

Eric the Viking – a restoration in many parts – June 2020

Spend since last report: £40.50. Total hours labour since last report: 10.4

Tidying up some odds and ends. Where the rear chassis meets the torsion tube as noted last time, it was looking poor and was half an inch out of position.



Poor welding inside the box section and new metal welded to badly corroded metal. Chopped it out and replaced it. New 2mm lightly galvanized steel sheet, cut to shape. 6mm holes drilled through it to the rest of the existing chassis box section are then plug welded thoroughly using a hot welder setting to ensure really good penetration as this is a section that needs a lot of strength!



The offside rear wheelarch was fully covered in underseal, presumably well after the horse had bolted since there were lot of big rust spots (middle of the white area which is the top of the inside of the arch). They came off with a wire wheel and received some Kerrust treatment. Rust holes were carefully chopped out and new steel cut to shape and seam welded in to give no visible trace. The whole lot was taken back to bare steel with the wire wheel on the angle grinder and then given two coats of primer and looks rather good.

The offside rear suspension is in the air as the van is on his nearside. As I needed to get to all of the bits, it was a good time to dismantle it and it certainly needed some TLC.



The trapezium shaped end cover is only a cover and you can see it in the wheel arch of a Bay window bus just in front of the rear wheels, one each side. It unbolts with 4 bolts and apart from some grease sticking it to the end of the torsion tube, it should come away easily. Eric's one of course was rusty but apart from a half centimetre section that needed a bit of filling with the welder, the wire wheel got it clean. Then behind the road wheel is the brake drum and behind that are 4 big bolts that hold the drum and hub assembly to the axle and the suspension arm. These were about 22mm bolts and I had to call a friend with a socket set that he uses on farm equipment, as of course everything was really rusty and seized.

The bolts finally came out and the suspension came apart. This is big thick steel and was covered in rust, paint, underseal and grease but the angle grinder's wire wheel took it all back to slightly pitted but healthy steel. It all then had a paint with the anti-rust solution followed by two brushed-on coats of anti-rust primer. I think that it looks rather better! No sense reassembling as that will stop access to the inside of the wheel arch that will need its top coat. On dismantling the suspension, there is a rubber stop that looks like a dog's kong toy and stops the suspension banging metal on metal when you go over big bumps. That has seen better days but is probably ok, sadly it sits underneath a mounting that was completely corroded into holes and that is welded to the main chassis rail behind the road wheel and THAT was also badly holed. First picture is the "before" image with the cuts made into the chassis ready to remove it.



Behind the pictured circle of steel is the mounting bracket, the second picture shows that bracket from above still attached to the chassis box section. Both pieces badly holed and rotting nicely. I cut the chassis box section off the bracket and welded the bracket back together on the bench (see the shiny steel in the next photo!).



And finally everything welded back together and as ever, anti-rust solution brushed on then two coats of brushed on anti-rust primer. This area gets all the salt and the weather when driving along and needs to be nicely protected. It may not be flat meaning that the top-coat will not be flat, but as Eric will not be concourse, it will look ok and be safe. On top of the top coat will be underseal and anyone who wants to pick me up for having non-perfect paint on the suspension arms under the underseal behind the road wheel is welcome to pass judgement!

More next time, hopefully by that point we can all start using our vans in fields, although I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing your photos come in to our Events Manager (and my wife) Lorna. Keep on enjoying, even if you only enjoy on your driveway! See you soon.