

RUST

Do you really want to know?

Your MGB is starting to show a few little bubbles in the paint on the lower rear of the front wing. And now you come to look, there are a few along the doorsill too.

OK. What are you going to do?

The answer could be anywhere between "Nothing" to "I'll do a complete restoration." Where you might fit is easier to decide if you know something of the overall condition of the body shell. If you're thinking about having one or two rust spots fixed, it's still worthwhile to check all the potential rust spots before deciding on the extent of repairs.

Rust virtually always starts from the inside of double panel sections where water and dirt can become trapped. An example is the front wing lower rear and the hidden front of the sill assembly. With the front wings removed, both my GT and roadster showed perforation rust in the front of the outer sill, reinforcement and inner sill panels. The floorpan adjacent to this area of the sill was also rusted through. Hopefully those little bubbles of yours will require only a part panel repair.

The only sure way to eliminate advanced rust is to cut out and replace part or all of the affected panels. If you are determined to have a totally rust free body, you have chosen a very expensive option. And once that standard is set, you then convince yourself that quality paint, chrome, instruments and trim must match it. And then there are the mechanicals. But hey! They're the cheapest! You've become a restorer. On the other hand, most of the MGBs around will have at least some hidden rust, but the enjoyment level may well be higher than for a completely restored, concours unit. You need to set your own standard for rust tolerance. e.g. no potential safety issues (Refer item 6 & 14), no floor or inner sill holes, no rust

visible externally.

A list of the rust-prone locations around the MGB body shell looks pretty soul destroying. However, not every car will exhibit every possible rust site (with the exception of my GT before restoration!) Knowing where to look before you start repairs helps avoid nasty shocks later.

SEE CENTRE PAGES-

1. Front Wings. Lower rear, around headlights, scuttle seam.
2. Upper front wheel arch reinforcement. Top surface of triangular box section.
3. Sills. Inner, outer and centre reinforcement. The ends of the sills are hidden by areas of the front wing lower rear and the rear wing lower front. Sill rust starts in these hidden ends.
4. Footwells. Junction of front of floor pan, toeboard & front of inner sill. Similarly at rear of the floorpan.
5. Crossmember and sills. Adjacent to jacking points.
6. Longitudinal sidemember. Adjacent to rear spring shackle mounts.
7. Doors. Lower doorskin. Bottom of doorframe.
8. Rear Wings. Lower front, top seam, below tail light assembly, top of wheel arch opening.
9. Boot floor. At spare tyre clamp. Where tyre contacts floor.
10. Bulkhead shelf. At either side of the heater, inboard of the curved surface which gives steering column clearance. (Best checked from the cockpit.)
11. Floor of air inlet plenum chamber. (Remove main air vent door in cockpit.) Additional for GT Model
12. Lower area of rear door, rear of boot floor and adjacent external panel. ('Beaver' panel)
13. Roof panel immediately behind rear lower corner of side window.
14. At top of wheel arch, around upper seat belt anchorage reinforcement plate.

By Len Fox

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Photos: James York