



“Visible damage can greatly affect the resale value of a CV. The vehicle will need work and be off the road”

The damage was on the front curve of the bonnet and covered about 10cm².

Having collected his tools from the topbox on his bike, he got to work.

According to Leech, the knack is finding the ‘sweet spot’ in the dent and massaging the area outwards. His look of deep concentration and feather touch showed he knew what he was doing; as if by magic, the dent began to shrink. The other side of the bonnet was partly covered by other panelling which hindered his work, but to our untrained eye there was little in it.

The hardest areas to work with, Leech says, tend to be the front wings where access is reduced by the engine bay.

With a mobile operation there will always be

a limit to what can be achieved, so Leech encourages potential customers to e-mail him pictures of the damage. This enables him to see if he can do the job; if not, he can usually recommend an alternative.

So what was the damage (pun intended)? All in all, it came to £85 (ex-VAT). Leech aims to charge no more than a third of the price of a conventional repairer. It sounds like a big saving, but as he specialises in fixing the sort of damage that will leave the vehicle usable, is it worth bothering – or should you simply live with a dent or two?

David Files, editor of CAP’s *Red Book*, says: “Visible damage can greatly affect the resale value of a CV. A potential buyer will see it as a negative as the vehicle will need work and therefore be off the road, thus affecting its productivity.” ■

DID YOU KNOW?

Manheim’s Dent Wizard

Mobile repairs are not restricted to small operators. Having owned a mobile repair company in the US, Manheim Auctions brought the idea over here and is successfully operating a mobile repair service under the Dent Wizard banner. It’s readily available at Manheim’s auction sites for vehicles that need a last-minute spruce-up.

Alex Wright, Manheim’s commercial vehicle sales director, says: “Buyers in general hate damaged vehicles, although commercials are more sensitive to age than passenger vehicles. Damaged examples will always be looked on unfavourably, but after two years this factor is less relevant as buyers know that a pristine van may suffer a knock or two once purchased anyway.

“Whether it’s detrimental to get dents fixed before resale is down to the individual vehicle, but on the right one it can double the investment laid out on a repair.”

So if you were an opportunist, you could buy a damaged van at a discounted price, pay for the services of a mobile dent-repair service to correct it, and make a profit on the resale.

