



Box of Bits

by
Michael King

When you buy a Sunbeam often you will be missing one or two "bits", the odd rubber here and there, the bit that finishes that thing off.. we all know the storey. So what do you do? Well you start by asking around the club, looking at swap meets and searching e-bay. Slowly but surely you find the missing parts, however you also begin to find out that some of these parts are not only not being remanufactured, but are also just downright hard to find. This often affects the early series cars more than the later as they do not share as many common trim and lighting components with other Rootes cars.. or the Tigers which tend to have lots of things reproduced for them.

So here is our intrepid sunbeamer trying to finish off his car. The more he delves into the car and what is "correct" the more he discovers other "bits". This is when you start to find things you are missing that were not obvious when you first got involved with the car, certain types of retaining screws, brackets etc.. it seems the more you are prepared to learn, the more the car is missing.

At about the same time as this you also notice something that has been staring you in the face the whole time, the dashboard. This is the part of the car that I believe starts a slippery slide into long hours or scrounging for the elusive "bits".

The first and most common discovery is that the clock, ammeter and cigar lighter in the car are not actually "correct".. (this is where we both thank and threaten Ian Spencer for posting images and part numbers for correct factory options on the SAOCA site) As it turns out, Rootes offered quite an extensive list of "optional" extras for our sunbeams. Everything from Rootes fire extinguishers, to Rootes branded spot/fog lamps to niceties such as sun visors, thicker rear seat cushions and even anti theft locks!

So here we are.. missing bits, and deciding that you would like some of the other "bits" to add that completed or special feel to your car. Only problem is, you discover, that great smiths clock you bought on e-bay is not right. Actually the clock comes from a Series I alpine, it has the adjustment knobs at the top of the dial. This seems like a

Removing and Installing an Alpine Engine

by
Jan Servaites

Removing and installing an Alpine engine could be performed in a few different ways. One way, to remove it, is to unbolt the engine-clutch housing and remove the engine, while the transmission is still in place. The reverse installation can be difficult trying to get the transmission shaft to pass through the clutch plate splines and finally into the pilot bushing in the end of the crankshaft. Its hard enough to do this with both the engine & transmission are out of the car (With both engine & transmission out of the car, I found that if I grab the end of the transmission and wobble it around, it finds the alignment quicker and then I can bolt the assemblies together).

Another problem is the Alpine engine doesn't allow many places to attach a lifting sling. Most solutions are a chain and some bolts to secure the chain to the engine block. The engine hoist would hook on the chain, and then the engine unit could be lifted out of the car. After a few engine removals, by using a piece of chain, I decided to visualize a solution to make it easier to attach my lifting hook to the engine. What evolved after some measuring and some quick sketching, is an idea to fabricate a specific engine lifting sling that could be quickly installed and has the lifting fulcrum just in the correct location to get the correct balance on the engine. Some 10-gauge sheet metal was sheared and formed at a metal shop and I fabricated & welded the rest of it.



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In the centre console I found the handbook plus a service manual. The owner had kept a record of mileage/gas plus maintenance carried out on the car. I therefore can assume the mileage reading of 71,000 is correct.

The car had been provided new from Precision Motors in Dallas, Texas with the optional items of sun visors, tonneau cover and wire wheels. The tonneau cover appeared to have been little used and was in excellent shape.

My overall assessment of this car is that it is solid, complete and is an honest example in that it has not been molested, modified or tidied for resale. The service records kept show that the car was driven regularly and well maintained until placed in storage in the eighties. The car now however needs a lot of work to be roadworthy again.

I went home to think about what I had seen and put some figures into an excel spreadsheet to try to figure how much it would cost me to put the car back on the road. This is a useful exercise but can only be a guide as these projects always cost more than you think.

