



# COLLINS PERFORMANCE CENTRE

Established for more than a quarter century, Collins Performance Engineering Ltd is one of the most respected and progressive tuning shops in the UK and Iain Robertson explored its past, present and future in a rare insight to its phenomenal capabilities.

Location is fairly vital to most businesses but, when a tuning company is established at the edge of 'Millionaires' Triangle', that section of high value real estate that stretches out from Manchester, west to Chester and south to Congleton, it could be suggested that its choice was prime. Collins Performance Engineering (CPE) has been located in one of the town's couple of newer industrial estates since it first delved into turbocharged engine tuning, when the Ford Sierra Cosworth was enjoying its heyday.

Its founder, Sue Collins, had already enjoyed a modest amount of success in rallying and had made the transition to circuit racer without enduring too many

problems. In fact, with a self-developed car that preceded the introduction of the Escort RS, which would form one of the pillars of Ford's competition activities of the late-1980s, Sue powered her way to multiple pole positions and race victories in an all-black turbocharged 'supercar' that appeared to have very few rivals.

Around 23 years ago, I visited the fairly compact premises in a typical out-of-town 'crinkly tin shed', to drive what was a fully road-legal Ford Sapphire Cosworth that had been used in the Autoglass Tour Of Britain event held that same year. Although trimmed to Group N specification, our computer read-out of its figures was no less than eye-opening. It had despatched 0-60mph in a whisker over 3.6 seconds, running on to a recorded top speed of 193mph, largely thanks to its long standard gearing. I was giggling like a girl, because the car was driveable, tractable and made only marginally more noise than its production progenitor, despite power and torque

figures that belonged in another class. CPE was placed firmly on the map. Continuing the visit into the firm's inner sanctum, I was not only amazed at the breadth of vehicles being worked upon but also by the amount of technology that Sue was employing to 'crack' manufacturers' ECU codes and to develop fresh maps and tuning potential, some time ahead of most of the company's rivals. I have said it before and I restate, Collins Performance was at the forefront of turbocharged engine developments, while still managing more conventional tuning exercises. That first visit proved to be a landmark for me and I am delighted to say that the company has continued in the same vein ever since.

A regular attendee and exhibitor at the annual Autosports Show, held at the NEC, CPE gained Ford accreditation early in its life for the RS200 and it remains one of the few Ford-approved RS tuning centres in the UK. Of course, as I mentioned earlier, its location in the



Cheshire countryside places it ideally to service tuning requirements from a large tranche of England and, with more millionaires per square mile residing in its locale, the inevitable, money-no-object personalisation factor has provided it with a regular feed.

Of course, even playboys and footballers with Italian or German supercars at their disposal need zesty runabouts, when a more incognito style of motoring is demanded. CPE soon adopted the fascination for Japanese imports and, appreciating the value of their even greater tuning potential, exhausts, turbocharger conversions, remapping and a host of individually developed CPE products, such as waste-gates, blow-off valves and up and down-pipes were soon brought to market.

You see, CPE is not just a bolt-on exponent of the trade. This is a company

that lives up to its frequently vaunted moniker of 'The Masters of Going Faster'. Much of its high regard lies in its design, development and manufacturing of specific components and complete end-products. While it does remarket some popular items, mostly as a service to its customers, its true devotion lies in producing its own solutions to many of the problems that it perceives. It is, after all, an engineering company at heart and the appliance of science is central to its core activities.

As a result, both Powerchips, the bolt-on enhancements that can improve fuelling and ignition timing of so many varied models of cars and both light and heavy commercials, and Mongoose Performance Exhausts are intrinsic parts of the Group of companies' overall activities. In fact, Mongoose, started by the company more than a decade ago, is currently in a

market-leading position. Using the highest grades of stainless steel, there is scarcely a single model sold in the UK, Europe or beyond that cannot benefit from freer flowing gases and the power enhancing properties that they convey.

Seeking a higher level of efficiency from the Subaru 'boxer' engine (2001 onwards), the company has recently developed a 3.0-inch bore cat-back system that relieves some of the possible deformation created by 2.5-into-3.0 inch systems originally supplied. The company also produces full systems and versions with sport-cat incorporated. However, it has also formulated a means for the twin tailpipes on a Honda Civic to be more efficient, with either a twin 3.5-inch or the slash-type in 4.0-inch width to fit within the rear bumper slots. To gain a more comprehensive insight, you should check out the firm's web-site (noted below),



> to see if CPE has a system to meet your requirements, both in terms of stylish appearance, as well as for the performance claims.

