



ASTON MARTIN WORKS SERVICE sees 2,500 cars through its gates every year – the vast majority of which are modern models, returning to the factory for their routine service. As Andrew Frankel discovers, it's simple common sense

I don't know about your understanding of what goes behind the walls of the old Newport Pagnell factory at Aston Martin Works Service, but I always thought of it as a place full of DB4s and DB5s being lovingly brought back to life by artisans practising techniques of handcraftsmanship handed down from generation to generation.

The good news for lovers of Aston Martin tradition is that these heritage models and the skills required to look after them properly are as vital a part of the Works Service operation as they ever have been. But perhaps what is less well known is that the vast majority of the 52 full-time employees of Works Service actually spend most of their time looking after the service and repair of much more recent Aston Martins, from the latest Gaydon-built cars like the DBS, DB9 and V8 Roadster, all the Bloxham-built DB7s and the Vanquish – the very last of the Newport Pagnell-produced cars, and something of a speciality at Works Service. You don't just go to Works Service to have your classic Aston restored, you take your modern one there too for the most routine maintenance.



It's a subject about which Arthur Sinclair, General Manager of Works Service is clearly passionate. 'At Works Service we take on around 2,500 jobs per year and, of those, over 2,000 will be work needing to be carried out on current or recent Aston Martin models. We have all the equipment we need on site, a fantastically quick turnaround time from the Parts Operations facility in Wolverton Mill and, most importantly, staff sufficiently skilled to take on any job from the smallest service item to returning damaged cars to as-new condition.'

It is the fact that Works Service is not some farmed-out, satellite operation but instead part of Aston Martin itself that makes it unique. It is also the world's largest repairer of Aston Martins, with so much space that substantial numbers of cars can be on site and being worked upon, without them ever getting in each other's way. 'We never have fewer than 80 cars here,' says Arthur, 'and often up to 120. We can look after them all with no problem at all.'

Who will do what for your Aston Martin depends very much on the type of model and what precisely needs doing to it. Arthur continues: 'One of the things we are most proud of at Works Service is the breadth of the skills, knowledge and experience we can provide. There are of course many people here who've worked at Aston Martin in Newport Pagnell for many years – and we have some fabulously talented youngsters who've recently served full apprenticeships at Aston Martin.'





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The younger members of the workshop are also alive to the latest technology installing and servicing iPods, multiview camera's and upgraded audio systems. These are the guys who know all there is to know about the latest electronics systems, composite materials and modern manufacturing procedures you find on the more recent models and are never happier than when interrogating a modern Aston Martin by plugging a lap top directly into its central nervous system.

What this means is that despite the world being a fast changing place and Aston Martin's rapidly evolving cars, there is no challenge you can present on any Aston Martin of any era that's likely to fox the folk at Works Service for long. Whatever the issue, there won't just be someone who knows how to diagnose and cure it, there will be an entire team.

Which is why not only are there many people who have devoted their careers to caring for Aston Martins in Newport Pagnell, there are many more who've been bringing their Aston Martins back to their old home for servicing for longer even than that. 'Relative to other Aston Martin dealers, we're competitive in price,' says Arthur, 'and once people start using Works Service, see the level of service we provide and how easy it is for us to collect and deliver their cars, they tend to stay with us.'

Being part of Aston Martin also gives Works Service one more very enticing string to its bow: the right to put an Aston Martin stamp in the handbook. Works Service has Aston Martins sent to it from all over the world because owners like the idea of their car being looked after exclusively by its creator and there is no doubt at all that having a book full of stamps from Works Service will do your Aston Martin's provenance no harm at all, as well as making it easier to sell. After all, if you were choosing between two Aston Martins and saw that the care of one of them had been entrusted to the factory, you might rightly consider this a good indicator as to the standard of care generally lavished upon the car by its previous owner.

So it can be seen that having even regular service items attended to by Works Service is simply a sensible way of keeping your Aston Martin in the best condition so it can be enjoyed to the full every time it is used and, should you be minded to pass it on one day, making sure it retains as much of its value as possible. That's not overkill or vanity: that's straightforward common sense.