I decided to make an offer on the car which the owner accepted and the car is now sitting in my garage. In the coming weeks I will be cleaning this car and will make it run. More to follow.....END

trivial thing, but hey you want the right clock.. then you discover that different series used different clocks, some look exactly the same but some have very small numbers printed at the bottom CE.... Some have red hands, some have white.. oh my some are positive ground some negative! Ok.. so now you have 4 clocks and not the one that is right for your car, so best to focus on something else...

How about that cigar lighter, could be useful to charge the phone, not to mention matches the choke knob and windscreen washer pump. A lighter should be easy, right? Oh well turns out there are a couple of different ones, a Smiths one for early cars, and then at some point a cross over to a Casco.. Heck, should be easy, lots of cars used them. Then comes the realisation, the one you looked at and bought does not have the chrome ring around the base.. it's almost right, but not quite. You discover that Jaguars also used the same lighter on some models, early XKE and MKII even some 420G 's and S types... looks like that lighter just got expensive.

So we move onto the ammeter.. a nice Lucas one. Should be easy; hey wait, the one in the car looks right! Oops, no it has the needle pointing down, and is scaled from -60 to 60+. Ok, so what ammeter do I need? It has to have the needle pointing up and a scale from -30 to 30+, if it's an early series it has to have white needle. Then you realise the S3 and IV alpine have the same one, but it has an orange needle, good if you own a late series alpine as you can paint the white needle orange, but not so handy if you own a I/II. Then again, if you have a series V you are looking for one with orange needle, -35 to 35+ oh where does this end!

The problem is while you have been buying all these parts and discovering they are wrong for your series or perhaps just not "correct" at all you have come across other information. That's right, what could be nicer than a factory-optioned car? A period aftermarket optioned one? Here is where the words, Holbay, Hartwell, Alexander, Lynx and mini-lite can start to get expensive.

Suddenly you are looking for different rocker covers. Wouldn't it be nice to have a Holbay rocker cover or Lynx to replace the alloy one you have with the letter "S" and SUNBEAM on it, which replaced the one you had with the SUNBEAM cast into it, which replaced the plain alloy one with nothing cast into it.

Surely if you get the Holbay rocker cover it would be nice to have that Holbay alloy sump? And seems silly to have that without a set of the Holbay spec 40DCOE webers with maybe a Holbay oil filter base with the temp sender oh dear.. where was I? I was looking for that clock right?

By now you will have started what a few of us like to term as "boxes of bits". This is where you keep all the things that you have acquired in your searches. They are sitting in that box, some in nice packages some in the ones they were sent in from overseas some in original Rootes boxes (extra kudos amongst the box community) it now seems that you have more parts that are new and off the car, than what you have on it.

Another symptom of boxes of bits is the multiplying factor, through your searches you will come across bits you already have or don't really want, but for some reason you justify needing them "I might need a spare", "it seems cheap" perhaps "I can swap this with someone for something I am looking for". Sooner or later when you unpack your box you notice you have sets of Rootes lamps, clusters of clocks, ample ammeters, scores of sun visors, lots of lighters.. It goes on!

How did this start? All you were trying to do was find the correct things the car left the factory with which lead to getting correct factory options, then to period aftermarket bits designed for the sunbeam. Then it lead to finding unusual or performance parts off other Rootes cars that you can bolt on... it was a quick progression but an expensive one.

Do not fear though, the nice thing about a "box of bits" is its actually quite fun. Boxes of bits do not break down; they are easy to clean, they take up less space than cars and have no running costs. There is also a boxes of bits community, it is similar to those who bench race.. "my box of bits has faster parts than yours", "my box of is rarer than yours", "my box of bits is still in its original packaging" and "I have more boxes of bits"

Looking at the interior it has suffered in the Dallas sun, the seats needed to be restored. I asked the owner about the original rubber mats and these fell apart sometime in the seventies and were replaced with some rubber from a local hardware store. The top crash pad was history but the dash itself would clean up. The soft top had shrunk and would require replacement.

The rubber seals were all badly sun damaged but appeared to be the original ones it left the factory with.

