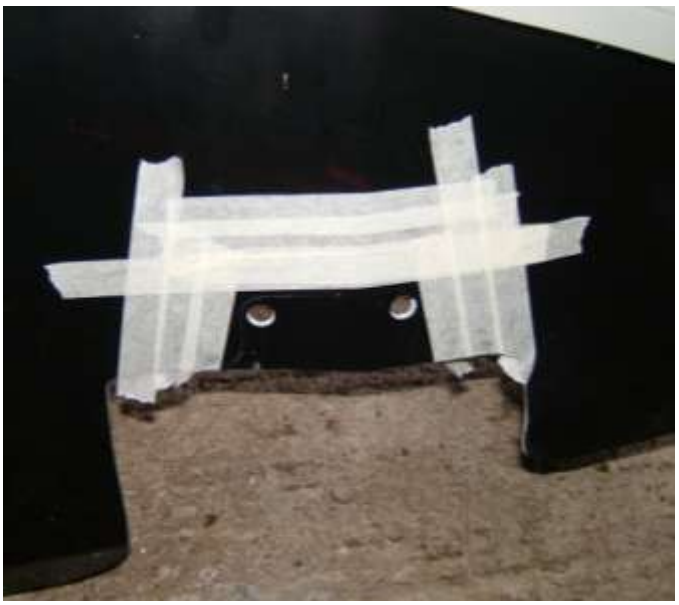
My Hawk build Part 11 by Stuart Clarke

Starting on the body

With the rolling chassis complete the next step was to start to prep the body and fit the things that will be easier with the body still off. (No doubt there will be things I'll miss and kick myself about later!)
So for this bit I think:

- Prepare engine bay
    - This will include painting the footwells white, cladding with aluminium and some painting with aluminium paint.
- Fitting side vents
- Fitting the pedal box and master cylinders.
- Fitting the reservoirs
- Fitting the battery tray.

As I was using the MGB front suspension, I had to cut the additional bits out on the Inner wheel arches. They are marked out on the GRP and just need cutting out.



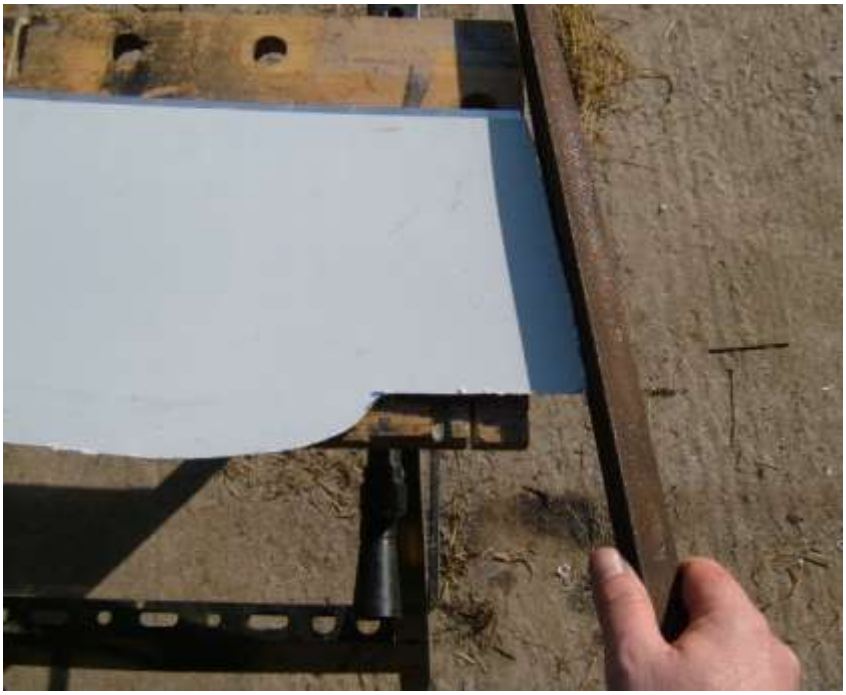
It's one of them moments that you just have to get through! Once you've cut the first bit out and it's OK you'll be away!

I drilled a couple of holes using a holesaw just to get into the corners. The masking tape was just to stop the running plate of the jigsaw from scratching the GRP. I know it's going to be cladded over anyway!!
A fast moving blade is needed and I cleaned up the edges with the dremel.

It’s perfectly OK to leave the engine bay as it is. The only reason why most people clad the bay or go for white footwells is to make it look a little more authentic. Some of the guys from the 289 Register have painted the inner wheel arches with aluminium colour paint and this looks really good too.

I decided on doing it the hard way. Painting the black footwells white and cladding the inner wheel arches with 1.2 mm thick aluminium sheet. I ordered an 8’x4’ sheet coated with plastic on the one side to try and reduce the scratches. This can then be peeled off when fitted.
I used lining paper to make patterns for the aluminium cladding.

I cut the aluminium sheet with a jig saw and filed the edges to deburr them.



I must admit, I didn't get them all right first time. Good job I had the 8'x4' sheet of aluminium.

I then cut the hole for the pedal box. The previous pedal boxes that I had seen had a proper flange to sit up against the footwell. Mine didn't so I had to be bear this in mind when I cut out the hole.

First I drilled a location hole, 25mm inboard of the template moulded into the footwell. In the inside of the footwell, I then retraced the position of the pedal box. Following this, I placed the pedal box up against the back of the footwell masked around the pedal box and then masked again 1cm inside this. This would result in a 1cm lip of fibreglass that I could seal the pedal box against after the hole was cut out.

