



BUYING SECTION

GUIDES, INFO & CLASSICS FOR SALE

Work trousers are put to the test - p143



CONTENTS

136 VOLVO 1800 BUYING GUIDE

This stylish Swede is one of the most iconic of Sixties sports cars.

140 GARAGE GEAR

Two pages of glorious goodies for your garage or workshop.

143 TROUSERS TRIED AND TESTED

We compare the top-selling work trousers for comfort and durability.

THE ESSENTIALS

- 151 Dealer Drop-in
- 153 Rolling Stock
- 158 Spares and automobilia
- 175 Updated Price Guide
- 182 Club Guide contacts



136 Volvo 1800 Buying Guide.

REGISTRATION YEARS

SUFFIX LETTER

A FEB 1963 - DEC 1963
B JAN 1964 - DEC 1964
C JAN 1965 - DEC 1965
D JAN 1966 - DEC 1966
E JAN 1967 - JULY 1967
F AUG 1967 - JULY 1968
G AUG 1968 - JULY 1969
H AUG 1969 - JULY 1970

J AUG 1970 - JULY 1971
K AUG 1971 - JULY 1972
L AUG 1972 - JULY 1973
M AUG 1973 - JULY 1974
N AUG 1974 - JULY 1975
P AUG 1975 - JULY 1976
R AUG 1976 - JULY 1977
S AUG 1977 - JULY 1978
T AUG 1978 - JULY 1979

V AUG 1979 - JULY 1980
W AUG 1980 - JULY 1981
X AUG 1981 - JULY 1982
Y AUG 1982 - JULY 1983

PREFIX LETTER

A AUG 1983 - JULY 1984
B AUG 1984 - JULY 1985
C AUG 1985 - JULY 1986

D AUG 1986 - JULY 1987
E AUG 1987 - JULY 1988
F AUG 1988 - JULY 1989
G AUG 1989 - JULY 1990
H AUG 1990 - JULY 1991
J AUG 1991 - JULY 1992
K AUG 1992 - JULY 1993
L AUG 1993 - JULY 1994
M AUG 1994 - JULY 1995

N AUG 1995 - JULY 1996
P AUG 1996 - JULY 1997
R AUG 1997 - JULY 1998
S AUG 1998 - FEB 1999
T MAR 1999 - AUG 1999
V SEPT 1999 - FEB 2000
W MAR 2000 - AUG 2000
X SEPT 2000 - FEB 2001
Y MAR 2001 - AUG 2001

1961-1973

VOLVO 1800

A sporty car that could change your views on classic Swedes

WORDS: RICHARD DREDGE
PICTURES: TOM WOOD

THE OWNER



Twenty years ago, Colin Atkinson got his 1800E to replace a Lotus Esprit Turbo.

Says Colin: 'The car was looking

forlorn in a garage; its engine was in the boot but with just 50,000 miles on the clock it was actually in reasonable shape. I had the engine rebuilt and ever since then the car has been all over the country. It's let me down just once, when the rotor arm cracked – just as I drove into the Volvo show at Gaydon!

'It sits alongside seven other classics, all of which get used regularly. As a result, the 1800 covers just 1000 miles or so each year – but I know it'll get me there and back without problems, unlike some of my other classics.'

From its foundation in 1927, Volvo built a reputation for safe, strong and reliable family cars. The thought of a sporty model from the Swedish company was utterly fanciful, but that's what appeared when the wraps were taken off the P1800 at the 1960 Brussels Motor Show. While early 1800s did little to bolster Volvo's image for well-made cars, the model did change buyers' views on what the brand stood for when it came to style and performance. Buy one of your own and it might just do the same for you.

BODYWORK

Rust can be a major problem as replacement panels are largely unavailable – when they do crop up they're extremely costly. The inner and outer front wings are especially rot-prone, so look inside the wheelarch towards the top of the wing; if you can see rust, there's likely to be much more, hidden from view. Repairs cost about £1500 each side, half of which is the cost of the wing itself – the rest is fitting, painting and lead loading. The windscreen has to be removed to do this properly.

The front panels are the ones most likely to rust, particularly the headlamp and sidelight surrounds, front wheelarch lips and sills. If the latter have been replaced, ensure genuine Volvo panels have been used. If they haven't, the curvature of the panels will be wrong, as

only the proper article has the original – and correct – profile. Look for a series of vertical grooves below the door; if they're not there it's because either pattern panels have been used or, more seriously, the sills are full of filler.

