

## **'Rusty's Renovation'**

Having looked for our first Caravan, to accommodate 2 kids, 2 Adults, toys, bikes, roller skates, scooters etc., we were confused about what to buy, and how much to spend. Until we came across 'Rusty'. A 1988 Compass Rallye 510 5 Berth. He was sitting in our friends front drive ready to be sold in the local paper. Giving it a quick look over we knew there was work to do on it, but it was the one ... ( little did I know how much work) !!.

The deal was struck and the bargain of the century was ours.

The next day having had a good look round, I could see an exciting project ahead. There was damp in the shower/toilet. Some in the corners of the van. The wheel arch under the kitchen unit was gone !!. The electrics, fridge and lights needed re-wiring. The floor was spongy near the door and down the centre. The door and both skylights were leaking. The rear window seals were rotten. On the outside there was some damage to the rear offside awning rail, and one of the rails on the base was hanging off .

Apart from that we wanted a carpet and new blinds.

So here's what it looked like when we started.



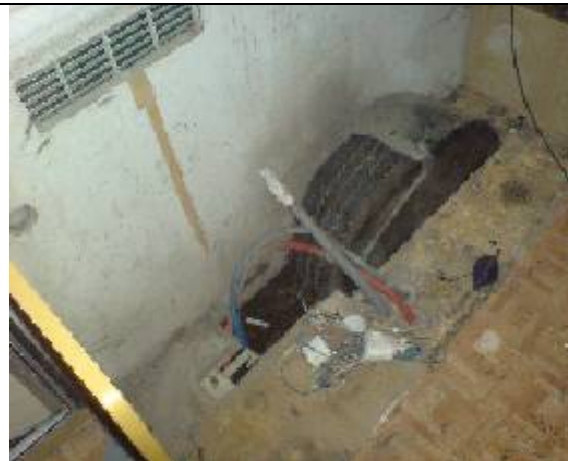
Bit of a mess



The fridge had got to there following the tow home!



The extent of the damp in the bathroom



The wheel arch had been destroyed by a blow out.

### The re-build / renovation begins

First job was to get the bathroom window sorted, which involved a complete strip back to the aluminium skin (carefully) removing the boarding and the insulation. This revealed a large amount of water had been coming in from the rails on the outside (another job loomed). Once the rails had been replaced with new mastic and screws, over a couple of weeks I checked there was no water coming in, then used Unibond to stick new battening where the old rotten wood once was. Then it was a case of plywood shaped to fit the 'hole' and new wallpaper, a daunting job that was surprisingly straightforward as I took my time.(and rested between stages).



Stripped back to the outer skin.



New battens stuck into place.



New plywood attached to fill the 'gap'



New wallpaper (Bathroom from B&Q value range).

So to the outside, and there was the challenge of both the door seal to be refitted, and the awning rails to be re-mastic-ed (is that a word – it should be!)

I followed the sound advice of many other 'fixed it' club members so get searching as the guys (and girls) have done a fantastic job of documenting their achievements.

So I knew at this stage that with the skylight, and awning rails sealed, and the new door strip doing its stuff, no major water ingress would cause further damp (for now anyway). I could get on with the floor.

I'd spent many hours looking into 'delamination' before revealing the full extent of the damage to the floor areas under the leaking skylight. Once I lifted the tiles I realised a rotting floor is what I had. So it was similar to the bathroom, strip the rotten and replace..



You can see the insulation under the rotten ply. I'm adding further support prior to adding the new ply on top.



New ply secured into place with screws. Now it was time to 'bond' the layers together.



By drilling small 'nozzle' sized holes in the new ply about 10cm apart I was able to squirt in some expanding foam filler. Some people advised against it, but I found that if I listened to the gap being filled I could judge when it was too much. The filler was weighed down with some heavy slabs while it went off (about a day).



Next - this nasty looking mess where the wheel arch had blown out....

There had been a previous 'blow out' which forced the wheel arch cover to be ripped off under the kitchen unit. This caused all sorts of damage and ripped out the cables for the taps and fridge. It took a while to remove the unit but once I found all the screws I was able to move it out of the way. Rather than unbolt the wheel arch cover from between the floor and chassis. I decided to cover the exposed tyre using exterior marine grade ply. Once this was glued, screwed and sealed it formed a neat cover to replace the kitchen unit back over. While I was at it, I recovered the kitchen drawers and cupboards with Fablon.



**The new marine ply cover and cables now back in order.**



**Handles removed and new Fablon fronts to hide the scratches.**



**Ready for the new handles.**



**New handles on, and the unit back in.**

**While working on the inside, I'd noticed that the rear lower panel, that houses the rear lights and number plate had been 'taped up'. I decided (wish I hadn't) to have a little look underneath. Here's what I found.**



Both corners were like this, and the light clusters smashed beyond repair. Off to Halfords for some P38 compound and wire mesh body repair kits.



Using the 'try it bit by bit' method I managed to build up a new corner out of the P38, and after an initial sand down, found it didn't look too bad.



A bit more careful sanding and some Fiat Punto off white car spray it was ready for the new light cluster (bought from the nice people at Premier Towing centre).



Bingo, a new corner where once there was nowt  
Even the lights worked!! Amazing what you can do in two nights (one hour per corner.).

So all the major work completed, it was down to the interior again. Fitted a new carpet, fixed and tightened the door catches, added fablon to those areas scratched or dented, and added some new blinds. With a new tyre and some first time towing, we are off on hopefully the first of many outings

For those of you daunted by the task of fixing up an old caravan, or repairing your own. I can honestly say it's hard work, but well worth it. Thanks to all those who have gone before me, for sharing their knowledge and experience. Especially Wizard, and the people from the [UKCampsite.co.uk](http://UKCampsite.co.uk) fixed it club.

