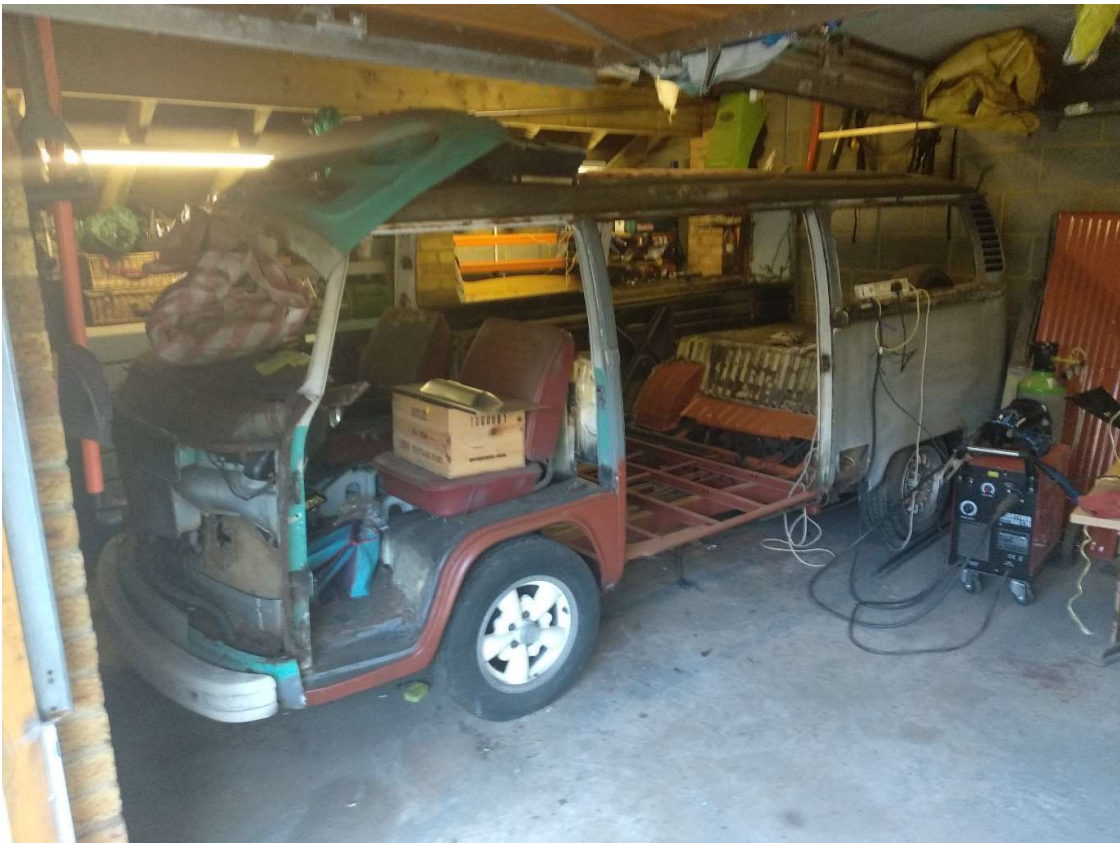


Eric the Viking – a restoration in many parts – February 2018

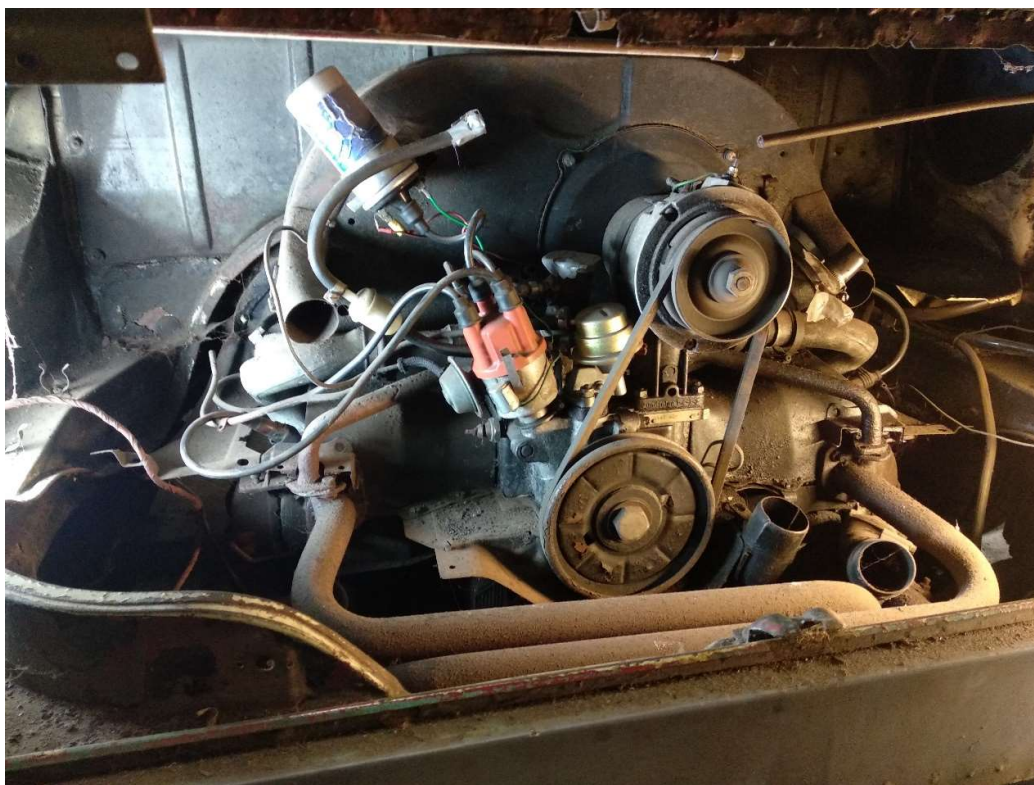
Spend since last report: £148.27. Total hours labour since last report: 11

A garage is cool and damp at the best of times. Winter makes things worse. Lethargy, cold and the restoration equivalent of writers' block conspired to stop progress or at least send it on a deviation via the coast road. The new cross members are still in and that last one remains steadfastly resistant, but I have an excuse, the dog ate my homework. I missed the bus. It was raining. I left it at home. Ok, so the real reason in the grand scheme of things sounds equally flimsy, I want to finish the cleaning, welding and preparation of the torsion tube between the rear wheels but to do that I need access. That rearmost cross member across the van needs to be out, the panel between the rear wheel arches that I chopped a year ago needs to be in the air. Access is what I need.



Or is it? Maybe I can get to the tube from behind, all that stands in my way is the engine, the gearbox and the ability to get into the engine bay given the rear brick wall of the garage. Cue a Christmas present of a pair of vehicle turners, effectively skateboards for cars, you jack up the wheel and instead of an axle stand that renders the car immobile, you drop the car tyre onto this little metal skateboard, in this instance both rear wheels. With the front wheels still able to steer, one person can push the rear sideways or any direction, steering as you need and in about a minute, Eric was 45 degrees across the garage. And his bottom in the air on these turners.





With access to the rear, I took pictures for posterity. Then started to make my way in. Offside rear corner was as I had recalled it, angle grinding off the whole panel took little time due to the lack of good metal. Working out the bolts for the rear light cluster was the hardest and most time consuming part. Once the wires were out of the way, the rest was simple enough, chop a little, look a lot. The battery tray next, very little left there, much rot or acid damage and the remainder was like paper. How much do you remove when it is all corroded, what is part of the corner and what is part of the battery tray, effectively all guess work.

With several noisy and dusty hours on the corner, Phil arrived with a huge trolley jack and a second pair of hands, not our lovely editor but a restoration buddy near me. For two and a half hours we tried to remove the seven bolts on the rear engine hanger and the six or so joining the engine to the gearbox. The engine hanger had so much oil nearby that the bolts were fairly routine. Five of the bolts came away from the gearbox with surprising ease but try as we might, the one nearest the starter motor, even laid fully under the raised van, left arm fully committed up into the bowels of the bus, through the spider webs, rot, rust and dirt, would not find or budge the engine bolt that remained.

