

ALL MAPPED OUT

With the arrival of modern engine management systems you could be forgiven for thinking that the days of carburettors and engine tuning are over, but not according to Webcon. PMM visited the company's Middlesex base to find out more.

You can't buy a retrofit, off the shelf engine management kit, right? And what about carburettors? Nobody supplies those anymore. Wrong, on both counts. Webcon are a leading supplier of Webber carburettors, performance kits and components, plus developing retrofit engine management kits. Martin Eva, Sales Director for Webcon, explained more about the business, and the development process.

Surprisingly, in the age of electronic fuel injection there is a demand for carburettors, which Webcon has serviced, but recently supply has been a problem. At the beginning of last year the Webber factory in Italy ceased production, leading to shortages. Although Webcon held good stocks, this obviously presented a problem. "Selling carburettors has always been at the heart of this business, so when your largest supplier stops producing it gives you something to think about," explained Martin. "However, we managed to restructure around other products such as engine management," he added. "The good news is that production of carburettors should be starting up again, so we hope to be receiving deliveries very soon."



An interesting aspect of the company's business is the development and supply of engine management kits. The company's Alpha brand started as a request from Aston Martin for an engine management system, back in the late 1980s. This evolved into performance kits for racing applications, the company achieving success in the British Touring Car Championship. "From this we came up with the idea of a complete, ready-to-go engine management kit in a box. The idea was that a kit car owner could buy



a basic engine from a scrap yard, for example, and the kit would supply everything – injectors, sensors, wiring harness, ECU, clips and bracketry to do the complete job," explained Martin. "With all the mapping set up ready to go, you turn the key and drive it down the road."

The company develops the kits to fit a wide range of vehicles, and offers different levels of performance upgrades. The engineering team at Webcon use a rolling road and computer software to



develop the kits. Working from a base engine map, the engineers use a PC and engine analyser to fine-tune the engine's running, ensuring smooth fuelling and performance under all loads and conditions. There is a great attention to detail, with even the sensors being individually calibrated to allow for different manufacturers.

Whilst there is still a demand for carburettors, it is a declining market, and this is reflected in the continuing development of the engine management kit business.

"What we offered in terms of the replacement carburettor concept we have now applied to the engine management kits," said Martin. The company takes a great deal of pride in providing a complete package with its kits. Evidence of this can be found in the warehouse, which seems to stock just about every nut, bolt, bracket, sensor, injector, etc, anyone could ask for, to ensure the straightforward fitting of the kits.

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