



Morris Mini MkII Super DeLuxe

Run by Martin Port
 Total mileage 68,687
 Miles since May report 299
 Latest costs £360

Mini travellers can now belt up

The first thing I did when we got the Mini was to replace one of the original Kangol front belts with an inertia-reel type so that a child's seat could be fitted. I tried to replace the driver's belt too, but couldn't get the bolt to mate with the thread in the bottom of the B-post and eventually refitted the Kangol. And in that state it remained, until now.

Having no restraint for passengers in the rear made me uneasy, so I paid a visit to Quickfit Seatbelts, a company in north London which has made and fitted belts to many classics over the years (C&SC, Aug 2001) and makes bespoke steel frames for glassfibre cars or those without mounting points.



Mini welcomes safety improvements with open arms (and boot)

rear parcel shelf revealed a piece of red textured hardboard in a much nicer shade than the carpet. Taking that out revealed the original shelf board, in faded red vinyl with holes cut for speakers. Fitter Brian Stimpson set about cutting the holes for the new belt mounts on the rear shelf, before riveting in the threaded strengthening plates. The process was repeated at the seat base for the lower belt mounts. Having already given his measurements for the belts and clips to the manufacturing department, they soon arrived in the workshop.

With the new rears in place, Brian started on the front. The original Kangol belt was badly worn and



Looks great, but child seat dictated...



...an inertia belt for safety and usability



Old belts could have been original to car



All finished in the back. Ride anyone?



Seen better days but should scrub up



Slight bubbling from join is just visible



Three ages of parcel-shelf covering

Managing director Stuart Quick was there to greet me and began by discussing the options. Choices of webbing, fixing and colour were laid out and the classic-style belt with chrome clasp caught my eye. However, because the main concern was to be able to put my three-year-old son Alfie's seat in the back, our options were limited to a conventional inertia-reel belt.

Removing the carpet on the

creased, and the centre clasp was fixed with a bolt too small for the nut on the transmission tunnel.

With the old belt out, the bottom mount on the B-post revealed extra metal welded into the inner sill. This explained the difficulty I'd had in getting the bolt to mate and Brian skilfully cut through it to allow fitting. He also passed on a handy tip: when drilling through carpet, use the drill in reverse. This stops the bit snagging on the carpet fibres and prevents tearing.

Soon the new front belts were in place, ready for Brian to test them. The action of these belts is smoother than the old Securon ones, and the inertia units smaller and less intrusive in a classic the size of the Mini.

Making my way home, I was pleased to find how much more comfortable the new belt felt and, best of all, I felt safer in a car that

had been manufactured in an age when 'airbag' was a dirty word.

Before I left, Stuart showed me the huge file of solutions Quickfit has provided for various classics, such as fitting a specially made child harness and seat cushion to the rear of an MGB roadster. Hmmm...

Then it was time to turn my attention to the ongoing problem of the cylinder head. Since the gasket failed so spectacularly last time, I've been keeping an eye on how the car is running, paranoid that it might blow again and reveal the reason for doing so first time around. Sure enough, performance began to drop off ever so slightly after a few weeks. The tell-tale sign that it was going again was water usage, replaying the same problem I once had with my BGT when it would dump a quantity of water from the radiator every time the engine was switched off.

Close inspection of the head-to-block seal showed a slight oil leak and bubbling on one side. However, the head was still adequately torqued so I'm pretty sure it must be warped.

Now in possession of the MG1100 head mentioned in the May report, I have sent it away for crack testing. If all is well, it will be skimmed before it is converted to unleaded by fitting hardened valve seats and new valves. With any luck, this should improve the running and eradicate the need for continuous use of fuel additive.

THANKS TO

■ Quickfit: 020 8206 0101, www.quickfitsbs.co.uk

NEXT UP

- Continue to hassle Jon Pressnell to deliver my promised twin carbs
- Find someone with a Dremel and tackle the sagging door-hinge bolts