As Sunday evening grew later and our respective wives' eyes bored deep to our hearts, we finally acceded and gave up for the night, a new plan had emerged. Forget taking out the engine and then the gearbox, let's take the lot out together and separate them on the bench. All we need is to remove the wheels, brakes, driveshafts, other bits that I have vaguely read about in books, get the van further in the air and then. Erm, well maybe Eric is going to be without an engine for a while and I can get to the torsion tube.

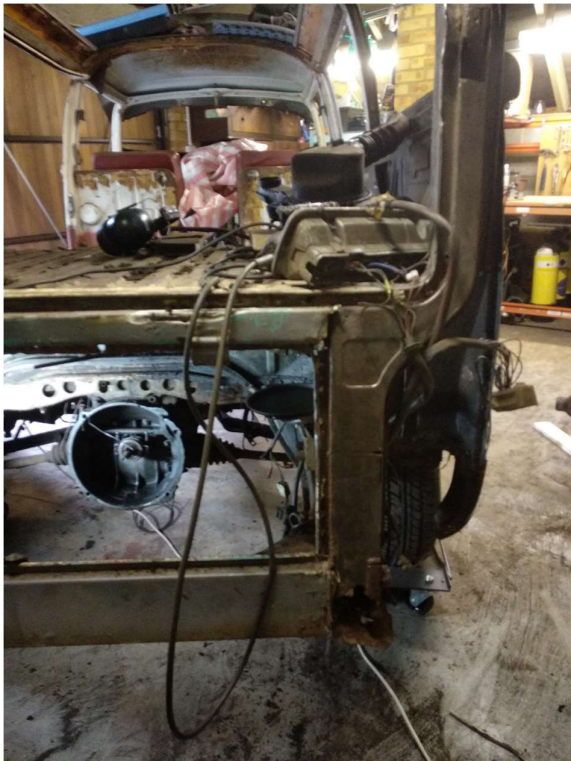
Liza, there's a hole in my bucket.

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

Spend since last report: £262.06. Total hours labour since last report: 36.95

In the last exciting episode, our intrepid restoration amateur was stuck under a Bay window van with his hands by the starter motor, trying to remove the last bolt to free the engine. After hours wasted and much kicking, it still sat connected. The manual, which had been read does not mention the starter motor and specifically says the last bolt stays, you take the nut off the other end from behind the cooling fan housing. Propped on a trolley jack and blocks of wood, the engine had that nut removed and it slid out with no ceremony. One person can (and did) do this but the video would have been a funny cross between juggling a heavy engine, feet propping the side of the engine, bits of wood everywhere and for safety it should be a silent movie.

In other words the engine is out.



Full steam ahead, engine dragged out of the way, main cargo area abandoned for now so that the problems there can percolate through the brain.

Rear offside outer corner removed completely due to rot.



Battery tray removed and photographs show the old one and the new one.

Structural D pillar down the side of the boot lid and engine bay door was badly rotten under the outer panel.



Removing a structural piece like that is above my pay grade, so rot chopped, patches made, welded in and painted after much grinding. One sentence covering around ten hours labour and that was the outer half of that one inner pillar, still have the rear/inner half for another day.

Bottom of that same pillar should be beautifully attached to the metal beam across under the engine bay door. Eric had a mix of rot and filler, very little actual metal. Chop, chop, literally. The Just Kampers repair section gives you the bottom four inches of the D post, in rear and front halves, needing some guesswork on how it should all fit together with no template. Again another sentence covering about six hours of labour.

The nearside outer corner only needs the lower half replacing which is available from all the main suppliers, and the lower D post repair this time from Alan Schofields who were the only stockists of the inner piece between the boot lid and engine bay door that we now find is also required. The Schofields D post is a nice repair piece but totally different to the original, which is over half intact. Sale or return hopefully but had the rot really taken hold would have been a great replacement.

A little more time spent with the wire brush took new and existing panels to bare metal, then red oxide paint makes it look better and protects for a while.

In other news, a recent wedding anniversary weekend away to Diss brought a photo and some used cutlery from a charity shop. Meet Charles, made from about 25 spoons and 35 knives. Plus a little cutting, shaping and welding.



