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Grumpy Old Mechanic – Never mind the balljoint, change the complete suspension arm assembly!

Published: August 9, 2023

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Online version:

<https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/grumpy-old-mechanic-never-mind-the-balljoint-change-the-complete-suspension-arm-assembly/>





Our long-experienced man in the trade lets off steam...

The motor trade never ceases to amaze me...

In an age when raw materials are scarce one would think that assemblies would be made, and relevant spares supplied, to enable dismantling when required, and in order to renew just the worn section/component, rather than a complete unit.

The theory's good, but in practice it often falls down. Take the example of a 2013 Vauxhall Mokka which failed its MoT test due to a worn ball joint. The ball joint is bolted to the outer end of the suspension arm (which in this case was in sound, serviceable condition) and therefore one would assume that by design a worn balljoint can be removed and a new one fitted, without the need to remove and renew the suspension arm. Indeed it's a quick and relatively straightforward job to unbolt the ailing old joint and attach a new one.

However, it proved impossible to buy just the balljoint (costing, say, under £10) so instead we were obliged to install a complete new suspension arm assembly, priced at more than £60, having first removed the complete old assembly from the vehicle of course.

Logical? No. Helpful to the vehicle owner. No. It's hard to believe that this sort of nonsense still goes on.