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Feb  
2014



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[www.fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk](http://www.fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk)

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## **IT'S SPRING ALREADY!**

Yes! It's nearly Spring and soon we will be carrying out the 'Annual Ritual of Renewal' - wash, polish, pump up tyres, charge battery. But wait! There is one more vital item to take care of, the Club Annual Membership Renewal.

It's just a little bit different for some this year. As the membership has continued to expand we realise that the systems that were good before, now need updating to be more effective, cost saving (your money) and able to serve the greater membership of the future. (also more ECO!)

As stated in the Jan newsletter, those members renewing by standing order, many thanks, job done, relax or polish car. All other members, to continue your membership you need to follow one of the paths below:

Go to your bank, (or on line) and make a payment of £20 to :

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Please put your membership number in the reference box. While there, perhaps consider setting up a standing order for next year Feb 15th 2015.

Alternatively, please send a cheque for £20 payable to FIAT 500 ENTHUSIASTS CLUB and post to: Alan Cook, Club Treasurer, 9 Armitage Court, Sunninghill, Ascot, Berks SL5 9TA

Be sure to put your name and membership number on the reverse. Don't know your number? See your membership card and also the label on the magazine envelope.

Not sure if you already have a standing order? Membership numbers below do not.

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Please help YOUR club to continue its success into the next and future years.

Many thanks, John Jenkins

### **Committee News**

Having confirmed our new Club treasurer as Alan Cook., the Committee turned its attention to the Membership role recently vacated by Steven Abbott.

Fortunately whilst taking a more back seat role we expect to see Steven and his family at as many events as possible in the coming year and beyond. Firstly On behalf of all of the Committee, and no doubt all Club Members, I would like to thank Steven for the immense amount of work that he has done on our behalf, both as the Treasurer and also the Membership Secretary. Either of these roles demand a huge effort and to carry the burden of both for the

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past 5 years is "Enthusiasm" at its very best. So a most sincere 'Thank You' goes out to him.

It should be taken as a compliment to him then that we decided to divide the extensive role of 'Membership' between two roles. Sheridan Bowie has offered to take on the role of 'New Members to enrol and respond to NEW membership enquiries. Existing and renewal of membership responsibilities will transfer to myself as part of the Chairman's role.

There may well be a few 'Glitches' to iron out before normal service is restored, and we seek your continued cooperation.

John Jenkins Chairman

### **Insurance Perspectives – new drivers**

The Club has been asked a number of times about insurance options for the new or young driver with a classic Fiat. We asked the insurance companies who support our club for their advice.

***Question: Can a new driver specifically use a classic Fiat as a lower cost insurance option for their only car and what are they likely to save?***

**Lancaster:** *Unfortunately just owning a car over a certain age does not automatically qualify you for a classic car policy. Our classic schemes are targeted at drivers of classic cars and it is those features which enable us to offer such low rates compared to everyday car insurance. As a consequence, we require drivers to have held their licence for up to 4 years before they can take out a classic car policy.*

*For the vast majority of classic car drivers, this is not an issue and so we can use that to offer highly competitive rates. Classic Car insurance policies are different to everyday car policies as we know the majority of classic car enthusiasts treat their classics different to their everyday car. The main points are they will usually own or have access to a second vehicle, there will be limited mileage and will probably be garaged. Classic car policies are not designed for everyday use in mind so unfortunately a new driver who is using a classic Fiat as their only car probably would not qualify for a classic scheme.*

**Adrian Flux:** *Yes potentially a young driver could qualify for insurance cover for a classic Fiat. However the 'classic' style terms imposed by insurers would still invariably apply - i.e. limited mileage, garaging clause (in certain cases) and so on. In addition many insurers now favour young driver/classic cars even if they cannot offer the classic style policy.*

**Question:** *How should a family add a new driver to their already insured classic Fiat?*

**Lancaster:** *As previously mentioned classic policies require customers to have held their licence for a certain period therefore it is probably unfeasible to add a "new driver" to your existing classic policy.*

*However, if this is just adding another driver to the policy the policyholder should contact Lancaster and discuss their options and we will do our best to accommodate them within the constraints of our schemes.*

**Adrian Flux:** *It's always worth contacting your intermediary/insurer to see if they can add a new driver/young driver, particularly to a classic Fiat. In many cases underwriters are unable to accommodate drivers under 25 years old on another's policy. This practice referred to as 'fronting' did receive plenty of press recently.*

We'd like to thank Craig at Adrian Flux Insurance Services and Charlotte at Lancaster Insurance for their help in writing this article and for their continued support of our club.





