It is hard to believe that it has been a year since I reported on the progress of my 1960 TR3A project. Time flies when you are having fun, eh? Truthfully though, I couldn’t have imagined when I started this project, I would still be working on it three years later! Hopefully though, I can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. So, without further ado, here is my report.

In the Spring 2012 edition of RAGTOP I reported on the successful start up of the engine, which had not run for several years. I had never heard it run at all, so it served not only as great motivation, but also provided a respite from sanding, scraping and painting.

Let me first say that I have a new appreciation for the amount of time, effort, skill and money that it takes to do bodywork and paint. I have spend hundreds of hours welding, grinding, patching, filling, sanding and priming over the past year. I have made countless trips to the auto body supply store to replenish the seemingly never ending requirement for auto body refinishing products. I am amazed at not only the quantity of materials required, but also the cost. Even a roll of 2 inch masking tape costs ten dollars!

Picking up where I last left off... I had just replaced the entire rear of the car with a new valance. New vertical and horizontal closing pieces were welded into the bottom of the valance, after several checks to ensure the bumper bracket bolts were angled properly to pick up their attachment. The interior of the tub was glass bead blasted to bare metal. Welding repairs were carried out and then the entire tub interior was painted, first with POR15 and then with POR15 Whitecoat, which hardens and protects like bathtub enamel.

The following month I began my first foray into working with body fillers, as I started working on smoothing out the engine bay and firewall areas. I figured that this would be a good place to start as imperfections in my technique would not be so obvious. As it turned out, most of this early work was re-done a few months later, but it fit as it should.

As we were now into May, driving season was in full swing and that meant that the TR6 and TR250 were brought out of winter storage. The TR3A was pushed to the side of the garage and pretty much neglected for most of the summer. I find it difficult to make the time to work on the TR3A when most weekends during the Spring and Summer are spent driving the cars to one event or another. Adding to this, my work schedule didn’t cooperate either, as I was away from home quite a bit managing labour disputes in other centres across the country. Many TTC members who own TR250s or TR6s are also members of the 6-PACK Car Club. Each year, the Club has one major event called the “6-PACK TRials” and David Fidler and I had the pleasure of hosting this event for 2012 in Niagara Falls, Ontario. This also took a lot of time away from working on my TR3A and I didn’t get back to it seriously until October.

My first October project was to fit the body panels and work on the panel gaps to make them a little better. In particular, I was concerned with the door to front fender gaps and the rear valance to boot lid gaps. These were made somewhat better by “cutting and shutting” tight areas, while wide gaps were made smaller by welding in some steel rod.

I decided to take a break from welding and bodywork and tackled a few small projects such as rebuilding and restoring the pedal box, seat tracks and other small parts. This will make it easier once re-assembly finally begins.

I had been putting off working on the front apron and driver’s side fender. They showed quite a bit of “racing” damage once the panels were stripped of paint and copious amounts of body filler. The nose of the fender and driver’s side corner of the front valance were in bad shape with severe denting and detached mounting flanges. A new fender flange was fabricated and welded in place while dents were hammered and filed to the best of my ability. Welding repairs were needed to several areas around the mouth of the front valance and the new grill was fitted and finessed a little, to make it fit as it should.

In December, Santa came a couple of weeks early and brought me a new DeVilbiss HVLP paint gun kit complete with a primer gun and basecoat/clearcoat gun. I had decided on a paint system to follow using Matrix branded products and my first purchases were several quarts of Self Etching Primer and Epoxy Primers along with a myriad of hardeners, activators, and reducers. During my Christmas vacation, I used my new primer gun to paint the boot/bonnet/doors, as well as the front & rear fenders, with white epoxy primer. I had a bit of a setback when refusing the rear passenger side fender. While bolting the rear fender on to do some fit checks, I was “per-suading” the front of the fender to conform to the radius of the wheel arch and the additional force cause a stress crack in the

Door gap repairs...welding in some steel rod.

Rear lower wheel well painted with POR15 followed by truck bed liner.

Earlier I had fitted inner and outer sill. In order to do this on a sidescreen car, a portion of the body sheet metal must be cut away at the bottom and rear of the B-post. Fabricating patch panels to effectively repair this area turned into a bit of a challenge as there are multiple curves and angles and flanges to form. I was happy to finish this area after avoiding it for some time!

Rear valance vertical and horizontal closing panels welded in.

In April of 2012, I started in earnest to strip the remaining areas of the body tub down to bare metal. The front and rear inner wheel well arches were stripped of their thick undercoating and painted with POR15, then covered with truck bed liner. In order to do this on a sidescreen car, a portion of the body sheet metal must be cut away at the bottom and rear of the B-post. Fabricating patch panels to effectively repair this area turned into a bit of a challenge as there are multiple curves and angles and flanges to form. I was happy to finish this area after avoiding it for some time!

The more recent work I had done... I spent many hours filling and sanding these area with most of the filler ending back up on the garage floor in a big pile of dust. I have to honestly say that sanding body filler is not one of my favourite jobs!

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epoxy primer, which needed to be rectified in order to proceed. In the end, the fender needed to be stripped back to bare metal so that proper repairs could be made to correct the fitment issues. It is tough to move backwards on a project and I have had to do this several times. It really takes the wind out of your sails.

I have continued with the remaining bodywork, but have yet to finish priming the front and rear of the car and the topside of the body tub. The most recent project I completed was the restoration of the metal transmission tunnel. The metal flanges at the front of the tunnel had rusted completely away and new flanges were fabricated and welded in.

Over the next few months I will complete the remaining bodywork and move on to final priming and block sanding, in preparation for base and clear coat. I have decided to keep my TR250 and TR6 in storage a little longer this year and don’t anticipate having them out until at least June. I plan on building a temporary spray booth in my garage and would prefer not having two other cars being in the way and in danger of picking up overspray etc. Keeping the cars in storage will also provide me with an incentive to get the TR3A done that much more quickly!

With any luck, I hope to have it on the road by mid-summer and out to some TTC events. Wish me Luck! RAGTOP