

Eric the Viking – a restoration in many parts – December 2018

Spend since last report: £1,384. Total hours labour since last report: 74

Following a huge amount of work detailed in the last issue of the club magazine, there had been more work covered and since then even more has been done.

The last picture showed the B post and the toe bulge behind the passenger seat all complete and mainly primed, that has now been primed. We have now finished the other B post behind the driver's seat – another sentence that took two man days to complete! The van had sagged once more and the B post was banana shaped, requiring the Porta Power, removal of the wheel arch and the rotten parts of the seat tub. Rot there is a job for another day. Easing off the metal from the bottom of the step as it hits the A post meant that it was easier to straighten up that side of the van.



With the Porta Power stretching the door gap to the correct size and the US import door supplied with Eric's purchase making its first appearance, the wheel arch and B post were welded in place to provide strength in that area for the first time in years. Here's the view from inside – the lower 8 inches are new, fabricated inside and a Just Kampers B post outer panel on the outside.

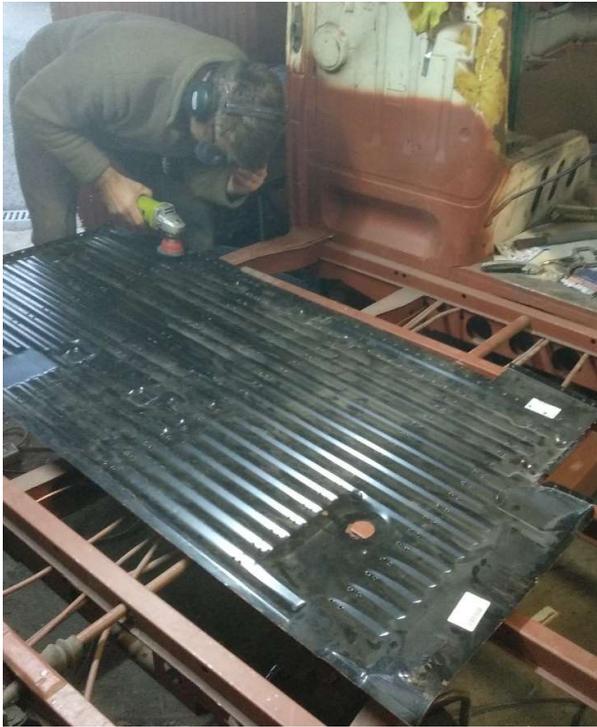


Where the floor was trial fitted, anything underneath will be hidden and received 2 brush-painted coats of oil based rust proofing primer (Rustoleum) inside the sill cavities and around the newly rebuilt B post. Anything above there will be visible inside the van and received a spray coat of Rednox anti-rust paint. Both are red!

Then it looked like the floor could go in, wahey. Just need to weld in the last parts of the rear cross member (both ends and they have a plain metal plate underneath), weld in the rear strengtheners underneath that look like jacking points. Then cut out the rot, grot and rust from around the rear wheel arches and around the C posts, remove the welded heavy metal plating added by previous owners. Then you remember that the official Volkswagen floor is a left hand drive floor meaning that to fit it to a right hand drive van, you need to trim the nearside floor to meet the threshold plate for the sliding door. The trial fit after another half day of trimming then showed a few areas of sill that were catching the floor and the 10mm drop in the pressing on the floor should perfectly meet the 10mm drop in the threshold plate but that would be too easy. They missed each other by half an inch. Fortunately my Mother-in-law's birthday present to me of a hammer and dolly set was used on all of this to persuade the floor to fit.

Finally, after far too many hours of trial fitting, we were ready to fit the floor. Two years since the old floor came out and we were excited. "All" it takes to fit a floor is to look at the corrugations on the floor, work out which ones correspond to the cross members, mark and remove the paint on cross members, mark and drill the two 5mm holes for each meeting of the floor and a cross member. Both floor halves. That is a little over 100 holes on each half

which started with a 3mm hole then drilled out to a 5mm hole. Yes, 2 goes at drilling on each of 100 holes on both halves and that was outsourced to my neighbour and great friend Rich. 400 holes drilled later, the last trial fit gave him a cut finger on a jagged bit of metal. You have to grind the rough edges smooth too. On its own, just the drilling and sanding is around five back breaking hours.



Finally, the floor was welded in.



Welding took around an hour and a half of those same few hundred drilled holes and no grinding has yet happened. Given that they are all in the valleys of the corrugations, they may just get a wire wheel smoothing then some paint! As you can see, around the edges of the

floor, we need to add the LHD to RHD conversion plate on the non-sliding door side to bridge from the middle sill to the body panel – available from Alan Schofield and purchased two years ago. Also need to fabricate and weld in behind the C posts, the bottoms of the inner wheel arches and the rotten edges of the 45 degree panel between the wheel arches. Expecting that will take a couple of days to complete using the latest and greatest CAD assistance. That's Cardboard Aided Design. Template your metal with empty pizza boxes, transfer that to your Zintec lightly galvanized sheet metal and shape with your new hammer and dolly.

Getting those two floor panels laid down has been a huge amount of work, is a key strengthening part of the van and of course is huge in terms of visibility. There has been 278 hours of labour in the cargo area and still the edges need to meet the floor, taking that part of the puzzle to around 320 hours once completed. Priming it to make it all red is going to be a huge visible step towards completion.

Whatever you are doing with your vehicle, keep on keeping on. Don't forget to check out the club web site, as my other hat is web site manager and I write an article every week there too. Go to <http://www.vwt2oc.co.uk> and scroll down past the intro to see the recent articles. Everything from split screen to T6, club information, restoration, electrical and technical gets covered. If you have an idea for an article, please send it to the Editor if it would go in this lovely magazine as well as the web site, or to me if it is web only. Have fun and stay dirty.