

WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN 2014 NEWSLETTER



TRIM & PROPER PART 2

Take your seats please

In the last newsletter we showed what's involved in retrimming an XK120 Drop Head Coupe. This covered (forgive the pun) the panels around the inside of the car but did not get as far as the seats themselves nor the carpets. We also did not cover the woodwork, which is a very distinguishing feature of Coupe models. In this newsletter I am going to show what's done when recovering the seats and renewing the carpets. Woodwork will be a future subject.

We supply trim and carpet kits for all XKs and in all colours and we can also fit them if required. For those of you who fancy doing it yourself, or are just curious as to what is involved, the following describes the work we did recently on a 1953 XK120 DHC.



The finished job

If you are really brave and/or skilled you can fit the seat covers yourself but this is the really tricky bit and does require skill if you want the perfect interior. We can do this for you and I really do recommend that as this job can make or break the appearance of the retrim.



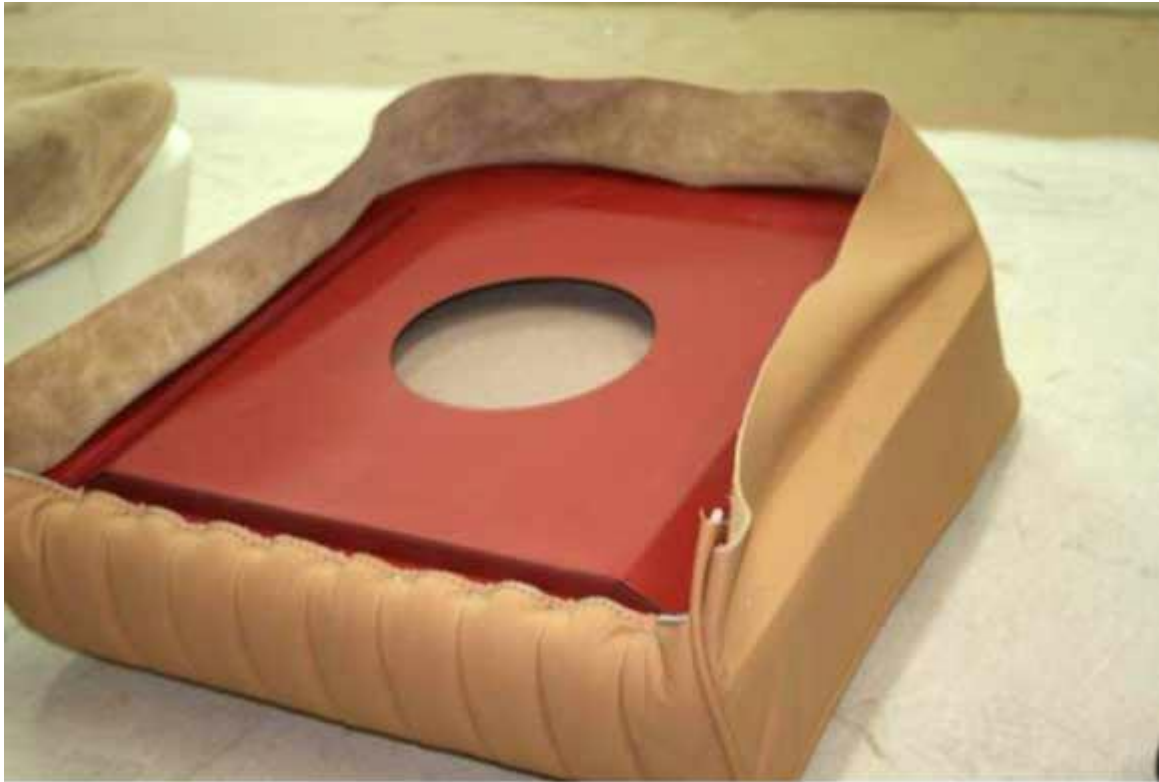
The seats are held in place by four screws, two in each runner guide. They screw into captive nuts in the floor panels. Once the seats are out, the backs are unbolted and you can start stripping off all the old material.

My advice is to do this one seat at a time so that you can use one seat as a reference as you retrim the other. Start by gently prising off the side and small top panel under the top edge as well as the cloth panels at the back of the seat. You can now see the dozens of tacks that hold the seat covers on. You must carefully pull all these out. The metal parts of the seat should then be cleaned and repainted. Nothing apart from the wood and metal parts should be used again. It is false economy to use the foam squab (the bit you sit on) and back cushions even if they look OK. They should be renewed to ensure that the firmness and shape of the seats are correct. When fitting the seat covers it is essential to get them into the correct position and alignment before starting to permanently fix them.



