

Another Kat life saved.

It all started at the end of October 2013. when a really dodgy picture appeared on Ebay of a Suzuki GSX 750 SE (pop up) Katana in bits and very incomplete.

A member asked on the forum if he bought it and only needed just a piece did any one else want anything so as to chip in money wise. I looked at it and felt that in all honesty it would just get weighed in for scrap. Another Katana lost.



So a plan was hatched. We agreed with the vendor to give him his starting bid of £175 if he would stop the auction as we had a plan. He loved the plan and a club member close to him collected it.

The plan, basically had multiple aims, one to show what a club can achieve and to save a Katana from the scrap heap for no budget, but we also wanted to find out which parts were unobtainable, Common to other models in better circulation. Parts could then be fabricated or at least we would know where to get them.

To do this club members all over the UK would be given a task, whether it was to clean, repaint, source or fabricate. This would be done completed and the bike built at the Manc'ee Kat rally, Easter weekend in April(2014) near Manchester. The bike would then be MOT'd on the Sunday and then raffled off. The draw being made at the European Katana rally (EK6) near Swansea in August (2014). The money from the raffle would repay members and or go in to club funds to pay for hosting the EK6.

The first thing to do was draw up a list of parts we had, which was much, much smaller than the list of bits we needed, this was the same size as the bits that were beyond help.

So donations of spare parts came in. A used fairing was sourced via yahoo/facebook Japan. We also came by a company that makes the pop up fairing in plastic so got one in to evaluate.

One side panel was snapped in half, but an advert in CMM (The Plastics Surgery - Steve Malvern) said that any plastic could be repaired.....true it could, cracking job!

All the plastics and frame were ferried up from London to Manchester where a chap who has recently retired now fills his time painting Katana's. The Pearlescent white of the pop up is close to **Toyota 070**.

Many companies that advertise decals are not as good as advertised, so with some to-ing and fro- ing a good set was sourced.

All the black parts went to a member in Hampshire who has his own powder coater. The loom and electrics went to Southampton for checking. The ignition barrel on the pop up is specific to this machine and now unobtainable so another was rewired to suit. Obviously there were no keys for the lock set so a trip to a locksmith got some cut.

There were no forks, so a set went from Bolton to Norfolk via Manchester for refurbishing. The front brakes also went to Norfolk albeit another member. These were the originals and the bike was last used in 1993..

Engine casings went to the other side of London to be painted. A quick word on paint at this point. this is an off the shelf no budget refurbishment, so we matched the paint closest, using a country wide motor factor so every member who needed to get the paint could get the same. Remember the frame, brakes wheels and casings on this machine

are Gold. We used **Nissan Metallic Gold** as close to original as it could be.

An engine was donated by a member in Bolton, condition unknown. This was dropped off in Manchester for carriage to Devon where the Wussey Kat rally was being held.

Why Devon? A club member owns a bike workshop there and would check the motor out. A few weeks later the verdict, knackered crank.....oh!

Another member moved the engine from Devon to London. A GSX 750 ES engine was sourced from Suzuki Spares in Peterboro' (who had heard of our dilemma and donated it). It was then transported to South London to be checked and if necessary parts swapped with the first one.

While this is going on people are going about their everyday business, so things and circumstances changed. Other people stepped up to take over.

The actual build date was well upon us when it was found the ES engine on bench compression readings were not at their best probably due to the engine being stood for years and the rings gummed up, with a new job the chap doing it was struggling. Hence a plumber drove from Preston to Oxford to meet the chap from south London to collect the engine so as to hone the bores, lap in the valves and generally check out the and paint the engine. This is 2 weeks to build date.

Parts had been arriving at the hub in Manchester in the post, from everywhere. Members passing other members addresses picked up parts and moved them to the hub.

Nearly new used tyres are bought, collected and fitted to the freshly painted rims. A member took on the task of refurbishing the rear brake master cylinder, but ended up leaving the country on business, so his friend (non club member) took on the task but moved from Yorkshire to Torquay.....The arrival of club member back on UK soil coincided with the realisation the task was not completed.

