

My Story So Far

By SMM 34643

I was manufactured in January 1950 in Cowley, Oxford, England, painted a beautiful black with nice shiny chromework, and a fetching interior in beige with maroon piping. I was so proud as I drove off the end of the production line. But alarm! To my surprise and dismay, I was destined to be shipped out to join the convicts in New South Wales!



How I was wrapped up at Cowley before going to the docks

Arriving down under after an arduous voyage, I received a reprieve when I was dispatched to that free settlement of Melbourne at the top of Port Phillip Bay. This resulted in even further delight when I was purchased by Mr & Mrs Ferris from the north of Melbourne to be used as her 'runabout'.

Mrs Ferris looked after me all through the years, even arranging an overhaul for my engine after some decades on the job. But as she was getting older, she put a few dents in me, including a rather nasty bingle on my front right hand side. I can't remember whether I ran into something or something else hit me, it all happened so



How I would have looked after my arrival in Melbourne

fast. What I do remember is that it hurt a lot, and my pride was dented as much as was my grille, bonnet and front right hand mudguard. I was only given some temporary repairs after this happened, and sometime after this dear old Mrs Ferris passed away.

Her son Graeme then became my new owner, and he promised to restore me. He even bought a replacement grille and bonnet for me, but all he did was move me from the cosy garage at his former family home where I had lived for so many decades, and put me out in the open at his home in Montmorency! In the Melbourne weather – yuk! So my beautiful shiny paintwork slowly deteriorated and a few rusty aches and pains started gnawing away at me. After many years, he finally realised he was not going to be able to undertake my resto, so he put me up for sale on eBay – how humiliating!



How I looked when Les first saw me in the flesh at Montmorency

Well, good old Les saw my plight and bought me on 24 November 2005, sight unseen, just from the photos posted on eBay. Very trusting – or would he be sorry later? I won't tell you how much he paid for me, I'm already embarrassed enough – I was sitting on eBay for 10 days, waiting, hoping... Even after I was purchased, I had to hang around until 6th February the following year before Les came to rescue me and take me home. Boy, was I glad to see him when he finally turned up with his brother. He gave me a nice pat, then lovingly released my brake shoes from my rusted drums and winched me onto Barry Parson's trailer for the journey back to Sydney.



Well, I thought "This is great, in a few years' time I'll be bright and shiny new again, like I was in 1950!" Ha, Ha! Guess again. All Les did at the time was remove my bumper bars, bonnet & boot hinges, door fittings, hand brake handle and hub caps to send these away for re-chroming - a sort of a false start. And then I was forced to live in various strange locations until 2012, while Les was giving priority to other Morris Minors – more and more humiliation! (See the story about my travels in "I've Been Everywhere, Man!" published in the Jul-Aug 2020 edition of *Minor Torque*.)



My engine and gearbox removed – it was like pulling teeth

But now I was finally in the shed at Ulladulla where Les had promised to make me like new again. I had heard these promises before, so I started to doubt if anything would ever happen. I was kept waiting, becoming very lonely, and after all these years I started to despair. Besides, he was getting older and deteriorating all the time, just as I was.



