

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER 2014 NEWSLETTER



In the last newsletter, I referred to the many XK owners who spend more on the cosmetics of their XKs than on safety and general mechanical reliability. Having said that, this Newsletter focuses purely on cosmetics, and trimming in particular.

As trimming involves a lot of work, I have split the article in two; this part covers the interior of the car but not including the seats or carpets. The next newsletter will cover the seats and carpets as well as talking about the wood trim that 120 and 140 DHC and FHC models feature.

Greg Beards

TRIM & PROPER

First impressions

They say that first impressions are the most enduring, and clearly it's the bodywork that creates the first impression when you see a car. However, open the door onto a beautifully trimmed interior and there is definitely the opportunity to make the second impression an indelible one.



Not bad for 61 years but not very impressive (before)



A good impression (after)

Skimp on your trim and I guarantee that it will be something you would regret every time you open the doors of your car. Trimming is a skill and if the right materials are used both labour and material costs are high but the returns most rewarding. Having said that, a 'cheap' job can still be expensive and could in fact lower the value of your car. You might save as much as £1000 getting a cheap job done but by paying that extra £1000 to have the job done properly, you might add £2000 or more to the value of your car. And I guarantee you will be a lot happier with the result!

However thanks to the kits we supply, any owner who is a competent DIYer can do a lot of the work them self and end up with professional result as well as a big smile and save money. So if you are on a budget or just love doing as much on your XK as you can, then our trim kits, which we supply for all models, are a great solution.

Our kits contain all the parts you need to retrim the particular model chosen. They include the trim panels that fit doors, A- and B-posts, boot lid, under-dash etc. Each panel comprises the precision cut plywood or aluminium base panel with the leather-cloth ready fitted, including where necessary such things as door pockets stitched in. The seat components are stitched together as complete covers to be fitted to the old backs and bases once the old material has been stripped off. Other options include the foam seat innards, several of the wooden boards for other parts of the interior and carpets.



The door panel fitted, showing the door pocket, which is as the panel is supplied.

You don't need to be a skilled trimmer to do much of the work yourself as the tricky bits are already done. The competent use of a drill, Stanley knife and adhesive plus a good eye are the vital ingredients required. You can even do some of the work and leave the tricky bits for us to get done.

XK120 Drop Head Coupe

The car in the photos is a 1953 XK120 Drop Head Coupe. Of all the XK models, this has the most complicated interior in many ways so best demonstrates all the intricacies of the job. On this particular car, the seats were the originals from 61 years ago. The rest of the trim had been replaced about 10 years ago but not to a very high standard so a retrim was a must.

Getting going

Before you start, it's a good idea to have any paintwork and the like done for obvious reasons. You need to plan the job and choose the materials and colours. Our car originally had biscuit coloured seats and trim, with suede green carpets and a green Hardura boot carpet. We decided to stay with biscuit for the trim but also have the carpets in the same colour and upgrade the boot carpet to 'proper' carpet, and trim the fuel pipe cover to match.

The kit we supplied for this job comprised all the panels, seat covers and foam interiors as well as some new wooden parts for the rear storage box along with a fitting kit of the necessary screws and washers. We also used some new wood panels for the rear storage box, an under-carpet felt set, a

full carpet set and a boot trim kit.

The kit was duly checked against the car before any real work was started. This helps to understand what is involved if you've never done the job before. It also gives the opportunity to check if everything is there and is correct. XKs were to a great extent hand-trimmed and often have been modified over the years and sometimes there can be variations that require adjustments.

Stripping out the interior is a simple job. The seats are taken out by removing the four screws on each side that hold the runners to the floor. The carpets can then be taken out and the panels on the doors, A- and B-posts and under-dash panel removed by taking out the small screws that hold them in place. On the coupe doors, the lock plates, handles and door woodwork must be removed first. The handles are held by pins, which are exposed by sliding back the chrome escutcheons around the base of the handles. You can push them out with a small drift or a nail. The wood trim is held in place by screws, and once the top piece is removed the rest of the screws are exposed. All that's left is to take out all the fixing screws and where necessary pull away the trim panels. Hang on to these as they are useful for deciding where to drill the screw holes in the new panels.