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## BEDDA

*The continuing tale of how Sara and Franc acquired, then drove their 1970 500L (Bedda) on a epic 60 day journey from Trapani in western Sicily all the way back to Manchester.*



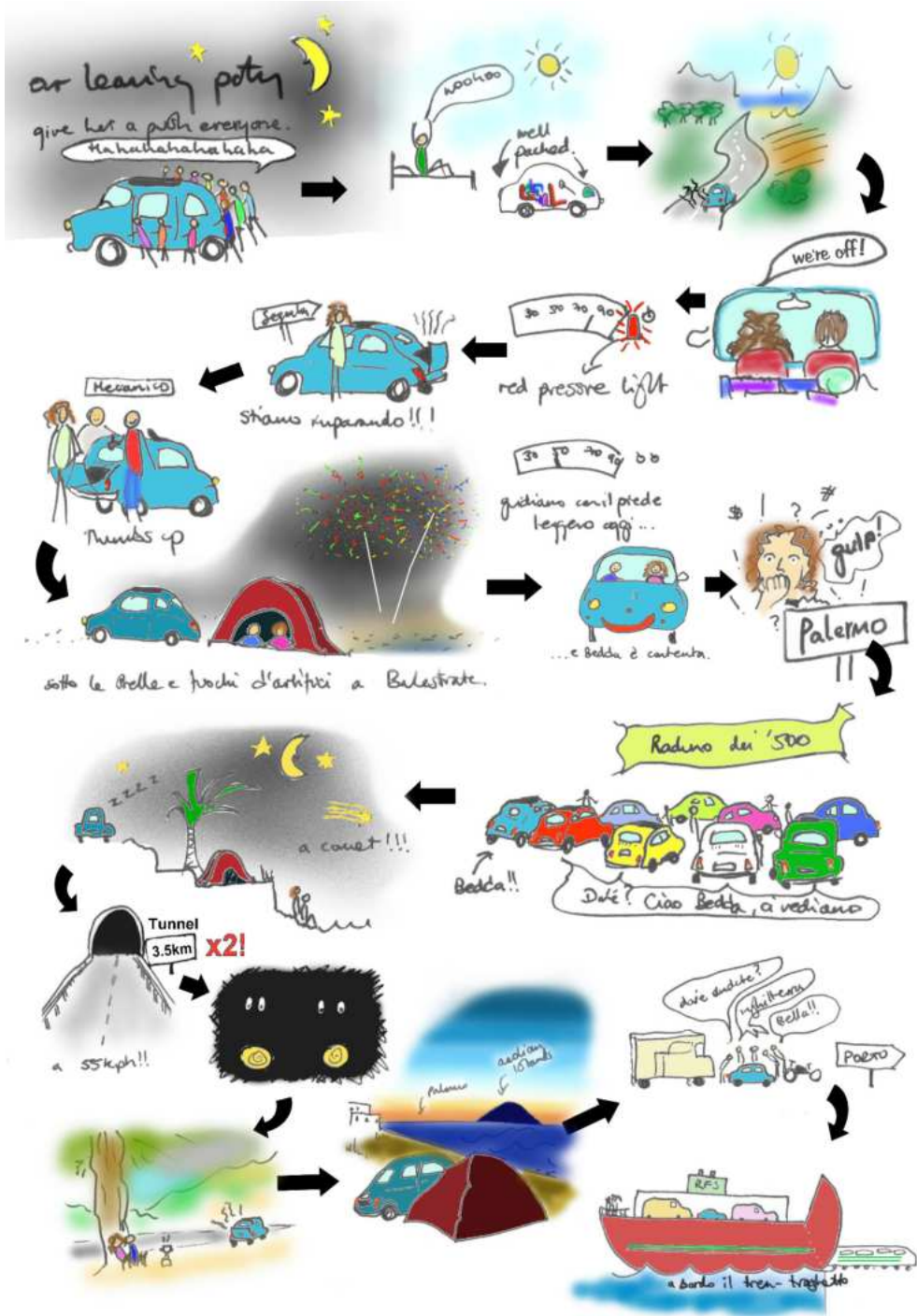
### *And they're off!*

With a week of September lost to Italian bureaucracy, we were eager to start our journey. We'd packed everything into the car and made window blinds to hide the contents from thieves. We'd

practiced driving and changing gear, but not driving in the rain. As if by magic, the heavens opened and began to delay us yet further. As all you British owners know, standing water on the roads and Fiat 500 spark plugs don't mix....We organised our leaving party regardless and were given a good old send off by family and friends. After two days of monsoon rains, Saturday 15th dawned with blue skies and sunlight. Roads were dry by 11 and we waited no longer. Bedda started first time and we set off with the roof down. Our 3 week journey to Manchester had begun!

By midday, the sun was beating down and we'd travelled about 35km. We were on the motorway and had been keeping up a constant 90kph when the red oil pressure light came on. We slowed and took the first exit – the







2000 year old amphitheatre of Segesta. We parked up, opened up her boot to cool her down and waited. We decided to continue our journey on the 'Statali' (A roads). The heat of the day wasn't helping to cool her and we eventually trundled into the (hilltop) town of Alcamo with red light still flickering. Being Saturday afternoon every garage was closed, but Bedda stopped to cool down outside one where the resting mechanic Giuseppe was kind enough to amble over and ask if we were alright. He had a quick poke around and said she was fine. He then advised us that "in sun don't take her over 70kph or do more than 100km without stopping". Happy it was us and not our 500, we pootled back down into the valley towards the beach to make camp. Our first day was over and although our dash said we'd covered 75km, we were only 50km (32miles) from our start point! Three weeks? More like 6! [1 day/75km].

