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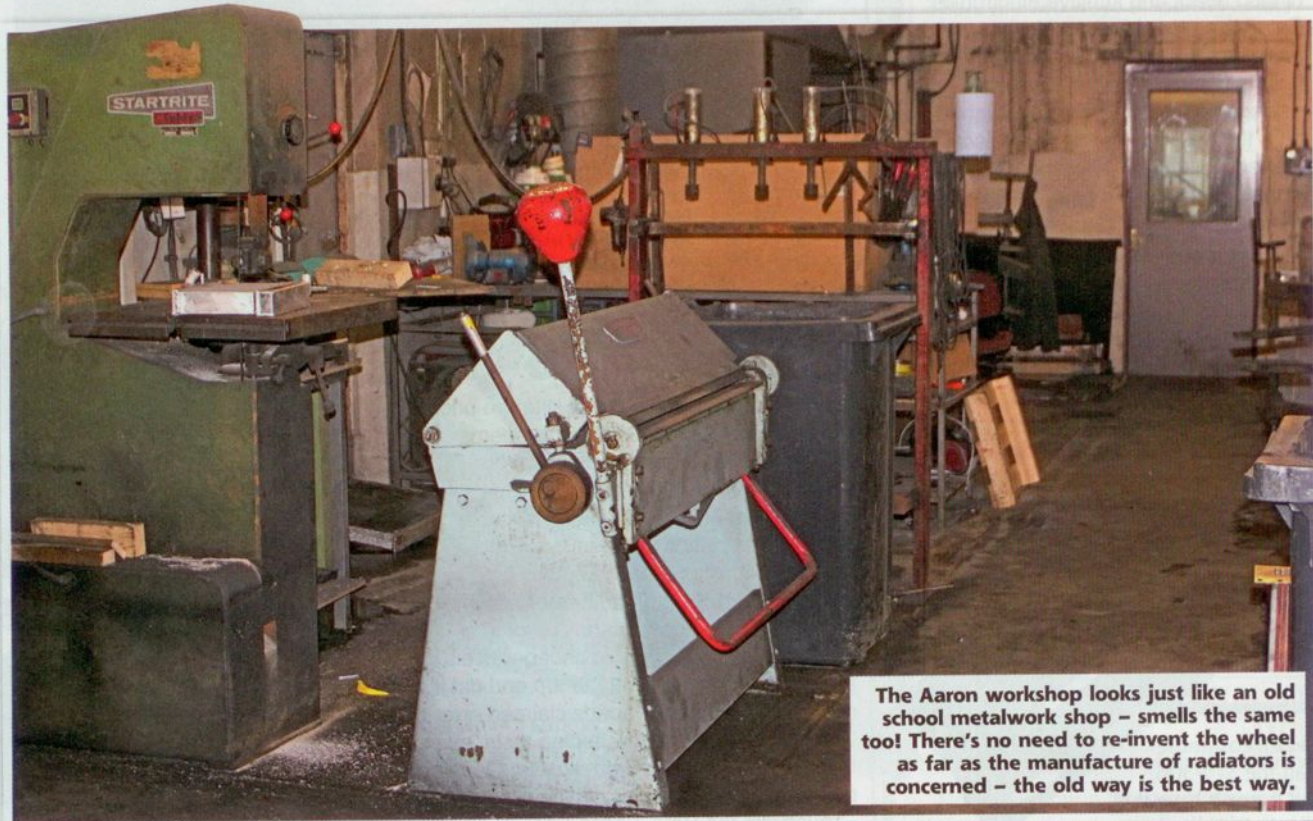


THE MAGAZINE THAT HAS SAVED YOU MONEY SINCE 1958



Aaron Radiators

50
YEARS
celebration



The Aaron workshop looks just like an old school metalwork shop – smells the same too! There's no need to re-invent the wheel as far as the manufacture of radiators is concerned – the old way is the best way.

Specialist radiator companies aren't exactly two a penny in the UK, but one south London operation has achieved a remarkable milestone this year. STEVE HOLE celebrates 50 years of Aaron Radiators.

Although a lot has changed since Bill Stringer founded Aaron Radiators in 1962, one thing has remained constant as the company celebrates its 50th anniversary: the company still produces a superb range of bespoke radiators.

