A clear demonstration

Ivor Searle are carrying out remanufacturing on a large scale

WHAT IS remanufacturing? To some, especially outside the automotive industry, it is the practice of breaking down a part, cleaning it and putting it back together. A misguided view that hampers the industry.

When it comes to it, remanufacturing is exactly what it says on the tin, taking something that already exists and rebuilding it, repairing it, re-engineering it, fixing problems that exist and in many cases those that don't exist yet. It happens with all sorts of products in the aftermarket, from water pumps to brake calipers, ECUs to turbochargers, even whole engines.

In fact, it is the engine that perhaps highlights just what remanufacturing is all about. Various different components from the block to the camshaft come together to produce the power to make vehicles move. If the engine is faulty then quite simply the car won't work. For all the electronic parts within, it is ultimately the mechanical element of a vehicle that matters.

This is a fact that Ivor Searle knows only too well. The company remanufactures engines, together with gearboxes and turbochargers. I was granted the opportunity to visit their facilities and see first-hand just what goes into a remanufactured engine.

The basics

If you ever want to see just what remanufacturing is, Ivor Searle is the place to visit in order to see the scale of what happens. Technicians can probably pull apart an engine in their sleep, however the company employs the best engineers possible to ensure that every engine which comes in is stripped, cleaned, inspected and assembled in the correct way. One interesting fact, and one which highlights what remanufacturing is, is that once an engine is pulled apart, it will never be reassembled with all the same components. Instead, each item goes into storage, which is then brought out, machined and built into a new engine ready to be shipped to a garage when required.

I met with Commercial Director David Eszenyi to discuss the company's process from old to new, what components are reworked and how important remanufacturing is. Ivor Searle has been going for over 70 years producing engines and cylinder heads, and recently added remanufactured gearboxes and turbos to its roster.

Starting work

A remanufacturing company cannot begin its work without components to remanufacture. The core has to come in to be re-engineered and keep stock up. It is not simply a case of getting an old unit in and repairing it, with many companies, Ivor Searle included, the new product is able to go out before the old one returns.

David explains: "The core is really important to us and we do our best to ensure that garages find it easy to return old units. Each new engine goes out in a crate and we ask the technicians to put the old one in. We then arrange to have it picked up, with costs built into our prices. There are no hidden charges, everything is built into the price.

"We still have to spend a significant amount to buy core in, often because garages don't send old units back, they're damaged beyond repair or we have extra demand for a certain type of engine. We work with large salvage yards to ensure we can keep stock up to date."

Walking through the yard looking at the old engines, it was clear that some parts were rather orange. David comments: "On certain models there are so many different cam cover modules that sometimes it is better for a garage to keep those and send us back the main unit. So we use dummy parts to ensure the engines work or for packaging purposes, which garages can then send back with the old units."

Shop floor

When the old engine comes in, it is stripped down, inspected and washed to give the engineers a better chance of assessing its quality, as