

## **Paintball Incident**

*By Clyde Wyatt*

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A few years ago my pride and joy "Auntie" took a turn for the worse, in that her two-tone green coat of paint was seriously damaged.

We had asked an acquaintance to come and install a generator at our home, as a standby in case of power failures because South Africa was at that time undergoing periods of load-shedding.

Having almost completed the job this chap, who was a keen paintball fanatic, decided to show me his paintball gun that fires little balls made of plastic and filled with different colour water-based inks!! Or should be.

He loaded the weapon and fired one shot into the foliage of a tree, to demonstrate the speed of the said balls. He then pointed the weapon at the windscreen of his VW pickup and fired his second shot, which splattered on impact but did not damage the windscreen. However, Auntie was standing nearby, having been taken out of the garage whilst the generator was being installed, and the splattering of the paintball also deposited millions of droplets of spray onto the Rover.

I pointed out the lime green droplets to Francois but he informed me that they were oil-based and would wash off. I gave it no further thought at the time, but after lunch I decided to wash the Rover off before parking her and found to my horror that every droplet had now hardened and refused to budge under pressure from a liquid soap and sponge. I tried to pick a couple off with my fingernail, only to find that they came off under due stress but also left an indent, indicating that the contents of the ball must be acidic and had eaten into the paint. The only sections that appeared to have escaped damage were the two left doors.

There was only one solution, a complete respray at a cost of around R7000. Fortunately, our insurance company agreed to cover the cost, having sent an assessor to confirm the damage.

The decision was taken to have the job done at Diedricks Panelbeaters in Greytown, but first we would have to remove all the chrome and fittings. With the help of my good pal Rob North in Hilton we proceeded to prepare the body, which was no easy task, as we found many rusted nuts and bolts. All the valences, front and back, were taken off, and both bumpers. The front doors were stripped and the most stubborn or difficult item was the chrome strip around the window aperture, which resulted in the back doors being left as they were. The strip separating the two colours was removed, the clips taken out and pop rivets drilled out. The headlamps, spot lamps, park and indicator lights were removed; wiper mechanism and bonnet air vent near the windscreen removed, including the opening and closing unit to let in fresh air. All windows and their winding units, door handles, door panels and the stainless steel strips below the doors were removed. The petrol filler unit and flap were removed

and also the inspection holes in the boot, to allow us to get to the nuts and bolts holding the rear bumper.

The car was then driven up to Greytown, looking a very sorry sight.

Whilst the Diedricks were seeing to the spray painting, Rob and I were very busy. Everything that came off was refurbished, painted, polished, buffed, gaskets made, bulbs replaced. Even the right hand door hinges were removed and refurbished by our newest member, Paul Deglon, who made new pins, as there was play in the old ones.

All the wood trims around the windows were removed and as they came apart, were re-glued with the slivers that hold the corners together. The window guides were replaced with felt. New channeling was fitted around the top end of the windows on the two front doors.

We replaced all the masonite door panels with new ones, cut, holed and varnished. All the clips were de-rusted, under-coated and sprayed silver. New foam padding was fitted, as well as new door rubbers.

New gaskets were cut for the taillights, park lights and indicators and Rob also replaced the wiring for the front indicators and park lights. New rubber was fitted to the boot opening area near the bumper. On the rear over-riders, small strips of rubbers that go between the over-rider and the bumper were also replaced.

The back and front bumpers were refurbished and painted silver on the inside, including the brackets. The petrol flap locking mechanism was stripped and refurbished and the breather pipe from the fuel tank that joins the filler pipe was also replaced. The filter in the filler pipe was clogged so it was removed and replaced.

The horns were cleaned and repainted. Anti-rust preventative was sprayed on all the nuts, bolts & screws that were removed and replaced.

I was dismayed when we took the foot step “L” shaped rubber off the body, which is covered by the door when closed, to find a lot of rust. A temporary glassfibre repair was done, and I planned to remove the other three and repair with metal.

I cannot emphasise enough how lucky I was to have someone like Rob North around, who removed and replaced things that I would have just “gawped” at. He was an absolute star in his helpfulness and the time he gave up to lend a hand. And all that time his wife Valda was there to keep up a steady supply of teas and lunches. My sincere thanks to both of them.

This is a precautionary warning - I suggest that if you are ever in the vicinity of a paintball, please scream and ask them to leave!

*Unfortunately no photos were taken at any stage of this saga!*