

Giulia 105 Register – June 2012

Continuing the saga of the earliest Giulia TI saloon in the UK, I have received this interesting article from Paul Pattison, which I am sure you will all find of interest.



A Glimpse into Giulia Origins



While most people will be associating 2012 with the Olympics, for a few of us it will also mark the 50th anniversary of the launch of Alfa Romeo's milestone Giulia 105 Series cars, starting with the all-new Giulia TI, in June 1962. The first RHD cars, fitted from the start with a floor gear-change (the left hand drive cars initially had a column change) probably reached the UK sometime in 1963, which seems to be when the UK motoring press started to conduct full road tests.

While Giulia saloons of all types are now a scarce commodity here in the UK compared with the coupe and Spider derivatives, even fewer of the original TI version survive, perhaps even less than 10: at Duxford recently Stuart Taylor and I were discussing the case of an early car that he is hoping to 're-home' on behalf of a Club member and was wondering whether it was, in fact, the earliest survivor; while I have once seen an immaculate, time-warped 1962 LHD example in Holland, our conversation prompted me to recall an amazing encounter back in the summer of 1990 when I owned Giulia TI KOY 909D.

I was travelling from Lincoln with my son George, then aged 4, to join an AROC contingent at a classic car event at Silverstone, very conveniently being able to stay at my sister's house overnight as she lived near the circuit. Having something of a terminal addiction to cooked breakfast, especially when I don't have to cook it myself, there was a compulsory early morning pitstop on the A1 Southbound at Colsterworth for an All Day Breakfast at the Little Chef.

Unsuitably refreshed by a satisfying intake of cholesterol, we strolled out into a near-deserted car park back to our car; simultaneously an elderly couple were walking out to theirs: our eyes met and the conversation that followed went something like this:..

"That's a nice old Alfa"

"Thank you, are you familiar with these cars?"

"Yes, I used to run one"

"Was it a Giulia TI or a Giulia Super?"

"It was a Giulia TI, it was the road test car"

"Oh, which magazine?" (blank look)

"What was the registration number?" (another blank look while I'm in overdrive trying to remember all the road tests in my Alfa archive material that I have collected over the years.....)

"Was it RPX?"

"No, LPX."

"415 LPX?"

"Yes, that's it."

OK, cracked it, this was the car tested by 'Motor' in December 1963 and I have that very issue in my collection! In my excitement I almost missed the next remark:

"I have still got it."

After picking my jaw up off the floor we exchanged addresses and phone numbers and agreed that I would come and look at the car after the gentleman had come out of hospital, as he had an operation pending; it transpired that he had had a business building agricultural trailers and when the car had needed an engine overhaul, he agreed a barter deal to build a trailer and in return the customer was going to overhaul the engine; in the event, the deal never took place.

Following this encounter I received a couple of letters, one of which enclosed a copy of the old-style logbook: this revealed that the car had not been taxed after February 1967 and that with chassis no. 725005, this was the 5th RHD car off the production line! Originally registered in August 1963 to Rudds, the well-known Alfa dealer in Worthing, it was then sold a year later to the man I was talking to.

In October and full of excitement at the potential prospect of that archetypal low-mileage 'barn-find', I ventured down to deepest rural Essex for a viewing. After a trek across a field

the car was revealed in a concrete farm building, straddling scaffolding poles and other detritus, which included parts of other dismembered motor vehicles; still wearing its original number plates, the car, in a dreary shade of grey was in very poor condition, the only apparent change from the roadtest photographs being the fitment of a Webasto-type fabric sunroof.

But there were further surprises inside: the cloth-faced seats apparently in some kind of tweed material, had been fitted with clear plastic covers, which were a popular accessory in the 1960's (Kumficar?) but they had not protected the seats, rather had caused them to sweat, causing the most amazing mould growth that I have ever seen anywhere. But the biggest surprise was the recorded mileage of 97,000 - this on a car that was not yet 4 years old when last on the road; while such a mileage might not be very remarkable today, in 1967 with a fraction of the motorway network that we have now, this would have been exceptional, and having been thrashed by who knows how many motoring journalists, hardly surprising that an engine overhaul had been necessary!

This was more than twenty years ago, and at the time a totally unrealistic asking price stalled any further developments, although without any interesting history beyond having featured in a roadtest, the car was really only fit for spares, yet it was to be a condition of sale that whoever bought it had to restore it. I have referred one or two other enthusiasts to its existence over the years, but as far as I am aware, it is probably still sitting in that damp farm shed after 44 years storage, a real 'barn find', but in this case probably without the happy ending.

My son is now 25 working in France, the Little Chef at Colsterworth has morphed into an OK Diner and I have enjoyed (well, at least part of the time!) 27 years of continuous Giulia saloon ownership - most recently a late-model Super.

A while ago I heard through Bob Dove that the gentleman who I had met in 1990 had passed away, but with the Giulia's 50th birthday approaching, if his son could be persuaded to see reason and part with 415 LPX, if it could be dragged out in one piece, even if beyond restoration, it would be a timely exhibit next year at a classic car show, preferably still covered in its years of grime and mould - a small but significant piece of Alfa Romeo history: so if any of you are up for the challenge, Stuart now has all the details!

Paul Pattison

Before and After

Mike Spenceley (MGS Coachworks) has sent me these before and after photos of Andrew Cloney's beautiful Bertone GT Veloce he has just completed. Originally a 1750, the car now sports a tuned two litre engine and has been set-up for fast road and track day use. Several months in the MGS workshop have resulted in this stunning restoration. Both owner and restorer are reported to be delighted with the outcome.



Stuart Taylor

Website: www.aroc-uk.com/105Register