

# BODY Test

On  
Test This  
Issue:

## The Flatliner Body Panel Repair System Putting REPAIRS back into the BODYSHOP

'Repair or Replace' is a phrase much bandied about and one that can evoke a passionate response. A crusading repairer who says today's panelshop technicians are no longer given the opportunity to show their true potential as skilled panel-beaters is **Trevor Ferris**, the co-designer and UK distributor of the Flatliner system.

Trevor served his time in the aviation engineering industry, where he says, even today damaged components and panels are never scrapped they are always repaired. With a thorough grounding in the fabrication of a wide range of metals including titanium, stainless steel, and alloys he found his way into body repair and has owned bodyshops in the UK and abroad.

Trevor now wants to convert an industry that he feels has been wrongly steered into the culture of replacing parts when really repairs are

- more cost effective (no parts to buy so it's a labour-only cost)
- faster (no dismantling, no cutting and welding, no re-building)
- preserve the integral designed-in strength of the vehicle because a partial panel excision is avoided.

Repairing panels makes commercial sense, allowing repair shops to sell more labour hours. Cash flow can be improved if fewer parts are being purchased - not to mention fewer headaches when parts are unavailable.

All in all, it looks a win-win for the bodyshop and whoever is paying for the repair.

### So Does it Work?

BODY asked Accident Express Direct in Birmingham to trial Flatliner. First they needed a demonstration and basic training to understand how the system works. Trevor Ferris took a unit to Birmingham and demonstrated the equipment on a dented rear side panel. You can see from the pictures how the process unfolded.

### And Their Verdict?

After keeping the demonstration unit for a week, **Wayne Mason-Drust**, owner at Accident Express Direct, made the decision to purchase the Flatliner system. He could see that the system would make it possible for his company to sell more labour hours – a key business goal.

To prove it to his staff, Wayne used the system himself to repair a vehicle, the



results of which can be seen on his website at: [www.aednet.co.uk](http://www.aednet.co.uk) [click on 'Service List' then 'more details' under the 'Damage Repair' subhead].

### A Word of Warning Though

This system will only be successful for those shops that commit to ongoing education and training for their estimators, panel technicians and managers. Estimators need to understand which jobs can be 'saved' from the panel replacement production line and panel technicians have to be allowed to use their traditional skills of panel beating.

It's not difficult for an adept panel technician to master the skills as long as they are prepared to re-think their approach. Trevor sums up, "A bodyshop can invest in the Flatliner system but unless they also invest in training their support staff such as estimators and body shop managers they will not achieve maximum benefit from Flatliner. Those bodyshops prepared to make that investment will, without doubt, improve their labour/parts ratio and hence their profitability."



Preparing the surface



Don't forget to relieve metal stress



Explaining how the pulling tool attaches

**Flatliner – What is it?**

A standalone workstation that comprises a spot welding unit and all the hand tools to effect professional repairs to damaged vehicle body panels. The system comprises of a spot welder complete with sliding hammer and accessories, a set of three pulling bridges, an 'Innopuller' dent repair puller, and a selection of hammers, bits, pulling bars, etc.

Flatliner allows you to work from the outside without removing internal parts. This significantly speeds up work times and enables you to repair the original body panel without having to replace any parts damaged during the stripping process. The Flatliner system can be used for all types of damage to body panels including steel, high strength and ultra-HS steels and aluminium.

**Flatliner – What's the Cost?**

The complete Flatliner system is priced at £5495 + VAT, which includes delivery, assembly and initial basic training for up to two people. Further advanced training is available at £350 per day, where certification is issued that will qualify for PAS125 audit.



attaches to the panel surface



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