

Petter Recovery

The first indication of this engine's existence was when the owner approached me at the ROYAL ADELAIDE SHOW in 1996. He enquired as to where he could find a fuel sprayer for a PETTER S. TYPE 6hp.engine. I gave him a few possible contacts but they turned out to be fruitless.

He next contacted me again 12months later and asked would I be interested in having the engine. He went on to explain that it was situated on the tray of a BEDFORD truck complete with a winch and a 10 metre high frame, and I could have it on the condition I removed the truck as well. He went on to say that I should inspect the unit first then give him my answer later. I arranged a meeting and was guided down a steep gully across a boggy area then over a small creek to a blackberry covered truck.



On first sight of the situation I thought how could you possibly move a truck out of an area like this without a helicopter?

But I said yes I would give it a go. On the next visit to measure and estimate the requirements for removal, I was pleasantly surprised to find all the black berries removed and waist high grass in the area cut down. I was also informed that the area now under water and so boggy as to

need water boots to walk to the truck, would dry firm and hard for approx. two months around Jan. and Feb, but at this moment in Oct. it seemed highly unlikely.

Now the plans were to arrange a suitable lifting truck to come in down the access track and pick up the complete unit and take it to a suitable area where it could be dismantled safely as summer time is notorious for bushfires in the Adelaide hills, and no way could you use a grinder or oxy-torch here. On contacting Balhannah Salvage and speaking to KEITH ASHBY he arranged to come and inspect the task. When Keith saw the area, which by now was starting to dry out, he said his vehicle could handle the job no worries. A price and date were arranged and my problems were solved. But wait, there is MURPHY'S LAW and the best-laid plans can and do go wrong. Two weeks before the due date I rang Keith to confirm the job and he informs me that his truck is out of commission with brake failure and parts are on order from over-seas, but don't worry he says we will fix it. One-week later parts are still being sourced, and now the weather forecast is for showers in the hills. I could only think of what a few light showers would do in this area, as all the run-off from the surrounding slopes finishes in my gully, and a bog with a stream in the middle will make the job impossible.

While contemplating this situation the owner rang and explained that previously, to prevent theft etc. had removed the parts missing from the PETTER, and would I like to pick them up.

They consisted of the CALIBRATOR oiler box with the brass eccentric drive and levers, the FUEL- PUMP complete with base and drive unit and lastly the full set of copper pipes to supply fuel and oil to the engine. These parts were in excellent condition and as the days passed waiting for news of the truck I have been busy dismantling, cleaning and painting them. Wed. 4/2/98.

The latest forecast is for light showers tomorrow afternoon and still no word of the truck.

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Then Suddenly things change, at 3-15 pm. Keith rings to say he will be on site at 5-15 pm. and can I be there at such short notice. Now its time to grab some tools, hook on the trailer and head up to Stirling in the Adelaide hills to pick up the "PETTER". I arrive at the entrance to the location and drive my panel van and trailer down into the gully and park 20 metres from the old BEDFORD to await the arrival of the crane truck.

With a new film in my camera I walk back up to the entrance of the track to meet Keith. It's early yet only 4-50 pm. and thoughts of what can go wrong flash through my mind. I look at the



time its 5-15. pm. where is the truck? 5-35.pm. has it broken down, dam MURPHY'S LAW. 5-45.pm. is that a truck grinding down the road, it is and its huge. As it pushes through the entrance with only millimetres to spare I see Keith and his son Brad in the cab with big smiles on their faces so what can go wrong. Having eight driving wheels on two back axles makes travelling down the grassy slope easy. Next follows a Ute. With Philip and Darren JOHNS who have come to help with the removal. I look back as the truck crosses the now dry creek area and pulls up alongside the BEDFORD without any hassles. Our plan was to load the complete unit onto Keith's truck and take it back to the Balhannah depot to dismantle it there.



After looking at the situation we decided it was possible with hacksaws and a bit of hard work to remove the PETTER and winch here, then load it straight onto my trailer. After a lot of sweat and some cursing we were ready to load the PETTER and winch complete With its stabilizer rams down the crane extended its arm and lifted the PETTER up and over onto my trailer now parked alongside. With my treasure on board I moved out of the way to watch the Bedford loaded.

All by the book so far, where is MURPHY?

After a few alterations to the slings the Bedford was picked up like a toy and swung around onto the tray of Keith's truck still no problems, how easy it is with the right guys and equipment.

As Keith ground his way up the hill with an occasional wheel spin, I thought, he is making hard work of it with eight driving wheels and I have only two. Now it was my turn, and with wheels spinning the Ford pulled the heavily loaded trailer up and onto the main road without any problems.

As it was only now 7:10 pm. and still daylight saving I decided to call into the Bradley's homestead which was just minutes away and show Graham the engine. After enjoying a good chat and some of Raelene's cooking it was time to head down the notorious Mt. Barker road, After passing the Devil's elbow, it was easy going from there. On arriving home it was out with a torch to inspect my treasure and plan the restoration, but that is another story...

Ray Webb