



Building an X300



Let's start at the beginning.

I was the owner of a lowish mileage and very reliable early Daimler Six (Registered Oct 1994). It was my daily driver for a couple of years on a daily commute of around 100 miles. It was as quick as I needed it to be, immensely comfortable, quiet, economical (actually that bit is a lie) and it looked fantastic - from a distance. Not once did it ever even think about letting me down. I wanted to keep it forever. Alas, the British climate had got the better of it. It had rust in the wheel arches, the sills, the floor, the bulk head. Serious work was required or it was going to end up on ebay as another sad and dying X300.

I didn't want some kind of cosmetic repair that was going to last 12 or 18 months, I wanted something permanent. As I was pondering whether this was achievable and who I could trust to weld and paint it I came across an ebay seller advertising brand new X300 bodyshells. Oh, how very interesting.

I had always had a desire to build a kit car but was put off by the thought of ending up with some fibre glass go-kart that was worthless and impractical. A real Jaguar kit car – that had real appeal.

Some man-maths calculations confirmed it was a definite goer. Some negotiation with the seller on price and temporary storage, and with the wife on converting the summerhouse (read expensive shed) in to a parts warehouse and a deal was done.

So started a long but enjoyable rebuild project . . . .



The seller had advertised the shells available as X300/X308 but they were in fact X308. We all know that on the outside they look identical (and they are identical) apart from minor trim, bumpers etc. The build experience has taught me that the shells have many, many subtle but important differences and I could write a long thread on that alone. It all added to the interest of the project!

A number of parts had to be replaced by X308 parts and a number "re-engineered to fit. (E.g. Compare the door apertures at the B Post - X300 is simple right angle, X308 has a curved fillet of steel for extra strength/rigidity - so the trim is not interchangeable.)

My objective from the outset was to create a solid and reliable car that would last at least 10 years and could be used daily if required. I never wanted to achieve concours standard and it was not in my budget to do that anyway. Any parts that were fully functional and in decent cosmetic state were reused. All bushes, bearings and other parts that you would expect to be getting worn on a car with 80k miles were replaced as a matter of course. Engine, Gearbox and Diff were left untouched apart from lubricants. Anything that was at all rusty was stripped, shot blasted and painted or powder coated.





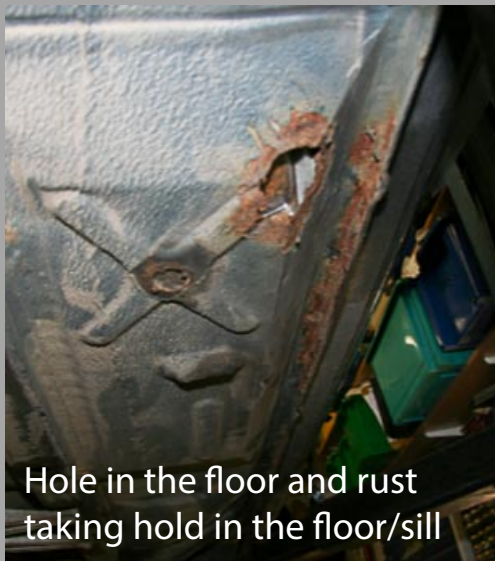
I tried to dismantle the donor car in major component blocks as much as possible to make reassembly easier. I took hundreds of pictures as an additional aid (this has proved its worth many times) and used hundreds of labelled plastic zip lock bags and crates to store the parts. It's amazing how much space a dismantled jag can take up!

Stripping (and re-installing) the wiring looms was probably the scariest part. You can see the loom in a couple of the pictures looking like the proverbial bowl of spaghetti. Having said that, a logical and methodical approach means even that does not present any real issues.

In terms of cost I think it's a bargain. I paid £800 for the new shell. I have spent probably £6K on parts and services to complete the project (it could be done for less) and I have a luxury car that looks and drives as new and should last a very long time. And the added bonus was that it was fun to build.



Corrosion in the sunroof



Hole in the floor and rust taking hold in the floor/sill



This is the ABS sensor cable entry under the rear seat

The X300 achilles heel in damp climates. Corrosion was evident in a number of areas. Rear wheel arches were also starting rot.