In the 1960s, car radiators were notorious for being poorly made, often failing after just two years. The problem was that car manufacturers had switched to light, efficient tube-and-fin type radiators, replacing the old cellular film core radiators that might have been heavy and inefficient but lasted forever. Sudden increases in horsepower had led to greater demands on cooling systems to displace more heat, so the tubes and fins became smaller, thinner and more efficient, but because car manufacturers were so dependent on keeping down

costs, aftermarket suppliers were able to make cores out of higher grade materials that lasted longer. It took the carmakers longer than the aftermarket to get their new versions up to scratch as the quality of material became more critical.

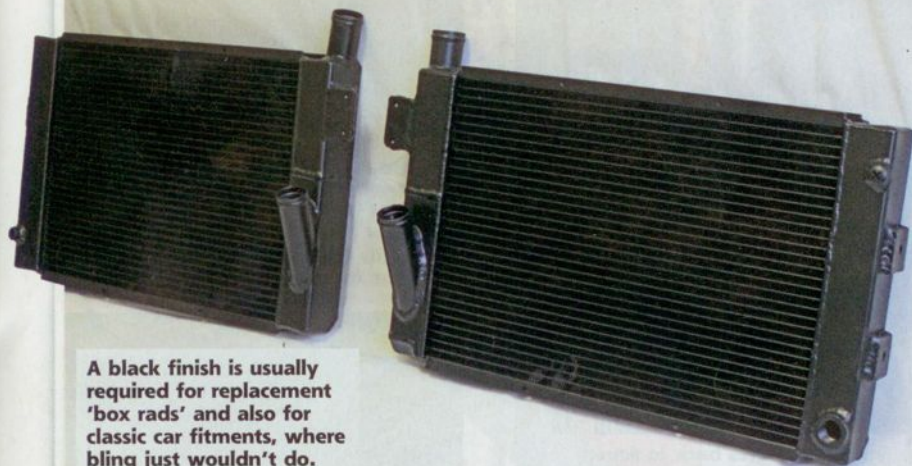
In 1962, having got the sack from a chromium-plating company where he had just been scraping a living, Bill Stringer could see an opportunity for a company to make premium radiators for the aftermarket and formed Aaron Radiators. Despite Bill's entrepreneurial spirit, the company took time to establish itself and Bill was forced to survive on his wife Jane's salary for the first 18 months. But Bill had a passion to survive and grow, driving his Ford Anglia van all over London pushing the wares and services that Aaron could offer. There was no special meaning attached to the Aaron name – it was

chosen simply to ensure the company got an early listing in *Yellow Pages*!

Once it had gained a foothold, Aaron grew quickly. Its south London workshop was an old pub on the border of Thornton Heath and South Norwood, just a few hundred yards from Crystal Palace Football Club. In 1979, Bill opened a north London branch on the Holloway Road, later moving to Hornsey. However, he discovered that running two workshops wasn't cost effective and the north London branch closed several years ago. Aaron still offers a van collection service for trade customers in the north London area.

Quality foremost

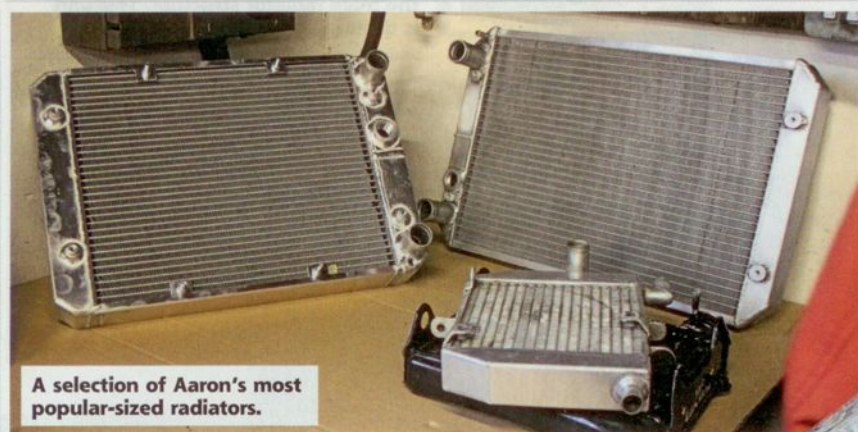
From the outset, Aaron introduced a range of radiators that were high quality and well-engineered. His wife, who still



