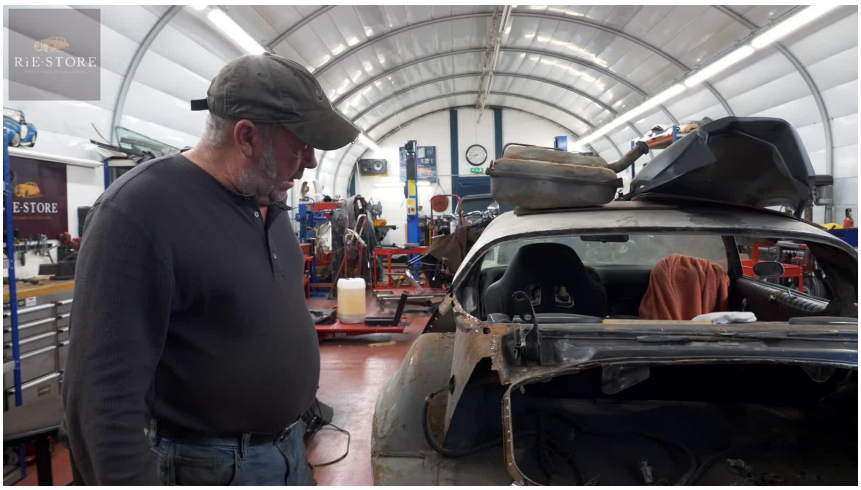
# Finding the Shape Again

With the damaged rear wing removed, the next question is how much of the car's remaining bodywork is out of shape. This week in the RiE-Store workshop, Ash prepares the exposed metal and brings a replacement wing into position. The first trial fit will tell us far more than looking at the stripped shell alone.

Getting this far has already taken considerable work. Ash estimates that removing the old wing involved drilling out around 400 spot welds. Some have left small nuggets of the outer skin attached to the metal underneath. Those remnants now need grinding back before the mating surfaces can be straightened and cleaned.



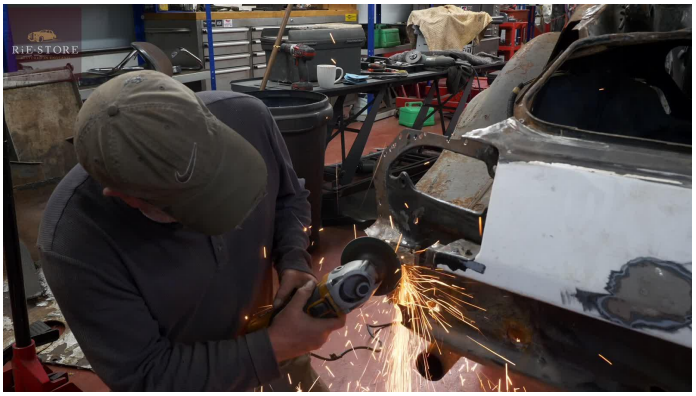

With the old wing removed, the exposed bodywork is ready for assessment.

The job also exposes the order in which the car was assembled. Sections fitted after the original wing conceal its edges and welds, so replacing it means working around those overlaps. Some pieces have had to be cut away for access and will go back later. Robin has already improved part of the damaged metalwork and made a repair section for another area.

For now, the aim is to prepare enough of the opening to fit the wing and assess the boot lid. Old sealer comes away, high spots are removed and distorted edges are worked back towards their proper positions. It is noisy, dirty work, with layers of previous repairs and corrosion adding to the task.

The exposed inner panels are surprisingly flexible. Ash points out that, without the outer wing tying things together, they can move considerably. Their final shape has to be judged against the replacement panel. Some rotten inner metal will therefore be repaired once the wing's position is established, rather than rebuilt to a shape that might prove wrong.

There is another decision at the top of the replacement wing. Following the original join would take the work up towards the roof and into a lead-filled seam. Ash chooses a lower splice position, trimming away the section that is not needed. The panel can then be offered up to the car.



Grinding back the remaining welds and preparing the mating surfaces.

That first fitting is temporary. Clamps hold the wing while its position is assessed, then a small screw takes over where a clamp would prevent the boot lid from closing. Bringing the lid back into the opening gives us a much better reference for the rear end and the gaps around it.

The result is encouraging. The boot opening looks more even than before, and Ash finds the rear bodywork nowhere near as bent as he had expected. The old wing appears to have accounted for much of the difficulty. There is still adjustment to do, but the trial fit provides a useful starting point.

The replacement panel introduces a complication of its own. One area is around two inches out of alignment. Ash identifies the wing as the source of that mismatch and explains that a section will need unpicking and repositioning. The wheel-arch returns also need working into place, with repeated fitting and removal ahead.



The replacement wing and boot lid together provide a reference for alignment.

By the end of the episode, the wing is trial-fitted and there is good metal available for the splice. The boot-lid line is closer, although the hinges, lock and surrounding gaps still need attention. The rear lights will also be needed to check how everything fits together, and the rust underneath remains on the list.

We finish with a clearer shape and a more manageable picture of the work ahead. The new wing has not simply dropped into place, but it has answered the important question: the remaining rear bodywork is better than feared. Now the patient work of fitting, adjusting and checking can continue.