The front crossmember (beneath the radiator) also rots. Patching it up is a real pain because it's welded all the way round and accessibility is nil with the engine and its ancillaries in place, so repairs can cost £400 including £70 for the crossmember itself.

The steering box mountings and front outriggers rust too. If the outriggers have gone it's possible to buy Volvo replacement panels at £35 each and about the same again for fitting. If the steering box mounting has rotted it's more serious, because this is a chassis leg and making it strong enough to pass an MoT will cost £400 or so. The rear outriggers (underneath the front seats) also need to be checked.

Even after making all these checks there are plenty more areas that can give problems, such as the fuel filler surround, bootlid, floorpans and the bottoms of the doors. The latter area is a problem because only a partial seal was fitted to each door, which allows them to fill up with water. Floorpans can also fill with water, often because the heater valve on the bulkhead has packed up, for which you can expect to pay £115 for a replacement. It might also be because the heater vent at the base of the windscreen has blocked up with leaves – you just need to remove the mesh panel and fish the leaves out.



THANKS TO

Colin Atkinson and Colin Hughes, of the Volvo Enthusiasts' Club, plus Rob and Emma Henchoz of Amazon Cars



WHICH IS WHICH?

1960: The P1800 coupé debuts at the Brussels Auto Show.

1961: The first cars are delivered, built by Jensen and featuring a 1780cc engine.

1963: Volvo transfers assembly to Sweden. The car becomes known as the 1800S (for Sweden) and power jumps from 100bhp to 108bhp.

1968: There's now a 1986cc engine and dual-circuit brakes.

1969: The 1800E arrives with all-round disc brakes and Bosch fuel injection (E for Einspritz, German for fuel injection).

1971: A three-speed Borg-Warner automatic gearbox becomes available for the first time. Also, the 1800ES arrives. It's a sports estate, mechanically identical to the 1800E.

1972: The final 1800 coupé is made (the 39,407th example).

1973: The last 1800ES is built.



But there could also be water in the footwells because the windscreen surround is leaking, which is more serious – and costly – to fix. This entails removing the windscreen and resealing it, for which a specialist will typically charge around £150.

The final areas to check on an 1800 are the bonnet hinge mountings and the rain channels. In the former case they don't rust, but they do break. Because the hinges seize up and the mounting plate is too thin for the job, it's put under strain with predictable results. In the case of the guttering it's unlikely to be rotten on a coupé, but the 1800ES does suffer.

Poorly repaired accident damage is also common. The rear panels suffer from parking shunts and rear wings are about £450 each. The nose gives even bigger problems, as it's delicate and new panels are unavailable, which is why bodesges are common, so look for filler in the bonnet and grille surround.

ENGINES

Until 1968, the B18 engine was fitted, which means a 1780cc four-pot that pushes out 100bhp. From 1963, there was 108bhp on tap and post-1965 cars have an even handier 115bhp. In 1968, the unit was bored out to become the B20, with a capacity of 1986cc. Whichever unit is fitted there shouldn't be any problems unless it's done over 200,000 miles – these powerplants really are that durable. If neglected, the engines won't rack up that mileage quite so happily, so check the oil has been

changed every 6000 miles – at the very least, make sure the oil in the sump doesn't have the consistency of tar.

A car that's been well looked after will also have a proper Volvo oil filter fitted, complete with non-return valve. Cheaper makes of filter don't have this and, as a result, the bearings will be starved of oil when starting from cold. If at cruising speed there's a thump that sounds like the big end bearings have gone, it's much more likely to be worn timing gears, which will cost you £200 to fix, including parts and labour.

As long as there's 40psi on the clock when the engine has settled down to a warm idle, the engine should be in fine form – even better if it displays 50-55psi once cruising. Although the engines aren't that parsimonious, if you find yourself putting in petrol at a wallet-crippling rate it's probably because the thermostat needs replacing.

TRANSMISSION

The lifespan of an 1800 gearbox is comparable to that of the average articulated lorry – at 100,000 miles it's nicely run in and is all set for hundreds of thousands more miles. That means keeping it topped up with oil, to make sure the bearings don't get starved of lubricant. If the oil level isn't up to the mark, there will be problems with the overdrive, fitted to all UK market cars. The only other likely source of overdrive problems is the electrics, with the same type of gremlins that afflict any overdrive-equipped car – poor earths, trapped wires and failed relays.