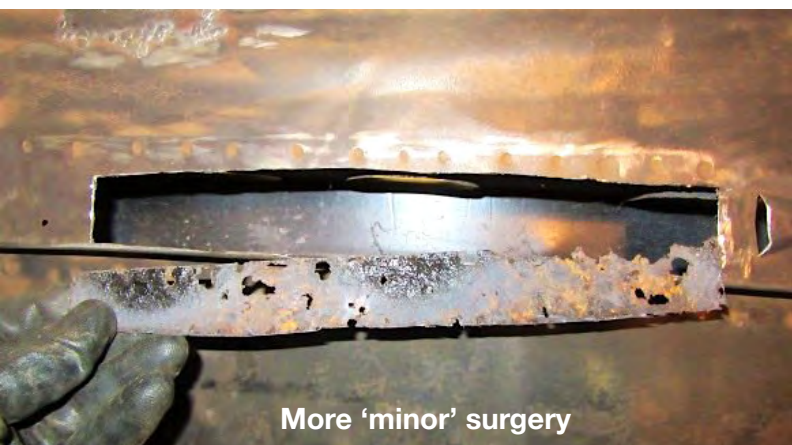
What I didn't know at the time was that he was progressively buying parts that he knew I would need for my restoration, and performing important tasks away from me. These included obtaining and repairing a replacement right hand front mudguard (it needed a rust repair), a new set of wheels, parts for my engine, a brand new wiring harness from England, a set of brake master and wheel cylinders re-sleeved, cats-eye headlight reflectors re-silvered, and a fancy, period Monaro Motors twin SU carb manifold set. He had to source some 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " side draft carbs and then had them reco'd by SU Midel. Later I learned that even more goodies were coming!

Then, to my great delight, Les started serious work on me in 2018. At first it was simple stuff like pulling out my entire interior – seats, trim and roof lining, and removing mudguards, bonnet, bootlid, doors and so on while still on my wheels. He worked on the exterior panels, taking them back to the



Some before and after shots – I healed up pretty well, I think !





More 'minor' surgery



metal, sorting their dents, spraying some primer on them, and trial-fitting them up, including the replacement bonnet, grille and mudguard. But when the day came to take my engine out, I knew we were well on the way. Not long after I found myself up on a swing rotisserie, after which my front suspension, differential and rear springs were removed; my four shockies and steering rack were sent away to Ray Selby for reconditioning.

Up on the rotisserie, swinging on my side, he scraped all the gunk from my underside, which exposed a few areas where the gnawing rust had done a bit of damage, but these were relatively small areas to attend to – I was really in pretty good shape. With the rust areas welded up, my underside was ready for primer and then some finish paint.

Les removed my door frames, and although they had been originally painted black, he sent them away for chroming, about which I was quite excited – I loved my chromework, which had become rusty or pitted, and so the more chrome, the better!

He worked on other jobs progressively, like scraping all the old

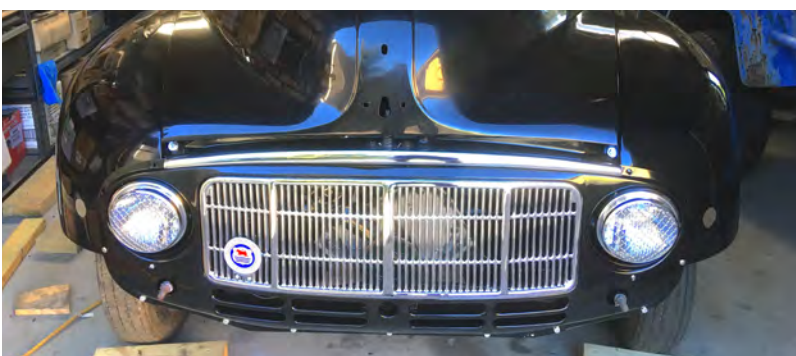


bituminous sheets off my interior floor ready for new paint, rubbing back my engine bay, boot area and interior, ready for primer and some new shiny black paint. (I had told him I had to be painted the same as I was when new.) In the process he filled up some holes that had been drilled in me that I said I no longer wanted. I was starting to feel rejuvenated already.

Then the day came when he told me he was going "to pull the head off my engine" - that sounded awful to me, but he said it had to be done. He had to check what condition my engine was in, and even I didn't know how things were inside it after sitting around for so long.

What would Les find when he removed the head? What issues did he encounter as he progressed with my resto? Stay tuned for the next instalment in a future edition...

PS And as a sneak peek as to how I look at the moment check out the pic below. Exciting!



Here's some more progress photos of
my resto.

Minor Torque July-Aug 2022

Cheers,
SMM 34643

