



Plus 8 Refit By Dave Berridge

Firstly a bit about me and my enthusiasm for Morgan cars. It all started when I was a lad, my father was in the RAF and we were stationed at Colerne. I would have been 5 or 6 and I saw this car driven by an RAF officer. It was a Morgan 4/4 I would have thought from about 1960 and I was hooked. I wanted one.

It wasn't until I was 28 that I finally got my First Morgan it was a 1969 4/4 it had seen better days but it was all we could afford. However, it was a Morgan and that was all that mattered. After using it for a few years it badly needed work so being brave or stupid I decided to strip her down to the bare chassis and rebuild her. After a few years I changed her for 1986 Plus 4 and again after some time I rebuilt her too. Over the years I gained quite a bit of knowledge on Morgan's and their peculiarities and I can tell you there are a few. Eventually the Plus 4 had to go and I am now the proud owner of the said plus 8.

I have called it a semi restoration as it was not a full strip down. Actually, it was only supposed to be a clutch change but things went on and ended up as a partial restoration so unfortunately there are no photos from the start of the project.

The engine was removed from the car. For those of you who don't know, the engine and gearbox have to come out together and there is very little room to work with. It takes a lot of wriggling to get it out. It was at this point I decided to remove the front wings to avoid damaging them and to give more room to work. The removal of the front wing is quite straight forward if you are lucky.



Along the running boards there are 5 x M5 captive screws and a couple of wood screws. If you are lucky, as I was, the captive screws hold and life is a lot easier. The next thing is to remove the cowl and the bolts along the wing edge These bolt through the inner wing and then it's just a case of lifting it off. With the engine out and gearbox separated the new 3-part clutch was fitted and there it stayed on the garage floor as I had to go into hospital and have a triple heart bypass. When I returned home after my operation, I could not do any lifting or virtually anything for the next three months so the car just had to wait.

After the three months I was able to return to work on light duties so I thought to myself I could do a bit on the car but not anything to do with heavy lifting so putting the engine back was out of the question.

With the front wings already removed, I removed the rear wings. Again, a mixture of captive M5 and wood screws, not forgetting to remove all the lights and mark the wiring to make reassembly easier. So now we have all four wings removed. The doors were removed which is just a case of removing the hinge pins taking care not to catch the door skin as you tap the pins out. Then take the door cards off and the locks.



We are now left with the tub as the windscreen and hood fittings etc were all removed. Then the hard work began, the rubbing down. I used an air sander to do most of the work starting with 400 grit wet and dry going down to 1000 grit. Just a tip using air sanders you can use water whereas not with electric ones for obvious reasons. I was going to use two pack paint so a proper face mask was required as it is nasty stuff to breathe in. Two coats of primer, sanding between coats. If using two pack make sure you use two pack primer and not cellulose as the two types react with each other. Three coats of top coat were applied and left to harden.



With the tub paint left to harden it was time to tackle the wings. Both front wings needed attention to the arches but the off side needed some welding doing and I have not tackled aluminium before so this was to be a challenge. I used aluminium solder rods as they were easy to use. They worked a treat and with a bit of filling out it looked the part. Now this is where my troubles started as the paint takes some time to dry, I had problems with dust landing on the paint and spoiling the finish. After a couple of attempts to paint without success I had the rest of the wings and panels professionally painted.



The engine and gearbox were the first thing to be refitted and this was going to cause me problems as I was still not supposed to lift anything but with the help of a good friend of mine the engine was back in place and a new aluminium radiator fitted with new silicone pipe work all round.



Then there was a long wait for the return of the panels as the person doing them for me was fitting them in between jobs so it took about three months to get them back but it was worth the wait as he made a very good job of them and the price was right.

The jigsaw puzzle was all ready now for assembly which was a lot easier to do than the disassembly as all new stainless steel nuts and bolts and washers were used and this I would recommend. Assembling the wings is a two man job as you don't want to scratch the new paint work so Kevin Biddle stepped up



to assist with the wing and bonnet assembling.



I used rubber gasket between the inner and outer wings with new wing beading that I had made for me to match the upholstery and I think it has made a good contrast with the cream paint work.



Now for some mechanics. About six months before I took the car off the road, I rebuilt the front suspension with new kingpins and bushes. I used hard chrome pins and spiral groove bushes as I think they give a little more life to the suspension. I fitted new shock absorbers front and rear and I used adjustable AVOs and new damper blades. I didn't fit new springs as the ones fitted were the same length and to the required manufacturers spec, so that should last me a few years before having to do it again all being well.

The brakes have been serviced with new shoes to the rear with new slave cylinders and pipes checked. I had purchased second hand a set of four pot brake callipers but after a lot of thought I bit the bullet and bought a new set from Mulfab. I also fitted new discs and stainless steel flexible pipes. With it stripped down the bearings were checked and found to be ok so were refitted with fresh grease. The whole system was then bled with fresh fluid including the clutch.

The doors were refitted with the pins polished as I can't see the point of painting stainless steel. Not only that but the paint keeps chipping off anyway and there is nothing worse than seeing paint touch up on the top of the pin. Seats refitted as well as new carpets. Most of the upholstery was in good condition as it was only a few years ago that I reupholstered it but there were a few bits replaced. It's starting to look like a Morgan again. The wheels were restored and powder coated by a company in Telford at a realistic price with new tyres fitted.





Well the big day finally came. Battery fully charged, all lights tested and they all work. Filled up with fresh petrol, oil, coolants, and new filters. I turned the key and the fuel pump started to pump. The engine turned over a few times and burst into life. It was a bit lumpy at first then settled down to that beautiful V8 burbling. I have to say it made my day to hear it run and there she is in all her glory waiting for an MOT and to get out on the road, whenever that will be. Just hope it will be soon.



I hope this was of interest to you all. If not, at least it gave you something to read or to look at the pictures. Look forward to seeing you all when this virus lockdown is over and you can look at the car for yourselves and see what you think.



Thanks to Dave for this article, originally published in Burble and Blatt.