



When Mustang rebuild enthusiast Kirk Murray bought a car that was already halfway across the Atlantic he never imagined what he'd let himself in for



PART 1

Green and roofless

BUY a Mustang that's come from Texas and the last piece of bodywork you think will need replacing is the roof. But after his 1967 deluxe coupe arrived in the UK and Kirk removed the vinyl roof to inspect the damage, it was immediately obvious the rust that had eaten away at the roof had rendered that panel beyond repair. "If the roof was to be replaced I might as well do a complete restoration on the car," he said.

When the Stateside owner had taken the Mustang off the road in



Maybe this green '68 should have starred in Bullitt!

1989 he had parked it under a tree in his back yard. Over the years, tree sap has dripped onto the vinyl roof and slowly seeped through allowing the dreaded tin worm to run riot

unnoticed. Slowly the roof had rotted away allowing water and sap to drip onto the driver's floor area which had also rotted through. As you can see from the photo he also used the rear fender for target practice. Let's hope the tank was empty of gas.

The Mustang was reasonably rare with only 22,228 built in 1967 out of more than 356,000 coupes, so a full restoration was more than valid.

Kirk set himself a strict budget, which allowed him to buy all the sheet metal, complete roof and new glass from Gary at ARP and source

other original items on E-bay. "I set myself the target of having the car ready in six months but this was far too ambitious so that was doubled. This still meant working on the car for many weekends and any time I could get off work. I was able to use a corner of a good friend's workshop and enlisted his help on many of the trickier bits," he explained.

His first task was to completely strip the car's interior and exterior so he could clean off 36 years of dirt and dust. Apart from the floors much of the metal underneath was in excellent order so all that was needed was some painting. The bottom of the fenders needed to be repaired and patch panels were let in.

The Mustang had the original 289 V8 and auto transmission – both of which were in perfect working order, so Kirk was unsure what to do about them.

"The lump really needed to come out to tidy up the engine bay," he explains "but I couldn't see the point of doing a rebuild. Why break what isn't broken?"

The next major task was cutting the rust from the floor sections. As this car this going to be around for another 30 years Kirk decided to take out the whole floor and seat platforms and fit new metal. This was done before removing the roof to keep the strength in the car and stop



Upon stripping off the vinyl roof, horror lay below when the rusted roof was exposed



Above, The roof is gone and the car is stripped for action. There's no going back now!

Right: the body was essentially sound ...



it from going out of shape. Once the rusted areas were cut out and the surrounding areas cleaned up, new floors and seat platforms were seam welded in place.

The car was now well into its restoration. The next and most critical task was removing the roof which Kirk was not looking forward to.

"If I was just slightly out then the glass would not fit, the doors and windows would not line up and I would have a major problem on my hands," he remembers. The replacement roof was ordered again through Gary at ARP, with instructions for a secondhand roof from a breaker's but cut to Kirk's instructions. What turned up was a sound rust-free roof with all trim still in place and cut perfectly. "Maybe I should have had the whole car!" he laughed.

Cutting the old roof off was a huge

emotional shock and you very quickly get to a point of no return. Suddenly the Mustang started to look more at home in that breaker's yard. The chopping was done in stages, with Kirk making sure all measurements were checked with the replacement roof.

With that stage complete, Kirk knew he had made the right decision about this particular car.

• PART TWO in the next issue of Round Up will show more of Kirk's rebuild. However if we find it's all gone wrong there'll be plenty of '67 parts for sale in the classified pages!



... except the floor panels which had perished. These were cut out and replaced. Kirk did this prior to removing the roof panel which ensured the rigidity of the car was maintained

MEMBER'S MUSTANGS

Mark Gibbs, Whitstable, Kent – 1968 Mustang Coupe

MARK went to visit some relatives in Dallas, Texas last year and ended up buying a 1968 289 Coupe while he was there! The deal was only completed at 10pm on the day before he had to leave for Florida to enjoy the rest of his holiday.

Upon his return home, the shipping of the car to the UK was organised ... and Mark awaited its arrival ... for 10 weeks!

"That was the longest 10 weeks I've ever known," Mark recalls. "A friend at work told me about a website that shows where all ships are in the English channel and said I should find the name of the ship on which the car was travelling. After a couple of days I got the name from the shipping company and I went straight to the website, not expecting it to show up."

But show up it did and the website's

information told him the ship's current location was Belgium and that it was leaving for the UK the next morning.

"I couldn't believe it," Mark says, "and when I managed to get home the following day to check up on it, I found it had left at 5am and was heading for Felixstowe then Chatham."

Another week went by and Mark had a phone call from the shipping company and arranged a date to pick the car up.

"When I went to collect it and drive her home, she started first time! The car only needed a couple of things doing for the MOT and registration."

"I've been driving her whenever I can, using as many excuses as possible to take her out and she's never missed a beat."

Mark Gibbs' '68 coupe gets driven regularly



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