



MORRIS TRAVELLER

YEAR: 1968

MILEAGE: 24,500

PRICE: £10,950

MOT: Oct 2012

CONTACT

Charles Ware's Morris Minor Centre,
0117 3003753 www.morrisminor.org.uk

Long before the acronym 'MPV' was even floated across a marketing meeting, the Morris Traveller was showing the way forward for multi-purpose practical transport. With its wide opening rear doors, folding seats and boxy rear end it was family transport with room for five plus dogs, luggage and anything else you cared to throw in or on top of it.

That perhaps explains why the Traveller is one of the most popular Minor variants today, with Charles Ware's famous Morris Minor Centre generally having a good selection available at any time.

Anyone with even a brief familiarity with Minors will be aware of the firm's position in the hierarchy of Minor specialists and classic cars in general, but if you're not then here's a brief recap: founded in 1976 by Charles Ware after he'd made and lost a fortune in the property business, the Morris Minor Centre espoused his philosophy of the 'Durable Car', backed by the idea that with sensible upgrades a Minor could keep going indefinitely. In this respect Charles was a green pioneer, but the idea of updating the Minor to suit modern driving conditions remains popular.

This example is typical of a Minor which has received the Charles Ware treatment: outwardly standard in its Smoke Grey paintwork with light blue trim, it benefits from front and rear inertia reel belts, brake servo, alternator, wiper delay, radial tyres and classic door mirrors.

This Traveller has been through the hands of the firm more than once in recent years and so its history is well known to them. Reassuringly, it's received replacement wood at some point which still looks in nice condition: as many readers will be aware, the wood is structural on the Traveller.



ON THE ROAD

A nice Minor is a delight to drive, with light steering, delicate and precise gearshift and – once on the move at least – light steering. There's no synchromesh on first gear but in practice, that's not a problem to anyone familiar with older cars, and certainly in town traffic the torque of the 1098cc A-series means there's seldom any need to engage first on the move.

We tried the car from stone-cold and it fired easily on choke and settled down to a nice smooth idle. In our test drive around the area near the firm's Bristol base we encountered a mixture of faster urban roads and traffic jams, but the Minor proved itself unflustered by modern

city traffic. The dry weather meant we didn't have to use the wipers or lights, but we know from experience that the alternator is a worthwhile upgrade and means brighter headlights, fog lamps and modern stereo can all be added easily.

A popular mod from Charles Ware is the firm's 'Series III' suspension upgrade involving telescopic dampers, but this one was on the original lever-arm set-up and felt just fine. Modern radial tyres improve the handling of course and twisty urban streets can be tackled at modern speeds without embarrassing squeals.

The seats have been retrimmed recently and the interior felt and looked good, while a CD player has been fitted unobtrusively in the left-hand glove box.

VERDICT

The Traveller comes complete with Charles Ware's usual chassis guarantee and will also be converted to run on unleaded fuel, which in conjunction with the upgrades makes it ideal for both the newcomer to classic cars who wants a painless entry into the scene, or a committed Minor fan who wants a top notch, usable Traveller. Yes, you might find Travellers more cheaply out there, but few of them will come with the chassis guarantee and the solid wood too. In fact, ownership of this one could well be no more troublesome as a modern car.

Paul Wager



TECH SPEC

ENGINE:	1098cc OHC
POWER:	48bhp at 5100rpm
TOP SPEED:	77mph
0-50:	19.6 secs
FUEL CONSUMPTION:	38mpg
GEARBOX:	Four-speed manual