Fun to make on the bench and beats an angle grinder removing rot and rust from a neglected van, laid on the garage floor, dirt in your nose hairs, pony tail matted with metal shavings. We are getting there though.

Next hair brained scheme? Going to make a frame so Eric can lie down on his side to make the under side work easier. Just needs a bit more strength in him first.

Then I saw the back of that D post I just spent a day welding the front. What do you mean it looks like this?



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

Paperwork. Apparently paperwork is not something that most people enjoy. Fortunately I am not “some people”. Lifted from our scuba diving hobby, we (I) write up every trip in our other van Poppy. We know the mileage of each trip, where, what we did, each fuel fill, each MPG per fill. When Eric arrived, his restoration was documented with all of the spending.

Project	001			
Description	Nut and bolt renovation of Type 2 Camper Van			
Code name	Eric the Viking			
Project start	22 August 2015			
Project end	22 August 2022			
What	Price (£)		Labour (hours)	
Project budget	14,201		1,160	
Current project spend	5,822	41.0%	245	21.1%

I can now see that I am at 245 hours of labour and that is 21% of total labour. As I look back on the work so far, it buoys me up. Then if I check my labour against the estimated labour to finish the welding it means I am about half way through. Feels pretty good.

Most amateur restorers seem to hide their spending or massage the numbers. My spend includes a big, brand new welder and a lot of tools. Each penny is detailed up to the £5,822 spent buying Eric, bringing him home and getting to current state. That includes the floor, rear panels and sills that are all close to fitting. Close being a relative term. Categories are taken from the Just Kampers web site and not all columns are visible.

		Budget		£ 1,200	£ 800	£ 1,000	£ 3,000	£ 14,201
		Percentage		85%	17%	0%	92%	41%
		Totals		£ 1,025	£ 140	£ -	£ 2,761	£ 5,822
Date	From	What	Price	Accessories, gifts & tools	Paint	Labour	Other	Total
03 June 2017	eBay	Semi flat wire wheel	£ 6	£ 5.99				£ 5.99
28 June 2017	Just Kampers	Floor, bulge, heater tube, walk thr	£ 298					£ 298.31
04 February 2018	Just Kampers	J11681 Inner screen repair panel	£ 148					£ 148.27
15 March 2018	Just Kampers	J29276 D-post repair offside, J1005	£ 55					£ 55.30
19 March 2018	ebay	Rustoleum primer	£ 32		£ 31.98			£ 31.98
03 April 2018	rick	Engine lid inner panel, d post repair	£ 156					£ 155.80
07 April 2018	hardware shop	Pack of paint brushes	£ 7		£ 6.99			£ 6.99
08 April 2018	ebay	Knee pads	£ 12	£ 11.99				£ 11.99
14 May 2018	rick	d post repair nearside refund	-£ 28					-£ 27.55

At each point when the work is finished for the day, my labour gets noted, how long and what. There is also a categorization of which part.

Date	Who	What	How long	Section
Total	All		244.81	
01-May	Nick	Painting top hat and rear posts	2.00	Restoration - rear
07-May	Nick	Rear n/s corner	1.00	Restoration - rear
12-May	Nick	sixth top hat	2.00	Restoration - cargo area
12-May	Nick	sixth top hat	5.50	Restoration - cargo area
03-Jun	Nick	n/s d post	2.00	Restoration - rear
04-Jun	Nick	n/s d post	1.00	Restoration - rear

This all rolls up automatically to the labour summary.

				Labour (hours)	
High level plan	Start date	Days	Completion date	Estimated	Current
Planning and learning	Aug-15	120	Dec-15	25	21.2
Restoration - cargo area	Jan-16	1,078	Jan-19	200	163.0
Restoration - cab area and chassis under	Jan-19	180	Jul-19	80	0.0
Restoration - front	Jul-19	120	Oct-19	80	3.5
Restoration - rear	Oct-19	180	Apr-20	100	57.2
Restoration - roof	Apr-20	180	Oct-20	100	0.0
Engine	Oct-20	180	Apr-21	50	0.0
Bodywork prep and spraying	Apr-21	120	Aug-21	100	0.0
MOT pre-work and mechanicals	Aug-21	120	Dec-21	100	0.0
MOT	Dec-21	120	Apr-22	25	0.0
Interior and rolling resto	Apr-22	120	Aug-22	300	0.0
Total		2,518		1,160	244.8
Anticipated completion date			22 August 2022		

The categories are sectional for solid progress but instead of working chronologically, there has been some deviation due to getting stuck as you have read previously. This all drives a completion date of August 2022. That means Eric will miss Just Kampers Open Day but might make Busfest four years from now. As my knowledge increases, the work speeds up. Is it likely that the dates will slip, of course it is likely.

