

My Story So far - Part 2

By SMM 34643

The last time I wrote, I told you that Les was about to “pull the head off my engine”, which made me both quite squeamish and bit anxious. My engine had been idle since the days that Graeme, dear Mrs Ferris’ son, owned me – he used to start me up now and then, but one day he lost my key! So from then on, and in all my travels after Les purchased me, my engine only had the occasional turnover by hand. So what would he find? Les told me he expected the worst – an expensive complete overhaul.

Well, he went ahead (nice pun?), and after much difficulty and banging my poor engine’s head with a rubber mallet, and plenty of WD40, he was able to take it off. (Remember, my engine is a rather cute old-fashioned side valve, with a ‘flat’ head.) To his surprise, he found the bores in good condition, and when he measured them, to his further delight they were 40 thou oversize (whatever that means). Les explained that meant my engine’s capacity had gone from 918cc to 950cc, which sounded pretty good to me. That engine reco last century that I told you about had obviously been done well and all the sitting around seemingly had done no harm to my little engine.

The next stage was to turn my engine upside down to remove the sump and check the bearings and crankshaft journals.



I'd been bored out 40 thou oversize; Les was pleased!



Apparently when I was all stripped down my 'bottom end' looked really good... my bearings and journals were in tip top condition



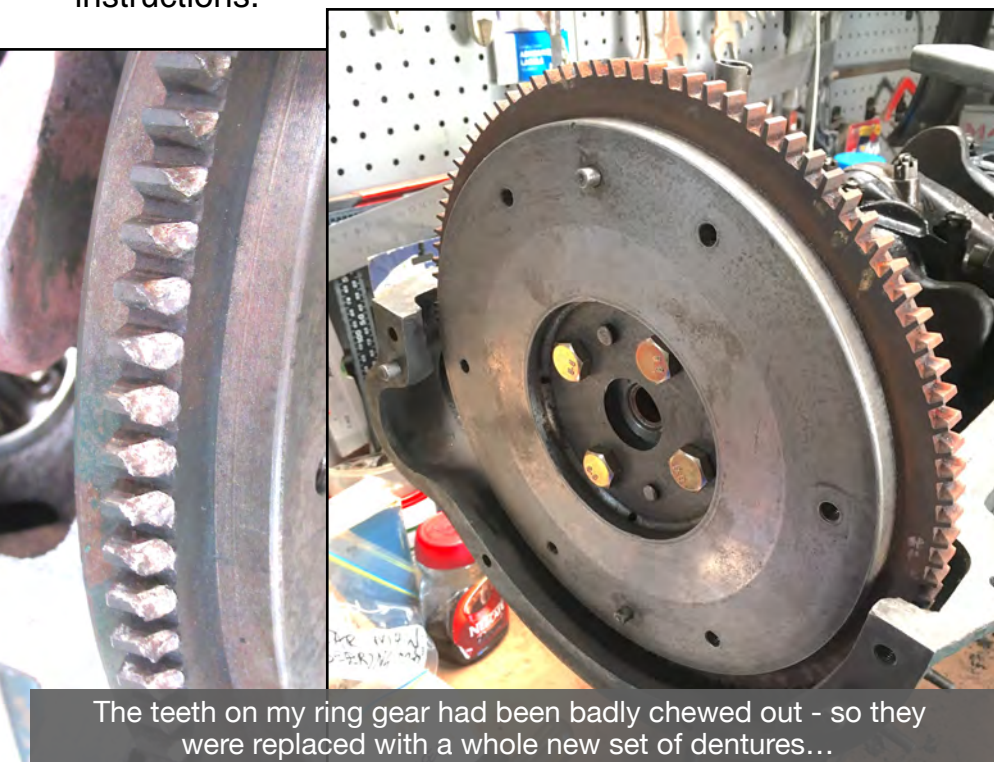
Dusty and rusty (left), then soaked with WD40 to help loosen the head



Again, I could hear Les singing with delight – he had found the bearings and journals were in great condition so he made an immediate decision that he would simply bolt the bottom end back up again. Of course, I insisted that appropriate cleaning up would be done first!

