



# FROM TRASH TO TRIKE

By Andy Brierley

To meet the request for hobby activities, I hope you have not been bored by this tale in the past: A lad arrived for work at my son's place on a trike which he told me was home built. If you have sat with the kids and watched the cartoon movie 'Toad of Toad Hall', seeing how absolutely smitten Toad was on seeing his first motor car, you get some idea of how instant obsession gripped me.

My 65<sup>th</sup> birthday loomed so I determined it would be my ultimate present to me on that date.



Home work on engine drive options had me plump for simplicity of Beetles, (no, not them!). No radiator with attendant plumbing; gear box, differential drive all in one casing combining engine sump. Half-shafts to rear wheels all part of Doctor Porsche's famous creation. Not a mile or so down the river from King Charles a friend had a recycling yard on Bloors Wharf. The first thing seen on the day I visited was a Beetle wrapped in 'POLICE, DO NOT REMOVE' TAPE'. I was prepared to purchase but was told to take whatever I needed.

I had laid out my idea of finished form on a concrete floor at home, like an exercise in 'Sale Loft'. Chassis to be a scaffold tube, thick walled and seamless, galvanised; welds well. My semi has a shared drive, my neighbour an ex-Chief E.R.A, local Eubanks director at power station. He was keeping a very close eye on my activities, a jaundiced eye I thought; his wife an ex-wren never missed opportunities to tell Josie, her man is an engineer you know!



He all but scoffed at my ideas to get geometry lined up and accurate enough to pass expert muster at the County Hall Registration, if and when.



I purchased a front fork and wheel from a motor cycle wreck - cost £35.00; also I heard of a pranged beach buggy, whose price for a pair of rear alloy Wolfrace wheels - and tyres - for £75.00; was a rare natural steal.

As things progressed the need for far better brakes than the Beetle offered was obvious; a brand new Servo at £45.00 had a mounting bracket that fitted with a simple weld to the back



axle. A length of 10" stainless water pipe from a paper mill scrap skip was made into a fuel tank.

Motor controls on handle bars were rejected as I liked the gear lever tucked into my crutch.

I considered it complete and got an appointment with the County Hall for an exam to check if fit for the highway.

I reported in, filled in the form; engine c.c. 1600, number of wheels 3. What I failed to expect was 'Make and Model' and could only think of my dad's name, plus only one was built, thus, 'Cephas One' is on the registration document.

The youth attending to me looked about 20 years old and asked 'Where is it?' 'Outside in the car park, meet you there'. He took a picture, said 'Ah, in original Beetle colour'. He gave me a piece of paper with six figures on it; 'Get that stamped on the chassis as soon as possible'.



That was me done, no fuss, no hint of any test, even to check the welding.

I rode home, unregistered until the number was stamped, same way as I got to the office feeling like a Cheshire cat.

The joy derived over subsequent years was immense, questioned by many nice folk when parked up, my diminutive Mam raring to go, just loved the back seat.

Thanks to diving school at Bulls Nose, Chatham Dockyard, I learned how to weld half decently and, more importantly, how to use resultant heat to bend/twist steel fabrications.

My neighbour never did have the charity to say it worked out okay; spare me the experts!

An Essex insurer Adrien Flux needed only a photograph of the machine to happily insure me for the next 25 years 'til 85.

My son's neighbour asked if I would sell it; as knee jerk I said if you have £500; the cash arrived in hours. The blow was softened as I hear it over the boundary hedge; you may even see it on Rainham roads during reunion weekends, tootling about.

I aim to please, hope it worth the read.