Photos are taken at useful points, sometimes they are even in focus and are useful to see the progress and these articles all get printed each time and go into a hardback album with the receipts, log book, old MOTs and other paper paraphernalia forming his story. Once he is finished, these articles will get turned into a book to live on board.

Work on Eric progresses, work at work taking much of my energy but looking back at the labour, the paper progress and the photos shows the journey trod. Pride, success, achievement and rust. All of those in bucket loads.

Stories of dirty faces ready to help others one day once I have the experience on this one. Did you see the ambition of Eric as project 001? 998 more before I run out of numbers.

Hope to see you at the next club meeting, this is your roving reporter, writing to you from a field in Oxford. In Poppy.

Trip	DateFrom	DateTo	Location	Mileage From	Mileage To	Miles	Nights	Nights since last trip
50	04/05/2018	06/05/2018	Wooferton, Dubs at the Farm	73818	74038	220	2	32
51	18/05/2018	20/05/2018	Great Bourton	74038	74124	86	2	12
52	25/05/2018	27/05/2018	Evesham, Dubs in the middle	74124	74251	127	2	5
53	08/06/2018	10/06/2018	Odiham	74251	74348	97	2	12
54	15/06/2018	17/06/2018	Oxford	74348	74400	52	2	5

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

Spend since last report: £0. Total hours labour since last report: 0

On the advice (well ok, it was more of a directive) of my physiotherapist, Eric the Viking's progress has been on hold barring one brief piece of work since early May. My back pain has been diagnosed and treatment has been progressing, the weather has been warm and the garage is dry. There are around eight weekends in between magazines and three of them were recently spent with our other Bay window called Poppy. Instead of a "no progress" report or a complete miss, here is what we did in France.

Last July we went down the west coast of France, uncertain if we would breakdown and had a lovely time around Bordeaux, Cognac and Montbassilac. Other towns not producing alcohol are available! This year we wanted to see the lavender fields of Provence and had increasing confidence with Poppy's engine. A service at the start of the season and trips to Devon and a few VW events allowed us to sort out minor niggles. We also ensured that the spares box included the items previous listed plus now a spare fuel pump, carburettor and a shiny new high lift bottle jack due to our jacking points having been filled with a step on the sliding door side.

As we were going to be heading down the middle of France, we took the ferry from Newhaven which allowed us to visit the Volksweald show at beautiful Penshurst Place, working the club stand, more on that event in a later issue. Newhaven is tiny and the ferry terminal building has nothing to offer, Poppy has a kettle and comfortable seating as we waited. A smooth crossing took around 4 hours and with the discount from the camping and caravanning club, it was a good price too.

We elected for non-toll roads and set off south in the afternoon sun, following the paper map before an overnight just outside Orleans on the first night. We bought a copy of the Aires book last summer which is brilliant - anyone travelling to the continent should have one. It gives you thousands of free or inexpensive places to stop overnight from car parks to vineyards, most with water and allows you to have a known point at the end of a long day. We found that the ones on the edge of town tend to be very reliable, clean and safe. Some are enormous and some are just two or three vehicles.

Our second day was a sedate start, a wander around Orleans and a long trek of 260 miles with a few stops for supplies and a rest, meaning that we arrived to the edge of Provence in the tiny medieval village of Domme a little after dark and rather tired. We tend to plan a day in advance and use the Internet to find out if we are likely to enjoy time in a place by seeing what it has to offer. You can use your UK based mobile contract in most of Europe now so there are no unexpected bills at the end of your trip. Domme was chosen as both a place of historical interest and the nearest place to the home of my Father's assistant from 1976 to his retirement in 1993. She gave us a lot of local history, acted as our tour guide and was also rather better at French than me, unsurprising after 14 years in the area. See the picture of the Dordogne from the hillside in Domme - the view that persuaded Jane to move from Croydon!