Les said the ring gear had been chewed up badly and needed replacing. I remember Mrs Ferris often being a bit slow in releasing my starter cable which probably explained that. Les had already bought a replacement ring gear in anticipation, along with a new timing chain, clutch kit, 4 new valves and a set of double valve springs which he said were recommended in the fancy Monaro Motors Twin Carb installation instructions.

Eureka moment... What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? Bye bye stubborn flywheel bolt :)))



The teeth on my ring gear had been badly chewed out - so they were replaced with a whole new set of dentures...

It turned out that the 4 flywheel retaining bolts (Metric thread, with BSF head, I heard Les mutter) had been done up very tightly. Eventually he got 3 out, but managed to almost destroy the head on the fourth with it still done up tight. “Not to worry”, Les said, “I can buy a special bolt extractor set on eBay, we’re not going to let one bolt beat us!” Some weeks later, I heard him yell out “Eureka!” Now, living in Victoria, I’d heard all about the Eureka

Stockade in Ballarat, but this exclamation made no sense to me. Oh, well - all I knew was that the flywheel was now off, but the new ring gear had to go on.

Then I learnt that Les had a trick up his sleeve – he had invited Johnny B from his Car Club to come and help with a few things he couldn’t do on his own. He assured me Johnny B would be kind to me and my parts, having finished his own restoration of a slightly younger sibling just a few years ago, and that he had been an apprentice at Qantas like Les so he didn’t have to say to himself: “Righty, tighty;

lefty, loosey” when attacking bolts and nuts. Hearing that put me at great ease.

On that first visit, Johnny B helped with: some heavy lifting with flushing out my engine’s water passages; cutting the ring gear off the flywheel and heating up the new one to slip it on (but I did hear some banging to seat it down properly!); fitting the new timing chain; making up a special tool to replace the pinion seal in my differential (that Les had already cleaned and painted); helping install my steering rack and front



I was singing Chuck Berry's 'Johnny B Goode' as Johnny B worked on my rear end... oooh
"Go, go, Johnny B Goode..."

suspension which was already painted, complete with new trunnions and bushes and the shockies back from Ray Selby; and installing new handbrake cables, especially the fiddly bits where the cables pass through my tailshaft tunnel. Hey, some progress!

With my engine now up on his work bench, Les was able to continue work on it, including painting it a nice shade of green which is very close to its original colour, refurbishing the oil pump, bolting the

flywheel back on, and refitting the lovely alloy sump and timing cover. This meant the bottom end of my engine was done and dusted, ready for it to be turned over for a decoke and the valve work.

Les busied himself progressively with a heap of things – I could tell he was enjoying himself. Sometime after he had finished painting my engine bay and giving it a bit of a cut back, I knew he was just dying to start fitting it out. So, in went the new wiring harness, starter solenoid and cables, regulator box, coil, fuel pump, along with lots of funny little rubber thingos called grommets. I was getting really excited by this time - it just felt sooo good!

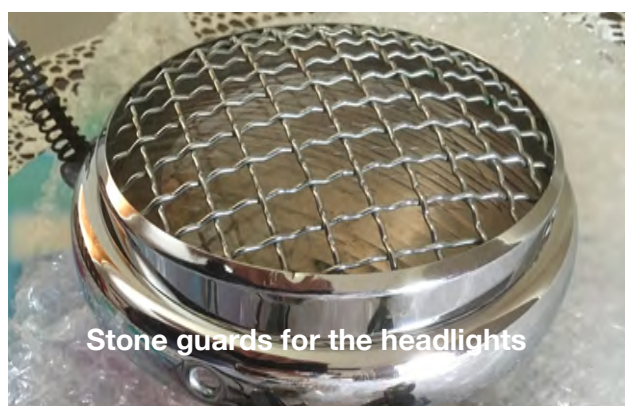


Reconditioned
trafficators
with genuine
Lucas arms

Other electrical stuff he worked on included refurbishing the best pair of tail lights from his collection, fitting up my cats-eye headlights into their rechromed frames with some nice period stoneguards, and reco'ing my old trafficators with some new genuine Lucas arms. These are very rare, with the lens being quite a different shape on my SF34 pair compared to the SF80 model fitted to my much younger siblings.