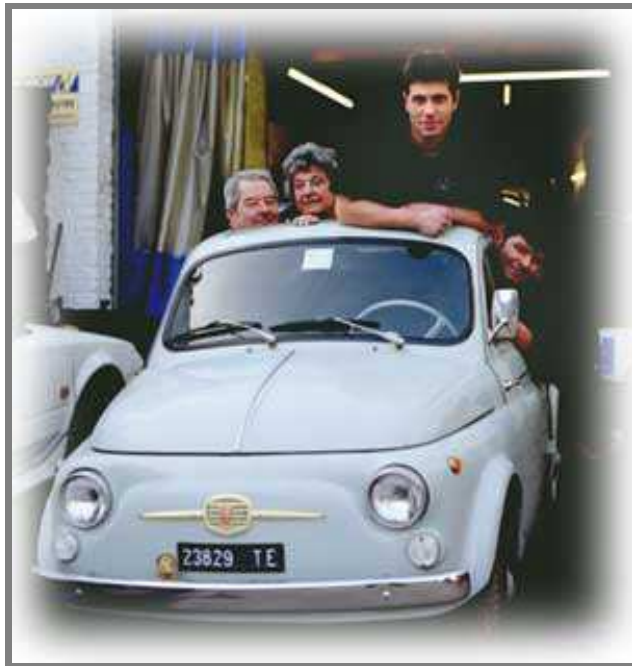
Next morning we were on the road by 7, intent on working our breaks around Bedda's cool-down stops. Thus breakfast was at 9am on the outskirts of Palermo. As we got closer to the capital we saw more classic 500s. Wanting to avoid the fast motorway traffic we chose to go through the centre... and with nerves of steel Sara was amazing and only had to sound the horn twice. Our 'PA' Palermo registration plates helped us fit in! As we scooted through a suburb, a casual sideways glance spotted what appeared to be three 500s and a police cordon. Curiosity aroused, we pulled over and Franc was sent to investigate. Next thing Sara knew, Marshals were ushering her into the cordon – charm had again opened a door and we were suddenly attending a classic Fiat 500 Raduno (Rally) with about 40 500s. It was as if all her Sicilian siblings had gathered to give her big farewell.

Our journey along Sicily's northern coast continued for another two days. In that time we met a score of other 500s dotted along the SS113 road. A veritable gold mine if you are looking to buy one! In honour of her final journey through Sicily, we thought we'd stop off in the hilltop town of Termini Imerese which gives its name to the Fiat plant nearby in which Bedda was most likely assembled. The 126, Panda, Punto and Ypsilon were all made here before closure in 2010. Two memorable things happened here: We overtook our first car – a 1990 Renault 5 - a big feat in a 42 year old!; and during a routine Polizia roadblock we were smilingly waived *past* as every modern car was waived *in* for checking! Yeah! Bedda Magic! By staying under 50kmh and giving her (and us) lots of breaks Bedda carried us 342km over those next two days – with no oil pressure light! [3 days/417km]. Maybe 4 weeks was realistic? Estimates aside, we were winging it with no real plan, happy to let the scenery lead us. So much

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so that on day 3 we failed to notice 'road closed/diversion' signs on the coastal road which then ended abruptly in a boarded up tunnel. Backtracking 10km, we were diverted onto the fast motorway and confronted with a poorly lit 3.5km long uphill tunnel! To say we felt vulnerable chugging through in our tiny 500 is an understatement. Thankfully, a white knight driver in his 'Artic' came up behind us and protected us - flooding the tunnel with light so we could see. With beeped thanks duly exchanged he overtook us as we returned to daylight. Our joy was short-lived as within seconds we had entered a *second* dimly lit uphill 3.5km long tunnel! \$%#\*!! And then we had to pay for this scary experience at the motorway exit! We switched back to the coastal road and treated ourselves and Bedda to a well earned lunchbreak on the clifftops overlooking the valleys of TV's Inspettore Montalbano.

With Sara thoroughly frazzled by the double declutching and crazy Sicilian drivers, Franc took the wheel as we set off for the port of Messina on our final morning in Sicily. Whilst queuing to board the ferry, Bedda became the centre of attention as German, Austrian and Czech bikers crowded round to peer at her cooling engine. We pointed them in the direction of the terminal where a member of staff was selling a 500F, an 850 saloon and a spider. We left Sicily under blue skies and 35 minutes later were rolling onto the mainland. Bedda had left her home of 42 years but was raring to explore Calabria with us! Beep-beep!



