



# BARN FIND WITH A DIFFERENCE

**David Wylie reports on an immaculately restored 1980 3C MkIII backhoe loader and other JCB classics owned by Highlands-based D&I Bain**

**"I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE WE HAD FOUND THE JCB 3C MARK III THAT MY FATHER HAD BOUGHT BRAND NEW IN 1980"**

**I**n the November 2021 issue of *EARTHMOVERS* we reported on a forest road project being undertaken in the Highlands by D&I Bain, with the help of their fleet of modern JCB machinery and a specialist stone spreading attachment.

Based at Tore just north of Inverness, the firm was started by Ian Bain in the mid-1960s, initially with a single backhoe loader. Today the contracting firm is run by his sons Garry and David, but Ian is still active in the business. The Bain family are passionate collectors of historic JCB machines, including a rare JCB 3C MkIII backhoe.

*Above and below:* Left to right: Garry, Ian and David Bain, who run the successful D&I Bain contracting firm and are passionate collectors of classic JCB machinery.

## JCB 3C MkIII

Pride of place in the family's historic plant collection goes to an immaculately-restored JCB 3C MkIII backhoe loader, which was originally sold to Ian Bain some 40-odd years ago. One of the last 3C MkIII models to be made, it was first registered for the road in April 1980 and a few months later JCB launched the iconic 3CX backhoe loader.

After acquiring an extremely rare JCB 7 excavator (more about this later) Garry and David were on the look-out for another reasonably-priced item of historic JCB equipment. In 2018 they received tip that a 3C backhoe was up for sale locally. Although it had been stored in a farmer's barn for a couple of decades, it was said to be in good condition. →







Left and right: Built from 1977 to 1980, the JCB 3C MkIII backhoe loader featured a much larger cab than its predecessor and was superseded by the iconic 3CX model.



bushes were fitted throughout, including the kingpost, together with replacing every hydraulic hose. While the original cab wasn't too badly rusted it was felt that, on balance, fitting a completely new cab would provide the best showroom finish and would also be more cost and time effective. The rest of the bodywork was shot-blasted, minor damage repaired and then sprayed with a layer of undercoat, followed by multiple layers of JCB yellow paint to give it a deep high-quality gloss finish. One minor deviation from the original colour scheme is the backhoe bucket, which would have come out the factory painted yellow, but Garry and David thought it looked better painted red.

The cab and its interior are immaculately finished, with all the original operational and safety warning notices fitted. One of the standout features is the operator's seat, which has been beautifully re-trimmed in red and black leather, and is height adjustable via a pull knob on the threaded post. Below the seat is the heater and fan assembly, with the ground visible through the slots in the floor to accommodate the clutch and twin brake pedals.

**"IT'S GREAT TO HAVE OUR 3C MARK III BACK AND LOOKING BETTER THAN NEW. I HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF BUYING IT NEW FOR AROUND £13,000"**

## JCB 3C MKIII IN CONTEXT

The JCB 3C MkIII backhoe loader would have been a familiar sight on UK sites in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Launched in February 1977 as a replacement for the well-respected 3C MkII, the MkIII version featured a much larger cab than its predecessor.

JCB built over 5200 examples in the first year of production, the majority of which were exported, mainly to the USA. UK customers bought over 4000 examples in 1978, increasing to just over 4500 units the following year.

Production of the JCB 3C MkIII ended in 1980 with the introduction of the iconic 3CX backhoe loader. In 1986, JCB's 40th anniversary year, their 100,000th backhoe loader to be built rolled off the production line.

→ As Garry recalls, "The JCB 3C Mark III was a proper barn find. We were delighted to discover we only had had to bleed the fuel pump, jump-start it and it burst into life and away it went. It's incredible to think this was the first time it had moved in about 20 years." As Garry and David gave the machine a good look over, they made a remarkable discovery: an old timesheet stuffed in the back pocket of the driver's seat, which was an original D&I Bain Ltd document!

Garry continued, "David and I could hardly believe we had found the JCB 3C Mark III that my father had bought brand new in 1980, then traded in for a 3CX in 1983. We were very lucky to find it, everything worked and it had less than 2900 hours on the clock!"

The discovery of the machine's heritage put a different perspective on the brothers' plans for the backhoe loader. They decided

it was worth a full-blown restoration to the highest possible standards and duly contacted Julian Carder. Julian's day job is JCB's global product marketing manager for backhoe loaders. He is also well known for managing top-class restoration work on historic JCB equipment.

### RESTORATION PROJECT

The brothers had to wait about 18 months for a workshop slot to become available with Julian, after which the restoration project took about six months to complete. The 3C MkIII was completely stripped down to almost every last nut and bolt, then cleaned, assessed and, where necessary, repaired to as-new factory specification.

