

Joe's Humber Hawk Story

To start with, I was partly built in two countries. I am a 1956 design and my pressing and mechanical section was done in England, and then shipped to Australia in CKD form (Complete Knocked Down). Complete cars that were imported from England were much the same but had leather upholstery and parts made in England while CKDs had many Australian parts and vinyl upholstery.

I was left in a garage on a property that had been sold prior to 2000. The new property owner had a cleanup and placed many machinery bits and pieces in the corner of a paddock.

Joe and a mate retrieved me from Warragul, Victoria. He had been told by another club member that I was available at no cost. I was inspected carefully and thoroughly for some time and showed that I needed attention to my rear end. I had rust in my boot floor and rear guards, some of which had been filled with tar and painted over. It was decision time for Joe. What was to become of me?



Luckily, Joe had a book 'Humber Illustrated - a History. 1868 to 1976' full of cycles, motor cycles, domestic motor vehicles and war products, aircraft, "Blenheim" scout cars trucks, heavy 4x4 station wagons! Montgomery's "Old Faithful" Snipe convertible, and armoured cars.

Whilst reading Joe noticed that Ealing of England had made a Snipe ute from 1946 to 1956. My new owner had to make a decision - would he turn me into scrap metal and sell my mechanicals for spare parts; give me away after all his effort to bring me to Wodonga; or give me a face lift and make me look like the Ealing of England ute with an improved style that we are used to in Australia? Joe decided that if Reall of Ealing of England could build a ute then so could he. With his 4" angle grinder he started in 2001.

Shortly after this Eddie Hay rang to ask if we would like another Humber that was located a short distance to the East of Wodonga, Joe asked Russell Renfrey for help and I soon had a friend, another car same model and year and the same price, thanks to Michael Bartel.

To make my cabin Joe went down to Hovell Street, Wodonga where he found a light truck cabin. Pat O'Toole Jnr said that it would be okay to buy, so the next day it was bought home. My chassis and two front doors went to be cleaned and solution dipped. The rest of my metal went to Border Sand-Blasters to be cleaned and primed.

Next was my engine. It was stripped and all internal bearings and bores were re-bored and the only parts that could not be replaced with new ones were two gear wheels in my oil pump. While my engine was being re-bored, my gearbox was being converted from column shift to floor shift by Colin Kendall of Wodonga Automatic Transmissions. The king-pins were later rebuilt with the rest of my front end and refitted it to my chassis. Next it was my rear end's turn to be cleaned and fitted with new bearings and seals. Finally my engine parts were back and John Adams lovingly assembled them, coupled them to the transmission and fitted them to my chassis. My brakes were then given attention with all new cylinders and pipes. The drums were machined and linings bonded. The master cylinder re-sleeved and they were all fitted with the help of Arnie Leitch, Bill Washington and Wodonga Brake and Clutch. My Chassis was now in "running" order



It was now time for the start of my beauty treatment. My shiny parts were sent away to have new chrome plating. My steering wheel was sent to "Pearlcraft" and my dashboard was sent to Melbourne to be "woodgrained".

My body was about to be rebuilt and the truck cabin had the inner panel removed by drilling out the spot welds. This took two days, followed by cutting about 200mm vertically from the cabin to match door pillars. Then Joe assisted Rob Golin to repair the cabin, mudguards and bonnet and spray them with undercoat. My tray was formed in exchange for some work that Joe did, but Rob found that it was twisted and could not be heated and shrunk, so Wolfgang Humer folded up new sides and they were spot welded in place and lovingly fitted to my chassis. Meanwhile, my cabin was painted with burgundy acrylic gloss. The rear mudguards were cut, reshaped, painted and fitted to the tray.

I'm now "Lady Hawk" with the help of Joe Rouse.

It was now time to modify and reshape the heater to direct air to the windscreen and cabin. This was followed by new wiring, lights, chrome work and new 8 ply tyres.

Now it was time for my upholstery - mid grey interior and light grey tonneau, masterfully handled by Eddie at Ryebuck Auto Trimming

At last I am nearly finished. Minor adjustments to my gearbox, brakes and choke cable and get my driving lights to work. The Engineer inspects me for a second time, the "Weighbridge" certificate and finally registration and I'm on the road in May 2009.

My facelift started in 2001 and completed in 2009 and with about 12 months of non-work time I'm now complete with my "short back and sides".

Thank you to every person who helped to make me a great vehicle so that Joe can, at last, chauffeur me around.

