

WELCOME TO OUR WINTER 2014 NEWSLETTER



TRIM & PROPER PART 3

Rolling out the carpet

In the last two newsletters, we have covered the trimming of an XK120 using the trim kits we supply. The final part of the 'soft furnishings' side of that is the carpeting, and that is the subject of this newsletter.



Fit for a king – or a queen!

Carpet kits come with all pieces ready cut with all the necessary leather edging binding and heel protection panels sewn in. The interior carpets come as one kit, the boot carpet another and you can further order the insulating underfelt too. The car featured here was originally trimmed in 'biscuit' colour with the carpeting and other soft material (like on the backs of the seats) in 'suede green'. It was agreed that the car would look much better with both 'biscuit' leather and carpets, so that was the colour we used. The other change from original was to use carpet in the boot rather than the original hardura plasticised material but this is available in a choice of colours if preferred.

As the car was undergoing a full retrim, the seat frames had been unbolted from the floor, which is necessary when carpeting, as the main carpet runs the full length of the floor. I think for economy reasons, Jaguar had a rather odd way of carpeting their cars originally. The theory is that because of the standard width of car carpet, and to avoid a lot of waste, the main carpet panels were made from a length of standard carpet cut in half. However this was not quite wide enough to reach from the transmission tunnel to the doors. This is why narrow strips of carpet were used along the sides. If full width carpets were used – which it has to be said would look a lot neater - the amount of wasted expensive carpet would have gone against Sir William Lyons' better judgement.

If you are retrimming the whole of the interior then the carpets are left until last so that all the leathercloth trim coverings are in place and the edges stuck down as necessary, particularly on the A and B post panels. The first job is to lay the under-felt in place. This acts helps deaden noise and gives the carpet that luxurious deep pile feel.



The handbrake boot fitted to the metal bracket.

The first piece of the kit we fitted fit was the leather boot for the handbrake. Originally this was riveted to a metal bracket that was held down by screws. The new boot will need some trimming and I suggest that you use some glue as well to fit it. Before finally riveting and gluing it however, make sure that the handbrake can be moved without the leather catching anywhere. Also make sure that you don't get grease on to the leather as the base and surroundings of the handbrake can get quite mucky as they are exposed under the car.



This lower panel was not originally carpeted but the new trim kit looks great.

The next piece of carpet to fit is the strip along the bottom of the rear panel just behind the seats. This was not on the car originally but certainly enhances the appearance. It must be fitted before the transmission tunnel cover as parts of it are stuck to the transmission tunnel itself. The bound edge of the carpet needs to be aligned with the top edge of the panel just below the hinges for the luggage box. It is best to use some tape to hold it there temporarily, so that it is properly aligned when gluing it. Using a Stanley knife or similar then carefully cut the carpet so that it goes over the transmission tunnel, leaving 'tongues' of material to stick to it. The carpet can now be glued in place and the transmission tunnel placed over it but do not screw it in place yet.



Riveting the button of the Durable Dot fastener with the punch and set.

A bag of Durable Dot fasteners comes with the carpet set. Each fastener comprises three parts - a button and socket, which fit in the carpet, and a stud to hold the carpet in place. The button goes through the carpet, the socket is slid over the protruding part and is then riveted over. This is done with a special punch, while the button sits in a protective and supporting set. In most cases the base studs will be fitted in the same place as the originals were and are either held with a screw or pop rivet. In the case of this car, most of the old studs were simply replaced by new ones in exactly the same locations. The new carpet is then laid out very carefully and accurately, and held in place with tape. A sharp tool such as a bradawl or a spike is then pushed through the carpet in the exact centre of the stud. The Durable Dot button is then fitted. Do each one at a time, and once one is fitted clip it down before doing the next. It is very important to keep the carpet aligned each time you do this and try to get some tension into the carpet so that it sits flat and taut.



The underfelt fitted to the bulkhead by the pedals showing the studs and 'penny' washers.

The next job is most uncomfortable. That is to fix the insulation and carpet to the front bulkhead. I suggest you start in the passenger well as there is more space and you will gain a little experience before tackling the awkward bit behind the pedals. Unscrew or drill out the old Durable Dot studs and fit the insulation to the bulkhead trimming any excess as necessary. Be careful when drilling or screwing through the bulkhead as there are cables and pipes the other side. Then either pop rivet or screw the studs in place with 'penny' washers underneath them to flatten the underfelt. If you don't use large washers here you will find that the carpet will not stay clipped to the studs.

Once the studs are fixed, lay the gearbox cover carpet in place and arrange it so that the gear lever boot is in line with the lever itself. This will then allow the carpet to be roughly trimmed in the area of the bulkhead. The reason for doing this is so that the carpets can all be fitted in place without large amounts of surplus material getting in the way. Next fit the fasteners to the two bulkhead carpet pieces as described earlier. The really awkward job is fitting the studs behind the pedals. Here there are the dip switch and throttle linkage that get in the way, not to mention the pedals themselves. Make sure that that none of the material impedes the operation of the pedals or dip switch. If trimming them, make sure that there is enough material left on the bulkhead carpet pieces to go under the main carpet when it is fitted.