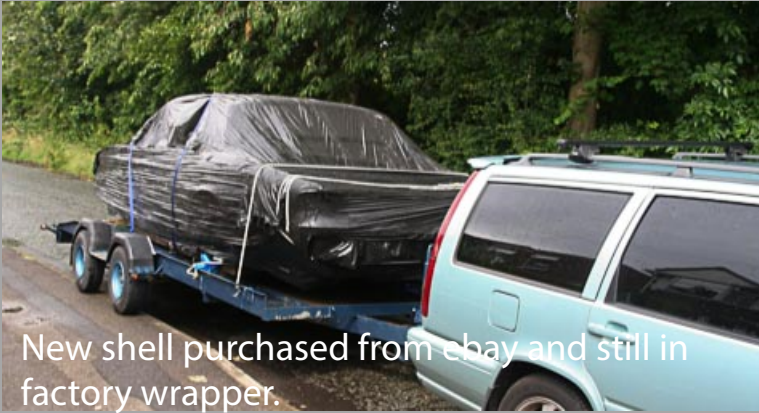




More rust. Bulkhead on both sides and the Radiator panel.







New shell purchased from ebay and still in factory wrapper.



Shell interior. Sound deadening mats factory



Shell unwrapped and in perfect condition





All panels fitted. Inner wing painted with POR15.



