



Technical Data Sheet 000 – Buyers Guide

Bond Bug Buyers Guide Overview

How Many Bond Bugs Were Made

Of the 2,268 Bugs produced between 1970 and 1975 it is thought that less than 1000 Bugs remain worldwide. The actual figure is unknown but it's probably a lot less than that and figure as low as 600 have been mentioned. It's difficult to come to a definitive figure because there are too many unknowns. Unfortunately what is known is just as cryptic!

Nonetheless a good starting point when you start looking for one is the bondbug.com website which now has the largest online record of surviving Bugs although it does rely on the visitors to update these records and unfortunately some of the data is outdated and/or incomplete, use it as a guide though. Join the Forum and make a post in the wanted section and keep an eye on the For Sale section.

Set Your Budget First

Prices for Bond Bugs vary greatly and at the time of production of this guide (Feb 2009) you could pay anything between £600 for a basket restoration project to £4000 for a mint show car. With the cars getting rarer by the day prices have been on the up for the last few years and are not effected by seasons that greatly.

They do come up for sale on a regular basis so don't go daft bidding on ebay for the first one that you find. Set your budget though and then stick to it.

Identify What You Are Buying

The first thing to look for when inspecting a bug is the chassis plate, it should be fixed to the front of the passenger footwell and clearly visible. Ignore the cars transfers as after market items are readily available and might not be telling the truth about the car.

The chances of finding a Bug with a matching chassis number and engine number are rare now as most engines have been replaced with the larger Reliant units but if it is an original block it will start with the letters BB. Use the chart below to check the numbers are right.

Compare this information with the registration document.

Date	Chassis	Notes
Mar 1970	BB60001	Model 700E only
May 1970	BB60115-45	Models all 700E model cars apart from the one and only basic 700 ever to be built.
July 1970	BB60700-999	No record can be found for any of these chassis numbers. Production no longer at Preston Production starts at Tamworth BB61000.
Aug 1971	BB61445	A new gearbox with synchromesh on all gears.
Sep 1972	BB61696	Steering column shortened to allow for a dished steering wheel that conformed to the latest safety regulations.
Apr 1973	BB62???	700 was officially discontinued.
Oct 1973	BB62427	700E and 700ES were discontinued.
Oct 1973	BB62428	750E and 750ES were introduced with the larger capacity 750cc engine.
May 1974	BB62569	The last vehicle ever produced to bear the Bond Bug name, registration number VLB 249M



Bodywork

The bodywork is prone to the normal stress of everyday crazing that any fibreglass car will show and the key points to check are:

- Canopy Hinges: Check for stress cracks and raising in the main body work from the metal plates rusting and causing the body to raise in a clear fashion. Not an easy repair...
- Lower body: this is the normal place to find cracks and damage, run your fingers round the bottom edge of the body to feel for patches of repair or visual cracks. Nice and easy to fix but may force a respray.
- Nose cone: Has the car been crashed, if it has the chances of a full repair panel are rare so check for symmetry around the indicators as they have a distinctive shape moulded into the bodywork and are not easy to copy. Check where the bumper mounts to the body if one is fitted, again this area has very clear shape and is not easy to reproduce but easy to hide with the rubber bumper.
- Rear: Like the front this is prone to damage so it's worth checking for symmetry in particular the rear lips of the arches and the number plate mount.
- Seats: Check the seats at the lowest point, where your bottom is positioned. Many bugs show signs of weakness in this area, a good push to feel for movement should reveal any problems. Remember the car is fibreglass though so expect a very little bit of give.

General Condition: Check round the body work for crazing and cracks, they will be present so don't be overly critical.

Engine

The Bug, depending on model would have had a 700cc or in the later models a 750cc Reliant cast aluminum block. Today, not many are left in the cars today as they have been replaced with the larger and more common Reliant units.

The engines need normal check for white sludge inside the rocker cover that would suggest a head gasket problem and then have a listen to the engine running looking for:

- Tappet noise, these can tap away quite loudly if out of adjustment.
- Listen for a clattering noise from the timing chain.
- The water pump can also make a whining noise and leak being both audible and visible.
- General oil leaks from the timing case and around the sump.

The good news is that the engine on the Bug is a fairly easy job to remove and once removed it is a relatively simple engine to work on and parts are still available for the 750 block but the 700 are getting hard.

Chassis

Often the biggest problem area of a Bond Bug given the quality of the original item. The Bug has a separate box section steel chassis that has the body mounted on it by rivets and here the problems start. The rivets go through the floor of the body into the box section and through time water often makes it way in through the holes causing the chassis to rust from the inside out, as these areas are hard against the body it is often very hard to detect damage here until the body is removed. Follow the base of the chassis looking for damage.

At the rear in the boot look for weakness in the two outer corners or glass repairs to the boot floor at the rear of the car as this will be evidence of repair and if the steel strip is loose with rivets missing then expect rust damage.

Lastly, check all suspension mounting points for rust.

You can still purchase a chassis and the forum has information on suppliers. Budget £750 for a new custom chassis.

Cooling system

The biggest problem in my experience with the Bug is One overheating so a road test in stop start driving is essential. If you are not able to take the car for a drive ensure you start the car and leave it running for at least 15 minutes. This problem is usually caused by failed water pumps, blocked radiators or often simply poor calibration of sender units.

You have been warned!

Interior

The Bug uses removable doors and these are often lost over time. Check that both parts of the door frames are available with the car as they are now very rare. The condition of the seat covers and foam is worth a look as they are hard to find particularly with the bond logo embossed on the seat covers. All trim is available from a single supplier who does a great job for the full interior at about £200, details on the spares section of www.bondbug.com.

It is worth getting to know your bugs before going to look at one so you can identify non standard or missing equipment. In general everything apart from the steering wheel is available with original or similar parts so don't get to hung up on the interior.



General Problems

Steering Box – check the three bolts are still in place where it mounts to the chassis.

Rear Axle – check for leaks by the diff and around the brake back plates.

Gearbox – Check you can get all four forward gears, first in particular.

Electrical – check for poor earths at the rear lights in particular.

Fuel Tank – Check the condition with care as these are very hard to find.

If you feel unhappy with the other party trust your instincts and walk away. Do not be tempted by that elusive bargain.

Documents

Examine all the legal documents, plus any available details of the car's history:

- The log book, otherwise known as the V5 Registration Certificate, is the official document that records the name and address of the current and previous keepers, registration, chassis and engine number, make, year, model and colour. See the DVLA website for more information.
- Do not buy if the seller cannot produce the vehicle registration document and other documentation (e.g. MOT certificate).

Bond Bug Buyers Check List	
Bodywork	✓
Engine	✓
Gearbox	✓
Interior	✓
Cooling	✓
Chassis	✓
Electrics	✓
Paperwork V5, Tax/Sorn, History	✓

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