

My Hawk Build. Part 3

by Stuart Clarke

Refurbishing the donor parts – Front suspension.

From the MGB I managed to collect quite a few parts that would come in useful. The main components that I needed for the build were a complete rear axle with rear brakes, front suspension and front brakes, steering rack (which needs to be modified) and steering column, front anti roll bar, front and rear lever shock absorbers, handbrake lever (which needed to be modified) and finally a number of smaller components that I thought may come in useful.

The first components to refurbish were the front suspension.



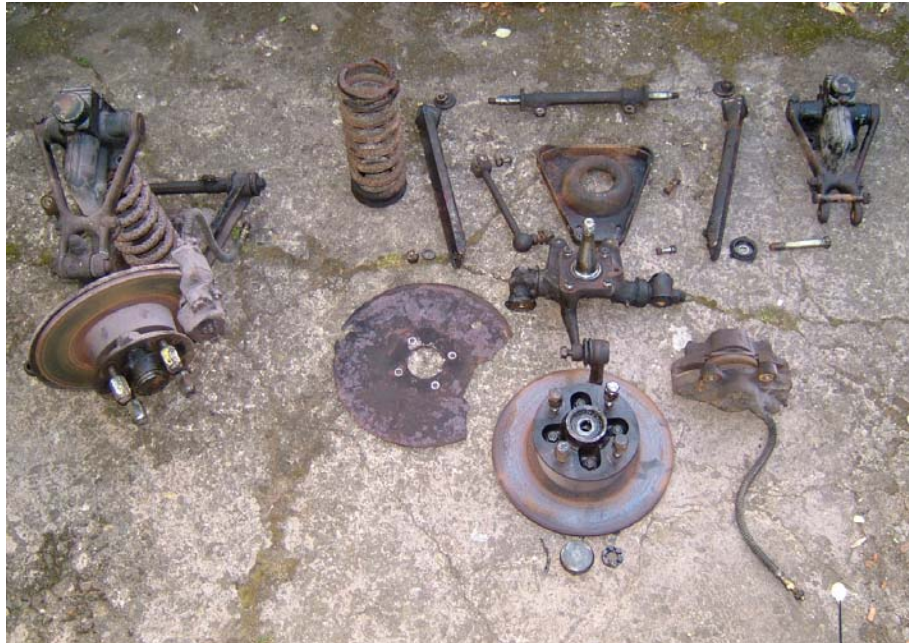
The main suspension cross member isn't required as these attachment points are all included in the Hawk 289 chassis so this was discarded. I decided to refurbish one half of the front suspension first and then the other. Despite having by this time a well thumbed Haynes MGB manual and Practical Classics MGB renovation manual I'd at least have a mirrored completely assembled unit that would give me some indication on how it all went back together.

It was at this point I had a wonderful setback when I was informed that the Garage I was renting had been sold so I had 3 weeks notice to find something else. Great....

So the plan changed slightly and I turned my attention to getting rid of all the items that I wouldn't need and getting all of the MGB parts, that I would need, home.

It's times like this that you are glad that you have a greenhouse. As the summer growing season was over it turned out to be an ideal temporary storage for a pile of MGB parts. As we had a very dry spell during October it was perfect for refurbishing the parts outside in the garden.

I stripped the nearside suspension unit to its component bits.



