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Michael Dyer brazes the sides on to a DB6 rad, while in the background proprietor Gerald Stringer cuts patterns for radiator tops on the bandsaw



Dyer adds top pipe to a brass header tank



Stringer puts finished rads in oven to bake



Gavin Cooper top-coats a Bentley radiator



Cutting out rust damage from a fuel tank

# STAYING COOL FOR 50 YEARS

## Aaron Radiators

**Location** 54 Whitehorse Lane, London SE25 6RQ **Staff** five  
**Tel** 08456 528852/  
 03302 020180  
**Web** [www.aaronradiator.co.uk](http://www.aaronradiator.co.uk)  
**Prices** DB6 radiator £299.63

Aaron Radiator Co Ltd has been supplying trade and public alike since 1962, and has been on this site, in the lee of Selhurst Park, for the past 30 years. Founder Bill Stringer is sadly no longer with us, but now the firm is run by his son Gerald and widow Jane, who boast that they can repair, re-core or copy any radiator or fuel tank.

The mail-order side of the business is expanding, but the company still welcomes walk-ins and aims to

hold one of more or less everything in stock so it can immediately supply. More modern radiators are bought-in direct from the makers because it's more cost-effective, but above the basement store is the workshop. Here Michael Dyer works his magic, re-coring and reclaiming old rads, most of which are of copper and brass construction. Modern radiators are usually aluminium with plastic tanks, but there has been a move back to brass with brazed joints among performance cars, because it's a better conductor so transmits heat faster.

Gerald shows us a Maserati 3200 unit, a curious tandem design that's a donor for a re-core so that he has one in stock. "We'd never seen one before," explains Stringer, "so I thought we'd better get one in and I bought this on ebay." It's surprisingly heavy, but size isn't a problem:

the largest radiator the company has made was for cooling the oil in a drilling rig, using 3/4in-diameter spiral tube, the whole thing measuring 3x2m (and 500mm thick!). The oldest they've done is for a 1908 de Dion: "Basically some copper tubes with fins on."

Back in the real world, when a radiator comes in for a re-core it's taken apart by melting the solder, then the tanks and sides are sand-blasted. Huge presses and several flaming torches adorn the workshop, but most of the work is done with the fresh core in a simple clamp, as Dyer builds a radiator around it. Then it's pressure-tested, dropped in a water tank to check for leaks, dried in the oven, painted in a fan booth – any colour you like, as long as it's black: gloss for Astons, matt for everything else – then oven-dried again. Stringer reckons

to turn around rebuilds in two to three days. With plastic-tanked radiators it's usually cheaper to replace than repair, but it can be done: "If the tanks are broken we can fabricate new ones, though obviously that costs more."

Also in stock are circular heaters, but if the right one's not there they can make it. And they will supply any TVR radiator in aluminium, plus anodised filler caps in red or blue, in different sizes and pressures for both cars and motorcycles. Aston Martin DB7 oil coolers are another recent line, and cost £178 with a year's guarantee. "A fraction of the cost of the original," Stringer's team can repair a fuel tank, too – it's defumed, cut open, shot-blasted, then welded back up.

And where did the name come from? "It makes us first in the phone book!" PH