

Historic kart restoration by a complete novice – part 2

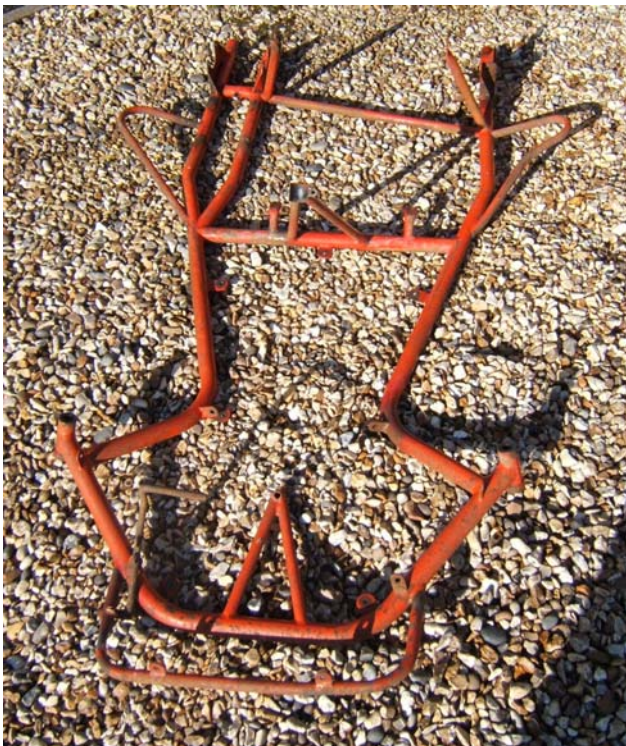


Taking things apart!

Taking a kart apart is easy, all you needs are lots of tools including a big rubber hammer, a box to put the bits in and two hours later, hey presto a box of bits and a frame, two broken finger nails and a badly scuffed knuckle. I do however have a tip to help things go smoothly and to keep the smile on your face. Forty pints of Black Country Mild homebrew in the garage, as you can see from the level in the barrel, there are thirty pints left after the strip down.

Only joking, there were only 35 pints in the barrel to start with, and I didn't just take bits of the kart in a haphazard way. First off I measured and photographed everything that could be adjusted or put back wrongly, steering, track rods, rear axle components. Now I know that they may not have been correctly set up in the first place, but at least I can put it back together as I found it, warts and all.

There were no seized bolts with only the rose at the end of the steering column, being stubborn. The stub axle bolts still had some grease on them after 25 years of storage, only the rear axle was a problem in that I needed to sand the rust off it before the bearing would move.



The bare chassis, with one pedal attached, because the front bar is bent the pedal would no come out. I checked dimensions diagonally and across the chassis and the main tubes seem ok, also the chassis sits flat (not just on gravel).

So the next stage is to do the fabrication, the nerf bar and the front tuber could perhaps have been straightened but the cross section of the tubes has been partly crushed, I even considered that this could be filled with braze, but in the end I thought the easiest option was to replace both tubes.

I know how to bend metal and weld, but it has been a while since I have done so and I don't have the required tools, tube bender or welding equipment. Getting the tube

was not a problem, the original tube is 5/8th o/d (or 15.9mm) so 16mm tube would fit the bill and is readily available, even B&Q sell it. The tube bender was a little tricky to

locate, I contacted all the fabricators I know and they did not have the former for 16mm pipe, however I found what looked like a suitable conduit bender at HSS hire. The radius of the form looked ok too, at £28 a day or £35 for the weekend it was not as cheap as I thought it should be. Then there would be the welding or brazing, I knew this



would cost me a "drink" to either borrow the welding kit or get a mate to do the welding for me. So the cost I was arriving at was £8 to £10 for the tube, £35 for the tube bender and a £20 drink for the welding, with bits and bobs of consumables I thought £70 to £80 would just about cover it. However I decided to get a price for the work off Adrian at BRT, amazingly he said £60 to £75 and he would also put the frame on the table and check how straight the chassis actually is. Sounded like a bargain to me so I left it with him, this would also free my time up to get to grips with all the components.

The chassis back from BRT with new front hoop and nerf bar.

I needed a quick win, to keep the enthusiasm up, two aspects of the kart I really like are the small black petrol tank and the classic steering wheel, so that is where I started.

The wheel is missing one gaiter? (Is that the correct term) and it had surface corrosion that while no bad all over did have some surface pitting here and there, and of course its dull. The tank had a rusty cap and peeling stickers and was also dull.



The wheel after an hour of wet and dry to get the surface smooth and another hour polishing with a mop and jewellers rouge followed by Autosol and black fingers. To protect the leather rim it was covered in period correct early 70's rag, attention to detail in the extreme. The two remaining gaiters were removed so I could clean them up and

make a new one. The hole in the middle of the wheel is a mystery, I have seen some karts with a bolt here, I assume to fix the steering column, but my karts column does not have this and it seems original, also there are marks around the central hole of the wheel where it was bolted. I can only assume this is a second hand wheel fitted a long time ago and not the original wheel, or the steering column is not original.

Stickers removed from the tank and a good polish by my better half Emma and the very small tank looks great. With a new "Ceadis of Wolverhampton" petrol cap, as fitted to Nortons, Triumphs and BSA's, I got this from a Motorcycle restorer at the Telford Vintage off-road motorcycle show.



The bead blasting of the frame was done by Danny Turner at Applied Surface Treatments, 1 Dobbs Street, Wolverhampton, 01902 871961, for a very reasonable £25, he takes on lots of restoration work, there were vintage motorcycle frames and veteran tractor panels laying along side his commercial work.

The powder coating was done by Ercon Ltd in Bilston, ask for Bob 01902 491011, they were very helpful and did a great job for £50.

So all that's left is to start bolting things together, fortunately at this point the home brew had been drunk.

Next instalment – Deadline Strubby