After a couple more days of touring the area in the searing heat of a 35 degree (and higher) central France in July, we were feeling relaxed, having plenty of walks around little towns and villages and the cheese and wine in the evening, we arrived to the walled town of Carcassone. Friends had recommended it as a great place to visit and sure enough, it is a thousand year old town within the walls of thick local stone and offers history, culture and many shops selling interesting items suitable for strolling.



There is an Aires about a half hour walk that meant plenty of steps but also a simple parking spot for the day's exploring. Definitely worth a visit, as is Domme.

From Carcassonne we moved into the Camargue, a small river delta south of Arles, bounded by the river Rhone and the Mediterranean. The brine lagoons make for great views and 400 species of birds including our first time seeing flamingos in Europe - thousands of them. The salt lagoons make a difference to the plants turning them black but also giving the vineyards a unique flavour to the grapes, a slightly saltiness in their Gris wine. We stayed at both Montcalm, a tiny village with little more than a wine tasting barn and a collection of vineyards. Waking up to the early morning mist over the low lying fields, the clear morning air scented with the sea, and birds of all kinds is lovely, especially if you can stay somewhere idyllic like that for free, which we did.

Our second night in the area was the little seaside town of Saintes Maries de la mer, just a random point on the map near us that might offer a place for a swim in the sea given the temperature. Another Aires, this one was a dedicated motor home car park but a nice one, plenty of facilities and a nice walk along the front. Surprisingly given the time of year, the scorching temperature and the location, it was relatively quite quiet; it was also neat, tidy and unlettered - something that lets some of our UK coastal resorts down. Camped facing the prom, we were one of the few non-beige vehicles staying over, had a lot of people come to talk to us as they all love a VW and of course we were by far the smallest vehicle there!

Once you get to the south of France, the only way is up quite literally. Unfortunately that also means that we were starting our steady trek home. After 10 nights away including Volksweald, we headed north for the first time and zipped ourselves up to Avignon, missing

the Aires but instead finding a spot right next to the Rhone with stunning views, no charge and about 200 metres from the Aires that charges €24 per night.



Using that as our car park, we went into Avignon walled city, had lunch, decided it was all a bit too noisy and busy so we headed to the bridge. Yes, we did officially sing "Sur le pont d'Avignon" whilst standing on the bridge at Avignon, the same one from the children's nursery rhyme from hundreds of years ago before walking home. Plenty of other vehicles joined us by the river, and as sunset rolled down the back of the hills, we had wine in hand, looking across the great river.

Again, we looked at the paper map with a vague plan for moving north and looking for a place to spend the next afternoon exploring and the night camped out. Chateauneuf du Papes was almost spot on for distance and direction, arriving just about 5pm, quickly into the shops before they close to get a bottle for dinner. Unfortunately we managed to choose a place run by the rudest lady in France, who patronised us, answered questions that we had not asked and would not listen to what we were asking. After a mediocre glass of what she felt was the best wine in the world and a number of minutes of failing to get her to be friendly, we left! A hundred metres away was a lovely lady, elegantly dressed and running a tiny basement cellar who could not have been more different. We chatted in French to her, learned about the local area, the grapes and her producers, we sampled and left with arms groaning from a good number of bottles of fabulous wine, complete with directions to a local camp site just outside the town. An evening in the trees after a dip in the pool and a beer on their terrace was a lovely and restful end to a long day at the wheel.

By now the routine had established itself - check your oil level every day. Chateaufneuf was just on a thousand miles since we left home and still the dipstick showed the level bang on the correct upper marker. Nonetheless, a daily check is important especially in the heat of a French summer. Leaving there, our next leg was a long one and we decided to visit Beaune, home of my Grandfather's favourite red. It was a 255 miles drive but we elected to take the toll road and what a difference - no delays, no towns to traverse, no roundabouts. The fuel saving was worth the toll, let alone the time saving so in future we will be using the toll roads more often! Unfortunately we needed a pit stop in one of the stop off points and somehow managed to find the only one that does both sides of the road before managing to get going back the way that we had come! That's a memory - driving south for 20 miles, coming off the motorway, paying our toll bill, going around the roundabout, picking up the new toll ticket and heading 20 miles north to wave at the place we'd been in an hour earlier. Well, we made it a little later than planned into Beaune about 5pm anyway.

