



The UK's No.1 Buggy Specialists

**1 Q: I would like to build a beach buggy but have never worked on VW Beetle mechanicals before. Do I need specialist knowledge and are there any books and magazines I can read?**

**A:** The VW Beetle floorpan, running gear and engine on which a beach buggy is based is extremely simple mechanically and ideal for an enthusiast who has some basic knowledge of how a car works. Never consider building a buggy without a good VW Beetle workshop manual and also read the 'Dune Buggy Handbook' and 'How to modify Volkswagen Beetle suspensions, brakes and chassis for high performance' by James Hale. We also suggest the 'VW Beetle Custom Handbook' and 'VW Performance Handbook' by Keith Seume, and 'Baja Bugs and Buggies' by Jeff Hibbard for additional information. All are available from VW books. Volksworld magazine regularly carries buggy features, and is available from all good newsagents. Join a local buggy club, and talk to other owners before you build a buggy. Visit VW shows to see buggies built by others, and talk to the owners for first-hand advice. For a first buggy, a long wheelbase kit would be easier to build as there is no chassis shortening involved.

**2 Q: I know buggy kits are built on a VW Beetle chassis, but I have an old 1302/03 Beetle with a Macpherson strut front suspension. Can I still use it or must I find one with a ball-joint or king & link-pin front end?**

**A:** The 1302/03 Beetle has the vastly superior independent rear suspension (I.R.S.) as used on Porsches and is an ideal base for a buggy as it will hold the road far better (without adverse camber changes) when large wheels and tyres are fitted. The front headstock of the chassis must be changed for the earlier type. If you are building a buggy on a shortened floorpan, use a ball-joint or king & linkpin floorpan for the front half and your I.R.S. for the back, minus the required amount for shortening. Our agents can perform these major cutting & welding tasks, together with any other chassis modifications.

**3 Q: I would like to see one of your buggy kits before buying. Do you keep one of each design in stock?**

**A:** All our buggy kits are made to individual order and colour and we therefore cannot guarantee we have the one in stock that you wish to view. If you wish to visit us, it is by appointment only. It is probably better to visit a large VW show or buggy convention where you will inevitably see some of our kits as fully built cars driven by their proud owners. You may also wish to contact our agents who sometimes build complete cars to customer order, to see if they have one available for viewing.

**4 Q: Do I have to spray paint the kit, or does it come self-coloured?**

**A:** All our kits come in self-coloured glassfibre in a vast range of colours. We don't do self-coloured metallics or metallflake because of the high cost and associated insurance problems, so if you fancy such a finish you would then have to spray paint. For a small additional cost, we can do custom striping in the gelcoat on, say, the bonnet of a buggy kit for a 'race look'.

**5 Q: Do you supply hoods, roll-bars and bumpers for your buggy kits?**

**A:** No. All buggy hoods have to be tailor-made for the individual car once built, as windscreen angles, roll-bar heights etc. vary from car to car. We suggest you look in your local Yellow Pages under 'Car Trimmers'—these specialists can fit your buggy with a hood, or interior, to your exact requirements. Whilst we do not supply roll-bars, 6-point cages or bumpers ourselves, our agents do. Please contact them direct for a quote.

**6 Q: Does the buggy retain the registration of the VW Beetle donor vehicle it is built from?**

**A:** Providing you acquired the Beetle with a log-book, and you have retained the major components of this vehicle without modification (floorpan, axles, gearbox, engine) then the original registration is retained, and the vehicle is SVA test-exempt. If you wish the log-book to note the fact that the vehicle is now a buggy you will have to consult with the DVLA or local licensing office, as the registration laws on kit-built vehicles are subject to change.

If you build the buggy from a collection of parts acquired separately, you may well receive a 'Q' plate as it is a vehicle not constructed from a single donor. A 'Q' plate, once assigned, cannot have another registration transferred onto the vehicle. In all cases, get receipts for all components used to construct the vehicle. If you buy a used floorpan, ensure it has not been accident damaged, as it may be of no use if it has been twisted.

**7 Q: What size and sort of wheels and tyres would suit the buggy kits you supply?**

**A:** There are so many variables, it is almost impossible to give an answer! Wheel sizes will depend on the kit chosen, but also on the suspension /braking system used on the vehicle built. For instance, most current wheels in a VW fitting are only available in a 14" or 15" diameter size. Some 13" wheels in a two or three piece design construction are available but will not clear a VW disc-brake caliper unless offsets and spacing are carefully researched. Tyre choice is also complicated by the wide variety and types of tyre available (road use, off-road, drag-race etc.), height profiles and widths. In all cases get specialist advice from wheel and tyre suppliers. Adverts can be found in Volksworld, Custom Car and Street Machine magazine.

**8 Q: Is it easy to get insurance arranged on a buggy and how much does it cost?**

**A:** Insurance cost varies depending on age, driving experience, type of vehicle, engine size, no-claims bonus etc. You will have to contact specialists for a quote. There are several specialist VW insurers who advertise in the VW magazines.

**9 Q: Is it easier to build a new buggy from a kit, or to restore an old buggy built previously?**

**A:** If you build a new buggy, you will not only finish it the way you want, but you can overhaul all the VW mechanicals during the build. It has the benefit of being a self-coloured kit (so you save the cost of an expensive respray) and of being brand new. A car built, say 20 years ago, and being restored, will present major problems: The glassfibre bodysell will usually be cracked and crazed and in need of major work before respraying. Even if the VW floorpan has been shortened correctly, is it really strong and safe? How much of it will you have to throw away and replace to get it roadworthy? In reality we have found that most people who buy a 'bargain' end up spending more on it than building from scratch; and who wants a new buggy that is really very secondhand under the surface?

**10 Q: I have just bought an old buggy and I want to know what it is and whether you can supply parts for it.**

**A:** Please don't phone us and say it is short-wheelbase and based on a VW Beetle. That limits it to around 50 different kits in this country alone! Either send us 3 clear photographs of the front, side and rear, together with a self-addressed and stamped envelope so we can identify it, or buy the 'Dune Buggy Handbook', which covers most buggy models in the UK and USA. Obviously we don't supply parts for other manufacturers buggies, or buggies long defunct, but some of our products such as buggy side panels, bonnets, dashboards etc. will fit some other cars. If you need an alloy windscreen frame for an early 1970's buggy (41 1/4" width on top of dashboard, 14 1/2" screen height) – yes we can help. We are the only company still supplying these so get your chequebooks out – they are not cheap, but neither is polished alloy.

**'Keep on buggin'**

**Specialist help: some useful telephone numbers:**

Kingfisher Kustoms: G.T. Mouldings buggy agents / VW floorpan shortening / roll cages / bumpers / VW parts / buggy building. 0121 558 9135.

VW Books: 01952 245 345. [www.vwbooks.co.uk](http://www.vwbooks.co.uk)

Clubs:

Southern Dune Buggy Club – 0181 657 9320. email:- SDBC@charlwood.demon.co.uk

Midlands Buggy Club – 01384 850636. email:- mbc@thedoghousemail.com

Northern Dune Buggy Club – 0113 279 2449. email:- chrisgibson@msn.com

Speedy Cables: Shortening of VW cables for SWB buggies: 01992 581600.

Midland Wheel Supplies: Wheels & Tyres. 01926 817444.

VW Heritage Parts Centre: New VW chassis. 01273 495800.

Polyfacto – Buggy hoods: 01323 841399