

What have you done!!!

The words hanging in my ears as I saw the dilapidated, broken ex-catering trailer delivered to my door. So broken in fact that it had to be delivered on the back of a car transporter. I could see the look of disbelief on the faces of the delivery guys as they manhandled it off the back of the loader; physically tugging it this way and that as the wheels were perished and had no air so it wouldn't move without being dragged along the road onto the drive. The suspension was so shot the body was almost flat on the floor.

This poor specimen that was once a proud shiny catering trailer had definitely seen better days. The back end had been buried in a muddy field for nearly 10 years and was all but rotted away. The floor was so water damaged from the three leaking side flaps it had large holes and what was left, was too delicate to stand on. The hardboard walls had the remains of long dead plants weaving through any holes they could find. When I finally removed the remaining wooden walls, a criss cross web of plants had burrowed and embedded themselves into the gap between the inner and outer shell. I dare say animals had also made this very sad unit their home in the past too.

But I had a vision. This relic of the 70's. This old girl, whose life as a catering trailer was long since past was getting a new lease of life as North Herts FM's new hi-tech Mobile Radio Studio. As I detailed my plans to friends, I received looks of incredulity in return. Slight raised eyebrows, a smile in their eyes that seem to be saying "are you completely bonkers"!



Maybe I was. Or perhaps I am the sort of person who secretly thinks “I’ll show you.... I’ll show you all”!! Partly, the lack of faith that this thing could be done is what fuelled me to complete it. There was a lot of talk about the “Forthcoming Outside Broadcast Unit” around the station as the months progressed and I got a feeling our volunteers thought it was never going to happen. We had events already booked throughout the coming summer beginning on May 4th at Baldock beer festival so the race was on to complete it in time for it's first outing. In fact, these events were actually booked when the unit still had no floor, sides or ceiling let alone the “hi Tech” interior I was boasting from the start!

The tear down and rebuild took 6 months (with a month or so break over Christmas when it was too cold to work outside). It was excruciatingly hard work. The first job after tearing the unit to bits, was to have the back end rebuilt. It had to go to a welders. Also, the unit had no main door, just a pigmy door at the rear so a new door frame had to be built. Pretty much all the rebuild I did myself. I learned to use a circular saw, angle grinder amongst many other tools. I had to buy and fit new suspension units. I learned to do upholstery and ceiling cladding, build and fit window frames (and windows)! How to cut metal and rivet panels. The final month Myself and our newly acquired Technical Director, Phil, was pulling 18 hour days just to get it finished in time for May 4th. May the force be with you indeed. And it was. three days before the festival, we put the finishing touches to the unit and took it to Henlow Bridge Lakes for a dry run. Everything worked Perfectly. So this sad, decrepit old turkey has a new lease of life as our shiny, new, hi-tech Outside Broadcast Studio. Who says you can't teach an old trailer new tricks!