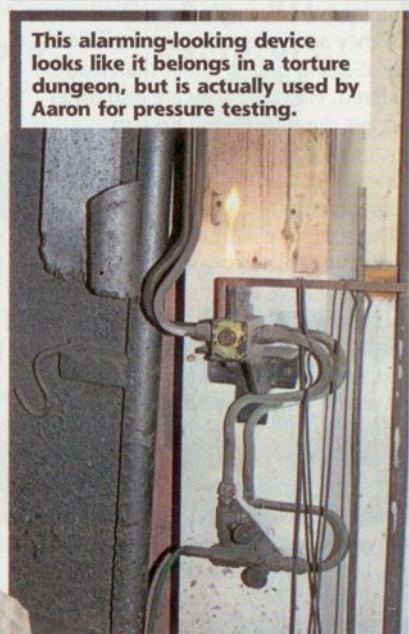
A black finish is usually required for replacement 'box rads' and also for classic car fittings, where bling just wouldn't do.



The radiator on the left has been brought in to the workshop for refurbishment; shown on the right is a new core.



A selection of Aaron's most popular-sized radiators.



This alarming-looking device looks like it belongs in a torture dungeon, but is actually used by Aaron for pressure testing.

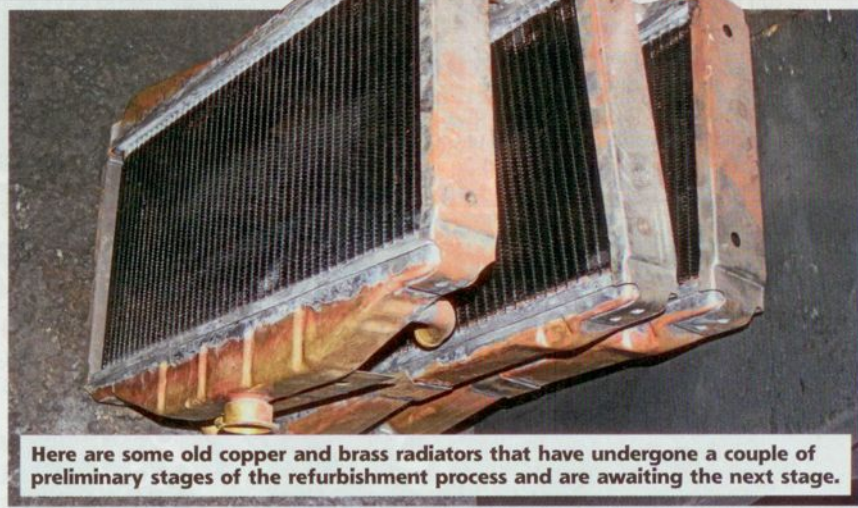
works at the company, says that when the autumn gave way to winter and the cold, frosty mornings arrived, they'd regularly arrive for work and find a queue of customers with steaming engines on the doorstep waiting for them!

Bill passed away five years ago and the business passed on to his children, Gerald and Laura, who have had to work through one of the worst recessions to hit the UK. They've done this by streamlining their activities – gone are the days when Aaron supplied thousands of 'box rads' as replacement items for daily drivers. Although it does hold a number of stock items and can probably supply what you want off the shelf, Aaron prefer to concentrate on its core business of producing bespoke radiators for mainstream, classic, kit and custom cars, taking into account specific 'packaging' issues, as well as reconditioning classic car radiators. Due to the size of the workshop, Aaron's staff don't work on the cars themselves; they supply the radiators and it's up to the customer to get them fitted.

All Aaron products are made in-house by two departments:

Copper and Brass

These radiators have a brass tank and tubes with copper fins. Mike Dwyer re-cores classic, vintage and industrial



Here are some old copper and brass radiators that have undergone a couple of preliminary stages of the refurbishment process and are awaiting the next stage.

radiators with cores made in the UK. Mike has been soldering car radiators for more than 30 years. This team is managed by Gavin Cooper, who is also Aaron's branch manager, and who has 33 years' experience in the radiator trade.

Aluminium (Alloy)

Adil Sheikh makes aluminium radiators, intercoolers and oil coolers from scratch with cores made in the UK and Europe. He also re-cores motorcycle radiators. Adil has been a welder/fabricator for 15 years. Gerald Stringer, who is also Aaron's sales

director, manages this department and has 24 years' experience in the radiator trade.

About a third of Aaron's business is accounted for by its industrial range of radiators for generators, compressors, truck and plant equipment, for plant hire companies such as Aggreko and Speedy Hire. In the past Aaron has re-cored massive eight foot radiators that take two people to lift. More recently, the company has focused on the re-coring of large industrial radiators, oil coolers and intercoolers.

