

Willys Eight 1931 - The long journey

2008-02-27 of Björn Meyer, text and Thomas Sjölund, photo

Buy auto on telephone can have its sides. Ragnar Adell knows how it can go.

With a fresh advice about a car from the thirties that would have been forgotten since beginning of the seventy. Ragnar Adell dialled a number in Umeå. Would it be the the right one? Would he still be the owner to the car?

- "Has I one more car ? ", he said, Ragnar says. He did not remember really how the car saw out or how complete it was so he travelled away and photed the car.

Some weeks latter, in December 2000, Ragnar got to see the pictures. It was precise he dreamt about: a car from the thirties with wire wheels and straight eightcylinder engine. A Willys Eight of 1931.

Actually intended Ragnar wait with retrieving the car to the summer. 840 km simple road with trailer through one wintry Sweden did not tempt. Not the thought on digging forward Willysen from an over snowed barn neither. But the weather's powers went Ragnar's road that winter. Up to and including up in Umeå was the still summer roads, the plans were changed.

- It was bothersome to go so far but it went good, Ragnar says.

He took the brother Lars with himself and travelled away, early, early in the morning. The brothers took night to rest in Sundsvall before the continued to the north and the met vendor in the morning at the barn outside Umeå. Along with the vendor and familiar to him load they Willysen on trailer. It took two hours. After that the business been done up turned they southwards again. Then the sun had thanked for itself pursue two hours late...

But Ragnar were pleased, he had of course dream bee smooth with himself home.

Permanent...

- In moment bought it believed I in my stupidity that it there quite complete. I had not become assured something, but I convinced myself...

Well home in the garage in Mjölby, Ragnar could establish that the item a left part to desire.

- Certain would many have considered it as a spare part car, Ragnar says.

In order to few grips about what he dragged home he taped and glued he together the pieces. When he got the whole overview of the car. He divided up the body in pieces, along the old tinned joints in the body. It became three parts that he could send away for sandblasting. The wood frame that holds up plate was really poor and fell for most of it only broken in chips. Situation to give up? No.

- Before had I of course renovated one Whippet, I knew approximately what I gave myself in on. The whippet was of course in all completely, where needed I not to buy somewhat else than engine parts and new wood.

Unfortunately, Ragnar might do a long list over lacked or damaged parts.

- Rearaxel saw delicate out outside but when I opened that saw I of course that someone had removed the big wheel gear.

The help on that problem came long a way from. Ragnar had exactly begun put up one dairy on internet and one new Zealand partner consulted of it:

- I might mail with an advice about that rearaxels from Internationals trucks would fit. I found such rearaxel and got it to work.

" New" radaiator shell, as nevertheless needed repairing, Ragnar got hold on in USA, like certain help and advice from others Willys-Overland owners. With the instrument board, it was worse. That one that followed with in the purchase where not more than fragments. And no one seemed to have one.

- I began to produce an own instrument panel and worked long with it, but set in all cases out an ad in ClassicMotor after the hydrostatic petrol measuring instrument that was missing - and got replies from a guy in Skövde. It was of course Christmas Eve correct - fantastic trip. I

believe that he had bought the panel on Ånnaboda in order to swap with someone. He has one six cylinder Willys .

The wood frame that holds up body was changed as said most to chips when Ragnar begun mess in it, but in the rear of body was the nevertheless intact. Those piece where each valuable model when the rest of it would be recreated.

- One can enough say that I have built it new body in wood, Ragnar says.

But it was sufficiently good has he of course retained. The wood in the doors was in so passports good manners that it to a large extent went that repairing. The floor, that is entire in wood, he might on the other hand do entirely new.

But also for man that can the handicraft is such renovating no simple thing. One must of course have something to correct itself after.

- I have devoted a lot time to research, but it has been very difficult to find technical descriptions, tolerances and so on, Ragnar says.

Club friend WOKR (Willys-Overland-Knight Registry) in Sweden, Norway, USA and New Zealand have helped to with information and Ragnar has got while on old newspaper articles and publicity materials. Repairing of the straight eightcylinder the engine required a lot mechanical jobs as Ragnar where forced to leave away. And new parts to the Willys Eight from 1931 pick one not from the nose: Ragnar got among other thing help with founding up babbits and the pistons became Oldsmobile that might be adapted to Willysspecifikation. new Apart from painting, Ragnar has done most of it alone. So long not the tolerance requirements been too hard has he produced new parts home in the lathe.

- And for all plate job so has I either the done tools in order to can to shape the plate or so has I make by hand, he says.

Of course closer to the end went against your end the more curious became Ragnar on the car's background. He advertised in a newspaper in Sundsvall since they old papers Ragnar has shows that Willysen gone in the northern part of Sweden (Y3089 and Z3575). Already the day after dialled one older man:

-” It was my father's car”, he said. That has gone as taxi in Liden until 1939, since became it unregistterd during the war and later sold to a neighbour Then first, when he dialed, he found out which colour the car had had. It had been green in different shades, with black fenders. Ragnar's ad gave more answers than so. It was a brother to the other owner as told how was owner numbers two” found the love in Källarne” and took with the Willys with him. There, it became forgotten behind a petrol station. And it was behind the petrol pump that the man in Umeå found it and took home it to its barn for sleep until Ragnar came with his questions. The last push from” almost completed” to ready come Ragnar's son Carl and his girlfriend Viktoria

The spring 2005 questioned they him if the car would become ready to drive.