Behind the seats on the DHC is a storage box which must be taken out. This has a hinged lid, under which is the storage box itself which is screwed to a hinged panel. Finally remove the transmission tunnel cover, which is held by screws on each side.



The rear box parts as supplied with the original storage box, side strips and lid shown.

You will now see that there are parts of the body that have leather-cloth glued to them – notably two curved sections under the dash board and around the battery/storage box section in the rear.

Trimming

The first job is to replace the leather-cloth that is stuck to the interior panels. You get various pre-cut pieces of leather-cloth with the kit, some of which are specifically cut to fit on the panels related to the storage box. There is also a large piece from which you can cut the other sundry pieces such as those previously mentioned under the dash. Sort these out first so that you know where each piece goes. If you can, use the old pieces as patterns to help you cover the areas mentioned. You can then lay the material in position and mark it with a pen to allow you to trim it a little oversize. It can then be fitted in place again and either trimmed accurately or cut closer to the size you need and the final trimming left until after it is glued in place.



The adhesive being brushed on to the storage box.

The storage box is lined with cloth headlining material supplied in the kit. This is stuck inside the box with the edges overlapping and turned over about 1 centimetre, and the ends similarly covered. Be careful not to put too much adhesive on the cloth so it becomes saturated. The box hinged lid is first covered with leather-cloth which is first affixed to the lid top and then carefully folded over and into the recessed part of the underneath. Once this is done then a piece of headlining cloth is folded and stuck into that recessed part. The other wooden parts – the lid hinge bar and the front panel are also covered. A staple gun is the best tool to hold the leather cloth in place on the hinge bar, as well it being stuck in place with adhesive. The forward face of the panel at the front of the box is then covered and similarly the cloth is folded over the edges and fixed to the rear with glue and staples. A second piece of leather-cloth is prepared by cutting it about 1 cm wider than the panel, folding and gluing the 1 cm border to the rear and sticking this piece over the back to cover it completely. The metal storage box is then screwed in place.



Here the leather-cloth covering of the rear interior bodywork is seen prior to fitting the storage box.

You must use a good quality contact adhesive for sticking down the leather-cloth, and one that will withstand a certain amount of heat. The adhesive must be spread on both surfaces to be stuck. A brush is best to spread the glue on the metalwork or wood, but use a thin plastic spreader for the leather-cloth. Wait until both parts are touch-dry before fixing the material in place. Remember that you must get it in the right place first time if you possibly can. Pulling it off and trying again is not always an option. Using a softish plastic piece of card or similar, and starting from a central point, gradually press the leather-cloth in place, ensuring that no air bubbles are trapped and that you get the material right into corners where necessary. When the material has to go over edges it can be stretched gently to take the form.



This shows the box with the cloth interior and lid with the leather cloth covering and cloth section.



The storage box fitted with the lid lifted to show the interior.

Fitting panels

The A-and B-posts panels and door panels are held in place with screws and cup washers. Make sure that you get the fitting kit along with the trim kit as this contains all the screws and washers required – short ones to go into metal and the longer ones for wood or if there are other materials to pass through. Fitting the pre-covered panels in place is pretty straightforward. First offer them up in position. Once you are happy with where they will go and that they fit OK, tape them exactly in their correct position – I use duct or gaffer tape to do this. Next you will need to drill the holes for the fixing screws. Check behind the panels to make sure that there is somewhere for the screw to go into and not damage before drilling the holes. Also make sure that you don't end up in an old hole that is too big. Finding a suitable place to drill for the new screws is made easier by comparing the new and old panels. Use a 2.5 mm drill bit and drill through both the trim and the panel into the metal or wood behind. Put in the new screw and nip it up before doing the next one.

