



excellent body shop at a leading Ford distributor (you guess the name). It was quite a nervous time for me when I was finally fitting and bonding the body panels and wheel arches in place. Modifying the wiring harness to cope with the new location of the battery and the relocation of the fuel injection computer caused by the battery move, the twin BMW fuel injection pumps etc.,etc. was just simply time consuming but I did manage to strip out whole sections of the wiring harness which were no longer of any use like the electric windows and mirrors.

The entire front bodywork of the buggy is now removable by undoing two bolts and disconnecting two wiring multi-plugs and two earth straps. It has been built with the view of retaining the air-conditioning, but that's another job for the future.

By October it resembled a complete vehicle and on Friday the 19th Lesley and I took it for its inaugural drive around the compound. It was when I tried to take it to Sinayah to get the windscreen made and fitted that I found the automatic gearbox had been stood too long and had blown a clutch. So the buggy was driven slowly down to the workshop in Diriyah to have a replacement automatic gearbox fitted by Nabil and his team. Then in November I arranged with my friend Ellie to book it in for its new MVPI. It's just convenient that Ellie is the manager of the Riyadh MVPI testing station and he personally walked the buggy through the test process to avoid any distractions caused by everyone asking what it is. I insisted that he test it properly and it passed with flying colours, I would have been

extremely upset if it had failed. It has now had the Estimara renewed and has been issued with new style registration plates and is now fully road legal.

There were so many of the parts needed which are easily available in the UK that I always brought things back when coming to Riyadh from trips home. I must thank BMI staff for bending their baggage allowances on several occasions, but on the other hand they did make me pay the extra on some occasions as well. Some of the parts came from the UK and some from the US and Australia so I got quite familiar with the customs clearance process at the KKIA, and by doing the clearance there myself I never did have to pay any import duty. The seats for instance came from Manchester via Royal Mail Parcels to the Saudi Post office in Batha.

Like so many things they are never truly finished, for instance the suspension systems which are a work in progress and will be developed over the coming months. The soft top and doors need finishing, the axles may need beefing up when I get more adventurous in the dunes, the hydraulic winches, the on-board air compressors and of course there will be the need for a more powerful V8 engine.

If anyone was to ask me 'would I do it again' the answer would probably be yes but not immediately, or, 'would I do it differently or the same' the answer would be yes I would change things to a different specification.

But then there is always the next one isn't there?

