

A Triumph with a Shady Past

from David M Ross.

From the shady gangster ridden streets of 1950's London to the scenic beauty and whisky scented fresh air of highland Scotland, that has been the journey taken by 965 EER, a 1952 Triumph Renown TDC.



Resplendent in virgin white and looking as innocent as it was the day it rolled off Triumph's production lines, you get no inkling of this car's dubious links to a murky past among some of the country's most feared hoodlums.

While today the Renown's razor-edged lines are admired by onlookers with no other motive than to enjoy its company, it was not always so.

It was no fault of the car but the Triumph we are talking about here has a decidedly bloodthirsty past, having once been owned by

the notorious gangster twins, Reggie and Ronnie Kray. The two were presented with it as a 30th birthday present.

Exactly what horrific acts the Triumph was to witness have now largely vanished into history but, thanks to at least some of its successive owners, the car is with us still.

"My wife Ann bought it for me as a Christmas present last year," said current keeper Ali Buchan, "but", he added, "she had no inkling of its past among some of the most brutal and murderous people in Britain."

There was a fair bit of work to be done to get the car into the condition Ali wanted it but, as he had completed a number of restorations, including a Morris Minor and a rare six-cylinder



Thames Trader truck now resplendent in his employer's colours – Ali works for the Glen Fiddich distillery in Dufftown in the area known as the Whisky Triangle – he set about the job over the winter and the car is now running well.

965 EER did have a near death experience itself as, following its time with the Krays, it had lain in a scrapyard but was rescued and rebuilt in February 1994. That rebuild took seven months but when Ali got it, he was surprised it had a valid MoT certificate.



It was running but had a number of mechanical maladies including a broken inlet manifold.

“I still have a bit to do to the interior as the wood needs refurbishing but I intend to have that finished soon as I have agreed to take a friend's daughter to the church on her wedding day,” said Ali. That should make the car a lot happier than it was when trundling around London picking up the rewards of the Kray's nefarious pursuits.

But most of its shame was washed away a while back as the Triumph also served as Pop Larkin's project car in the Darling Buds of May. At that time sporting a black paint finish.

Exhibited at the Crathes Historic and Classic vehicle Show in Royal Deeside, the Triumph was making only its second appearance since Ali got it running.

And it's a fairly rare bird. A TDC model, there are only 56 left in the UK and 75 worldwide. It's currently fashionable to shrug off or conceal an infamous past but with cars that can be seen as provenance and well worth keeping alive.