Colin Atkinson's splendid 1800E – the 'E' stands for the German term for fuel injected.



There's lots of brightwork, but it lasts well.



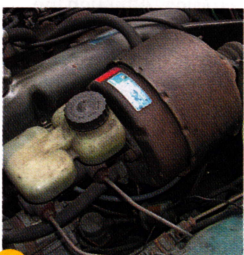
SPOT THE ROT



1 The 1800's Achilles' heel is its bodywork, especially the front panels which rust and are also easily damaged from shunts.



2 Interior trim isn't that easy to find. All cars got leather, which can split, but retrimms do not require special skills or equipment.



3 Replacement brake servos aren't available, but carburetted cars can have their Girling unit swapped for a Lockheed one.

STEERING & SUSPENSION

If the steering is really heavy it's because the steering box has been overtightened to remove any play, and the result will be premature wear. Hopefully the damage won't have been done yet, and by slackening it off it'll be sorted. But if it's too late you could have problems finding a replacement steering box as they're not available except as secondhand units.

The suspension is tough, apart from the four top wishbone bushes. They wear out but replacing them is easy and they cost all of £2 a shot. You could opt for polyurethane items, but they're not normally recommended because they reduce the refinement levels a bit – although they are more durable.

WHEELS & BRAKES

If you're a slave to originality and you want one of the earliest (Jensen-built) cars, make sure the proper wheel trims are in place – if they're missing you're unlikely to find replacements. Even if the covers are there, they'll be tatty as they tend to fly into the scenery, so don't expect perfection.

Post-1970 wheels had an alloy hub and a steel rim, and after a while they separate. Few 1800s have these original wheels – your best bet is to source a set of wheels from a 140-series Volvo, which go straight on.

The brakes shouldn't give problems unless the car hasn't been used regularly, in which case the system will have started to seize up. Fixing this isn't difficult if

NEED TO KNOW

PRACTICAL CLASSIC?

Very, especially in 1800ES form. It's tough, comfortable and well supported by clubs and specialists.

HOTLINKS

- www.classicvolvo.com
- www.volvo-classics.com
- <http://volvo1800pictures.com>
- <http://www.p1800.com>

WHAT ARE THEY LIKE TO DRIVE?

Surprisingly sporty, with strong brakes, a light clutch and a slick gearchange. But it's not that quick – this is a car for cruising.

WILL I FIT BEHIND THE WHEEL?

Even tall people can fit in an 1800 easily enough, but while the car is supposedly a four-seater, the rear seats are for luggage only.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PROBLEMS?

- Filled sills
- Headlamp surrounds
- Rear wheelarches

WHAT SHOULD I PAY?

There's little variance in values between fuel-injected and

carburetted versions of the 1800, which means whatever the model, you'll be looking at a minimum of £5000 for a useable coupé. Really nice coupés fetch up to £10,000 unless really special, in which case they can be worth even more. The 1800ES isn't quite as valuable, with the bottom line for one of these in useable condition being £3500-£4000 while top-notch cars can go for up to £7500.

WHO ARE THE SPECIALISTS?

- Amazon Cars, Suffolk (01379 388400, www.amazoncars.co.uk).
- Brookhouse Volvo, Ipswich (01473 218806, www.classicvolvoparts.co.uk).
- Tony Barrett, The Old Volvo Man, Hackney, London (0208 525 7283).

WHAT ABOUT SPARES PRICES?

- Exhaust (mild) £176
- Exhaust (mild, sports) £270
- Front wing £779
- Rear wing £940
- Front damper (oil) £38 each
- Front damper (gas) £115 each
- Clutch kit £112
- Alternator £134 new
- Starter motor £174 new

ANY PARTS HARD TO GET?

- Original trim
- Outer panels
- Switchgear

IS UNLEADED FUEL OK?

European-spec 1800s won't run on unleaded without cylinder head modifications, but these are easy enough. US-spec 1800Es will run on unleaded.

IDENTIFYING MARKS?

There's a chassis plate on the offside inner wing and, just behind it, the body number is stamped into the metal.

WHICH OWNERS' CLUB SHOULD I JOIN?

- Volvo Enthusiasts' Club (01425 476425, www.volvoenthusiastsclub.co.uk).
- Volvo Owners' Club (02380 9238 1494, www.volvoclub.org.uk).

WHICH IS THE BEST BOOK?

