

OUR MGS

The latest on the cars we own

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Colour-coded bumpers add a distinctive look to Simon's MGB, but need to be straightened up to look their best.



Chipping away at the slow ravages of time

Simon's BGT gets some cosmetic improvements thanks to a new quick-and-easy stone chip repair system, but a mechanical niggles is yet to be cured.



1979 MGB GT

Owned by: Simon Goldsworthy

Owned since: 2006

Mileage: 125,632

There have been a lot of little jobs building up on the MGB, all vying for attention and trying to climb to the top of the jobs-to-do list. The problem is that unless something is very obviously urgent, I find it is all too easy to forget about it until you are driving somewhere – when, of course, you can't do anything about it.

So I have bought a write-on/wipe-off board for the garage where I can list every job, no matter how small, as soon as I get back home. In fact, the smaller the job, the better it can be for morale as

then you can very quickly cross something off. The front bumper that is sitting slightly low on one side is a good example – this really should take no more than a few minutes to straighten out.

Another job that needed doing on the bumper was to tackle the growing number of stone chips that have been appearing recently. As regular readers will know, this is a colour-coded fibreglass item, supplied and fitted by MGs Unlimited in Devon (01752 881688). Coincidentally, at around the same time as I was

contemplating this task, we had a press release land on the computer for CHIPEX (01295 258308, www.chipex.co.uk), a new product developed and produced in the UK specifically to cover stone chips quickly and easily. Sounded perfect, so I gave it a go.

The first step when ordering is to find your car's paint code. Do bear in mind that most classic MGs will have been repainted at least once in their lifetime, and even original paint will have faded over the years. If in doubt, you can send in a small sample of paint to have it

analysed on a spectrometer – the 1980s MGs have a painted fuel filler cover that is perfect for this. Fortunately, my car had recently been resprayed and so I knew that the FAB code was correct.

The CHIPEX kit costs £49.99, and is pretty comprehensive. You actually get 50ml of paint, which is enough to do a heck of a lot of stone chips! It is not suitable for use with cellulose paints, but is fine with all other types, and that included the two-pack that is now on my car.

The first job is to clean the



There is no danger of rust on the fibreglass panel, but the proliferation of stone chips was starting to drag down the rest of the car's finish.



Once you have cleaned the panel, the perfectly matched paint is blobbed into the chip, and dries rapidly – two minutes is all you need for it to set.



The blending agent then lifts off any excess paint from the panel's surface, leaving the new colour confined within the damaged area.



Under the scrutiny of a close-up camera lens you can see where the repair was done, but the chip is all but invisible from a normal viewpoint.



The CHIPEX kit is comprehensive, containing cloths, gloves and brushes as well as paint, blending agent and a colour-coded polish.

area to be treated. You then simply blob the paint onto the stone chip, give it a couple of minutes to dry and then flatten it off with a finger, or the plastic scraper provided in the kit.

That is stage one complete. Stage two is to wipe over the painted area using the blending solution from the kit. This lifts off any surplus paint very easily, leaving only the new pigment

needed to fill the chip or scratch. The final step is stage three – a colour-pigmented polish appropriate to your paint that helps fill in any microchips or scratches surrounding the

area of damage.

Now, I don't want this to sound like a paid-for advertorial because I have no involvement with the product or the company, but I was genuinely impressed with how quick and easy it was to use, and how much it improved the look of my car. CHIPEX is not intended to fill holes, although successive applications can build up the depth of paint. It does, though, make unsightly chips disappear from all but the closest of scrutiny and, if the chips are on a metal panel, give you near-instant protection from rust developing on the exposed metal.

If only all the items on my list were this quick and easy to fix! One problem has so far defied all attempts at a cure, and while it is currently just an annoyance, it does have the potential to turn into a major problem with little or no warning. What happens is that there is a short

but very noticeable hesitation when you step on the throttle after cruising from a light load. It doesn't seem to make a difference whether you try to accelerate hard or gently, there is just the same pause when the power cuts out for a second before picking up again. The worst thing is that the B can do 100 miles before the problem surfaces, or it can be present from the start.

So far, I have had the carburetors tuned and balanced, and checked that the dashpots are topped up with suitable oil. I have also changed the distributor vacuum advance pipe, then disconnected it entirely as a test and sealed up the holes at both ends, but seen no change. The distributor is new, the timing spot on and the plugs fairly recent. Somehow, I suspect that this particular item will remain on the garage whiteboard for some time yet.