

Eric the Viking – a restoration in many parts – April 2019

Spend since last report: None. Total hours labour since last report: 17.5

The big push took longer than expected, those last-minute jobs take time. On March 23rd, the offside bulge behind the driver's seat had its last patch put in, the nearside rear arch work was completed for the part I am listing as the cargo area and the bulkhead between the rear wheels had a rub down. Three hundred and forty man hours across 1,158 calendar days has taken Eric from a rotten mess that looked like a van to a solid centre of what looks like a van. The hole for the sliding door is now the right shape, the holes for the front doors are about the right shape.

With that looking mainly correct, beautifully red with primer, time to get on with the rear wheel arches. The one next to the sliding door gets awfully complicated due to the sliding door, the outer sill with its runner for the door and wondering how to attach it all. Skip that, let's try the offside, surely that will be the same as the other side in terms of good metal.



Underneath a lot of filler was a replacement outer wheel arch. That was loosely attached to another outer wheel arch that had been bent to make something approaching an inner wheel arch. That in turn was barely attached to some rust. See the above picture. This time the outer panel was trimmed slightly higher than the other side because it was about 1mm above the line of the previous outer panel. The added advantage that I can attach the new panel much easier as I will discover later. I hope.

Meanwhile at the back of that wheel arch the outer panel is supposed to attach to the front of vehicle wall surrounding the battery tray. Much of that was missing too.



The box in the middle of the picture was missing its left edge that folds around out of shot. That edge gets the wheel arch panel spot welded to it. Then the rear corner welds to that once the battery tray has been put back in. The new piece is being held in place with my new aircraft clamps that line both pieces of metal up, hold them in place and set the gap between them all in one hit as noted previously.

A quick clean of 45 years of accumulated dirt, rust and rot plus a little neaten up of the edges and it looks better already.



Then I used one of the outer arches suitably trimmed down to fabricate a new inner arch for the piece that I needed and clamped it in place.



I cannot weld that one in place until I know that it is correct forwards and backwards. To do that, I need to trial fit the outer panel. To do that I need to weld in that vertical fold at the back, clean up where the panel meets the C post and the middle panel, then hold the outer panel in place with both hands, whilst holding that inner arch panel in place with both other hands, getting it totally lined up, mark exactly where it needs to go with two other hands, then ideally clamp it in place with further hands. With clamps that take up the exact space where the outer arch has been held in place with my first pair of hands.

With this many good hands, I should take up cards. Anyone for snap?