*Next time: Breaks, Brakes & Breakdowns*

Franc & Sara

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## **'TECH TORQUE'**

*Please note that the Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club advise caution if and when following advice given on these pages as the club can accept no responsibility.*

### **Some Ideas on Improving the Life and Performance of an Engine**

Many years ago (and sadly, I do mean many) I worked at 'Radbourne Racing' in London under the guidance of the late, great Geoff Anstead—possibly the best boss that I ever had. One of the regular jobs was for a bunch of us to go over to (I think) Jack Barclays, collect brand new 500s, drive them back to Bramber Road and then convert them into 'Radbourne 650N' pocket rocket—a job I really enjoyed. Whilst doing these conversions, I acquired a fair number of tips and ways of doing the job that improved the performance and life of the engine.

#### **(A) STRONGER EXHAUST MOUNTING**

One of the normal problems with securing the exhaust mounting brackets to the crank-case is that the studs can pull out of the crank-case, and then you are faced with the problem of fitting oversize studs and drilling out the brackets to refit them. The trick is, whilst the sump is off and before the engine is rebuilt, to tap the thread on the TOP stud holes all the way through (they are not 'blind' as are the lower stud holes) and then fit a machine screw, of the required length and complete with flat washer, spring washer and loctited, from the INSIDE—and do it up REALLY TIGHT! This way all the load on the top mounting is taken by a bolt that can't pull out, rather than a short length of aluminium thread. If in doubt regarding the lower stud, a steel insert in the crank-case might be a wise move—a problem we didn't come across as we were usually dealing with brand new engines.

#### **(B) NEW-BUILD LUBRICATION**

Very often when rebuilding your engine, it can be days, or even weeks before the rebuild is complete, and then some considerable time before the engine is installed and cranked into life; this can lead to an oil-drain-back situation with the engine being started with "dry" components---I have stripped brand-new engines with 'collection only' mileage on them with scored bearings in them. I used to get round this problem by coating all moving and 'in-contact' parts with a liberal coating of a "gloop" consisting of a 50/50 mix of STP and thin engine oil—the oil lubricated, and the STP held it all in place. I have actually got the 'oil-pressure' light to go out by pushing a car down the road, with the



plugs out, in gear. I usually made the mix up in a wide-mouthed container (Doritos Tortilla Chips 'dip' jar is perfect—fairly shallow with a wide mouth), but remember, don't put the rest of the mix, or the STP, into the engine until it is well 'run in' - because the STP will prevent it from becoming 'run-in'!

#### (C) CLEANING ALUMINIUM COMPONENTS

Getting aluminium components really clean can be a very tedious job, but this chore is now alleviated by the system called 'Aqua Blasting' - also known as 'Vapour Blasting'. In this system VERY fine glass beads are carried in water at high pressure. The beauty of this system is that, unlike with grit or sand blasting, you don't have to spend time masking off all the 'gasketed' surfaces as it leaves them clean, and unmarked. I have used this system myself and can vouch for its effectiveness—it brought up a gear-box bell-housing so well that my son thought that I had bought as new one! It is very good for cleaning carburettor parts, and often the people with this facility also have an 'ultra-sound' facility for cleaning out the very fine passages and orifices in carburettors.

Tom Montague



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## Timing Chains

In the November 2013 (No. 29) edition of this illustrious little magazine, Tony Spillane wrote an article regarding Fiat 500 timing-gears. His problem is not unique as many years ago, when I was a 'younger mechanic' I ran a 500 and ran into the same problem, with a remarkably similar scenario. My engine was running a little erratically, but not enough to worry about; I ran my (then) girlfriend home from West-Wickham (just outside Croydon) to Kingston one evening, drove to work next morning (Radbourne Racing in London)—no real problem. That was until I came to go home—the engine wouldn't start! Going through all the basics I realised that the timing wasn't correct, by a fair way. Being that the distributor wasn't loose, it could only be out if the teeth were broken on the distributor drive (which they weren't) or - the cam timing was out. A quick strip down of the timing-cover revealed a cam-shaft sprocket with a lot fewer teeth on it than it had come out of the factory with - how had it kept running?

My parts were factory original, but the mileage was about 80,000 so maybe they have a 'natural' life. We mustn't forget that 500s were built cheaply, to get Italy back on the road. My only suggestion regarding this problem is that as the mileage builds up, it might be a wise move to do a 'stitch in time' renewal, and if the engine is being re-built, NEVER re-use the old chain and sprockets—always renew them, no matter how good they look.

*Tom's advice is sound, nevertheless I have had further communications regarding the timing gears which further suggests there is an issue with sub-standard parts. It is certainly a case of 'buyer beware,' if you feel you have bought sub-standard parts, it is wise to contact your retailer first, not forgetting that they may be unaware of the problem.*



## Fiat 500 – everyday use

As mentioned before, my Fiat 500 is my everyday car, and I'm doing around 10,000 miles a year in it, including motorway miles. To make this more comfortable, I've done a few things to quieten it down. It's slightly ironic that my first job was working in the noise & vibration dept at Rolls Royce Cars! Old habits die hard, and so Phoebe has been getting my attention.