-” can you have the clear over the summer? Becomes it clear so assures we to meery us”, he said. It became much and hard job...

But marriages it became Carl and Viktoria and Ragnar sat behind the wheel in the Willys. Proud as a rooster.

But the travel there became long. From it long the travel to Umeå just before Christmas 2000 to the late summer 2005 had he lot to do..

- I have many doubt if I should make it , but then have I only to go from the shop. But I have had good premise so I have not needed move the car.

Ragnar's jobs are not however really clear. There are some things left to do.

- Now am I very pleased but it is this with the petrol consumption. Original carburetor became of course exchanged already 1932 of Willys...

The car does not have therefore fairly carburtor and despite councils, advice and aprowment is Willysen thirtsy. Correct thirtsy. It guzzles easily in itself four five liters per ten kilometers...

- it longest I have driven is a ten five tonne 10 km and with one tank on 45-50 liters so concerns it that it is not long between the petrol stations.

But Ragnar works on. The last he done (after the photographing occasion, red. comment) is to produce and to assemble chromated reserve wheel protections with rear-view mirrors on and to do the furnishings in trunk with associated toolboxes in mahogany.

- Now have I pinstripping left to do, it has dwelt for I do not want to to mask and to drip. I want to have it done for hand.

As it should be on one Willys Eight.

Footnote: Willysen has one thermostat governed radiator but Ragnar lacks the thermostat.

(Same type that to Cadillac, Cord and Duesenberg.) Knows you where such a is?

Contact Ragnar.

Eight powerful cylinders

Willys Eight began to be built during 1930, certain information speaks in order to it was launched already in January while other information interprets on that it comes in April 1930. Actually late in order to last one thrity-one and early in order to last oar mock-up one thrity-one. Ragnar Adells eightcylinder Willys is of 1931 years' mock-up. Chassis was divided with Willys others big bodies: Knight, with it six cylinder slide engine. Certain parts of chassis were adapter to respective engine.

The frameworks for both Knight and Eight was provided with kick up over both forward - and rear in order to can hollow the cars' total height. Willys the called structure" double-drop".

Another technical news that Willys got a lot attention for was that company, on typical American sensible, called" Float-O" - oil pump in the oilpan. The idea with the structure was that the pump always would suck oil where it there as cleanest. Pressure oiling of the piston bolts through holes in the crank goes where also news.

The bodies was seen over in a row details. One of the most noticeable was that the hood sides vertical louvers was replaced with ventilation hatches. Inside, a tripod bar was noticed thumbwheel arbor that could be adjusted to four situations. Also the front seat went to adjust in both long building evil and in the back support's inclination. Willys had entirely released the cheaper four cylinder cars but got instead good judgements about your strong six - and eightcylinder engines. In Svensk Motortidning in March 1931 typed G.V. Nordenswan following about six with conventional valves:" Acceleration is in the alone agency so good, that we will give the proposed owners one hint about handling carefully with the accelerator in slippery roads". It eight cylinder car is mentioned as" six in half French band" and" the effect pr the weight unit for this model becomes still bigger than for six. Car is therefore still faster..."

A-B American Motorimporten sold Willys in Swedena had an ad " car [has] a speed of over 120 km. /hour" something as not spokken agianst of motorjournalists .

Willys Eight was produced until 1933.

Ragnar Adell has a diary on internet over the work. There, masses with pictures and comments are from Ragnar. Come into n Ragnar's homepage and to take part of the extensive material. The link finds you at the end of the article.

Technical specification Willys 8-80 D Sedan de Lux 1931

Engine: Straight eightcylinder petrol engine with side valves, 4 021 cc (245, 4 cubicinches).

Drilled: 79, 5 mm, stroke: 101, 6 mm. Compression: 5, 26:1. Effect: 80 hk at 3 200 .

Force transfer: Three alternated manual gears.

Chassis&body: Steelbody on wooden frame assembled on separately stage framework off steels.

Wheels: Forward: hard axel blade springs. Batch: Formal arbour in long building going blade springs. Bumpers of make Ross.

Brakes: Mechanical wire drum brakes.

Electricity systems: Auto little 6 volts with starter, audio, light bolting give in” the horn button” in the thumbwheel.

Measures folded: Length: 4 650 mm, breadth: 1 780 mm. Wheel basis: 3 073 mm. Service folded: 1 620 kg. Tires: 5.50/6.00x19.

Other: 1 686 eightcylinder Willysbilar was built 1931. How many as was in same execution as Ragnar Adells is unclear. Price was 995 dollar. (Ford Fordor De Luxe price same year 630 dollar.) In Sweden the Willys price 6 350 kronor or 6 900 kronor for De Luxe-modellen. (A-Ford at 3 350 kronor.)