It's quite fiddly doing this as you may well find out.

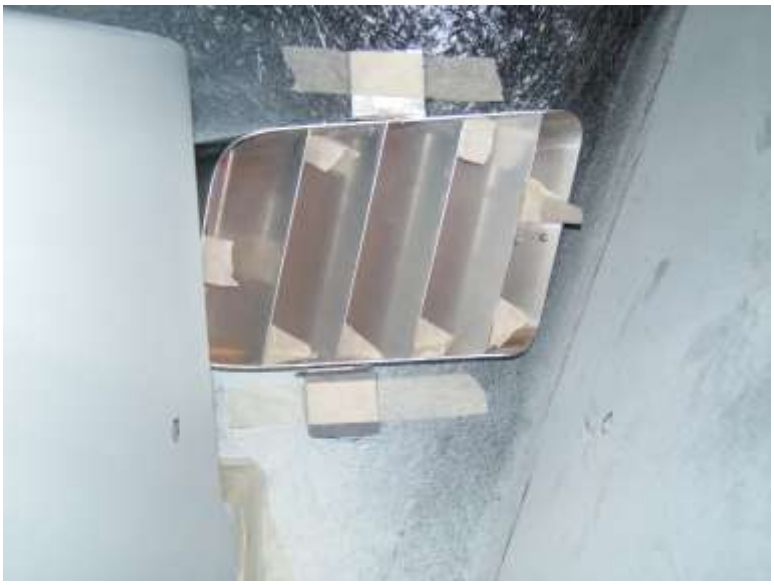
I then cut the hole out for the accelerator pedal. There's no guide for this as it's pretty much personal preference. I set the pedals so they would be evenly spaced.

With the holes all cut out, I could turn my attention to painting the footwells white. I spoke to a contact from another 289 Register member who suggested using a white primer with a clear top coat.
I followed the instructions and keyed the gel coat.

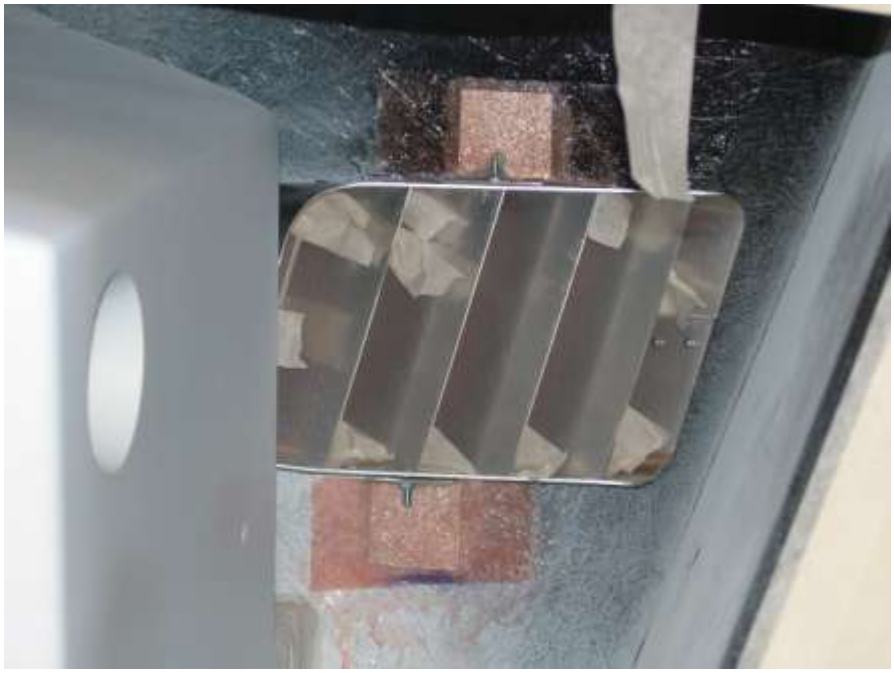
It took about five coats to cover the black to my satisfaction. After the clear top coat it looked great.

Those templates I cut out of the lining paper for the aluminium panels were great for masking off the areas I didn't want to paint.

When it was dry I fitted the side louvres. The accepted way to do this is to make some aluminium brackets and to fibreglass these brackets in place to hold the side louvres. This is a pig of a job and if I ever built a Hawk again I'd get them done before I picked the body and chassis up!



I fixed the brackets in place just to locate them. Then, making sure the louvres were level, I fixed the louvres in place using masking tape from the outside. This let me fibreglass the brackets into place without any obstructions.



Fibreglassing was something else I did for the first time on this project.
I've got some aluminium coloured sealant to hold the louvres in place (in addition to the brackets), Just in case!

Well that little job of fitting the louvres took nearly a full day. I've heard of some people using water resistant double sided tape. That sounds as if it is, possibly, a much better idea!

I drilled the holes for the battery tray and fit the master cylinders provisionally to the pedal box and placed the pedal box in its correct location with the hoses attached so I could find the correct location for the brake and clutch fluid reservoirs.

I just had to fit all the bits in place now.

I drilled the aluminium plates and riveted them into place using 4mm rivets.

Not bad at all.

The bulkhead panel just needs a bit of a polish and I needed a slight touch up on the footwells.

I fitted the battery tray into place and I fitted the mounting bracket for the reservoirs. Now I was ready to refit the body!