Voilà! The passenger foot well.

Now you can fit the gearbox carpeting properly. You will eventually have to carefully cut out the hole for the gearbox dipstick access and cover but leave this until the very last job as there will be a lot of fiddling needed before you are done. Also don't fit the transmission tunnel cover until just before you refit the seats because part of the gearbox cover carpet sits under the tunnel cover.



The side strips should be positioned so that the leather binding just abuts the doors.

The narrow side pieces, which butt up to the door are next to be fitted. Line these up on the A and B post panels as well as the door closing aperture so that the bound edge of the carpet just touches the edges of door when it is closed. Again some tape (duct tape is handy for this) can be used to hold the carpet in place. The fasteners can then be aligned with the studs, again doing one at a time to check after each is fitted that the position and tension are correct. With both side pieces in place, the transmission tunnel cover can be fitted making sure that the gearbox carpet is tucked neatly under it and surplus material cut off. Self-tapping screws and washers hold the cover to the tunnel.

All that is left to do now inside the car is to fit the main carpet pieces on the floor and the Durable Dot fasteners fixed as required. The seat base frames are then placed on top of the new carpet and using a spike the fixing holes can be located. With new carpet and underfelt you may find difficulty getting the four screws in each seat to locate - fitting slightly longer screws will resolve this. Carpeting the boot is very straightforward. If you are using carpet, rather than hardura, you will find a piece of cloth in the kit to fix to the fuel filler pipe cover. Remove the cover first by taking out all the self-tapping screws and then glue the cloth in place.

The method of fitting the boot carpet is the same irrespective of which type of carpet you fit. The old Durable Dot studs fitted in the floor are replaced with new ones and the fasteners fitted to the carpet accordingly. Start by fitting the fasteners nearest the rear of the car and work forward, ensuring that you get good tension on each to make sure that the carpet lays flat and taut. You can now put your picnic basket in the boot and go off for a day-out to enjoy the car and admire its new interior.

In the next newsletter, I am going to cover the woodwork that graces the interiors of 120 and 140 coupes.

If you are retrimming the boot as well then this is a straightforward job. Originally XKs had Hardura boot mats. This is a plasticised material and we offer this as an alternative but most customers prefer to 'upgrade' their cars with 'real' carpet that matches the rest of the trim. Replace the old studs with new ones. Then, starting from the end of the boot floor nearest the rear bumpers, start fitting the fasteners. If you are going to trim the piece of metal that covers the fuel filler pipe – the material to do this comes with the kit – then remove the metal cover first.

You should now have a car with an interior to be very proud of.

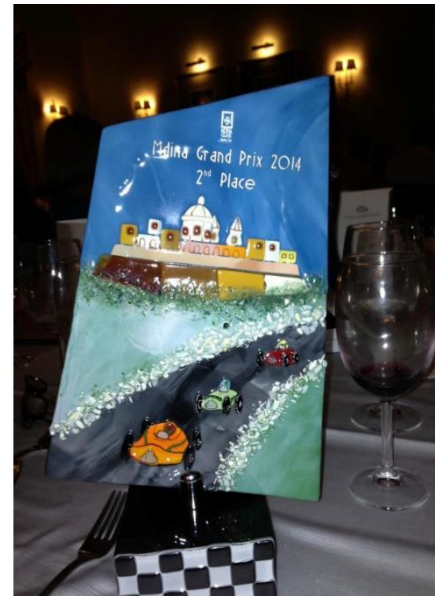


MORE FENDER-BROAD NEWS...

Mdina Grand Prix 2014

We returned two second in class trophies to base after a fantastic run over 5 days in the beautiful ancient city of Mdina Malta. We decided to race 2 'stock' cars. The XK150s FHC returned to the competitive arena after a 10 year absence joined by the Sebring replica MGB GT V8. I put the XK through its paces as did Guy the V8.

The format of hill climb, sprint and then races broken up with a concours and finishing with a gala dinner was simply sensational. Our cars were competitive as evidenced by fabulous Mdina glass trophies. The XK was not ideally suited to the twisty narrow street circuit, but performed strongly attracting a lot of attention with some hairy moments under braking and outrageous power slides burning rubber for the 20,000 plus spectators believed to have attended the event



This event was probably the friendliest event I've ever attended. I'd highly recommend it for a holiday or the chance to compete in a relaxed competitive environment Guy has attended all five of these events and presents a 'spirit of the GP' award which this year went to an awesome Alfa Spider. We also purchased a superb Alfa photo and presented it to the event organiser. ' What a weekend! *Neil*



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