

Wrecks to Poverty in Zero Seconds Flat

The story begins with a crazy Scotsman who retired to Malaysia and thought it would be a great idea to restore an old Triumph. Not having ridden or worked on bikes for over forty years the venture came under the classification of one can short of a six pack.

The bike selected was a 1962 Triumph Twenty One (3TA) and was described as a runner, ideal for restoration. Since the bike was in England and I was at the other side of the world the purchase was made on the basis of a few photographs. We are now talking two cans short of a six pack.



The original price was 2,500USD which seemed reasonable however by the time it came for the long awaited arrival, things were starting to get a bit pricy. Shipping costs, import tax (almost 1,000USD) and the guys in the truck and fork lift truck (almost 700USD). Still it had arrived.



At long last I had the first opportunity to see what I had bought. That was after releasing it from a recycled Japanese motorcycle packing crate with a hacksaw in 32°C of heat. Was this a sign of things to come, you'd better believe it.

As there is no source for Triumph parts in Malaysia everything, and I mean everything had to be shipped from Great Britain and Austria.

It soon became apparent that an oil change and a quick polish was not going to do the trick and while I have no doubt that in England it was a runner, in Malaysia it was definitely on its holidays, and no amount of kicking was going to light its fire.



Small details started to emerge such as, in the headlamp nacelle there is supposed to be a steering damper not a rubber bung. As they say “no pain, no gain” so I sold my soul to the devil and acquired a full set of BSDFSA (bloody spanners don’t fit a sodden thing) spanners and box keys; a very big hammer; a parts list book; a workshop manual and set to work in my friend’s back room.

The spanners were a lottery since the previous owner had not felt constrained by the laws of originality which resulted in metric, BSF, BSC, and Whitworth nuts and bolts. Very few restorers realise it is possible to get metric nut to fit a Whitworth bolt but this guy had.

My most important tools were a digital camera; a notebook and pen and a roll of sticky labels. If Murphy’s first law is “If things can go wrong then they will” then his second law is “If it can be forgotten then it will be” and you can forget the workshop manual for fine detail because the guy who wrote it was definitely taking a global view. I generally photographed from every angle then noted down details such as blue/white wire joins to red/blue wire at Speedo bulb holder (don’t get me started on the wiring) finally I stuck a label on the bit e.g. right telescope leg. Amazing the number of bits that are the same but don’t actually fit in the reverse position.

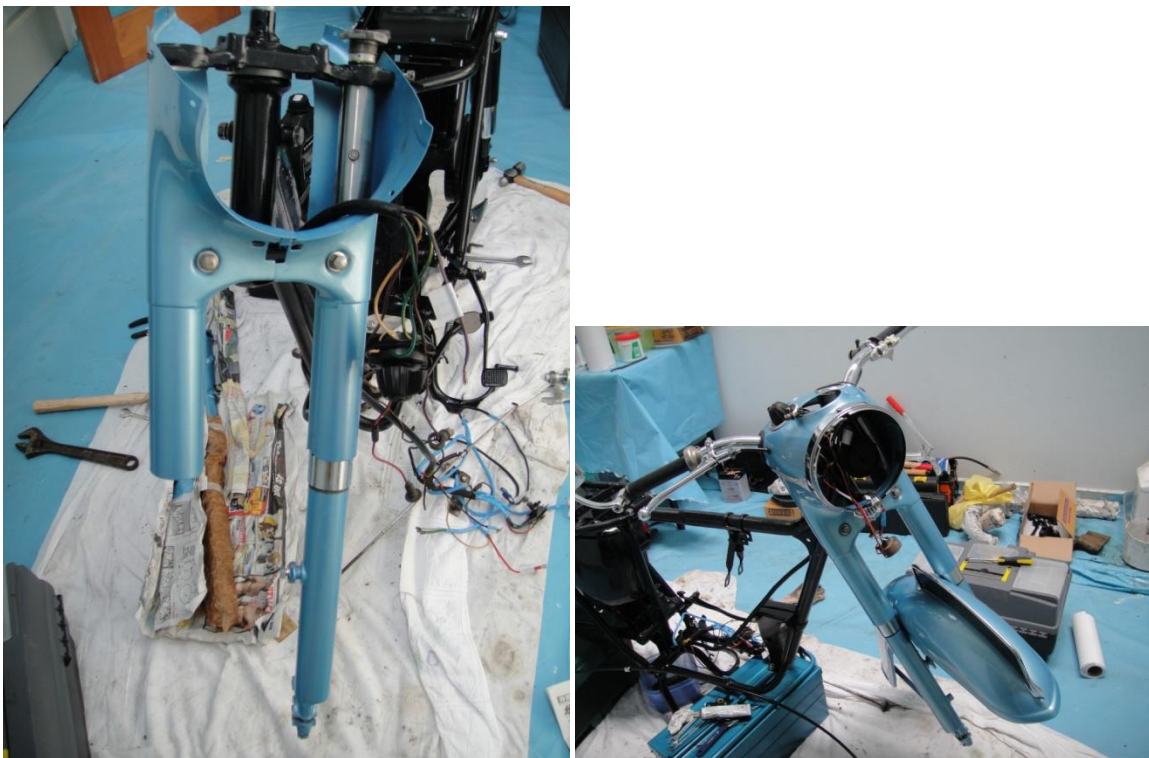
The strip revealed the usual amount of rust and wildlife, peeling chrome and instruments that didn’t work. I also found traces of water in the gearbox and I think your theory of water going down the clutch cable entry point is spot on because I couldn’t find any cracks or damaged seals.



When the repainted black bits arrived back, assembly began with new rear shocks and steering races.



Completely rebuilt the front forks, seals bushes the lot. The special extractor was a must. The bar end mirrors may seem a little early but the old Scottish saying goes “in order to know where you are going you need to know where you’ve been”.



The wheels were respoked; fitted with new spindles and bushes; drums cleaned and new brake linings fitted and finally finished off with a new set of tyres.

The tank was fitted at this stage so that I could pretend I was almost finished.

The engine work was minimal although if anyone tells you that a 650 oil pump fits a 350 all I can say is that the one I tried pressurized the system to such an extent the it vented the entire oil tank out of the breather pipe. The carb was rebuilt (after scraping off a ton of gunk) with a kit from the nice guys at Amal. The electrics were upgraded from 6 volt to 12 volt using an upgrade kit and to anyone who

says using Halogen bulbs on a 60's bike is heresy; I say I am the heretic who can see where he is going on a very dark night.



The new electrics make starting a dream. Final act, fitting the rear cowl (bathtub) and the silencers.



There was one final test and that was for the bike to go to the test centre to get road approval before it could be registered. It failed, no indicators (I ask you, who puts indicators on motorbikes, the same people that fitted an ashtray?) As you will see from the last pics. the bike now has indicators and a Malaysian registration although the sharp eyed among you will recognise a similarity with truck cruising lights. Hey Ho.



The final cost; do you really want to cause a divorce?

5 cans short Bob