### 1) Insulation

After making sure that all obvious holes are sealed up, (including a check on the door seals), the biggest first step is to fully cover the floor and rear bulkhead with noise deadening felt. This needs to be a good fit, to minimise gaps. Include the areas behind the rear side trims, rear parcel shelf, tunnel, etc. You can buy the felt, and spray on adhesive, from many car accessory shops or on-line. I've also lined the engine bay with sound absorbing foam, from B&Q (see photos below)

Fortunately, Phoebe came with a Fiat 126 Bis final drive in place, this reduces engine revs for any given road speed.

### 2) Exhaust

I soon took off the 'sports' type exhaust that was on the car, it seemed to make more noise than go. I've recently fitted a German Ebay special, an exhaust for the late 126 Electronic car. It features larger pipe diameter (35mm compared to 32mm standard – nearly 20% more cross-sectional area)), a two-into-one pipe system, and a larger silencer volume. All of this should help improve both performance and quietness, and for the cost of loose change, it's worth a punt.



The downside is fitting requires removing the rear cross-member (no big deal), and a bit of extra clearance is required by fettling here and there, particularly between the cross-member and the tailpipe. New top mounting brackets are

needed (I fabricated mine out of B&Q 4x30mm steel strip). I took the opportunity to fit stainless steel studs, nuts & bolts.

On the road, it feels smoother and more responsive, whilst certainly being no noisier.



### 3) Air intake

Phoebe came with a Dellorto FZD carb, and as these seem to challenge gold on the stock exchange, I've kept it on. However, it has an open intake, which is not good for noise or engine life (no air filter). Having done an air intake noise test (downhill in gear with the ignition off, alternating between closed and open throttle, and listening for any difference in noise), it was clear that the open inlet was noisy. I tried using the standard system off the cooling casing, but it upset the carburetion, which seemed to elude a bit of re-jetting. Finally, I stumbled on a new 126 Bis remote air cleaner system, that fitted nicely onto Phoebe's rear bulkhead (she's very accommodating!).



With a bit of flexible ducting, and a modified inlet elbow and breather hose, it was nicely sorted. It didn't require re-jetting, showing that there is negligible flow resistance, yet the intake noise has gone.

Whilst no Rolls Royce, Phoebe is now a bit more civilised!

**Tony Spillane**



## TECHNICAL TERMS EXPLAINED (Simply, but not necessarily scientifically)

### BODY PARTS

**A Pillar** The vertical steel tube type supports between the roof and the floor each side of the front windscreen,

**B Pillar** Similar to above, roof to floor, but immediately behind the front seats each side.

**C Pillar** Yep, The roof to floor supports at the rear, but more usually flatter sheet steel.

**Bulkhead** Sheet steel pressings which run up from the floor at the front to the bottom of the screen and support the pedals and steering etc. at the rear, separates people from the engine and oily bits! (unless a Topolino which is front engined!)

**Quarter lights** Lights are windows, These are the very useful little ones at the front of the doors, which most modern cars don't have!

### ENGINE

**Crankshaft** Wiggly shaped shaft in the centre of the engine which most oily bits are connected to, changes the up and down movement of the pistons into a turning motion more suitable for driving the wheels.

**Camshaft** Driven from the above by sprocket and chain at half the speed, The cams are positioned to open valves at the correct time to allow fuel into the cylinders and exhaust gas out. Also drives the distributor, but that's another story!

**Pistons** Two per 500, 4 per Topolino, Cylinder shaped alloy which slides up and down in the cylinders taking the power from the burning and expanding fuel down the connecting rods to the crankshaft.

**Connecting rods** ie 'Con' Rods 'Have I lost you yet? stick with it' Steel rods with a bearing at each end (called big end and small end easy) that join the up and down piston with the round and round crankshaft.

Well Done, Take a break! More next month.

J.J.

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## THE FALL & RISE OF FRED FIAT

*Continued from November. Welding over, now on to the rest...*

That was just about all the major re-welding except for many small brackets et. The wiring loom had all the terminals replaced together with a few modifications to accommodate a high level brake light sourced from Ricambio – ex Panda which with small modifications fits very well.

Hazard lights were also fitted, as well as a heated rear window – again Franco, I also found a relay which gave me a 10 minute cut off for this. The windscreen wiper mechanism was also unserviceable. As I could not get a right-hand drive



I had to modify a left-hand one, at first the wiper motor itself would not cancel, but once this was sorted I found a relay to enable the motor to be switched to slow sweep – one sweep every 5 seconds. Having an alternator on the 126 engine I decided to fit daytime running lights and also fitted courtesy switches to both doors.