- *Essential Volvo 120 Series and P1800* by Anders Ditlev Clausager. (Bay View, ISBN: 1-870979-74-5).
- *Volvo: Safety with Style* by Richard Dredge. (Haynes, ISBN: 1-85960-964-3).

SPECIFICATIONS

	P1800 (1961-1968)	1800S (1968-1969)	1800E (1969-1972)	1800ES (1971-1973)
■ ENGINE	1780cc/4-cyl	1986cc/4-cyl	1986cc/4-cyl	1986cc/4-cyl
■ POWER	100bhp@5500rpm	118bhp@5800rpm	130bhp@6000rpm	130bhp@6000rpm
■ TORQUE	108lb ft@4000rpm	123lb ft@3500rpm	123lb ft@3500rpm	123lb ft@3500rpm
■ TOP SPEED	104mph	111mph	112mph	112mph
■ 0-60MPH	13.2sec	11.9sec	9.6sec	9.7sec
■ CONSUMPTION	29mpg	27mpg	24mpg	22mpg
■ GEARBOX	4-speed manual + overdrive	4-speed manual + overdrive	4-speed manual + overdrive	4-speed manual + overdrive
■ LENGTH	14ft 5in (4.39m)	14ft 5in (4.39m)	14ft 5in (4.39m)	14ft 5in (4.39m)
■ WIDTH	5ft 7in (1.70m)	5ft 7in (1.70m)	5ft 7in (1.70m)	5ft 7in (1.70m)
■ WEIGHT	2493lb (1132kg)	2493lb (1132kg)	2560lb (1161kg)	2570lb (1168kg)

you've got the special hub puller required for pre-1968 cars. The only other problem that's likely to crop up is with brake servos. Fuel-injected 1800s had dual-circuit brakes, so as long as the ATE servo is working okay the system won't give problems. However, new replacement units aren't available and they can't be rebuilt. If it's not working you'll have no servo assistance as there's no suitable aftermarket system.

Carburetted cars had a Girling servo installed, which can no longer be replaced. But a dead unit can be swapped for a Lockheed one which will work just as well. Don't be tempted to opt for a rebuilt Girling unit too readily as they're notoriously difficult to repair reliably and you could end up throwing your money away.

TRIM

Interior trim is hard to source but generally durable, although dashboards crack after years of exposure to the sun, with repairs impossible and replacements extinct. All 1800s had leather-trimmed seats and the seams split; a retrim is around £500. A set of door and armrest trim panels will set you back £250.

The seat webbing often goes, but a few quid buys replacements and it's easy to fit. The factory carpets were tough, but if they're now worn you can buy repro sets for £350 and fitting them is simple enough.

Exterior trim is easy to find, but it can be very expensive. The grille surround is prone to accident damage, with replacements at £300. On the plus side, the

brightwork usually lasts well, so unless it's lost or badly damaged, that's one less thing to worry about it.

ELECTRICS

Until 1966, all 1800s had a dynamo; after that an alternator was standard. All external electrical parts are Lucas while everything underneath is Bosch. The Bosch units are reliable but the Lucas parts suffer from corroded contacts. Most electrical issues can be traced to a problematic fusebox, on the nearside inner wing.

The switchgear is generally reliable – apart from the dimmer switch for the panel lighting. If you can live without adjustable panel lighting, it's easy enough to just wire it into the main circuit.



CONCLUSION

It's easy to overlook the 1800. Because it's unusual and not British, it gets relatively little coverage in the classic press. Yet these coupés (and the estates) are good to drive and very useable, while they are seriously tough.

Values have climbed in recent years, so their desirability is at last being recognised. If you're looking for a classic that you can use all year round, few fit the bill better than this stylish Swede. Just ask Irv Gordon – he's the chap who has covered two million miles in his, with little more than regular oil changes. ■

THE SPECIALIST

When Emma Henchoz bought a Volvo Amazon as her everyday car 10 years ago, little did she know that in 2000 she and her husband Rob would end up buying the business that maintained it.

Says Emma: 'Amazon Cars focused on selling used parts and the odd new bit; that's now reversed for us. However, we're better known for our upgrades and rally preparation.'

'Volvos are very popular with the classic rallying fraternity, and we're at the forefront of keeping the cars going. We do only classic models (PV to 164), and we compete too. I won the Tour Britannia two years ago in my PV544. Next January we've got a 144 entered in the Cape Town Rally, raising money for Malaria No More and Help For Heroes.'