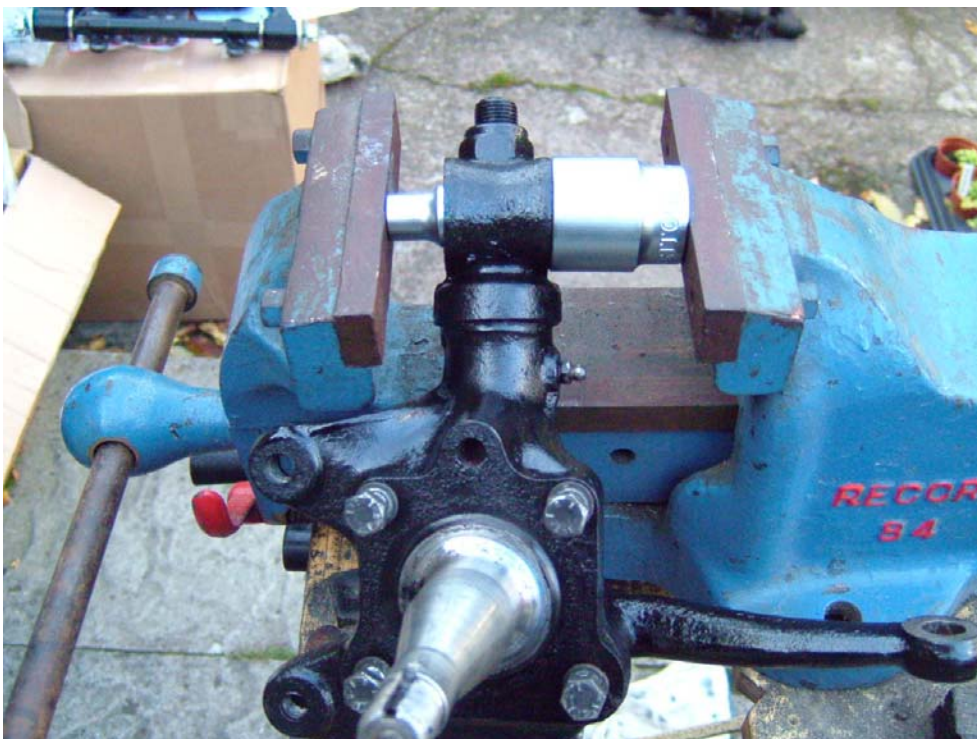
The split pins had had it, the bolts and nuts were all rusted up and the bushes were all shot. I ordered a complete set of these from a local MGB parts supplier. They were very helpful in recommending the required parts and even had a special offer on those that I needed. The spring pan and wishbones were filthy but in good condition and a light shot blast (from a willing friend) and a couple of coats of primer and good enamel and they came up great.



The Armstrong shock absorber was in good condition and only needed a clean up with a wire brush and a coat of paint.



The kingpin and swivel shaft assembly had no play so I cleaned it up and it looked as good as new. The new bushes, nuts, bolts and split pins arrived and I assembled the suspension unit. A large vice is a fantastic investment for removing old bushes and refitting new ones. I bought this vice on eBay for £25.00, money well spent I think.



I used a small and large socket set up in the vice jaws to push the bushes out. (Pushing the bushes into the large socket). After lots of discussions with various sources I opted for poly bushes. Some people say that they make the suspension too hard and other people swear by them. As I would be fitting a Ford engine in the 289 which is quite a bit heavier than the Rover V8 I thought that I will need something a bit harder wearing.



A couple of days hard work and I was really pleased with the result.

Just had the other side to do now.

A couple of weeks later I managed to secure another opportunity to build the 289. It was about the same size and slightly closer than the previous garage. It was a large stable / small barn. Big double doors on the front, high ceiling, and concrete floor, secure and dry... perfect. I just had to fit some lights and sockets which only took a day and I moved in.

It was about the time that the wonderful autumn weather we had been having, took a turn for the worse and I was glad to have a roof over my head.

I built a bench out of some steel legs and an old kitchen worktop and I got to work on the other suspension side.

Again all of the components were sound but filthy. They were all covered in light rust and a mixture of old grease and traffic dust and debris.



I finally got all of the components stripped down.



They were all in good condition and just needed a good clean and paint. I tapped up my friend that had the shot blasting equipment and he obliged. After cleaning I noticed that the one wishbone arm on this side was virtually new.

I didn't blast the king pins so I cleaned these the hard way with a scraper and wire brush. This saved the risk of grit getting to where it shouldn't get and it saved me having to strip these further as they were in excellent condition with no play. A good couple of hours of scraping and cleaning off with degreaser and they were all ready to paint.

As with the other suspension side, a couple of coats of good quality enamel and they looked as good as new.



It's just a case of following the instructions with the bushes and using the silicon grease provided in the packet (normal petroleum based grease can react with the polyurethane and is best avoided). Using a vice makes the assembly job really easy.



A liberal amount of the provided grease is applied where the bushes come into contact with a metal surface.

It's a good idea not to tighten up all of the bolts to the correct torque until the suspension assemblies are mounted to the chassis, and the suspension arms are at the correct ride height. This prevents any unnecessary stresses and strains occurring that could result in failure later on.

All finished and ready to fit to the chassis.



For information the proper torque settings for the front suspension are as follows:-

Front shock absorber bolts	44 ft lbs
Hub nut, align to next hole	40 ft lbs
Shock absorber pinch bolt	28 ft lbs
Lower arm nuts, align to next Split pin hole	28 ft lbs
Lower arm/spring pan nuts	22 ft lbs
Stabiliser bar link nut	60 ft lbs
Swivel pin nut, align to next Split pin hole	60 ft lbs
Steering arm bolts	63 ft lbs

