

# My old friend had a breakdown

**A**n old friend of mine had a breakdown last week, while mowing the grass at my place. We'd had a full day's work and grass cutting was almost wrapped up for the weekend. I knew she was getting warm; she'd worked hard for a couple hours.

Suddenly, with no warning, she started to squeal and then the squeal turned into a loud moan. Puffs of smoke emitted from her breather and then I took action.

I shut her down. My old friend, a 1974 International 574 farm tractor, was suddenly silent.

I felt sick—it was my first thought that she'd blown her motor.

Now, this tractor is special to me. My dad and I purchased it new in the spring of 1974, and it was pretty much 'my' tractor.

Sporting 60 horsepower (which was impressive at the time) I spent many hours glued to that seat, cutting hay, planting corn, drawing loads of haylage or plowing the fields—all aboard the '574 as we affectionately called it.

I can honestly say that the seat on that tractor has a permanent impression of my back-side molded into it.

Now it may sound corny to some, but after spending thousands of hours on one piece of equipment, an operator develops a bond with that machine. And the 574 was no exception.

I could tell exactly how it was running, by the sounds, by the feel, by the colour of the diesel exhaust—almost second nature for me. So the thought of blowing the motor on this old tractor was not a happy event for me.

Besides, it will cost big bucks to repair it.

Now a few people have questioned me when I said I'll repair it, and rebuild the motor—it being 31 years-old.

But the cost of replacing this tractor would

**A  
TED  
BIT**



**Ted Brown**

be several times the cost of an engine rebuild. Besides, it's the 574...

As it sat silent below the house I pondered what my next move should be. I threw caution to the wind and turned over the starter. It fired up, but sounded rattly.

I idled it to the shed, and parked it. Enter my personal tractor doctor—Bill Brooks of Limehouse.

Bill drove in (he makes house, er... shed calls) and he surveyed the damage.

He pulled the oil dipstick, felt and inspected the oil, then took off the oil filter. He checked the oil pressure gauge and then had me try to start it. It started, not near as rattly as before. He made his diagnosis.

"I think the oil pump may have quit Ted," he said, "I'll need to pull off the oil pan and see what's happened inside, from the bottom. We can probably repair it."

So now my 574 is going to be laid up for some time, as Bill works his magic on it, to return it to me ready to once again mow the grass, and blow the snow in the winter.

And although I'm missing my old tractor, I'm not totally lost.

My other tractor, an Allis Chalmers can fill in for the time being until the 574 is back in the harness. I only have one problem

That seat just doesn't fit quite the same...

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