Internally the seats were beyond redemption, mice had been living in the rear seats. I had these recovered in red leather, the door cards were also remade and covered in the same material, together with the lower half of the B post. I sourced a matching red carpet and cut out new carpets. Also covering the wheel arches. The floor carpets were made in two pieces – back and front, with felt underlay. This meant I had to raise the seat runners some ¼" (6mm). These were then bolted back into position.

The padded knee bar was re-covered, as I had added a few bits on the electrics. I needed a few more holes for the extra switches. I didn't want to cut out extra holes in the dash and also could not find appropriate switches of the same pattern as fitted. Mine however were in very poor condition and I removed the plastic fascia of the dash panel and made a new one to accommodate the extra switches, together with an ammeter and clock this was fitted in front of the original dash panel. I then replaced the pocket under dash panel with a purpose



made radio housing and fitted an external aerial.

The car was then sprayed in the modern colour White FIAT No. 268. The underside was sprayed with Dinitrol 3125 a penetrating cavity wax, then Dinitrol 4941 a black hard wax.

The underside of all four

wings were sprayed with a few coats of MMM stonechip. This spraying was carried out with the bare shell tipped on its side. At the same time I replaced the rear coil spring cups and also made some repairs to the box sections back and front.

inside the area under the rear seat cushion was also badly rusted as was the lower half of the area behind the



back seat backrest. This area is double skinned with what looks like pitch in between.

The 126 hubs were rebuilt and fitted, this gave me a greater choice of wheels as the fixing centre for the wheel nuts is of modern size.

I did manage to salvage and restore the front indicator lamp bodies, then fitted these with clear lenses and amber bulbs. New headlamps were also fitted along with new rear lamps although one of the rear lamp gaskets was of extremely poor quality and you cannot buy a single gasket, so I had to purchase a whole new lamp assembly.

**Don Stewart**

*Next time: Work continues on the seized 126 engine*



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## TALE OF A FIAT 500D.



*The 500D when found*

Having always been interested in old cars, I had often thought about undertaking a full restoration following a half-decent attempt at a Triumph TR6 rebuild back in the 1980's, but now recently retired and keen to get stuck into a new project, I decided

that now was the time to have another go.

My choice of a Fiat 500 was twofold – firstly, the car was relatively simple mechanically (and I'm no engineer so this was important) and secondly, the car was small enough (just) to get into my garden workshop so I could undertake the restoration under cover.

Next, I needed to find a suitable car but as I was intending to carry out a full restoration the present condition was immaterial, so I set my sights on an earlier 500, possibly an 'F' or preferably a 'D' - the earlier 'N' models being outside my budget.

I joined the Fiat 500 Club (apologies here, but it was a while later I discovered the Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club !!), to learn something about the cars and make contact with fellow 500 anoraks. My research led me to Latifa Estates, a company run by Kelvyne Baker in Winscombe, Somerset. Kelvyne has been restoring and modifying Fiat 500's since the 1970's and there is nothing he doesn't know about the little cars. Kelvyne promised to keep an eye out for a suitable donor car. A while later I visited Kelvyne's Stand at the Classic Restoration Show in Shepton Mallet - Kelvyne mentioned he had just been approached by a man from Worcester who wanted to sell a 500 that sounded like a fairly early car. He put me in touch with the seller and after an encouraging phone conversation, a week or so later, I travelled to Worcester to see the 500. The car turned out to be a 500D which the seller had seen

advertised whilst on holiday in Australia in 2002 and promptly bought the car then had it shipped home to the UK. Since then, the car had been used very little and spent most of its time in the seller's Barn alongside several other old cars he owned. The car was ideal as it was the model of my choice and importantly, it was Right Hand Drive which made it comparatively rare. The car looked in good shape – there was some rust to the floor pans and the car was scruffy with various bits added here and there, but importantly it was complete as far as I could see and it was a runner. It was fitted with a 600cc unit with synchro box, but when the seller told me he also had the original 499cc 110D engine and original gearbox (albeit with cracked casing), I knew the car would be ideal for my project. Kelvyn advised a price I should aim to pay for the car, but needless to say, it finally cost me 25% more !! A deposit was paid with the balance a month later and I finally trailered the car home in January 2012.

The next few months were spent stripping the car down completely. I attempted to log everything as best as I could and tried to remember the way parts were fitted or came apart, but this finally turned into something of a blur. I took a lot of photos (Kelvyn's tip) and knew many of these would prove useful when I finally re-assembled the car. Many of the parts I would need to replace, but wherever possible, I tried to restore or rebuild as many of the original parts as I could. I had asked Kelvyn if he could rebuild the original 110D engine for me which I was told by the previous owner had been running up until it was removed from the car. Kelvyn was also going to attempt to rebuild the original 110 gearbox for me although some parts for these earlier gearboxes are now proving difficult to obtain. The gearbox had a cracked casing with a chunk of metal missing and had apparently almost imploded which was why the original units had been replaced by a 600cc engine & gearbox. I delivered the original engine/gearbox to Kelvyn with the instruction that I was in no hurry and that he should take his time with the rebuild - I also took down the larger engine/gearbox in case any interchangeable parts might be prove useful.

