

Muffin - The Strip Down:

For me the first task prior to any rebuild or restoration is to take lots of photos and measurements. I did that the day Muffin arrived so no problem there.

The first part of the actual strip down was to remove the bonnet and as I lifted it up it made a ripping sound and half the pop rivets holding the two left hand parts together just broke away as there was so much corrosion. On the basis that anything can be repaired I stored it away but my build plan doesn't involve using the original bonnet so it's not a major problem.

Note.

Personally I find the original TA bonnet on this car particularly clumsy. My master plan includes lengthening the bonnet, hopefully using the new bonnet that was in the abandoned kit I bought off Mark Sadler (the club member who purchased the assets of Findhorn Cars). I plan to have it Emma (NG TD) style; i.e. double centre hinged section and two removable side panels. If this idea is successful I will have to make some smaller side sections below the louvered panel as the TA body and dummy radiator cowl sits an inch or so higher than later TD/TF etc. cars.

Next off was the radiator cowl, radiator and support brackets. Once that lot was off I took everything off the body, easier said than done as many parts were held by self tapper's screwed into the fibreglass body and the screwdriver profile had in many cases rusted away. Persevering by taking fractions of a turn with a pair of mole grips saved the day. "Hadn't people heard of stainless steel in the eighties?"

Last off was the fuel tank followed by the body. Most of the body bolts had been removed apart from one that was well rusted in. But eventually the last bolt gave up the fight and was removed. There wasn't any rubber or Denso tape strip etc. between the chassis and body!

I couldn't smell any vapour from the fuel tank, which was rusted internally, so put on a pair of ear muffs, to deaden the sound of any explosion (best to take health and safety precautions to protect your ears), and then cut it into quarters with an angle grinder.

Turning my attention to the engine I removed the carbs, manifolds and exhaust system plus a few other bits.

At this stage I had a throwing away session and the black wheelie bin received lots of new contents including; all the wiring and switches, both master cylinders, the heater unit minus the heater matrix, dashboard, voltage regulator, dynamo, washer pump and jets and numerous smaller items.

The photos were taken 48 hours after delivery. You will note that the chassis is well rusted. It looks rather basic compared to the later TA's as it doesn't have any cruciform bracing, but when you factor in the lack of cracks in both the chassis and the body it was obviously well up to the job. It's quite rusty due to the lack of post build care rather than the original design. Of course it wouldn't pass a current IVA Test but that's due to the introduction of new rules rather than any omissions by Nick Green. My master plan will see a considerable improvement in the chassis area.

I have left the chassis as a rolling enterprise at the moment as I need to take some extensive measurements in preparation for chassis upgrades.

The state of the engine is a bit disappointing and it was obviously left without antifreeze at some stage as two core plugs have blown, but I cannot see any cracks. When I drained the oil it looked like something out of the black lagoon but I intend to do a full engine strip and rebuild and get the cylinder head converted to unleaded.

The gearbox is the overdrive type but it doesn't look like the overdrive unit has ever been connected. There is also a hole in the gearbox bell housing adjacent to the starter motor. As I now have four overdrive type gearboxes a solution will no doubt be found.

Relevant facts:

Looking at the paperwork that came with the car it was built using a **1979 MGB** and is currently registered in the **V5C** as **NG TA 'MDX 841V'**. The chassis number is '**TA016**'. The earliest paperwork I have describing it as an NG is an MOT Certificate dated July 12th 1984. Presumably the donor car rotted out at 5-years of age, or maybe it was accident damaged beyond repair, but there is no mention of that in the V5C.

I am the eighth keeper but I don't know if that was since it was purchased as an MGB, or following its reincarnation as an NG TA.

It was sold on eBay as a restoration project in April 2016 for £1110 and purchased by the previous owner who made £90 profit when he sold it to me on Monday 24 May 2021.

From what I can tell from the paperwork I am the third or fourth person to attempt a restoration; hopefully there won't be a fifth!