On the door panels and A-post panels there is overhanging material that needs sticking down. This is at the top on the doors and bottom of the A-posts.



The boot panel held in place with tape to keep it place before drilling the screw holes.

The large under-dash panel can be a real struggle to fit as there are cables and the like on the bulkhead that can get in the way and may have to be moved. It also requires a bit of thought to fit the panel around the A-post trim panels where they fix to the curved parts under the dash. With the wooden dashboard on the coupe models, the front edge of the dash panel screws up on to the back

of the two dash board side panels and to the edge parts of the instrument panels either side of the trinket tray. The bonnet release cable must be run under the panel, which has a hole cut in it for mounting the bonnet pull handle.

The boot lid panel is fitted in a similar way but make sure that the wiring to the light is laid in its groove and that the light components are transferred from the original panel.

The interior of your XK by now will have started to look stunning. What is left is to put the seats together, fit the carpets and bolt in the seat frames. More on that next time plus we talk about renovating the woodwork.

MORE FENDER-BROAD NEWS...

VIEW FROM THE PIT WALL. GOODWOOD 72ND MEMBERS MEETING

When you've been the man holding the wheel for as long as you can remember, the invitation from Goodwood to take our ex works TR2 to the 72nd Members Meeting was tinged with a certain frustration. Guy and I usually do endurance events like Classic Le Mans and share the car. Unfortunately not possible with this 30 minute 'sprint'. Guy is quicker than me according to him and so he got the drive.

I didn't know how it would feel sitting on the pit wall watching our piece of history belting around the Goodwood tarmac ribbon as it had done in the 1958 Members' meeting. It was great. I would go as far as to say I enjoyed it every bit as much as racing myself.





So how did the 'quicker than you' Broad do? Bloody well actually. The field was packed with exotic machinery and lesser cars tuned to within an inch of their life. However our over-gear'd 'old gal' sitting on 2-year-old tyres blasted around with some aplomb. The quick one qualified 10th out of 30-odd. I almost had a nose bleed we were that high up the grid.



We had been allocated number 7 - the preferred race number of 'the legend' that is Sir Stirling Moss. It would have been a missed opportunity to not get a photo with the great man and Sir Stirling posing with PKV693! And then our racing apprentice and triple karting champion, one Angus Fender, got in on the act too. Another photo for the mantelpiece. At 13, Angus is already taller than Sir Stirling. Not sure if F1 will be an option for my boy but he can certainly race PKV693 when the increasingly grey-haired silver fox that is Guy Broad hangs up his open faced helmet!

Union Jack drops and they are away. Lap one and the silver fox has manoeuvred PKV693 into 8th and has a gap on 9th. Another nose bleed imminent? No, the race is red-flagged due to a car rolling over. Bloody selfish really but thankfully only some mangled bodywork to repair.

A re-grid sees the advantage lost. Surely Guy can't make such a good start this time can he? Well, he did. And when good friend Trevor Groom found himself with nowhere to go as an Aston spun, Trevor Groom became Trevor Gloom as his famous car became significantly shorter. Super news for team PKV, though, as the following mess turned to an advantage that enabled Guy to break away and find a gap to finish 7th. Deliriously happy, we all retired to the bar for champagne and stories of the race, and a day sitting on deck chairs enjoying what was Revival-plus for us. All the fun with 20,000 very knowledgeable spectators making it a 'good sized' crowd. Surely it was like this in 1958 when PKV693 last graced the super Goodwood circuit.





Next stop. Le Mans Classic. Plateau two. Come and see Neil and Guy if you are going.

Neil Ford



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations are due to two drivers who took part in their first Mille Miglia this year. Both Joe Said and Yanni Pipilis competed and completed the gruelling endurance race in May. Beautiful to look at and still able to strut their stuff as serious competition cars, their XK 120 roadsters performed superbly, and were kept in tip top condition with parts and servicing from Guy Broad.



Photo on left: Joe Said in his black XK120. Right: Yanni Pipilis driving his white XK120