Once I had the car fully dismantled and down to a bare shell with all panels removed, I planned to strip the original paint by hand so decided to start with the underside of the car and remove all the underseal and the many years of thick oily road grime!! This presented my first problem as I had no wish to spend endless hours on my back under axle stands stripping off underseal, so I began to look for a car tilter/rotisserie so I could support and spin the bodyshell to make the job easier. I soon discovered that most rotisseries rely on attachment points at the wheel axles which I no longer had, but a quick scan

through e-bay and I was lucky to find a rotisserie that someone had made up to spin his Triumph Spitfire shell using body attachment points. His project had now finished and he was selling the rotisserie. A quick phone call confirmed that I should be able to modify the rotisserie to fit the Fiat, so a price was agreed, the rotisserie was delivered by courier (these things are extremely heavy) and a trip



*Up on the Rotisserie.*

to my local Blacksmith to modify the pick-up arms on the rotisserie to fit the bumper attachment points on the Fiat and I was back in business.

With the body shell spun at right angles, the next few weeks were spent standing upright but working on the underside of the shell, stripping off all the old underseal with a hot air gun to soften everything up and scraper to remove the worst, followed by copious amounts of rag soaked in petrol to take off what remained. This process was well worth while, as it revealed there was minimal rust in the underside, confined only to areas of the floor pans and the lower joint between the battery box compartment and front panel which had rotted almost completely.

I had intended to strip the body paint myself but initial attempts proved the task to be arduous. As I didn't wish to acid-dip the shell, I made enquiries about blasting the bodyshell which led me to decide upon soda-blasting. This method is less abrasive than bead or sand blasting and has the advantage that after the process the shell is left with a protective coating which prevents rusting, particularly useful if it is going to be some time before the shell is painted again. The downside is the soda suds get everywhere – into every nook, cranny and concealed panel you can imagine, so after the process I needed to spend a morning with an air compressor to blow all the soda out of the shell – not an easy job and one that will never be rid of the soda completely!! I found a soda-blasting company close to my home (another bonus) – Roger Harrow is a youngish lad with a full time job but is building up his blasting business on the

weekends, so his costs are reasonable. I started by taking the panels to him (two doors, roof panel, bonnet, engine lid, rear valance) to assess the quality of his work. The results proved excellent but also showed how much filler had been in the car and had now been blasted out! The rear valance & engine lid were badly damaged as it seemed the Fiat had had a shunt up the backside at some point.



*Some hidden damage!*

Next the body shell itself went off – Roger collected the shell on his trailer and delivered it back a week later – the result again was very good but this time further damage was revealed – the rear offside wing was severely buckled (possibly the same shunt that had damaged the rear valance & engine lid), but worse of all, the front offside corner had received a big shunt causing a lot of damage to both the wing and front panel – somebody had obviously been hard at work over the years with bodyfiller!!

**Roger Webb**



*Back from Soda-Blasting.*

*To be continued.*

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## EVENTS 201

*The following is based on the latest information, but events and venues may be subject to change, so keep checking the events section of the website and subsequent newsletters and magazines for any updates.*

### **Horsham Piazza Italia**

**Monday 21st April 10am-4pm**

Horsham Town Centre, Horsham, Sussex RH12 1HN

Italian classic cars are displayed in the streets of the town centre and draw a large crowd whilst there's a wide variety of Italian foods to try in the market.

Please contact Nathaniel Cross at [web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk](mailto:web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk)

### **Auto Italia Italian Car Day**

**Saturday 3rd May 10am-4pm**

Brooklands Museum, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0QN

Auto Italia's 27th Spring gathering and one of the biggest events of the year at Brooklands celebrating the UK's obsession with all things Italian.

Please contact Nathaniel Cross at [web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk](mailto:web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk)

### **Basingstoke Festival of Transport**

**Sunday 11th May 11am-4.30pm**

War Memorial Park, Crossborough Hill, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 4AG

Cars, motor cycles, lorries, buses, tractors and stationary engines.

Please contact Jenny Squillaci at [magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk](mailto:magazine@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk)

### **Audlem Festival of Transport**

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2014.**

**Cheshire**

<http://www.audlem-aset.org/events/transport-festival.html>

I have registered to enter, using their on-line registration.

Not far from the Cholmondeley Castle event of last year. Let me know if you're thinking of going, so that we can arrange to park up together.

Please contact Tony Spillane [midlands@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk](mailto:midlands@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk) 01527 879321

### **Kent Italian Classic Car & Bike Show and AGM**

**Sunday 7th September**

Honnington Farm, Vauxhall Lane, Southborough, Kent, TN4 0XD

(The AGM will take place at 3 pm in the club marquee)

Run by club members in aid of the Kent Air Ambulance, the car and bike show is combined with the Honnington Country Fair making it a great day out for the family.