The brake hydraulics as well as the clutch hydraulics were completely shot and will need to be rebuilt. The brake servo had been bypassed at some point but was in the trunk of the car. The suspension was would also need to be rebuilt.

Looking at the engine numbers they matched the chassis number so this car still has its original engine. This is always a plus point. The engine did turn by hand and is therefore not seized. The engine bay appears to mostly be correct with the exception of the heater valve plus some mis-routed hoses.



My New Series 5 Alpine

by
Steve Kirk

While attending "All British Car Day" in Dallas in April I was approached by a man who told me he owned a series 5 Alpine which was put into storage sometime in the late eighties. Further conversation revealed that I was talking to the original owner of the car. This interested me as one owner cars are now rare plus the chances of the car still being an original and unmolested example are greatly increased. I agreed to look at the car the following weekend.

The car was located an hour North of Dallas in a boat shed. The car was covered in dust and dirt. I proceeded to inspect the car very closely. The body is extremely solid even areas which normally show signs of rust on good cars such as the floor pans and battery box are in great shape. The car had been repainted sometime in the early eighties. I tried to inspect the paint through the dirt and it appeared it would clean up but would only look good from a distance. The chrome would clean up and look respectable. The Chrysler Pentastar was still on the lower fender, these are often missing.



Here are just a few of my favourite "bits" to consider, I will list them in factory options, other rootes/alpine bits and aftermarket:

Factory Options:

- Rootes fire extinguisher
- Rootes anti theft lock
- Rootes reversing lights (yes the bullet/exhaust style ones!)
- Rootes Spot/Fog lamps
- Clock
- Ammeter
- Lighter
- Radio
- Fog lamp panel
- Sun visors (early style cantilevered or late style bracketed)
- Head rest (S3 onwards)
- Interior lamps
- Wood rim GT wheel

Other Rootes/Alpine bits "Bits"

- Sunbeam rocker cover with S and Sunbeam
- MKII tiger late SV alpine headlight rims (non peaked)
- Holbay rocker cover
- Holbay sump
- Holbay oil filter base
- Holbay Webers!
- Most anything HOLBAY!
- Tiger MKII wheel arch trims
- Tiger MKII egg crate grill
- LAT wheels

Aftermarket options:

- Lynx finned alloy rocker cover
- Mini-lite style wheels
- Chrome bullet mirrors
- Fitted luggage for SI/II
- Koni adjustable socks
- Mota-lita leather steering wheels
- Aircraft style seat belts

END



As one can see in the picture above, that side flap is just to give the sling more rigidity so it doesn't act like a spring (bouncing the engine up & down). Also, notice the many fulcrum positions to set the lifting eyebolt. I have found that the most forward hole is the best position to use to install the engine & transmission. I also added more holes in that flap to accommodate the later 1725 heads which do not have the coil mount holes like this early head has. On the left side of the engine, I used the two head bolt studs and secured the sling with 3/8-24 nuts. Just leave the head bolt nuts in-place, there is no need to remove them. There is enough room on the cylinder head stud for the sling and a second nut which makes it really nice. I have removed some engines where the previous owner replaced the two studs with a common head bolt. Well, in that case, I removed the bolts and I used some spare studs & nuts that I had on hand. Otherwise, the sling cannot fit on the engine correctly and those studs should be on every Alpine engine.

Day Five – Return to Cincinnati (I hope)

Jim Stone and I have decided to tag along together, at least until we reach his home town of St. Louis. However, the past few days we've been negotiating a departure time. Turns out Jim isn't a morning guy, so we diplomatically agree on 6:00 a.m. George Farrell decides he's coming too, but will peel off around Springfield, Missouri to go fishing. The eastern clouds on the horizon look threatening but Jim's not deterred. He hasn't had the top up since Invasion 3 and he's sure not about to put it up now. His determination lasted until the time when the rain and mist was so bad I could no longer see him on the road! He flashes his lights and we pull up under a bridge to put his top up. Jim was right, it had been a while, as evidenced by the pulling and grunting we did to get the thing up and secure. And what do you think happened then? We drove another 15 minutes or so, the clouds break, and the sun comes out for the rest of the day. Of course.