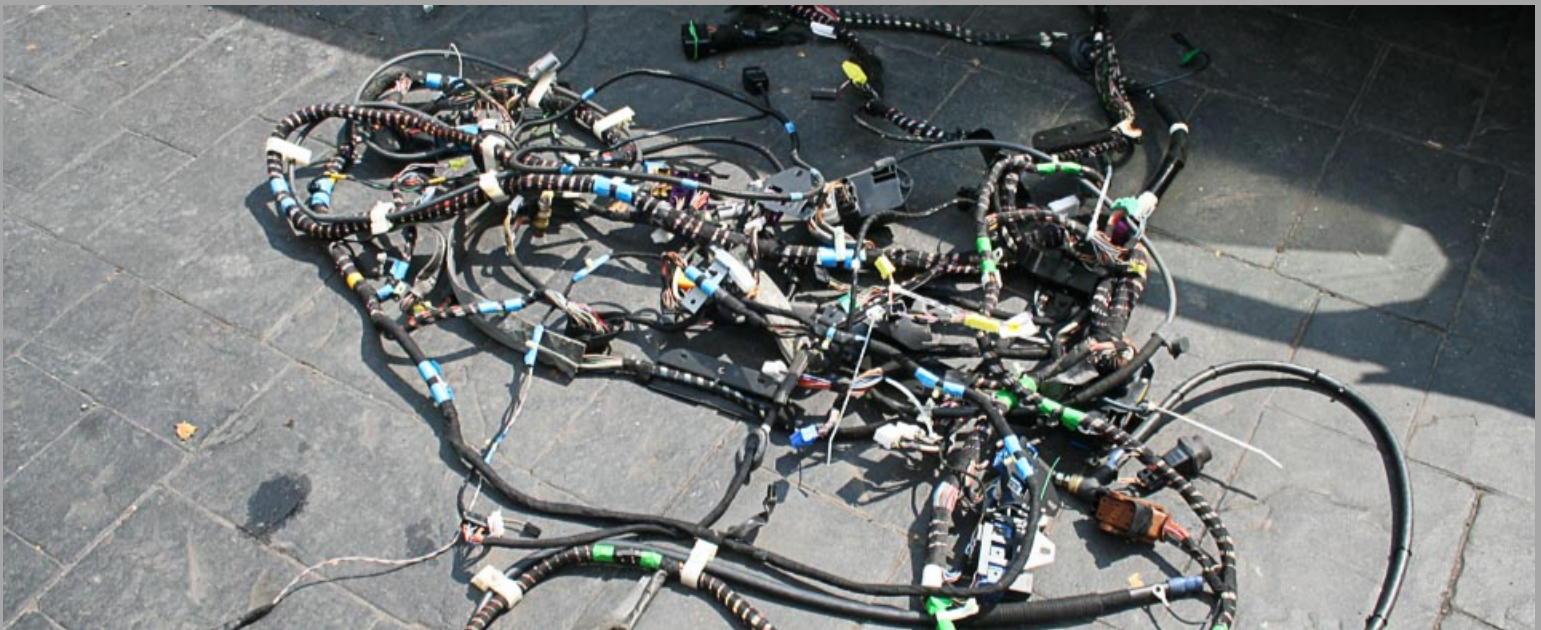
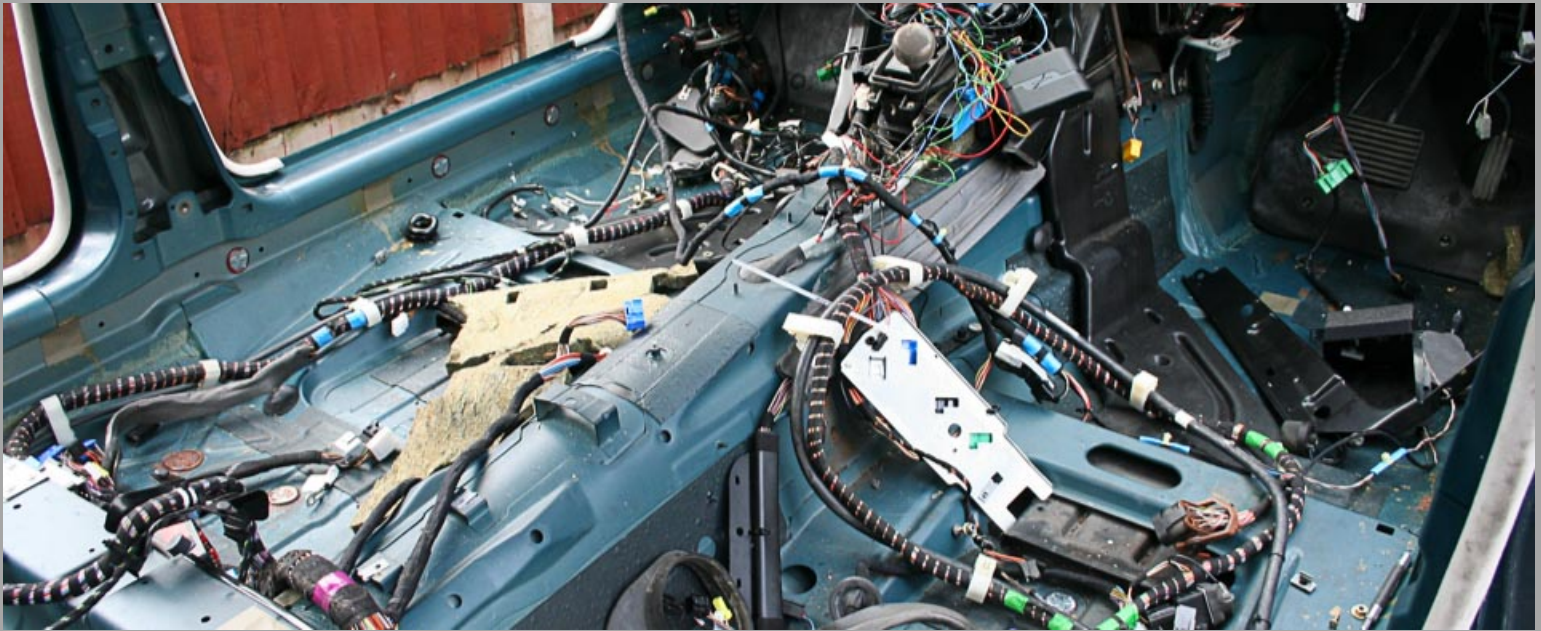
First panel fitted. That was easy!



Panel transfer in progress

All panels on the original car were good and had no corrosion. A simple cut and paste operation although alignment takes some time.





The wiring appears to be the most daunting task, but lots of pictures and careful labeling makes it fairly straight forward.





Front lower wishbone arm before and after example of shot blasting. Pretty effective.



Wishbone arm painted and new Poly bushes fitted



Front subframe and other parts painted and



Front suspension components ready for

All suspension components were shot blasted and painted or replaced.

