

Rover SD1 Twin Plenum Vitesse D330 ENH - Tales of Caution Number 2 - 4Q'93

Here is an update on the project to upgrade my TP Vitesse D330 ENH. Further to experiences fitting an MRA stainless exhaust system, I had two mechanical failures associated with the fixings at the rear of the gear- box. The first was metal fatigue at one of the original support brackets which was easily welded, but the second was more consequential. One of the “ears” welded to the pipe adjacent to the rear of the gearbox broke off, and it was clear that a welded replacement would be under similar stress so I remove the ear from the other pipe and fabricated an alternative method of fixing the system to the aforesaid bracket at the rear of the gearbox.

For two standard 54mm “U” bolts I made up two 1/8” steel plates (2.5” X 0.75”) each with three 6mm holes. Two outer holes matched the “U” bolt, and one near the centre mated with the support bracket slotted hole. The “U” bolts were assembled to each pipe and the plates offered-up to the “U” bolt ends with two additional nuts/spring-washers, so capturing the 6mm bolt which fixes to the support brackets. With fittings and brackets all loosely assembled I pulled everything slowly together until both pipes were securely attached to the rear of the gearbox. The pipes were protected from compression by interposing a 16g aluminium semi-circular pad between the “U” bolt and the pipe.

An additional refinement was to weld two 54 mm “U” bolts back-to-back with a spacer and that unit positioned between both pipes just where they come together for their parallel run down the tunnel and the whole thing lightly torqued and locked. This further reduced resonance in the system caused by the unsupported run of the twin pipes down to the first silencer box without generating any vertical rigidity aft of the gearbox. Contrary to your vivid imagination, the whole thing is not at all like the Forth Bridge under there, but it looks very neat, durable and easy to adjust if needed.

I have replaced the lower steering shaft flexible coupling using a Peugeot part previously recommended in the club magazine but the p/n has changed (again) to 404057. Had an interesting failure and subsequent solution to the problem of trying to undo (in situ) the allen-head screws which were very tight. I resorted to removing the lower splined assy complete with coupling. Whence brought to the bench, I found I had damaged the hexagonal hole in the top of the screw, so I selected a torx bit from my kit and drifted it into the damaged hole to “convert” it to torx for removal. Magic! Replacement screws will be fitted.

Had two (more) rainwater leaks to deal with during the recent monsoons! After abortive amateur solutions I went to my local professional (Dennis at Bedford Windscreens) who first did a neat and virtually invisible job of applying black silicon to seal the front screen followed by a routine “out and in” job on the hatch glass. It’s not just the water-logging which I found so annoying, but the fog condensing on the interior with every merest ray of sunshine. No sooner had he fixed the front screen than two days later it collected a small stone from a passing lorry which punched a star hole in the outer lamination. Now for another 40 quid I can get a new screen on the insurance but hopefully the new method of repairing holes/cracks in screens will be the best bet?

I am planning to fit new front shocks but a trader said I must replace struts and springs too, some suppliers providing a whole kit! I’m not so sure that is needed so is there anyone out there who can advise what’s best and most cost-effective? Adjustables, non-adjustables, what have you?

The “Alban Boris”



breakers yard where he worked. Initially, we called it “The Buggy” and after a season of racing at Santa-Pod, Carl decided to make it Street Legal.

The obvious requirements were lights, guards, mirrors, horn, etc, and he first consulted the local road-traffic police for advice. Everyone else said it couldn't be done but he persevered and when the day came for inspection by DVLC (Luton) a very nice lady engineer turned up on a Saturday afternoon and the conversation went something like this:-

DVLC (Ignoring the Buggy) “Could you show me the car, please Sir?”

Carl “It's here, right in front of you!”

DVLC “That's not a car, it's got no body!”

Carl “It's got four wheels, seats, a steering wheel brakes, lights and an engine. What more do you want?”

DVLC “Well, er, what sort of engine is it?”

Carl “Rover 3500cc V8 with Holly carb's!”

DVLC “OK, but what about the chassis?”

Carl “Ford Popular!”

DVLC “Yes, but what sort of axle is that?”

Carl “Jaguar!”

DVLC “Well it doesn't look like any of them! We've got to call it something, what do you suggest?”

Carl “Alban?”

DVLC "Alban! OK! Um, Er, What model?"

Carl "Boris?" (and with no trace of a smile)

DVLC "Boris! Huh! Thank you Sir! I'll let you know when you can come into the office and pick up your log book, tax disc and "Q" plates but remember, I'll need your Insurance and MOT!"

Now, obtaining the insurance is another story, but not surprisingly the local MOT centre were also non-plussed (going thro' the "Thats not a car!" routine, all over again) before passing it AOK first time. To make a long story even longer, armed with Insurance and MOT, "Boris" was duly registered and subsequently driven all the way from Bedford to Hayling Island for an Annual Street Car Cruise before Carl (needing cash) sold it for a song to a guy in Bristol.

Thus is the tale of how our family attained equal car manufacturer status with "Rover", Rolls Royce" and "Lotus" et al, and proof resides somewhere in the vaults of DVLC with detail of a singular Street Legal Dragster affectionately known as the "Alban Boris". And, of course there are also his photos.

Are you still out there Boris? "Viva la V8!"

Ramon

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