Please contact Nathaniel Cross at [web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk](mailto:web@fiat500enthusiasts.co.uk)

## FIAT 500s ARE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

I first saw XCD 690K, a down-at-heel white Fiat 500L with a flat tyre, one grey February day in 1985, sitting among other cheap run-arounds for sale at a local garage. That first glimpse was to be the beginning of a very special relationship. Illness and self-employment don't go well together. In the 1980's, I'd had a long spell unable to work and was looking for an inexpensive form of transport. Paying the mortgage was more than the usual struggle, the family car had been sold and riding a motorbike in winter was unthinkable.

Two days later, after a bit of patching up, a new MoT and the expenditure of £180, I was initiated into the world of compact motoring. On the way home I more-or-less mastered the crash gearbox and, in time, came to understand the



technique of driving a 499.5cc Fiat 500, espoused by generations of Italians - that you keep the accelerator flat on the floor until death stares you in the face!

Over the next 20,000 miles and four years, XCD 690K was my sole transport, in and out of London, round the M25 and on the school run along the narrow, sunken lanes of the Surrey Hills. My daughter, now a sober adult with a family of her own, loved the little car. She named it 'Tot' and even started the 'Tot Supporters Club' with her friends. Eventually, my health long restored, the Fiat and I parted company as roomier transport was needed for a family of

teenagers. But, in the quarter of a century since, I've never forgotten the fun and adventure of 500 motoring.

Recently, a chance conversation with the DVLA revealed that XCD 690K still exists, but where? Apparently the car is not taxed or insured. Does anyone know of its whereabouts at present? I would love the chance to see my little friend again.

**Astley Jones**

*If anyone has news of this car please contact the editor who will pass on any information to Astley.*

## **MEMBERS WANTED AND FOR SALE**

*Please note that the 500 Fiat Enthusiasts Club only offers free advertising in this column to private individuals who are paid up members and not to businesses or commercial enterprises. The 500 Fiat Enthusiasts Club advises those placing or responding to adverts to take reasonable care as the club cannot endorse or accept responsibility for any items listed for sale or for any subsequent transactions.*



**FOR SALE**

**1963 RHD Fiat 600D**  
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 Please contact: Charles Robinson [crobioo@aol.com](mailto:crobioo@aol.com)

### FOR SALE

My RHD Fiat Giardinera. MOT Aug 2014. Original log book, instruction and service voucher books, and lots of history. Bills in excess of £4800. Engine, gearbox and clutch all good. New brake system all round, new tyres and much more. Not concours but not bad!

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For further information contact me at:

[martin-sewell@live.co.uk](mailto:martin-sewell@live.co.uk)



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It has the original fuel tank, engine tinware, cloth interior and full opening hood including the genuine vents on the front face. The wheel arches, bulk head, the battery area, undercarriage, engine bay and interior flooring areas have all been sealed. The sale comes with all the paperwork including a valid MOT to May 2014, (one V5C owner) and plenty of receipts. **£17,495 o.n.o**

Please contact me on (m) 07767 233 728 or email: [retlaskram@aol.com](mailto:retlaskram@aol.com)

**FOR SALE**

**FIAT TOPOLINO PARTS FOR SALE** Too many to list individually but includes early Sidevalve and late Overhead Valve Engines, Gear Boxes, Running Gear Suspension etc. Ring Barry on 01384 873560 (West Mids) or 07733115562.

**FOR SALE**

I have some body panels for a Fiat 500 L 1972 for sale. I am open to offers. They are all new.

Front nearside outer wing, Rear end cross member and engine support.

Front lower panel / battery tray. Rear offside inner and outer wing

Shortly I will also have a used fitted carpet in red - overall good condition and black door cards and rear inside panels - in good condition but the door cards have a speaker holes cut. I will also have a set of black seat covers front and rear which are not damaged but the stitching has come undone in parts.

Please contact: Bryan Pentland Mobile 0780 181 8764



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## NEW MEMBERS

The Fiat 500 Enthusiasts Club extends a warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined our club

Paul McIlhargy	Middx		
Peter and Tara Vasey	Surrey	600	Green
Catherine Barrett	London		
Jensen Yin	Derbyshire		
Jason Wentworth-Taylor	Somerset		
Les and June Taylor	Stockton-on -Tees	Topolino A	Blue
Bryan and Carol Pentland	Surrey	500L	Blue
Peter Clarke	Nottinghamshire		
Martin Thomas	Tyne and Wear		
Colin and Mandy Smith	Oxfordshire	500	Green
Susan Parsons	Ireland	500L	
Richard Meadows	Gloucestershire	Autobianchi Giardiniera	Dark Blue
Kevin Parfitt	Wiltshire	500L	White

**COPY FOR THE MARCH MAGAZINE SHOULD BE WITH THE  
EDITOR NO LATER THAN MONDAY FEBRUARY 17TH 2013**

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