12 and a half hours driving, 1,500 miles roundtrip but I made it! And the Humber purred the whole way at 75 to 80 miles per hour. Gas was expensive at 16 miles per gallon but I did travel in style. These cars are great for long distance driving.

Many thanks to Donna and Jim who put on a great event. You can rest now guys, it's over. Looking forward to next year's event already....END



Day Four – Car Show / Banquet

Saturday's car show was VERY VERY HOT. Someone said 106 degrees but I never verified that. Thanks to Brad Babb who provided instant shade with his large canopy. We all huddled underneath and talked cars. While the turnout was lower than expected I'm reminded it's not necessarily about the cars but the people - and we have great people in this club!

Steve Kirk represented the fin fans with his sweet Series II, and there were plenty of Series IV and V Alpines as well as some great looking Tigers. I was the odd man out with the Humber. Donna had made arrangements with a local DJ to spin some tunes from the 50's and 60's and we drew curious shoppers from across the parking lot to come see what these cute little cars were all about.

The evening's banquet was well done, with good food, and good company. BUT, the big highlight for me was Steve Silverstein's well-prepared presentation on American Alpine racing. Our guest of honor was HJ Meyer of Sports Car Forum fame, and it was very interesting to hear him talk about those halcyon days of racing. Well done Steve!



I have learned to remove the Alpine engine & transmission as a unit now, and with some practice and a good quality engine lift, you might feel the same way. To perform this engine removal, you need to remove the valve cover, and all the fluids (especially the transmission because any oil will run out the tailshaft). Also, please reference the Work Shop Manual for a complete list of steps to be taken for removal & installation.

Look at the next series of pictures to get an idea of this process.





If your engine hoist doesn't have a tall reach, then its okay to grab the transmission tailshaft and lift & swing the transmission in the engine compartment. That is what I had to do here in my garage.



Watch out for the slave cylinder & hydraulic line. Be careful of the OD switches on the shifter tower.

me in the Humber, Mike in his Toyota, and Brad and Michelle in their truck pulling along his Alpine on a trailer. We hum along for another 5 hours to a very hot Tulsa. We managed to lose Tom Wiencek and his son when they detoured for Dairy Queen - oh well, he's got directions, I think. (later we found out he developed a flat tire and his passenger side rear brake caliper stopped working; perfect time to abandon a friend eh?).

I've come to realize that old car people are just plain crazy, but we sure have a lot of fun.

p.s. - There's something really funny about people in modern cars complaining to a guy in a Humber that he's going too fast and he needs to slow down. Keep up with the pace car boys!

Day Three – Tulsa / Road Rally

Back in my air conditioned hotel room again, after a great day driving around the Tulsa countryside. Who knew eastern Oklahoma would be covered in rolling green hills? Mike Phillips was my navigator as we headed off for the 100 mile photo rally. What a great way to see old Tulsa and old landmarks along historic Route 66 . This town hasn't changed much since the 40's and 50's, and there's great junkyards everywhere just brimming with old cars. Next year we need to come back and just spend all day trolling through the junkyards. The idea today was to follow the clues and take pictures along the way of the various historic points. Not sure what we win for all this but it was fun anyway.

Next we moved on to the Auburn Cord Duesenberg factory (Glenn Pray operation) to see all the cars. This guy has quite a collection of old radios and other ephemera, but mountains and mountains of A/C/D parts. Looked at some beautiful finished Auburns and Cords too.

Last night's Mid-America Ford Powered car show was hot but fun to walk around all the Mustangs, fake Cobras (there was one real one in the mix), two TVR's, and other miscellaneous Ford-powered items (including a nice blue Tiger). Ate cheeseburgers and root beer at a local place that's been there for 50 plus years.

