

## TRIMMING REGISTER FOR TYPES 401, 402, 403, 404 AND 405

Amongst the treasures being discovered by the merry band of BOHT volunteers beavering away in the workroom kindly loaned to the Trust by the Aerospace Bristol Museum, several extremely dog-eared hard-backed registers have come to light. One of these was used by the trim shop to keep track of and record the trimming of cars as they passed through the shop.

The register covers chassis nos. 401/204 to 403/1580, chassis nos. 402/701 to 402/719 and chassis nos. 404/2003 to 404/2051 with a jump to chassis nos. 405/4001 to 405/4020.

The register indicates which trimmer did what and often, when. The trimming is split between body, front seats, squabs and rear. One or two trimmer's names appear against each of these elements for every chassis number listed.

Dates only start to appear against entries after chassis no. 401/896. By the time the register gets to chassis no. 401/1045, both start and finish dates are recorded. Four operatives worked on this particular car, namely, Messrs. Tooze, Cox, Casey and Jenies.

From the beginning of the register there is a column with a one- to two-digit number under fifty, the relevance of which has yet to be determined. There are additional notes against some cars, e.g., chassis no. 401/235 has a note, "New Scheme", which could be when the Type 401 door arm-rest was dropped.

Type 401 chassis nos. 401/204, 401/209, 401/213 and 401/214 are noted as prototypes with 401/255 being for development. Show cars are identified these being chassis nos. 401/233, 401/696, 401/1085 (Swiss), 401/1279, 403/1426 (U.S.A.), 403/1571, 401/1696 and 405/4002 (Earls Court) and 405/4003 (Paris). Chassis no. 402/212 is shown as the Type 402 prototype with chassis no. 404/2009 is listed as a drop-head being bodied by E D Abbott Limited.

There is a block of chassis nos. – 401/886 to 401/894 - with a note of "Chassis for Switzerland" for which there currently not much information given that the Trust has yet to compile the dossiers for these chassis nos.

(The set of Rolodex file cards acquired with the archive shows that the following chassis nos. were supplied to the following dealers:

401/891 Titan Audtoservice AG, Zurich, Switzerland,

401/892 E P A Bogala Motors, Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka),

401/893 C A Drenowatz Auto AG, Basle, Switzerland,

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with a Car Division document showing chassis no. 401/892 going to Ceylon in November 1951 with other sources of information showing that this was bodied by Beutler for a Swiss customer. An order from C A Drenowatz Auto AG dated 17 November 1950 strongly suggests that chassis no. 401/893 was the one bodied by Carrosserie Langenthal for the 1951 Geneva Show.)

Special trim colours are noted but only seven among the Types 401, 402 and 403 while the Type 404s were trimmed in a variety of colours. There is a separate list of Type 405 chassis numbers, 405/4001 to 405/4020, which includes the Paris show car in 1954.

A "Seq. No." or date is shown against some entries for steering wheels. It is assumed these were trimmed in batches. After chassis no. 401/852 there is a reference on about every eighth car as being "lagged", which is a mystery that needs a solution. The fitting of two loudspeakers is also noted for some cars. Left-hand drive cars are highlighted, some with "USA" against the entry.

Several cars after chassis no. 401/277 had an extra 2½-inches on the front of the seat and 1½-inches higher at the front with chassis no. 401/860 having special seats. Show car chassis no. 401/696 was apparently painted in Bristol Red, had Broken White hide and red piping. A new type of front carpet was introduced on chassis no. 401/824. This could have been a change from Beige to Cinnamon Brown.

The register also includes a materials requirements list for special-coloured interiors.

Front seats pockets (for chassis no. 401/962 and found on chassis no. 401/1045) are referenced with the leather required for this option. Materials listed includes Brown Rexine, Farflex, flanged rubber, and Vynide (3¼-yards). There is a list of the extra materials for trimming the Type 402 which includes upper and lower celluloid light and mohair hood material.

In addition to the surnames of trimmers appearing against each chassis, they are also listed in the back of the register with their employee number. Some are designated as Men, Girl Machinists, Woman Machinists, Boys and Lads. There is further interpretation of the register to be made but just knowing who trimmed your car and other information about its interior is bound to be of interest to those who own these models.

This article is the result of work of the Trust's volunteers who give their time generously. Although the Trust is currently part-funded by donations and selling surplus items from the archive, a more secure income stream is need to ensure the Trust can maintain the archive after completing the compiling of the individual car heritage dossiers and the archive elements that will contain the records of the engineering, factory, dealer and other aspects of the activities of the Car Division of the Bristol Aeroplane Co. Ltd and its successors. If you think can help the Trust by a regular donation, please get in touch with the Trust's chairman, Stefan Cembrowicz.

For more information on the Trust, please visit [bristolownersht.com](http://bristolownersht.com).

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