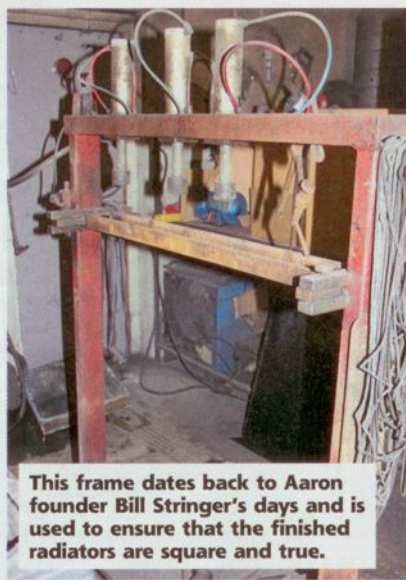
Metal matters

Once upon a time the bulk of car radiators were made from copper and brass, with aluminium being often prohibitively expensive. However, given the current market value of metals, copper and brass are rapidly catching up with aluminium, which used to be three times more expensive.

Traditionally industrial radiators were made from copper and brass, but due to increases in durability, industrial aluminium radiators are becoming more popular. Aluminium radiators look more attractive, and they are lighter and more efficient, due to being brazed rather than lead soldered. However, they are also softer and less durable, so you have to be careful about placing them in a vulnerable position where they might get pebble-dashed by stones.

The company has provided rads for most popular sports cars and will more than likely have a 'pattern' for the radiator you require. Even if you own something unusual, just send Gerald Stringer some accurate drawings and dimensions – he can advise on exactly what is required – and Aaron will create one from scratch for you. Aaron will also happily refurbish your existing radiator or even copy the old one. Given the care and skill that goes into their work and the high quality materials used, you will get a massive increase in the efficiency of your radiator, along with greater durability.

And Aaron doesn't just make radiators. The firm can help with any cooling solution, including heater matrixes, condensers, oil coolers, intercoolers and swirl pots, and it is one of the few companies qualified to properly repair or clean out leaking fuel tanks. What's more there's a 12-month warranty on all work.



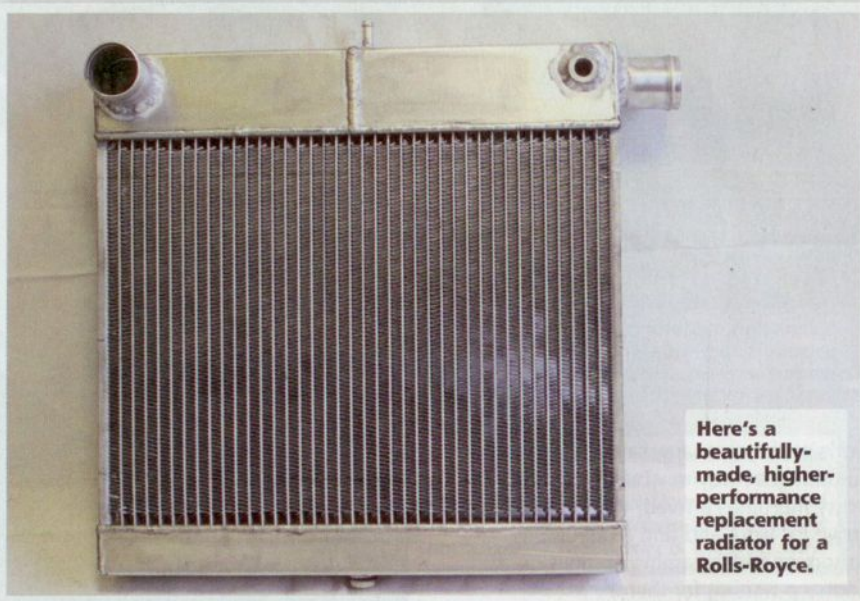
This frame dates back to Aaron founder Bill Stringer's days and is used to ensure that the finished radiators are square and true.



This water tank is used to test that the new or refurbished radiators are watertight, much as you'd check a tyre's inner tube for escaping air.



Here, the surround is being fitted to the main radiator structure. This unit is destined for a classic Rolls-Royce.



Here's a beautifully-made, higher-performance replacement radiator for a Rolls-Royce.



Aaron buys in all its radiator 'cores' from a longstanding supplier, however it makes all other metal parts in-house and using British steel.



Aaron also manufactures a range of tanks for a variety of uses such as intercoolers, condensers, catch tanks and swirl pots, and it can also properly repair old fuel tanks.

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