Tonight it's dinner at another local joint. Current temperature is 96 degrees. The Alpine drivers are looking very red in the face right now.

Wish you were here.....

Tom Wiencek and son Matt just arrived from Chicago. Guess what? Tom didn't bring his Alpine - what a shocker! Tomorrow we're going to hook up with Jim Stone, Brad and Michele Babb, and caravan on down to Tulsa.

(we all went to a BBQ place that night for dinner and I got to play chauffeur as a number of people jumped in the Humber for the experience)

Day Two – St. Louis to Tulsa

Bright beautiful morning. Birds are singing. Tom Wiencek is STILL snoring (I shared a room with him and his son and he had the nerve to tell me "you'd better not snore tonight"). I rub my eyes, got some coffee and head out to the Humber to check the fluids. Everything looks good, decide to get gas, turn the key, nothing. Absolutely nothing. Sinking feeling in stomach. Pop the hood, check connections, all looks good. Thinking starter may be jammed so get out the persuader and give it a few knocks. Nothing. Call the troops and go into panic mode. Mike Phillips, our soon to be hero, comes out, grabs one of my screwdrivers and touches the two leads on the solenoid. She fires right up! Whoopee! I get back in the car and that's when I discover I had parked the car the night before in "D". As in "duh" or "dumb". Put the car in Park, turn off the car, turn on ignition, she fires right up. Stupid is as stupid does I always say. (Luckily I had the parking brake on or there would have been a Humber grille impression on Mike Phillips)

Jim Stone calls - he's got a problem too. He's in his Alpine, heading towards our hotel, and he's noticed that his revs are dropping from 3k to 1k and he doesn't know why. He limps back home and we all agree to meet at his place for an impromptu fix in. When we get there he has that look on his face like I did - "duh". Turns out he installed the top cover on his DCOE incorrectly and was choking off the air.

Two crisis averted, we all head out onto the highway – Jim Stone in his super tuned Alpine,



You need to keep a keen eye open for trouble like the shifter tower scraping the firewall sheetmetal. This is not a problem sometimes if you direct the engine to the side slightly. Notice that I have rubber mats to protect the oil pan.



The engine is pasted the worst part of maneuvering now and its on its way in. About this time you need a floor jack to support and lift the transmission tailshaft off the floor.

The Road to Tulsa – “Rootes” 66

by
Scott Christie



With the floor jack holding up the transmission, try to find the front engine mount bolt holes in the crossmember. You want the engine to land there and get a few bolts installed, so you know the engine is aligned with the front of the car. Now you can remove the hoist and get it out of the way and start preparing the transmission rear mount and its bolts.



Be careful working underneath the car while installing the transmission mount. Remember to install the electrical grounding cable on the right side. Once the engine is safely in place, just start reassembling the other components. Its in there!

Many of you who follow the club's message board faithfully know that a few of us submitted road reports while we made our way to Tulsa. Unfortunately my Alpine developed an overheating problem I could not cure in time, so I was forced to take the Humber. Following is my road report, with a few additional comments thrown in to “enhance” the story:

Day One – Cincinnati to St. Louis

I sit in my comfortable air-conditioned hotel room here just south of St. Louis, MO. Mike Phillips and I made it. The Humber ran flawlessly, purring along at 70 to 75 mph for six straight hours. I get exactly 200 miles per tank (12.5 US Gallons) so am happy with the 16 miles per gallon (especially when you consider the Humber has the aerodynamics of a flying brick!) Mike followed in his modern Toyota.

Lessons already learned – (1) bias ply tires look great, especially in wide whitewalls, but they're a nightmare to handle on rough roads, in the wet, at speed. I can't wait for them to run out so I can buy radial whitewall tires. (2) Never follow directly behind big trucks - they make the tires handle even worse. Still, I bet I'm more comfortable than all you Alpine guys when you hit those bumps!