For all of its massive range of competences, CPE has never forgotten or ignored the simplest of customer contacts. CPE will entertain servicing on almost any vehicle, even though tuner cars are its speciality. Although the vast majority of its clients will rely on product supply, the company has built some of the foremost competition cars currently racing, rallying and winning in the UK and Europe. CPE will take any job from initial discussion through a comprehensive development programme, to result in a finished vehicle that meets all international regulations to perfection.

Having carried out such tasks for itself, both as a means to prove its individual developments and to flag-up its capabilities to a wider audience, it is no surprise to appreciate that the Mongoose Drag Racer, popularised in its past by the Page family members, was built by CPE. The 8.0-litre hand-built monster develops a remarkable 7,000-8,000bhp and can run the quarter-mile in a remarkable 4.8 seconds, with a terminal velocity of over 300mph. It is without doubt the most powerful machine that CPE has developed, which should provide a hint as to the company's overall capabilities.

In fact, CPE has had a vital hand in British Touring Car entries, the VECTA Challenge, British Superbikes, Mondeo V6 Challenge, the Max5 Series, ASCAR and the European Drag Championship, the latter four with Mongoose sponsored cars. An important string in its range of services is that of remapping and its Superflow 4WD rolling road, sitting in its own dedicated unit, is a vital element in carrying out the service on all manner of tuned cars. It supports an engine dyno from the same company and ensures that CPE is bang up-to-date with the latest technology for its clients.

Featuring a climate compensating facility and 42-inch rollers for minimal tyre deflection allied to the maximum tyre contact patch, only the most accurate torque and power figures result. The facility can handle single or all-gear tests at full throttle, carrying out controlled acceleration and deceleration, which is vital for ironing-out minor mapping glitches. Step, steady state, aerodynamic loading and drive cycle tests can be carried out with the utmost efficiency using the eddy current power absorber module. There are very few similar facilities anywhere in the UK, which pinpoints another strength of the



CPE operation.

Naturally, as an engineering concern, other aspects of the latest technology are also part of the CPE approach and its Schenck CS-30 balancing machine ensures that no crankshaft will ever depart the premises running out of true. Yet, despite the high-level tuning potential possible at CPE, it is the 'everyman' Powerchips retail business that has placed the company on a broader map.

Developed by Sue Collins from the outset to enhance the performance of both normally aspirated and turbocharged, petrol or diesel, car or commercial vehicles, Powerchips is the acknowledged 'bolt-on' component from which almost any vehicle can benefit. Much of the firm's early development work of more than 25 years ago went into the development of a broader market range of end products.

Each of the several hundred different types (of which you can check availability through CPE's web-site) of 'boxes' can be fitted readily by any moderately skilled home mechanic. Yet, as the Powerchips devices use OBD links, CPE has organised a network of fitting agents nationwide and across Europe to facilitate installations on

cars, commercials, trucks and buses.

However, the company also offers a mobile fitting and mapping service, using the latest mobile technology and Flashpoint Genius equipment. This unique service can also provide a CPE technician, who can remap a factory ECU with a Powerchips device, at either a domestic or work address. Rapid Diesel is the latest offshoot of the Powerchips range dealing with the increased number of diesel-powered cars now in the national car parc.

Factor in some of the top names from the tuning industry, such as SFS Hoses, DashDAQ, Aquamist Water Injection, Radtec intercoolers and radiators, Bilstein suspension, EBC brakes and both Red and Yellow Stuff pads, K&N Induction and the many products developed under the CPE banner and you arrive at a tuning house that is conveniently located and capable of turning out superior quality tuning solutions. It almost does not get any better.

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## COLLINS PRODUCT NEWS

### Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X

This system is made from 76mm T304 stainless steel and is designed so that to give maximum performance (our tests show anything up to 25bhp extra on a standard car) whilst still retaining a pleasant drive. With twin 5" rolled in slash cut tails the system comes in 3 options of which the prices are as follows, £626.86 for the cat back, £769.04 for the full system with cat replacement and £1001.69 for the full system with sports cat.