

Muffin's Front Subframe:

As far as I'm aware you can still get just about every part for an MGB other than a new front suspension subframe. After trying everywhere I could think of I contacted British Leyland Heritage and asked if they could make me a new one, but alas no joy.

I had two old subframes, neither of which I was keen to use as they were both badly pitted. A visit to Mark Sadler in early June resulted in yet another subframe which on close inspection appeared to have better potential once the rust, dirt and grime was removed.

The problem with an old subframe is its box section construction which makes it hard to get adequate shot/grit blasting into all the nooks and crannies, which also makes it difficult to get a good paint coverage for future protection. A better coverage would probably be provided by powder coating but I don't like it and prefer paint.

My local galvaniser doesn't do grit blasting and has said before that his pre-treatment bath wouldn't get rid of paint and as galvanising wouldn't protect painted areas any paint left in situ would act as a sacrificial area (when/if the paint eventually flaked off) and quickly rust away.

Rightly or wrongly (only time will tell) for long term protection and retained good looks I decided to go for grit blasting followed by galvanising and then painting. Before taking the subframe to the grit blasters I ground off the tabs for the brake pipes as they were heavily corroded; in their place I drilled holes to take Riv-Nuts at a later date, these will be used to secure stainless 'P' clips. I also drilled the holes to take some headlamp mounting brackets, I haven't designed or made these yet but I thought that pre-drilling the holes before blasting and galvanising was a good idea. I quite like Emma's headlamp brackets so drilled mounting holes in the same position on Muffin's subframe.

As most grit blasters have a minimum charge I added the four lower wishbones, both rear brake backplates, both bottom spring pads, the spare wheel mounting and the pedal box assembly, sans pedals. The total cost was £100 I don't know if this was a fair price as it's years since I've had any grit blasting done? Perhaps I should point out that I asked for special attention to be paid to the interior of the subframe and every visible trace of rust and old finish was removed.

Grit blasting tends to roughen the surface slightly so back home I went over the subframe with a Poly-Strip abrasive pad in the angle grinder and smoothed out the parts that will be on display. I also smoothed out the backplates at their inner contact points with the axle oil seal carrier's, brake adjusters and wheel cylinder mounting areas.

Today I will paint the wishbones, spring mountings and pedal box in Palatine red oxide and next week I will take the subframe, spare wheel carrier and brake backplates to the galvanisers.

I must admit that I haven't previously had anything galvanised that will be on display and therefore have no experience of painting on galvanised steel. I am thinking of a 'Mordant' etch followed by Palatine red oxide and their Agricultural Black Gloss as a topcoat.