

# Rebirth of a Minor classic

It's 20 years since the classic Morris Minor family car went out of production in Britain. Now the "poached egg" much loved by enthusiasts around the world is set for rebirth in a pioneering village factory in Sri Lanka. **Margaret Chesworth**, *Compass News Features*, reports.

**A** joint venture by a British car buff and a Sri Lankan tea planter promises to carry a much-loved British "banger," the Morris Minor, into the next century — under another name.

Charles Ware, who runs a Minor restoration workshop in Bath, and planter Dhanapala Samarasekara have set up the Durable Car Company in south-west Sri Lanka to build "clones" of the famous little car, sometimes called "the poached egg" because of its distinctive shape.

Production of the Minor, a popular family car of the 1950s and 1960s, was halted in Britain in 1971.

The new labour-intensive plant in Sri Lanka will initially turn out body panels and spare parts for the repair of Minors scattered throughout the world.

In four years' time, however, when the workforce has grown to 1,000, the factory will begin production of a popular car modelled on the English classic.

The Durable Car Company is regarded as a role model for the way "post-industrial" manufacturing could expand in developing countries, providing better-than-average wages and new skills for local people in contrast to the high-tech mode of manufacture which has become implanted in so many countries.

It is viable because labour rates are much lower than those in the West, explained Ware.

The Durable Car Company, initially employing 50 people, is in Batadua, Samarasekara's ancestral village near the historical port of Galle. When it opened last April Buddhist priests were on hand to bless the new enterprise.

Plans to launch the factory took



Charles Ware — aiming to give the Morris Minor a new lease on life that will take the classic family car in