

Build a
CAMPER for
£3K

T4 project Bus

Time to let the light in

This month, we tackle some metal work removal as the bulkhead comes out and some side windows go in

Words: James Peene Photos: Mike Prior

Fitting the interior will totally transform our project Panel Van into a fully fledged Camper, but simply fitting side windows has arguably made the biggest difference to the driving experience and ownership of our T4.

Having jumped behind the wheel of it after the new windows had gone in we couldn't believe how much better it felt. Light literally flooded in to make just sitting inside so much more pleasurable, and we could see over our shoulders when driving, making lane changes on the motorway so much easier and safer.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. Before tackling the windows we removed the front bulkhead in our T4, which isn't something we had to do, we just chose to as it means we can fit swivelling seat bases to make maximum use of the space available inside our soon-to-be Camper. The job was pretty straightforward and, for those who might be worrying, removing it makes no difference to the structural integrity of the vehicle either, so out it came.

Fitting the side windows wasn't a particularly taxing job either. The template (so to speak) is already marked out for you on the inside of the Van so all you have to do is transfer it to the outside of the vehicle so you can cut it out.

Remember to remove any flammable materials from your vehicle first as you don't want anything to catch fire whilst sparks are flying around. Likewise, cut out all the holes for all of the windows you are fitting before installing the glass as you don't want any grinding sparks damaging that either.

Finally, we used black Sikaflex 221 adhesive / sealant to secure our windows in place. It's what Just Kampers recommend, so that's what we went for, and job's a good 'un so far. ➔



01 SEAT REMOVAL

You can ignore this step if your project vehicle is already a walk-thru. As ours wasn't, we removed the front seats so we could cut our fixed bulkhead out. A socket set or spanner is all you need to remove the seat retaining bolts. Keep them safe as you'll need them when you come to re-fit the seats



02 THE STRIP DOWN Our Van had been ply lined, which was a real bonus as it had prevented the Bus' metal sides from being damaged by stuff flying around inside. An electric drill took the effort out of this job



03 REMOVE OR PROTECT

The rubber matting in the cargo area won't be re-used as we're turning our Van into a Camper, but we will be using the cab mat. Remove it to protect it from damage caused by flying sparks or any other damage, but be careful as they become brittle with age and split if folded



04 DRILL With the interior stripped out, it's time to break out the power tools. Type 2s are simple creatures so you can easily see where they're spot welded together. Work your way along the bulkhead and drill out all of the spot welds. Having a couple of spare drill bits on hand is a good idea as breakages can slow you down. You can use a centre punch on the spot welds to guide a normal drill bit, but it's easier and quicker to buy a proper spot weld drill bit



05 DE-BURR The drill got rid of most of the welds, but there will always be bits remaining that will hold the panel in place. We ran along these areas with a cutting wheel on an angle grinder so there were no 'hang-ups' when we came to remove it



06 BRUTE FORCE

A cold chisel and hammer will come in handy, too. The bulkhead is a tight fit and these 'precision tools' can be used to break any remnants of the spot welds. A good shove from behind and our bulkhead came free no problem. If yours is stubborn, go round the edges and check again for hang ups



07 WINDOW FITTING

With our bulkhead consigned to the scrap bin we moved on to removing the metal side panels to fit our new windows. On the inside you'll see where the inner skin dictates the shape of the window. To transfer this shape to the outside of the Van use a drill to make a series of pilot holes around the outer edge...

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08 MASK UP ...move outside now and you'll see your pilot holes in the corners of the panel to be removed. Run some masking tape to protect the paintwork and then grab your jigsaw. You can make life a little easier for your jigsaw blade by enlarging the holes with a fatter drill bit but it isn't strictly necessary. Now simply join the dots, but take it easy and let the blade do the work



09 THE FINAL CUT There's nothing wrong with using a jigsaw to cut out the entire panel but, if you're confident, you can use an angle grinder for speed. Having someone on hand to steady and catch the panel as it comes out is a good idea



10 CLEAN UP Watch yourself on those sharp edges as they can hurt you bad! Grab a file and remove any burrs and rough shards. A hand file is dandy, but we used a coarse flapper wheel as it's much quicker