The foam on the base with the cover about to be pulled over them

Once the squabs have been stripped off, the bases should be repainted. The new foam cushion is laid on top and the seat cover very carefully placed on top and pulled down. The covers come ready stitched together and are a good fit.



The back edge is first partially tacked to make sure all is square and tight.



A staple gun is used to staple the leather cover to the wooden edges of the seat bases.

Once the tacking has been done, the cover can be fixed permanently. While tacks were used originally a staple gun is the tool of preference these days. The stapling is done all round the edges while constantly checking that the cover is square and taut - creases and slack must be avoided. The excess leather is trimmed off. Once the cover is fixed then beading is tacked around the edge to protect the covers.



Beading is tacked over the edges of the cover.

The most complicated part of the job is without doubt covering the seat backs. Once the backs are stripped, the metal parts need painting before starting any trim work on them. Then new foam inserts are fitted and the covers tacked in place. Start at the bottom, making sure that the pleats sit perfectly aligned with the edges of the wood and working both across the bottom and up the sides.



Starting from the bottom, the covers are pulled up over the seat backs.

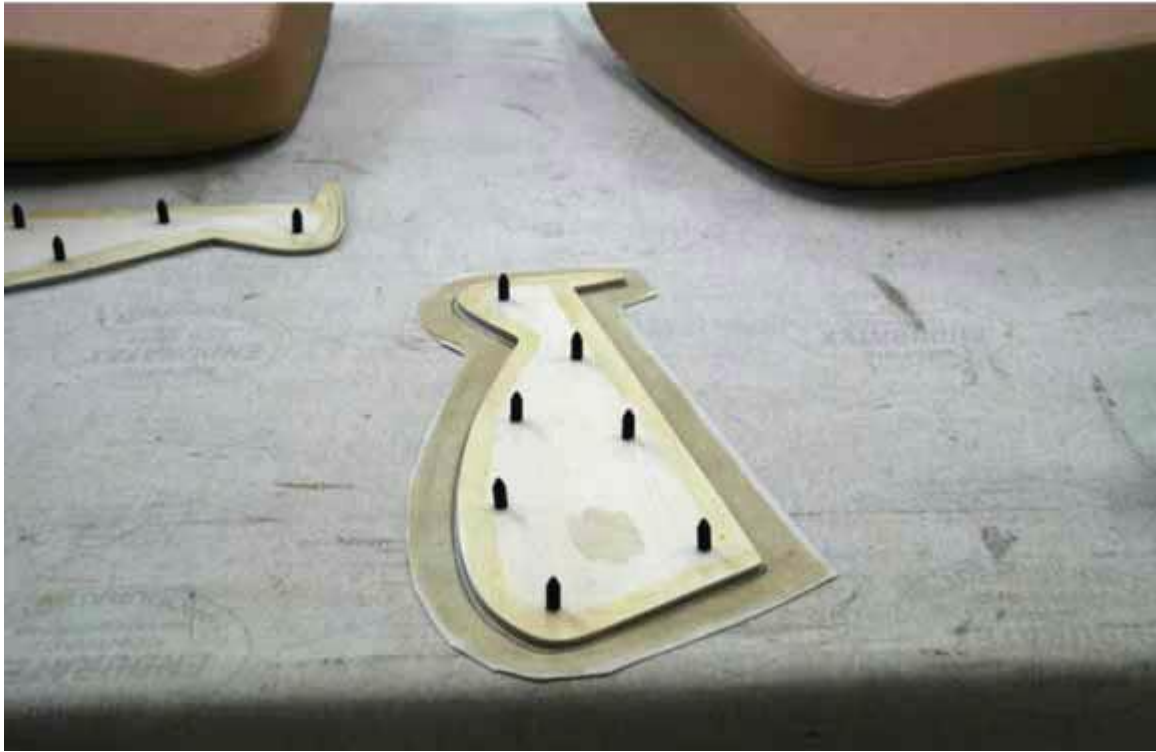


Like the squabs the covers are stapled all round the edges.

Go round the edges making sure the tension is even, there are no creases and that everything aligns properly. Once the cover is fully tacked to the woodwork, the cloth back panel is fitted followed by the small trim piece that goes under the top edge. This covers the edges of both the back cloth panel and the leather of the seat cover.



The back is covered and the holes for the side piece fixings can be seen in the side panel.



The side panel with the plastic fixings ready for the trim to be glued in place.

Originally the side panels on the seat backs had trim panels fitted to them with hidden tacks but modern materials allow a neater job to be done. The wooden side pieces are aligned on the seat frame and drilled through, Plastic plugs are then pushed through the panel and covered by the trim material making a really neat job.

Refitting the seats is very straightforward but the carpets need to be fitted first. I will tell you all about what's involved in doing that next time.

Guy Bevel