

MGB Factory Hardtop, Refurbish

By Ron Parks

You have seen this hardtop before, in the February 2026 issue of the Octagon News. It was setting on Methuselah, Bruce Miller's MGB, the featured car that month. After traveling to Richmond Indiana to see the car and talk with Bruce about writing the feature article, I thought about it for a while and did some checking to see if parts were available, then went back to Bruce's and brought it home. And, so it began!

The top needed everything. I went online to MG Experience and found a recommendation that someone in Michigan may have some parts. Ultimately I bought all the parts I needed from Rimmer Bros in the UK. And, yes I had to pay duties/tariffs. They had all the parts I needed and we were able to reuse those that were not available.



My neighbor, John Wilson, was instrumental in getting this project completed. I can't thank him enough! He did things that I would not have known to do. He is very good working with metal/fiberglass and paint. He has

restored a 1972 Dodge Charger that is perfect. John knew to sand the exterior and paint it with epoxy primer to ready it for a vinyl cover to be glued on by J P Upholstery. JP had glued the vinyl covering on John's Dodge Charger top to finish his restoration, which is how I found JP Upholstery.

Let's go back to the beginning. My idea from the beginning was to have the top covered in Tan vinyl. While it was setting outside by my barn, I had JP, of JP Upholstery come and look at it. He took measurements and said he could do it. The vinyl material would not be wide enough to span the width of the top, so he would have seams on both sides and drew them on with a marker to show me what they would look like. He told me what to do to prepare the top and we agreed on a price. This was July and I thought we had plenty of time to get it done and on my MG well ahead departing for the Southeast British Car Festival in Georgia in September. Instead, we got the top finished and on the car with two days to spare. Here's why:

We had removed the rear window and packed it safely in a large box. I sanded the outside of the top in John's garage, preparing it for him to paint it with a coat of epoxy primer. The next thing we needed to do in preparation for sending it to JP Upholstery was to paint the inside, headliner



area. You may be thinking, “why would he not have had a cloth headliner installed?” Well, I was leery of a cloth headliner showing water marks and stains if it was to get wet, which it most likely would at some point; get wet that is. So, since the inside of the top, although fiberglass, is textured to give the appearance of fabric, painting was the optimal solution. John first applied a coat of Adhesion promoter to help the paint adhere to the textured fiberglass surface. He then painted it with SEM

COLOR COAT, light Buckskin color, flexible coating paint. This paint is designed to restore or change the color of flexible plastics. It looks like a headliner with the added bonus of being washable. With the preparation done, I delivered the top, the rear window with its glazing stirp/seal, the seal retainers and rivets with which to attach them; to JP Upholstery. This was early August.



Meanwhile, John and I worked on the side windows. I had to reshape the Plexiglas windows to match the opaque originals, grinding with a small belt sander. John polished the window frames and cleaned up the screws and bolts that were to be reused.

After fitting the vinyl covering to the outside of the top, fairly quickly, JP attempted, unsuccessfully, to install the rear window using the glazing strip seal

the Rimmer Bros has sent. He spent a lot of time trying to make it fit, finally gave up and said I would have to take it to someone else. I then took it to Tom Dworetzky at Superior Finishes in Trotwood. We removed the glazing strip seal that JP had installed and attempted to install the window using a new glazing strip seal that I had re-ordered from Rimmer Bros. Tom and I worked one whole day trying to get the window installed, approaching it with the seal on the window first, then on the frame first. No go, the seal was just too big to fit. So, I found a smaller seal Sold By The Foot - Windshield and Rear Window Seal, with Lockstrip-LP 99, on line at Metro Molding: [Sold By The Foot - Windshield and Rear Window Seal, with Lockstrip](#)

It arrived and now it's two days before I am to leave for the Southeast British Car Festival. Tom and I worked with the new seal a little and I told him that at this point I would just give up taking it on the trip. Just set it aside, work on something else and we would get it done later, after I get back from the trip. I forgot about it, went home to pack and clean up the MG for the trip. Well, about 4pm, Tom called and asked if I had seen the picture he had texted to me. He had gotten the window installed with the help of a friend who had some experience installing window seals. So, happy and surprised, I went and picked it up.. John and I began installing the side windows, seals,

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latches and locators. We got everything installed and the top on the MG the day before leaving. We had some adjustments to make after I returned, but it was on the car and good to make the trip.



It was my goal all along to meet Carole and Terry Looft for the drive to Georgia and surprise them by showing up with the hardtop on the car and was able to do that after all. Dave Gribler had seen the hardtop at the body shop and Tom told him whose it was, so I had to swear him to secrecy to maintain the surprise for Carole and Terry. They were surprised!

A word of encouragement, what with Rimmer Bros taking over Moss Motors. I wrote to them, Rimmer Bros, recommending they replace their glazing strip seal in the future, with the one that ultimately worked for us. Furthermore, I asked for a refund of the cost of the two dysfunctional seals and provided the order information. They wrote back saying they could refund the most recently purchased one, but the first one ordered was outside their return policy. After writing back suggesting that a manager there should make an exception to the rule and refund for both, they did. So, we can hope that the Rimmer Bros takeover of Moss Motors will turn out to be a good thing!

This project was a lot of work, worry and expense, but was worth it in the end, as I am very pleased with the final outcome. I had matched the swatch of vinyl JP had given me, to the canvas convertible top, not realizing how well it would also match the seats and interior trim. (See photos below)