Beaune is beautiful, no two ways about it. The Aires is a car park on the edge of town, no water, no other services but plenty of company from modern vans of all sizes, an old Mercedes camper a little dented in places and our little red bus. A very memorable meal outside on the pavement terrace of a fab little restaurant, sampling a truly magical local wine and typically wonderful French food as the sun set. Walking home hand in hand to sleep free of charge in a car park before driving back into town to one of the many Chateau and filling the van with a dozen or so special occasion bottles to remind us of our time there. On the way home, we found a little old Citroen delivery van and stopped to give it a cuddle.



Two towns could not contrast much further than our last inland visit to Epernay, another 200 mile trek up the toll roads almost level with Paris. It felt tired, run down and rather insalubrious especially compared to our previous few days of vibrant and pleasant towns. The Aires was pleasant enough, next to a huge church and over the road from a small park next to the local swimming pool, watching the petanque players as we had a little rest before heading off to explore. Dinner was quite adequate but unmemorable and we left at 6.30 the next morning with no plans to return - a disappointment given what we were expecting.

Our final place to stay was our only two night stop in France, in the lovely seaside village of Criel sur Plage, just along the coast from Dieppe. About 8 parking places for up to 2 nights facing the English channel. The azure colour of the sea, the 200 metres to some nice little restaurants, brave kite surfers and plucky swimmers supplementing our people watching. Ice cream from the beach van, watching the waves and then spotting that the outflow of the river taking salmon and other fish out to sea also had salmon leaping back up at lower tides. Then spotting a clever seal taking advantage of an easy buffet meal as his head appeared every few minutes nearby. It feels like I have not been in the office for months but in fact it is under two weeks.

Living on bread and cheese plus a low-key restaurant meal most days, having a simple life of walking, chatting and observing, exploring the new places and having good sleeps in our 5 foot rock and roll bed. Our last full day was also the "stock up" day, having failed last year with that day being Bastille Day and all shops being shut, we made sure that we had enough memories to take home! Coming back, our spot from the first night was taken by an Alfa Romeo car with an indifferent teenage girl in the back and a sulking pre teenage boy in the passenger seat. A sit in Poppy for ten minutes watching their story unfold, the boy head to the beach for a few minutes before getting back in the car with an "it's so unfair" face on him allowing us to get "our" spot back.



The last morning was met with drooping bottom lips, we packed up the van neatly as each day, did all the washing up as each day and got ready to go as each day. Lorna navigating, me driving and headed our little selves to the ferry port about 15 minutes away. We queued in the rain, watching other people sitting in the modern cars, us in the back having bread, cheese and cups of tea before getting back on the ferry to Newhaven. Even the weather was sad about us leaving.

Newhaven was similarly rainy, the A23 on a Sunday afternoon was busier than most of the French roads and the M25 was as clogged as normal at all the usual junctions. We arrived home just after 7pm and unloaded 84 bottles of wine, some souvenirs of our visit, some lavender soap bought in Provence and some cheese that never quite tastes the same in England. 1,888 miles, no breakdowns, not even a hint of a problem. An average of 28mpg with some fills being over 29mpg which is rather good for a fully loaded van and a 1600 single port engine.

Carlberg don't make memories, but if they did, they would probably start with a Volkswagen transporter. And a splash of wine.

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

Spend since last report: £1,600. Total hours labour since last report: 62.50

B-post. Behind the front doors and in front of the sliding door / matching other side panel is a pillar called the B post. It is pretty much a hoop of steel that runs from the chassis rail on a T1 to T4 (and maybe later, I have never checked) outwards, up the side of the doors and into the roof. Underneath the vehicle it forms a section strong enough to jack up your vehicle. Maybe. Therefore it all needs to be in good order, made of steel not body filler or rust and importantly needs to be connected at the join from underneath to the side.