Much of the machine is totally original, apart from some new genuine JCB parts, including the chrome-plated front work lights on the grille and cab. New pins and



The cab did not have a fatal dose of rust, but it was cheaper and quicker to replace it to achieve the standard required.



Garry commented, "Julian Carder has completed an amazing restoration job and believes it's probably one of the finest standard JCB 3C Mark IIIs that's been restored, as our machine doesn't have the 6-in-1 clam shovel bucket or the extendable backhoe stick."

Since its restoration, Garry and David

have put another 100 hours on its clock, giving it a run-out at local vintage and charity events. However, this museum-quality example of our industrial heritage is unlikely to load, stockpile or dig another ditch, which wasn't the brothers' intention when they were originally looking for a new project. Their wish for a JCB backhoe that can be used as a working machine at classic plant events has recently been satisfied with the purchase of a 1963 3C Mk 1. →

**Far left and left: This Julian Carder restoration has resulted in one of the best standard-spec 3C MkIII backhoes in existence.**







Above and below: Most weekends the JCB 7 excavator gets used in Bain's back yard.



→ The business was started with just such a machine, and this example required only light restoration work.

Ian Bain added, "Our JCB experience started with a 1963 JCB 3C Mark 1, bought from the local JCB dealer in Muir of Ord. We also operated the famous blue and red Major loader, which was the 27th machine made.

"It's great to have our 3C Mark III back and looking better than new. I have fond memories of buying it new for around £13,000, as we had a whole range of work lined up with the Hydro Board, local housing contractors and some agricultural customers. The JCB 3C Mark III was, and still is today, a highly versatile tool."

#### JCB 7 EXCAVATOR

We first reported on D&I Bain's classics back in 2019, when Garry was operating an extremely rare JCB 7 excavator at Morris Leslie's classic plant event. Built between 1964 and 1966, it was the first tracked machine produced by JCB and is believed to be one of only 10 examples left in the world.

This example was built on 30 December 1966, configured with a standard dipper and fitted with a 2ft bucket, and delivered to dealer Tate JCB. In more recent times,

## 110 TRACKED LOADER

Garry and David's latest acquisition is a 1971 JCB 110 tracked loader, only the third example of this model to be produced. This muck-shifter would go on to win a prestigious design council award in 1972. The brothers are currently looking at the cost of replacing its cab, but apart from that and a sticky hydraulic control valve, the machine is in good overall condition.

this JCB 7 was owned by Eric Warburton and featured in a television programme called Classic Plant. Garry purchased the machine, which required no restoration, at auction for just over £15,000.

Its four-digit meter shows just 80 hours, having been round the clock once, equating to 10,079 working hours. The 12.7t excavator is powered by its original six-cylinder Ford 590E diesel engine, which produces 96bhp at 2250rpm.

For the mid-1960s, the JCB 7 was packed



A 1963 JCB 3C Mk1 backhoe will have some light restoration work carried out, then used as a working machine at classic plant events.



with state-of-the-art technology, including safety glass for the cab windows, sealed-for-life track rollers and two-speed, pilot hydraulic operated travel motors. More importantly, shown in large capital letters on the spec sheet, it came with both a heater and demister fitted as standard! The slewing mechanism features a sealed-for-life cross roller swing ring with external gear teeth, similar to the design found on some of today's ultra-class hydraulic mining shovels.

Garry explained that the JCB 7 is a handful to operate, as the boom and dipper are controlled by separate levers. The slew operation works from a pedal, while the bucket crowd function is a two-pedal operation. Additional levers and pedals control the travel function and the handbrakes!

**"THE JCB 7 IS A HANDFUL TO OPERATE, AS THE BOOM AND DIPPER ARE CONTROLLED BY FOUR SEPARATE LEVERS & PEDALS"**

#### CONCLUSION

Running a successful contracting business with the help of the latest JCB technology allows D&I Bain to help to preserve our industrial heritage. As the world gets back to normal, there will be more opportunities for plant enthusiasts to see some of their



## PRIESTMAN ROPE SHOVEL

The Bain family are the proud owners of a diesel-powered Priestman Wolf rope-operated face shovel, which is in very good working condition. In 1949 it was supplied to the famous Muir of Ord contractor Buchan & Sons, who ran it for over 60 years!

collection at work, such as at the Morris Leslie classic plant event in Perthshire in the not-too-distant future.

One of the family's most recent acquisitions is an extremely rare 1972 JCB 8D, a 24t excavator believed to be one of only five machines still in existence today. It is still in working order but really requires a lot of restoration work to preserve it for the future. Garry said, "David and I would love to see this rare JCB 8D excavator restored to its former glory. If the JCB apprentices are looking for another project in the future, we would love to hear from them."

#### Acknowledgement

Thanks to Garry and David Bain for some of the photographs used in this feature. 