

Emma's Toolkit:

In the good old days, before bikes and cars were computerised to within an inch of their lives, there was considerable satisfaction to be gained from always getting home under your own steam. Of course with the advent of mobile phones you can now keep your toolkit (AA or RAC etc. Breakdown Card), in your wallet. I have driven a lot of miles over the years, many of them in old cars, and have had a few breakdowns in that time (especially in the sixties and seventies), but on only one occasion have I been unable to continue my journey; that was in 1965, or maybe 66 when I was driving my father-in-laws Hillman Minx 1600 Super when it threw a con-rod through the side of the engine crankcase.

But I digress, if you want a toolkit in an open car (and at the very least you want a jack and wheel brace etc.), the first problem is where to put it where it is reasonably secure. At a push you could mount it under the bonnet but I started by making a false panel with lightweight plywood that is split into front and rear halves then carpeted over. The rear half levels off the well by the battery and the front half covers the rear passenger foot area behind the front seats. The rear half is again split into two so the part that covers the battery is left in situ most of the time. The tools and spares go in the rear well by the battery and emergency coats etc. are kept in the passenger foot-well's away from prying eyes. The addition of carpet makes the plywood cover practically invisible.

Note.

Of course as usual there's more than one way to skin a cat and it looks like it would be relatively simple to put a piece of upright plywood with a lockable access hatch on the TD and TF models, thus turning the slopey back bit into an angled cupboard. In fact I imagine that a lot of members have already done it? If so please post a photo.

The following tools are carried under Emma's false floor:

- Jack (I use a screw bottle jack).
- Wheel brace.
- Multi-Tool (the cheap £10 version of a Gerber).
- Plug spanner.
- AF Spanner's.
- Side-cutter pliers.
- Long nosed pliers.
- Pipe pliers.
- Crosspoint screwdrivers.
- Slot screwdrivers.
- Test light (the type with a spike on one end).
- Box cutter knife.
- Mole grips.
- Adjustable spanner.
- Wind up torch.
- A 50mm thick x 150mm wide x 200mm long block of wood, angled at the end (used to drive the car on to get the flat tyre/wheel high enough to get a bottle jack under).
- A 50mm x 75mm x 250mm long piece of wood (used between the front lower suspension wishbones and jack to spread the weight).
- Pair of riggers gloves.
- Kitchen roll (a thin part used one stolen from Margaret).

Note.

An old hand bag or wash bag makes a good tool bag but it needs to be small enough to fit in the recess.

Parts:

The following spares/parts are also carried.

- One litre of engine oil in an aluminium screw top container.
- One litre of mixed anti freeze, ditto.
- 1/8" NPT plug.
- Two indicator bulbs
- Two taillight bulb.
- Two sidelight bulbs.
- One headlight bulb.
- Assortment of fuses.
- Four spark plugs. *
- CB Points and condenser. *
- Rotor arm. *
- Fan belt *
- Duct tape.
- 5m of nylon cord.
- Assortment of cable ties.
- Wire cable (2m each of black and red).
- Four 45mm Jubilee clips (they can be joined together to make larger ones). Useful as emergency exhaust hangars.
- Two 25mm Jubilee clips.
- Two lengths of welding wire.
- Amalgamating tape. **
- Electric chocolate block.
- 6" length of 1/2" copper water pipe.

Notes.

The parts marked with a single asterisk are parts that were replaced when I carried out the initial service; i.e. they are second-hand spares that are carried just in case.

Of course with good maintenance you may never need all these tools and parts, but it's nice to be able to help other people.

Unfortunately I didn't have enough room left over for a warning triangle or a first aid kit (both items are compulsory along with spare bulbs in many countries), but I think I might eventually store them somewhere in the engine compartment. It might seem a bit daft to carry a first aid kit but I know from experience that German police at the scene of an accident have the right to commandeer your first aid kit and give you an 'IOU'.

Tip: - ** *A temporary repair to leaking coolant hoses and pipes can be carried out with amalgamating tape, but drive home with the radiator cap removed. The lack of pressure in the system will reduce the potential for a water leak, although the radiator will require topping up regularly as the water will eventually boil away.*

So that's what is in Emma's toolkit! What useful additions do you keep in yours?

The photos show the bits of plywood cut out for the false floor. Unfortunately I screwed the securing leg in the wrong place initially hence the extra holes on the cover that goes over the battery. The eyebolt holds Gromit's (our Border collie's), safety belt/harness.

WOFTAL:

Very few people check their modern cars on a daily basis nowadays. The only thing I do is walk round and make sure nothings under the car, such as leaks, cats and Gromit's tennis balls, other than that I just start it and wait a few seconds for the computer to do its checks.

In the old days we did a pre-use check using the acronym 'WOFTAL' Water, Oil, Fuel, Tyres and Lights. I tend to do this check on Emma once a week. The 'Fuel' element used to include checking you had enough fuel for the journey but since the advent of ethanol based fuels I have included looking for 'wet' fuel hoses.