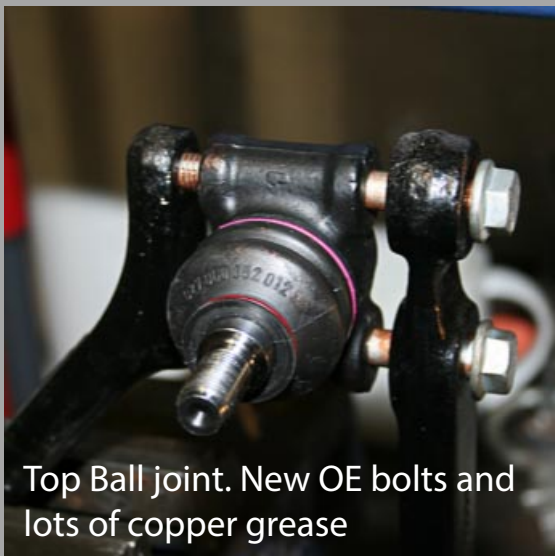




Front subframe rear bush being pressed in



Subframe bush installed

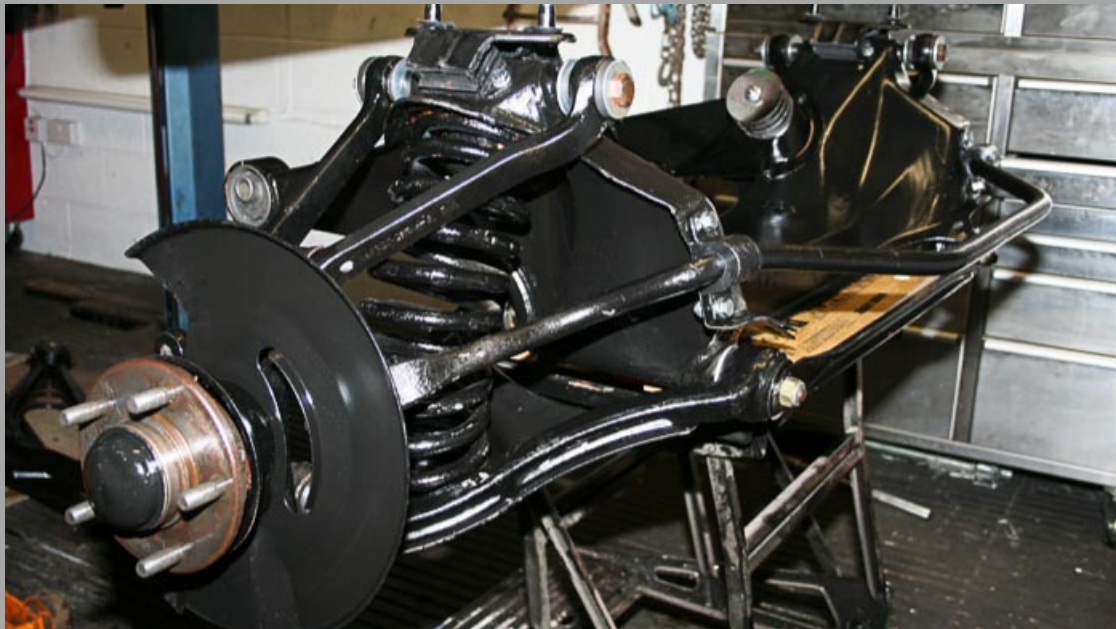


Top Ball joint. New OE bolts and lots of copper grease



New Front Subframe V mounts

All suspension bushes, bearings and joints were replaced as a matter of course.

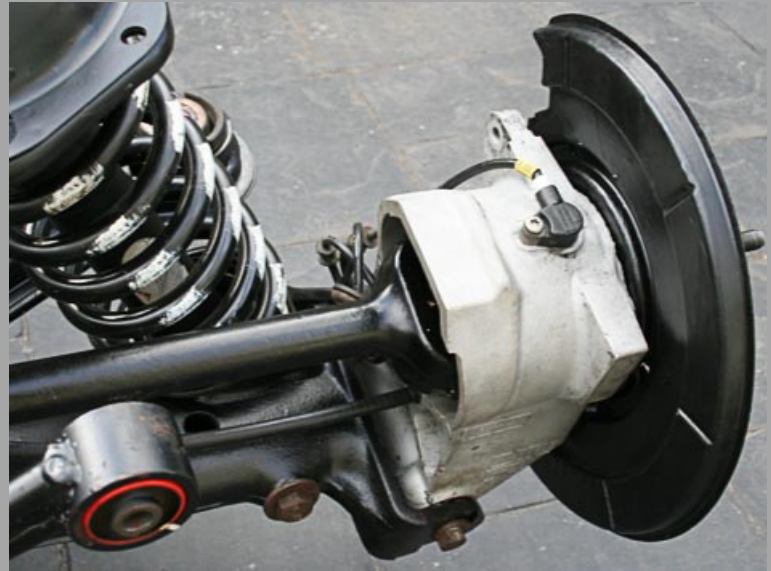


Before and after views of the Front Suspension assembly.