Eric's front cross member that starts this hoop runs across behind the front seats with jacking points below and SHOULD meet the edge of the B post.



Unfortunately it was 10mm away from lining up and therefore I had fitted the cross member incorrectly. Since that one is parallel to the other 5 cross members, potentially they were all incorrectly placed as well. My heart sank. I enlisted some professional help from a talented friend who just happens to have been restoring VW campers for 30 years professionally and after a good deal of investigating and measuring, we were able to conclude that my cross member was correctly placed. My heart lifted. Unfortunately, my wheel arch, sliding door threshold plate and bottom 12 inches of B post were all in the wrong place. My heart sank. The angle grinder makes short work of removing the incorrectly placed pieces, but that leaves a lot of work to put it all back correctly.



Now that all of the wrong metal was missing, including the heavy angle iron added 2 years ago for strength but in completely the wrong place, we were able to add in some good new metal in the right place. Firstly, we removed the threshold plate that you step on when entering the sliding door, we were then able to add the inner sill, then the middle sill. With those welded in place, the bulge can be fitted.



The bulge panel is really just a flat sheet of metal with a dent for the feet of the bus passengers but the bulge does add strength to that panel. That panel forms the front of the B post. Then a “cover” goes on the outside to be visible and the rear side of the square section and the inside piece of the square were fabricated from sheet steel and hammered with the pressings required. Finally a flap coming into the van along the rear of the bulge was folded and this new metal in the shape of a W was welded in. See the spot welds on the back of the bulge panel, attempting to replicate the factory original.



We also filled in the hole above the bulge to replace the previous rot and the top of the bulge was whacked repeatedly to make the pressing just above the bulge. It isn't perfect, but is sufficiently close that once the primer and paint are on, it should not be visible.

With that metal all looking good, the threshold plate could go back in over the top of the inner and middle sill, the wheel arch could go back in too. Then the passenger seat floor was joined to the back of the seat. All of this was done with a porta-power levering the B post straight from top to bottom as the issue was a sagging van making the bottom of the B post 100mm off true. It is just a big gas ram to hold the metal square as the sections are welded together to stay in shape.



After about 4 man days, the old threshold plate, along with a new bulge, new inner and middle sill and some newly cut and fitted sheet steel are all in Eric, he is a lot stronger and it is all in the right place. 4 man days is a lot less than the 62.5 hours noted at the top, more next time. Stay dirty everyone.



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.

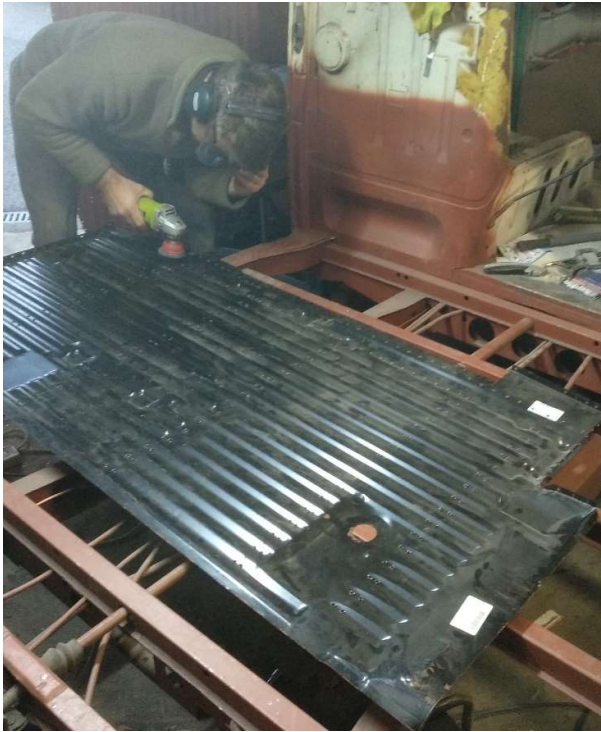


Where the floor was trial fitted, anything underneath will be hidden and received 2 brush-painted coats of oil based rust proofing primer (Rustoleum) inside the sill cavities and around the newly rebuilt B post. Anything above there will be visible inside the van and received a spray coat of Rednox anti-rust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