

## XOM 429 J 'SPIKE' – as told by Tom Singfield

My prize-winning Morris Minor 8 cwt Van was first registered to a Mr Clarke in Birmingham on 21st July 1971 and is one of 21,833 Vans built that year. Mr Clarke was responsible for an extensive strip down of the whole van and a beautiful job of soundproofing, rust prevention and some chassis welding. He also made many high quality electrical modifications to the interior and exterior lighting, including electric windscreen washers, fog lights, interior lights, reversing light, tape player and various extra instruments on a modified dashboard and huge centre console. It was sold to a Mr. Wilson from Bromsgrove in 2000 before I purchased it via EBay (unseen!) in September 2003 with less than 25,000 miles on the clock. With an interest in aviation especially Gatwick (where I worked) airlines, I decided to modify the original overall Teal blue colours by using rattle cans to paint a white roof and side panels. I added a flashing orange roof light and then added vinyl titles from British United Airways. This airline was based at Gatwick from 1960 until they were taken over by Caledonian Airlines in 1970. BUA never had Morris Minor vans but they did have a fleet of Ford Anglia vans in a similar style colour scheme. Other Gatwick airlines certainly did have Minor Vans; the most numerous was Dan-Air London who had vans (dark green colours) and a variety of pickups with stunning red and black colours. Julian Temple, formally at the Brooklands Museum in Surrey has a pickup restored in Dan-Air colours.



*Engine is out and hours of scraping get the thick layers of sound deadening off the engine compartment.*



*Out comes the 1098cc engine ready for a Marina 1275cc to drop in.*

I have fitted a 1275cc Marina engine with an HIF6 carb, front discs, Midget Clutch and flywheel with a lengthened clutch release arm, saloon diff, alternator, under-seat speakers with a USB based music player, battery isolator, cigarette lighter socket for my TomTom satnav, thermostatic fan, footwell lights, electronic ignition, new carpets and re-upholstered reclining seats from a Metro as the original seats were so awful. (It actually only came with a driver's seat) I

The back now has carpet and boxed-in wheel arches with the spare wheel re-positioned. The dashboard has laser-cut drop-down hinged panels with a full set of instruments.



*This is what the early interior looked like while I was doing some re-wiring!*



*A view of the current interior showing the modified dash with hinged, drop-down panels for the gauges and Metro seats.*

The ugly rear view of the van has been cleaned up by the fitting of an aluminium valance containing the number plate, reflectors, fog and reverse lights.



*Rear views in a van are dreadful, even with big wing mirrors you can't see directly behind you. This mirror fitted to the door frame is offset enough to allow a view of traffic directly behind.*

The best mods however are an additional rear-view mirror attached to the forward edge of the driver's door frame in front of the sun visor (I can now see anything directly behind me) and the wonderful extended bonnet stay that prevents me banging my head on the bonnet edge as well as letting me hoist out the engine with the bonnet still attached.

When I bought it, under the bonnet looked awful as it was covered in an inch thick layer of scruffy sound-deadening. This took me many days to remove but this then allowed be to prep it all for a front end and under bonnet re-spray.



*Looking very smart now with fresh paint and a new 1275 along with a Midget Clutch and extended clutch release arm.*



*A view of me in my little garage prepping "Spike" for a front end respray.*



*Here is "Spike" alongside the Vickers Viscount airliner I help look after at Brooklands museum.*

I am a volunteer at Brooklands Museum where I help look after a Vickers Viscount airliner in British Air Ferries (BAF) colours. When new vinyl stickers were acquired for the aircraft, I ordered a small matching set for Spike so when I go to Brooklands in the van I park alongside the Viscount in matching markings. BAF also never operated Minor vans but it's my van and I can paint it anyway I like! Future plans for Spike include three-branch exhaust and perhaps a new carpet one day.

**Tom Singfield, Horsham**