Similar before and after pictures of the rear axle/suspension.



Most mechanical components were in serviceable condition as it was my daily driver on a 100 mile a day commute so it was well maintained. Nevertheless everything was rebuilt just to be sure.





Suspension assemblies ready to be bolted on and get the shell mobile so it could be transported to the paint shop



Injectors were sent off for cleaning and flow testing. A great refurbishment job by a contact from a Volvo forum.





Every last bolt, clip and grommet removed from the shell before disposal. It's probably now a microwave.





Getting ready for paint



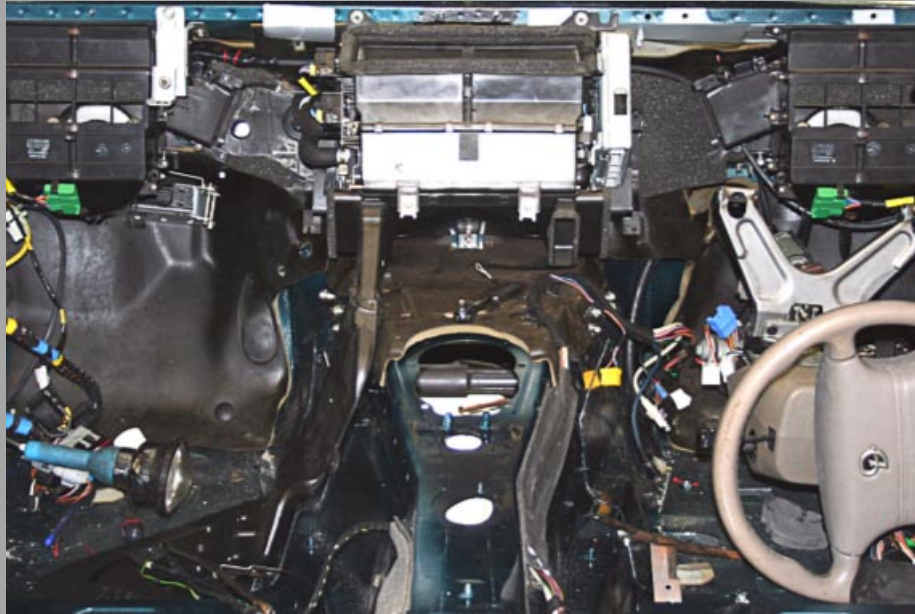


Painted by my nephew at his bodyshop. Nice finish straight from the gun.



Painted shell returns home, and sits waiting for things to be bolted back on.





Interior fit out starts with the Air Con unit and blowers and soundproofing mats. Wiring loom and rear fuse boxes back in place.



Wiring in place in boot, and ready for fuel tank install.



