



# PROJECT XI

PART 3

This is it, the moment of truth, as we try to start the Westfield for the first time

In 1879, Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, its combination of glass, wire and electricity effectively exiling darkness and changing the world forever at a stroke. One can only imagine the sense of wonderment he must have experienced the first time his carbon filament burned brightly, but I think I've had a taste of just how excited he must have been.

When the tiny ignition light on our Westfield XI's dashboard glowed red for the first time, it was met with cheers and whoops of delight. Its significance may not have had quite the same global impact as Edison's discovery, but it was a massive moment for us. Our car finally had power, and the pile of components we had collectively spent well over 200 hours refurbishing, modifying and bolting together was at last coming to life.

To an outsider it would no doubt have seemed odd to see four blokes clapping a light coming on, but if you'd been there from the beginning when we disassembled the corroding heap that was once an MG Midget, and then spent most weekends since Christmas in an icy garage crawling around a spaceframe chassis, you too would have felt

the mixture of satisfaction and relief that such a moment brings.

Until we'd connected a battery and twisted the key in the barrel, we had absolutely no idea whether the electrics would work or go up in smoke; even our resident expert, Roger Swift, was unsure. Most surprised of all, though, had to be Peter Tomalin, for he was the one who connected most of the loom to the dash.

Despite this achievement, it was only the first of our targets for the day. If everything went smoothly (which, let's face it, was a long shot), we'd aim for the Holy Grail and attempt to start the engine too.

Since last month we've fitted a new distributor cap, leads and plugs, a fan belt, an oil filter and a racy new Pipercross air filter. All the hoses and pipes are on, and the interior is almost finished too. It took me more than a day to fit the runners to the seats, trim and install the carpets, cut holes in the body to mount the seatbelts, and finally bolt the chairs to the floor. And they'll still have to come out again because the transmission tunnel cover has been left off for now as we've yet to

