

Eric the Viking – a restoration in many parts – October 2016

Spend since last report: £617. Total hours labour since last report: 30

Once the moths had found their way to the light and we stopped coughing from the dust, my wallet was open and used to buy the parts. All outriggers, jacking points, support sections, six top hats, all sills on both sides and the repair sections for the bulges at the back of the front wheel arches for your feet if you are on the middle row of a dormobile bus. It all came beautifully packaged, bare metal covered in grease. I laid it out carefully indoors to see how it all fits. I am still none the wiser but it is a start.



Together with the new rear corners, battery trays and other parts that I bought a year ago, they remain steadfastly in the house whilst Eric sulks in the garage.

Since my last report, further cutting has taken place and he is even lighter. The chassis from the middle to the front wheel only needed a small amount of patching, first attempt was passable but the weld had not penetrated well and was cut out. The second attempt was so good you cannot tell it has been patched, and the only addition was new friend and pro welder Phil. My brand new welder had been sent back with a fault as I did not know it was not supposed to use gas when the trigger isn't pressed. On return after a fortnight, and despite specific requests for testing, the fault remains, and so starts the battle with the reseller. Practicing on Phil's welder shows improvement though, give me time and I will become a welder.

Then we moved back to the rear of the cargo floor area to the join with the rear jacking point. Water has been sitting in there for years and both jacking point and chassis rail at that junction are totally rotten. Jacking point removed, chassis rot removed, patch built. Hmm, not happy with the patch or the chassis rail further back. A good job that we abandoned that plan as the rest of that chassis section is also rotten all the way back to the torsion tube. No, we didn't know what that did either. The big side to side tube just in front of the back wheels with a cover on each end in the shape of a trapezium is the torsion bar but we didn't know what it did, we're only amateurs. Where the chassis meets that tube was all rot and rust, so it all got hacked away with a cutting disk and a grinding disk. Eventually shiny metal was seen on the tube and we cut a little hole in the 2mm metal about 2 inches each way to see what is inside. Gingerly. Green and shiny metal is what we found, seeing the light for the first time in 43 years but the pilot hole piece was half rotted and needs replacing. Almost certainly on the other chassis rail too. Before the rot was removed and after:



Repairing the tube is difficult as access from above is tight due to the rear panel between the wheels and welding in a confined space laid under a rotten bus is just no fun. Next job then is to remove the panel between the wheels.... All the spot welds drilled out carefully and start easing the panel away. Turns out that panel forms part of the fuel tank ledge, so a wasted hour and now need to make that good again.

Ok, got some time, want to make progress. Off with his nose!



More weight loss program, chopping from the windscreen down the nose near the edges, leaving the air intake grill and down to the bumper. Looks better already, let's see what is going on underneath. Bumper is ok and reusable. Deformation panel is pretty much dust, the front chassis sections are too, the floor of the cab isn't great and all inner front panels are wrecked too. New plan, don't look at the rest of the bus to see what you have got, fix the current bit only then move on. The path to the end is taken by looking at your feet taking one step at a time not looking at the mountain wondering why on earth you jumped into this money pit in the first place.

The torsion tube can get the patches fitted (steel sheet purchased) then fit the chassis rail patches from chassis rail to torsion tube (chassis repair rails purchased). Then cut off the offside sill to make some room. Then fit the top hats that go side to side of the cargo floor on top of the shiny chassis rails and out to where the new sills will go. The icing on that jigsaw is the new floor. Bracing myself for that one, more credit card bashing but there's a moth heading towards the sun carrying something that looks a lot like a credit card... someone stop that moth!