

## The UK Connection 10 Years Ago

Andy Draper

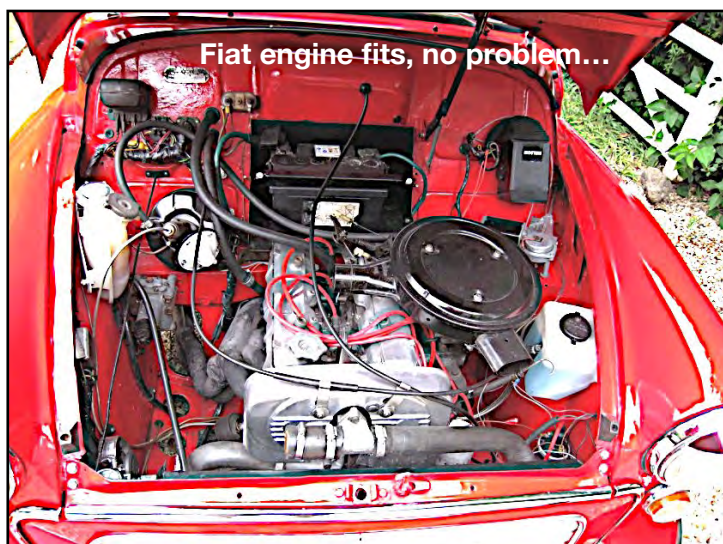
Many of you in the club have met my Mum and Dad, George and Peggy, who came out for the 2009 National Rally and drove the Traveller to Brisbane. They came out again for 2011, and were at the Port Macquarie National Rally (and enjoyed it very much). They also have a Morris – my first one – a 1963 4-door 1000, which I bought in 1991 to replace my Mini which had been written off in an accident. I decided to get something that was strong enough so I could fix it if someone shunted me again...

The car was in a barn where it had sat for 8 years full of paint tins. The barn housed chickens, a lot of them, and although the original colour was Dove Grey, the whole thing, windows and all, was off white. We emptied the car of tins, pushed it out, put a new battery on it and it started 2nd turn of the key! We drove it home with a little peephole through the poo on the windscreen.

We fixed it up, had it painted very red, and rebuilt the interior. I drove it for a couple of years with the 1098 Sprite engine and gearbox that was in it, until 1st and 3rd gears were totally gone. The engine was a bit tired too, so I scrapped them both (wish I'd held on to the 1098 now!) and looked around for a replacement. Enter FIAT. I bought a 131 engine and transmission, with all ancillaries, for 55 quid, with 70,000 miles on them. Cheaper than a recon, right?



Peggy (above) and George (below) both helped with the installation of the Fiat engine



The fitting kit, comprising engine mounts, rear cross member and oil filter inverter (to miss the chassis rails) cost me another fifty, so I was happy with the price!. For those that know (and I know Peter McGibbon from Wollongong had one of these in his old car), the fitting was more painful than the cost. The challenge was to fit the engine with minimal modifications to the body, allowing it to be put back to stock without too much trouble down the line if need be.





**A very red 4-door Morris Minor 1000**

inflation! The brakes were not so good. It is difficult, even in the UK, to source a pair of rear wheel cylinders for an Italian car; Minor ones are everywhere! We added a booster as well as rebuilt the calipers and cylinders.

So I thought I'd gotten rid of it for my parents, they could sell it and get their garage back. No chance. It turned out

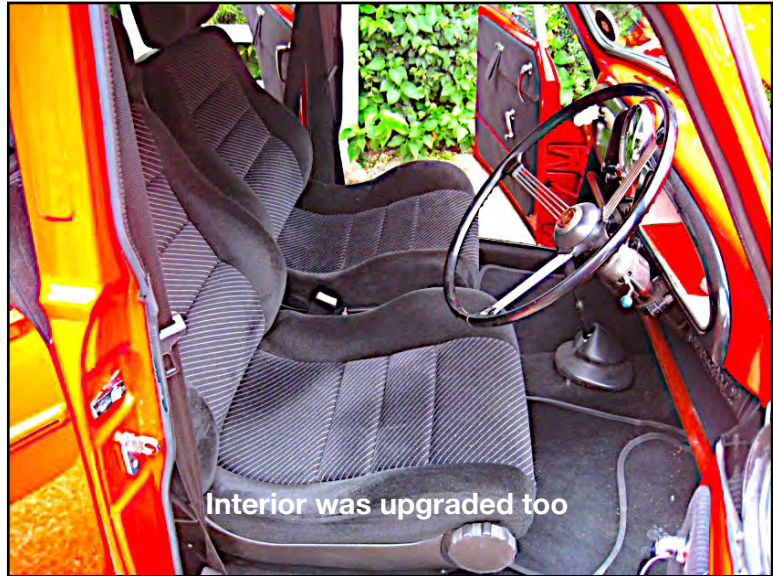
There's not much room for the radiator, so we sourced a brand new one from a big pile at a scrap yard which was great, but now I have no idea what car it came from so a replacement might be an issue.

The rear prop-shaft is the original Fiat item, and has a centre joint. I swapped the rear flange with the Morris one and had the prop professionally shortened and balanced. We needed to make a mount for the prop centre bearing which was easy.

The exhaust was made up from a few systems that we bought from the same scrap yard and welded together, with 2 silencer boxes. The only major modification made to the body, apart from drilling holes for the various mounts, was to cut the front chassis rail away and replace it with a thinner one made from square tubing. This came with the fitting kit, and as the front rail was quite dented and damaged it was no major loss.

When I first started my overseas adventure in 1996, the car went to storage in my parent's garage. There it sat for almost 10 years, much of the time unregistered, but they didn't want to part with it. On a visit home in 2006, I decided to resurrect it, so that they could sell it and get the garage space back after all those years.

As it is an internal garage, the body was as good as I'd left it. The engine had a bad water pump, and I was worried about a source for a new one as the local Fiat dealer had nothing for the engine, but a visit to the local motor wreckers turned up a very dusty box with the original price of 13 quid on it from the 80's - not bad value with zero



**Interior was upgraded too**

that Mum and Dad quite enjoyed a drive around the pretty English countryside on a summer's evening, so now it sees more use than it ever has had. Dad continues to work on it, replacing the rear wings and repainting the underside (a horrid job) in the last couple of years. So it's still in the family, and probably always will be!