11 PANEL PREP The adhesive / sealant should do a good job of protecting the metal but it makes sense to paint the exposed metalwork. Allow it to dry and then give the paint a key to help the glue adhere to it. We had a piece of 40 grit sandpaper to hand so that's what we used



12 TRIM TIME The Just Kampers window kit comes with a piece of rubber finishing trim that runs around the edge of the glass. Fit this on the outer edge and cut off the excess with a knife or a sharp pair of scissors



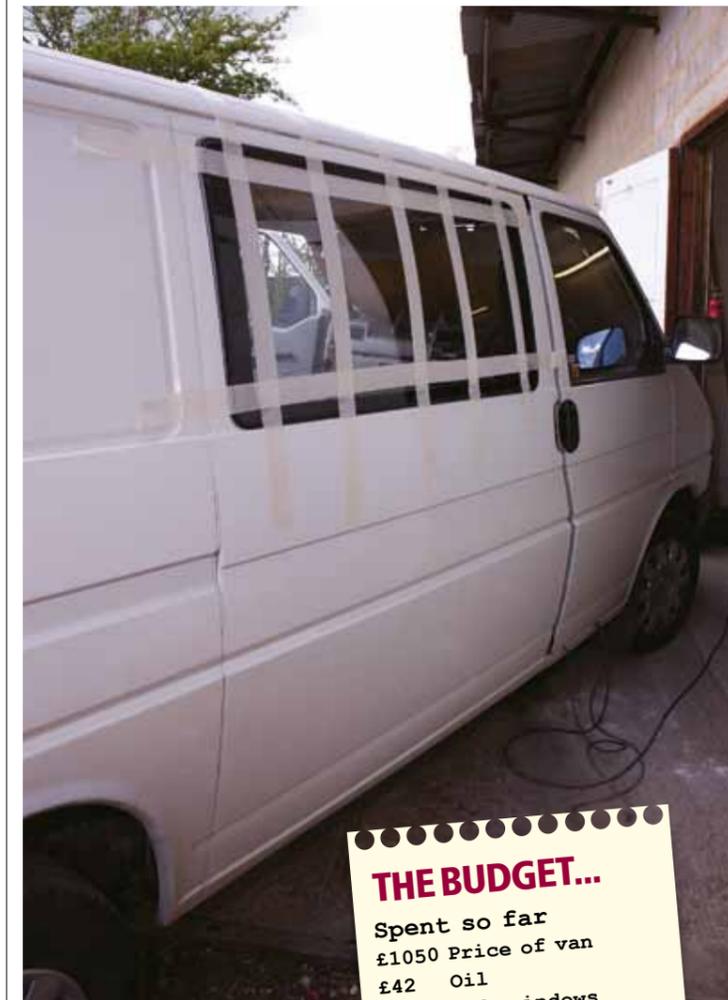
14 FIT IT UP Be careful how you hold the pane of glass (window suckers are a great idea) as you don't want to drop it or smere the sealant all over the place. Line it up and push it into position in one fluid movement as the adhesive will grip straight away. You can move it slightly if needs be, but don't try and lift it out again or you'll trap air in the glue and that will weaken the join



13 SEALANT With the correct piece of glass for the side of the Van you're working on laid out on a bench or similar, run a thick bead of adhesive all the way around the edge. A piece of card or dust sheet to protect the face of the glass is a sensible move here



15 TAPE IT UP Use plenty of masking tape to hold the new window in place. You can't drive the vehicle for at least 24 hours whilst the adhesive sets. It goes without saying that it's a good idea to have somewhere out of the elements to store the Bus for this period of time



16 JOB DONE Once the adhesive has dried, you'll have an ex-Panel Van! We fitted two windows in just a couple of hours, but we would advise you set aside a full day for this job if you haven't done it before

THE BUDGET...

Spent so far	
£1050	Price of van
£42	Oil
£113	Side windows
£73	Window seals
£30	Adhesive

NEXT JOB
The interior! Or perhaps look at the oil leak situation...

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