However feeling he couldn't let the side down he drove from Yorkshire to Torquay and back in a day did the job and delivered the finished freshly painted item to the hub address in Manchester on the Wednesday before the build.

With days to go all systems were set, except the carburettors were an issue, the screen hadn't arrived from Aberdeen. Have faith.

At last the weekend of reckoning arrives, Good Friday sees many club members collecting in the Car park at the Black Swan, Hollins Green, in between Manchester and Warrington. The parts are in a marquee with some tools. However the engine is not there, it is in a van going the wrong way on a motorway as the plumber is called out... Have faith.. 9pm it arrives with the bike bench.

The build will begin at 9 am after a continental breakfast. But Friday night 37 people filled the local Indian restaurant before some ale was partaken of.

There was no starting gun, no whistles, no fanfare, just eagerness. Most of the members present knew very little about pop ups as they are 'proper Katana' owners, but armed with a manual and pop up owning colleagues the resurrection began.

Airbox first was the common chant....engine on it's side frame over it. bolt in and pull up..... While this task was being carried out by a few, the Geordies built the front end up, the swing arm and monoshock got built by a contingent from the North West.

The sun shone people from the pub came by to see what was going on, some returning with friends. A wedding party at the pub saw many men from it standing around the group pop up build watching with interest. The Bride came to see asking questions. At one point a search party was sent out to retrieve the missing wedding guests.

The carburettors which were now sorted, got fitted to another bike to make sure they were ok. They were..

The screen which was fabricated by a member arrived with the club logo laser etched on to it. Unique.

As the day went on the bike became more and more finished, obviously mistakes were made, but no recriminations or arguments took place, some parts were found to be missing, like the number plate! Communication failure meant the member doing the plate didn't know... however a phone call at 5pm to another members wife who has access to such equipment sorted it out problem was she was in Staffordshire 100 miles away. OK, so a trip down the M6 to meet her half way at junction 17.

The BBQ at 6 pm marked the point where the bike was nearly done.. Anyway the pub was calling, this was after all a social event with people travelling many miles to attend.

Now the electrical gremlin appeared, so after coil checks, spark plug checks and much multimeter probing, it was decided to borrow a CDI from another members bike. 2314 hrs. She lives .. the excitement as the word spread from carpark to the pub where a cheer was raised, the wedding reception also got in on the euphoria.

2330 hrs text to MOT man. He would be travelling over to Manchester from Wrexham just to carry out this MOT as his shop (Cadishead Motorcycles) which should've been closed for Easter,.

The die hard 7 members still there at the end who just wanted the bike to be running finally got into the pub as the band finished. But a heroes welcome and pint was in order.

Finishing touches like final bleed of the front brakes and fitting of the tank took place in the morning before the mad dash for the 10 am appointment.

The amassed crowd gathered in the carpark as the representatives returned with the bikewellwell, . "Split pin! No split pin," they were told, the dejection obvious. "However we had one so we passed!!" Hurrah. Mission accomplished.

So this Katana was saved from the scrap heap after 21 years. No NOS parts were used, just parts from members spare stock, either refurbished or just cleaned and painted. The total including original purchase was about £1000. The time scale from start to finish 6 months. Individual Club members names haven't been used because it was a group effort some people gave parts, some time, others just a hand on the day, either way the enthusiasm, professionalism, camaraderie, dedication are summed up in the phrase "Katana owners Club".

The raffle tickets were on sale at £5 each.

The draw as stated was held on the 15 August 2014 at EuroKat 6. We raised £150, the market value of the bike and the amount needed to stage the event. Everyones was a winner.

The winning ticket number 240, Cord Morhoff from Germany.

The bike was transported from the rally to Hull by some Kat UK club members, where it was held in storage for a few months, until Cord and Heinz from the German owners club came over as foot passengers on the Rotterdam to Hull ferry collected it from the port, rode it on for the return trip that evening.

It now resides in Germany as one of very few Pop ups to have made it there.