Weather was pretty good - rained in Ohio, cleared up in Indiana, got hot in Illinois and Missouri. Not really looking forward to 95 degree temps tomorrow but what are you going to do? We're all crazy for doing this, and if I can drive a 45 year old car across the country, so can you - or at least drive your modern car!

Officer's Report – Summer 2006

Our annual Sunbeam Invasion has now come and gone, and for those who attended I'm sure we'd all agree a good time was had by all. I'm reminded it's not necessarily about the cars, although that is what brings us together, but it's about the people. And we have great people in this club! My thanks to Jim and Donna Granwehr for hosting the event. I know a lot of work goes into planning an Invasion. You did a great job!

Meanwhile, the British car show season is now in full swing and I hope you've made plans to attend and show off your Rootes-mobile. There seems to be an increasing number of road rallies available around the country, so get out your Alpine and enjoy the twisty roads with a friend.

Activity on our club's website seems to be ever increasing – if you haven't visited the message board and joined in on the fun you're missing a lot of useful information, some great debates, and some very colorful characters. It costs you nothing, just a minute to register and off you go. Hey, it beats waiting another three months for the next edition of the Marquee. I know I've got to have my daily fix.

On a sad note, we were all stunned to hear of the sudden passing of John Egan, owner of John's Deli in Tulsa, OK. Just two days after we visited his deli and met John, Donna posted a copy of his obituary on the club's message board. As she put it, "Life is too short", which is so true. Flowers were sent on behalf of the club.

All the best,

Scott Christie
Vice-President



Th finished product without too much grief & work.....END

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Those great car and racing magazines from the '50s, '60s and '70s
by Steve Silverstein

When I was growing up, I was an avid **Road & Track** fan like just about every single Alfa enthusiast I know. Like most, I used to peruse the "For Sale" section looking at all the great cars for sale, but on occasion in the "Other" section I would see "Complete **Road & Track** collection for sale, in binder, Umpteen dollars". "Umpteen" would usually be an astronomical value to your typical teenager and I would laugh and close the magazine, and it would migrate to the circular file some months later.

Now that I am older and wiser, I started to re-read vintage Road & Tracks and they really are great! But even better are some of the magazines that most have never seen—the ones that were in publication just a few years and simply disappeared. Fantastic auto and racing stories, Now here's where we delve into the offbeat and oddities: **On-the Grid**, **Today's Motorsports**, **US Autosports**, and of course **Competition Press**. All of these magazines are relatively tough to find but occasionally pop up on Ebay and at automotive flea markets. They are well worth the search and you might pay dearly to own a specific issue. These were magazines that really covered the U.S. racing scene and also had some decent automotive test drives. Absolutely fantastic reading if you really want to get a feel for racing in the 60's. These are the magazines I live by these days. You may be asking yourself, "Competition Press....didn't they become Autoweek?" They did, and I jokingly say, "It lost its edge when the Autoweek title became larger than the Competition Press title!" As you can imagine, as **Competition Press** moved into the 70's, their focus shifted from covering the racing scene and the publication became directed at the general automotive population.

There just isn't anything better than a 60's vintage issue of **Competition Press**. The best issues are mid-year since race coverage is more prolific. Even the classifieds can hold your imagination for hours. This was the publication in which you posted your race car if you wanted it sold (RSKs, Listers, Maseratis, and more). Here's the catch: **Competition Press** was more of a newspaper than a magazine. Most issues, assuming they survived, are very fragile. You almost have to take an archival approach to preserving these, but it is well worth the effort.

There you have it—the best vintage reading around for just a couple of dollars. Next time you are at a flea market, race event, or even on Ebay, just spend a moment to check out some of these old magazines. I think you will find yourself captivated for hours by the stories they hold.....END

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Cover: Looking for clues at Invasion VI treasure hunt

Inside Back: Scott Christie's car that he drove from Ohio.

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A Newsletter to the Members of
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