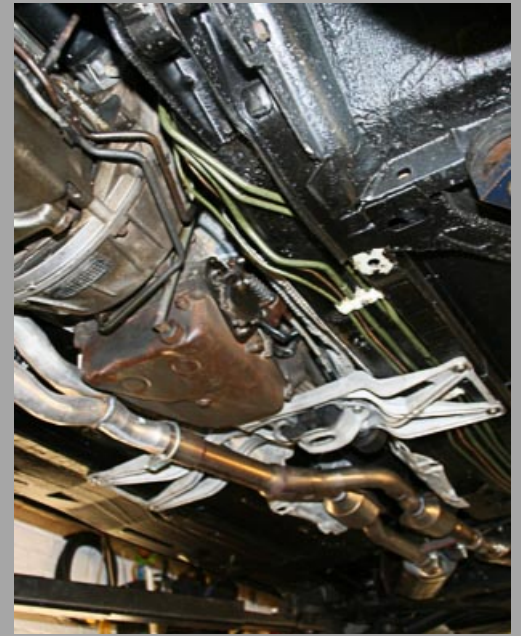
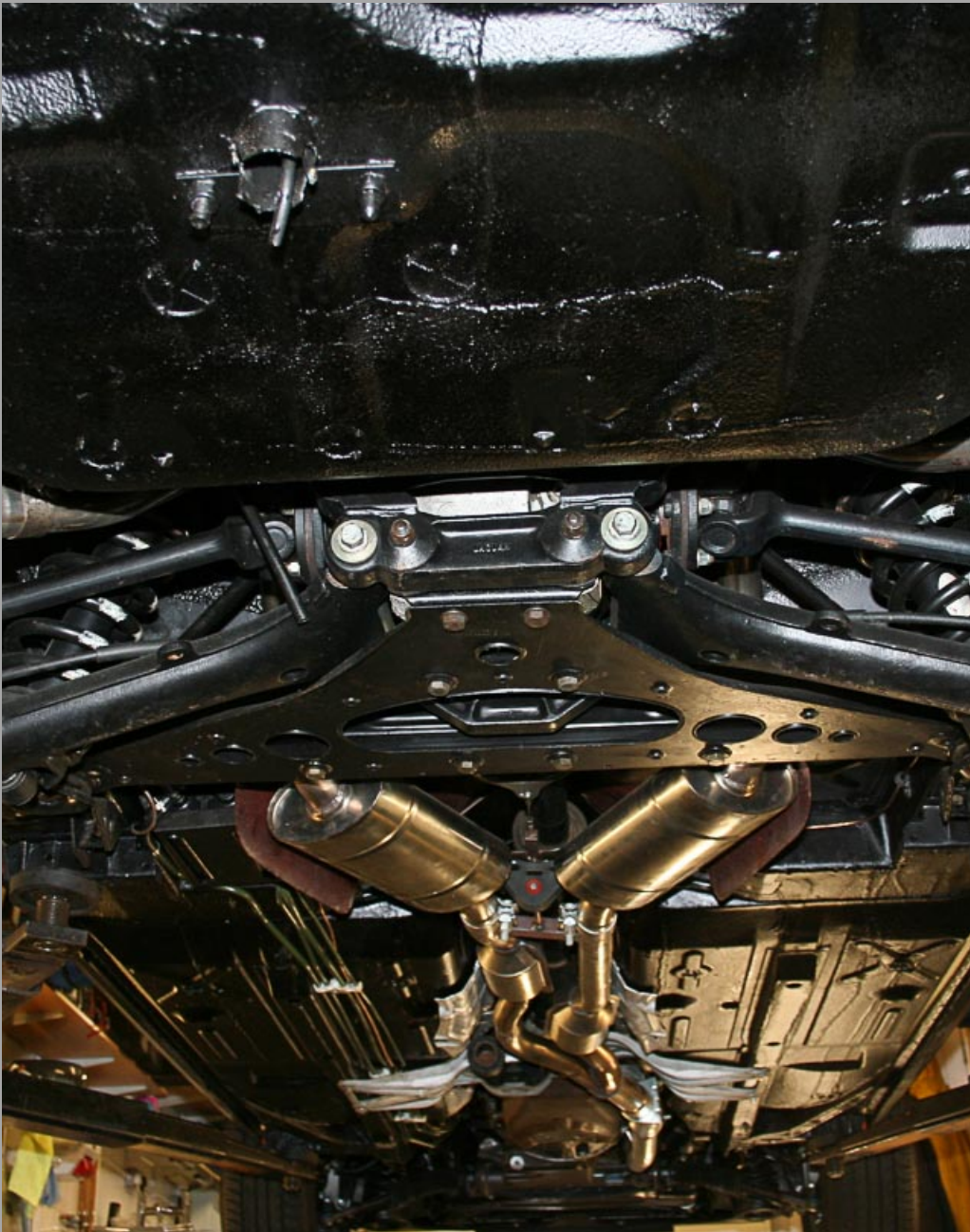
A few wires and pipes to install under the bonnet





New stainless steel exhaust and cats installed





Underside view. You can see my home made Kunifer fuel pipes painted original green that replaced the rusty leaking originals.





Front Seat bolster was worn to a hole. The second picture shows the repaired seat. Not like new but a big improvement.



Interior complete





You may notice the rear seats have five pleats and the front four. The rear seats are from an XJ8 as the seat belt configuration on the XJ308 shell (and later X300) is different and my original seat would not fit. Still looking out for some Daimler style seats with center 3 point belt!



Difference in the X308 shell required some customisation under the bonnet. Note the Audi A6 header tank.



Later refurbished XJ8 wheels fitted by choice .





These pictures are the car as it stands today (Oct 2014 - It's now twenty years old). Two and half years after being returned to the road there's still a few little jobs on the list but there probably always will be.





