



Matt Tomkins
PROJECT
MANAGER

Rust-free

Matt future-proofs his convertible Minor project

As alluded to in my previous saga, with the welding on my Minor's shell complete, it was time to look into rust prevention for the future.

Having undertaken such a comprehensive body restoration, it would be foolish not to protect that considerable investment of time and money.

With underbody protection there are two primary options available: a bitumen-based 'underseal' type product or a hard-wearing paint. As someone who has been bitten by the ingress of water and consequent rot behind old and flaky underseal in the past, and with a totally blank canvas to work on, I fancied a clean, painted surface. Nothing can hide, and surface corrosion can be treated before it turns terminal. Rustbuster Epoxy Mastic 121 is about the hardest wearing paint I know, so when the company's managing director Ian Allen mentioned that it is available in body colour, while filming for our latest Skillshack course, it seemed the obvious choice to me.

Over at Rustbuster HQ, we rolled the car gently onto its side ready to get

started. Looking at some of the fabrication and welding that I undertook at the beginning of the project over 12 months ago and comparing it to the work carried out in the past couple of months, the difference is phenomenal. Given the time I would like to go back around the car knowing what I do now and make a better job of it. I have to draw a line somewhere, though, and all of the work I'd done was solid and of perfectly acceptable quality for the Rustbuster treatment. So I was happy to leave things alone.

Rotary stripping

The guys set to work first removing any trace of old surface rust and old coatings by means of rotary wire brushes and MBX stripper tools. They then ground back any undressed welds with flap-wheels. Next, the surface was degreased before application of FE123 rust converter to treat any

pitted surfaces or seams where rust had begun. This had to be applied very sparingly and soon turned to a hard, black iron tannate. This could then safely be coated over without fear of corrosion re-occurring

'For now, though, I can declare the shell finished once and for all'



AFTER
Seam sealed and painted, it's a protected for years to come.

BEFORE
Rust removed and converted, all ready for treatment.

underneath, as the rust had been neutralised. All welded seams were sealed with a flexible permanent sealer, with all of us safe in the knowledge that no rust was trapped within. Sealer was applied from a caulking gun before being brushed into every nook and cranny. Care was taken not to block any drain holes. A common point of failure with any painted coating is at outside angles and edges. Not only do these get exposed to greater abrasion, but it is also harder to get a consistently thick coating from spraying due to vortices and areas of negative pressure being formed by the pressure of the spray gun. Thus, before the final top coat was sprayed on, any edges were stripe-coated with Epoxy Mastic paint, before being quickly followed by the final top coats sprayed wet-on-wet.

Got it covered

Standing back at the end of the day to see the months of welding finally behind me and a solid base to build the rest of the car upon was, I must confess, a little emotional, and with Epoxy Mastic being used on North Sea oil rigs, I'm pretty confident that this investment now, with the Minor as a bare shell that could be thoroughly cleaned and coated, has all been very worthwhile.

For now, then, I can declare the shell finished once and for all, meaning I can set about paint prep in the coming months. The priority now is to send the panels to be dipped and stripped, which I'm sure will inevitably reveal a world of horrors. Oh the joys of classic cars.

While the shell is away I have continued with the A-series engine build. I've fitted the 1275cc Metro economy cam along with a high quality Mini slot-drive oil pump. With this in place, my attention turned to the other end of the camshaft where I fitted an upgraded duplex timing chain kit, countersinking the frontplate before fitting it to accommodate a pair of countersunk screws, giving clearance for the thicker bottom pulley. With the frontplate fitted to the engine, dots on both timing chain pulleys were lined up and slid on over a new pair of woodruff keys in the cam and crank. Once the sump is on, I will be able to drop in the NOS cam followers I picked up at a recent BMC parts day and find the rest of the bits and pieces required to declare it complete.

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How to take on the tinworm



1 Back to basics
Welds were ground down and surface rust removed along with any traces of old coating. This stage is an essential one to ensure a strong final finish for the floorpan.

2 Rust converted
The FE123 rust converter was applied and then left to dry to black.



3 Seams sealed
Seam sealer was applied to all welded seams and potential moisture traps.



4 Stripe coat
Edges and seams were stripe-coated for coverage where it mattered most and where spraying may not have covered.



5 Spray Away
Finally, the shell was painted in 121 Epoxy Mastic topcoat, ready to provide many years of protection and worry-free motoring.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Rustbuster
01775 761222,
rust.co.uk



1960 Morris Minor Convertible

Engine 998cc/4-cyl/OHV
Power TBC
Torque Hopefully sufficient
Gearbox 4-speed manual
0-60 Maybe
Top speed Hopefully raised
Fuel economy Who knows?

Work done

Rust stopped once and for all with a trip to Rustbuster.

2 (Days) TIME	500 (£) SPENT	0 MILES
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Also in Matt's garage

1979 TRIUMPH DOLOMITE
Awaiting attention, someday.
1992 EUNOS ROADSTER
Requires a clutch before it can be used regularly again.