Wiring harness, regulator box... all looking good



Stone guards for the headlights

But, what about some blinkers instead of those old trafficators? Even Mrs Ferris had some funny orange 'pimples' fitted back in the day, and in my travels I had seen the traffic on the roads was much worse these days. I felt we needed some flashing turn indicators. "Ah yes, we're fitting those too," Les assured me, "You'll see - and you'll be able to switch between the two depending on the occasion." This sounded like a great bit of fun.



'Cow of a job' tailshaft...

He didn't forget the rest of my mechanicals either. My tailshaft got new Hardy Spicer uni joints (a "cow of a job" from what Les told me, yet the manual makes it sound so easy!).



Above and below: completely refurbished rear end...



Resleeved brake wheel cylinders with S/S bores, and new rubber seals, boots, etc

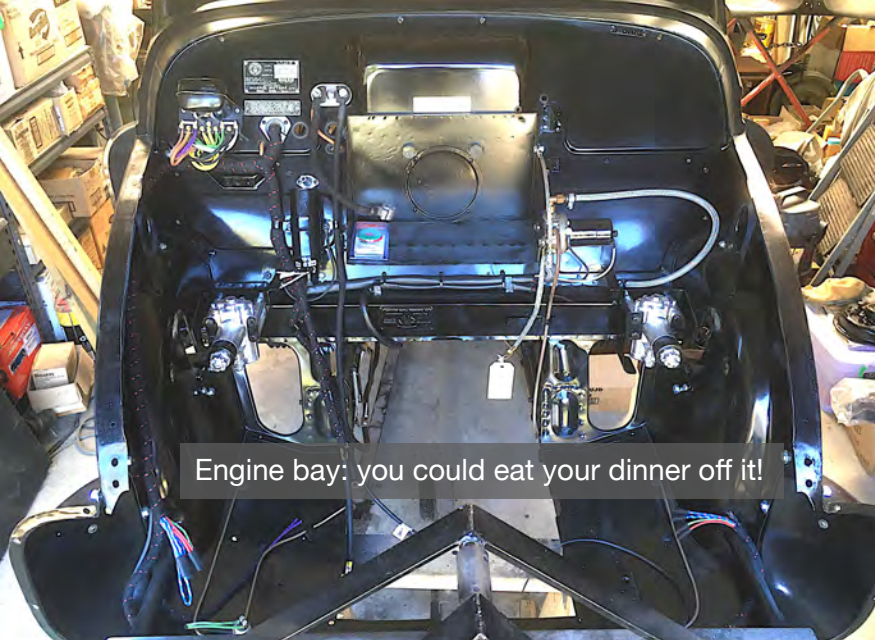
He assembled all the re-sleeved brake wheel cylinders and the master cylinder with their rubber seal kits ready for installation, and riveted some NOS sets of brake linings onto freshly painted shoes.



Once he had fitted my rear springs and managed to bolt up my differential with my rear shockies, I felt I was ready to dance again – that is until I realised I was still sitting up on the rotisserie and didn't have any wheels fitted!



New brake pads



Engine bay: you could eat your dinner off it!

But wait! My engine was still not finished, my body was sitting in primer with just a sealer coat of black, my wiring had to be finished inside; and what about my upholstery and carpets? There were many things yet to be done. How was Les managing? Would Johnny B visit again to help? Look for the next instalment in a future edition.

Cheers,
SMM 34643



Bottom end all hooked up and ready to go!



Front suspension, before and after...

