



THE COMPLETE RESTORATION OF A 1958 MKVIII MANUAL O/D JAGUAR, BEGINNING IN OCTOBER 1988. - PART 1

By Andy Bryant

Part 1: Assessing the condition of the interior, prior to the cars full dismantling of both the exterior, and all the interior trim.

A: The back seat area.

Both photographs show the interior prior to pulling it all apart, to allow for any rusted panels, in the sills, doors, mudguards, or in the scuttle area to be fabricated and welded in. The photo of the back seat area shows that the seats, carpets and woodwork were all in good nick, even after some 30 years.

Furniture oil was used regularly on the dark Circassian walnut veneer, whilst the nylon pile over-rug is here, loosely lain across the back flat floor, and always removed prior to any mountain tramping or climbing trips.

The very high-backed bucket front seats, which could be raised and lowered for height

above the floor, provided much more room for the legs and feet of rear seat passengers.

The very sumptuous back seat with its extra thick Dunlopillow-filled cushioning could seat four 16/17/18-year-old teenage boys across its five-foot width, whilst the big front seat could seat two boys of the same age, but sit belted in.



The seats were kept soft and clean with saddle soap; the carpets with an overlay of old newspapers to prevent tramping boots from soiling them, and anything else! And so, the interior was kept polished up (Like the paint, chrome and tyres!), with the judicious use of the vacuum cleaner and furniture oil.

B: The Dashboard and front seat area.

Both the Mk VIII and the Mk IX models, built from October 1956 – 1961 had a more upright dashboard (Nearly vertical) compared to that in the Mk VII models, which sloped,



quite markedly, toward the driver.

The darker Circassian walnut prevented too much reflected glare, in the blazing hot New Zealand summer sunshine.

A grab handle was fitted to the upper rail on the passenger side, on both the Mk VIIIs and the Mk IXs.

On the later model Mk IXs, an electronic rev counter was fitted, which moved clockwise and not anti-clockwise like the mechanically driven ones in the Mk VII models (And most Mk VIIIs) were.

Despite the greater height of the front seats, one always tended to look along the bonnet, and the skuttle/top of the dashboard seemed high – which to many potential owners, felt intimidating.

The front doors too seemed extremely thick – and as a consequence, very heavy.

All these factors made my Mk VIII a very different car from my 1961 Rover 100 which had slim aluminium doors, bonnet and boot lid, which I owned from 1977 – 1978.

A luxury feature though, was the west of England cloth headlining, and metal sliding roof used both in summer and winter for some open-air motoring.

C: Clutch and brake pedals.

Later model Mk IXs (Manual models) used square padded pedals and not the awkward long and narrow organ shaped ones from the Mk VII and Mk VIII.

Andy

(To be continued as Part 2 in April magazine)