



**MAGNETTE**

*Safety*



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**L**OATH though a man is to face the fact, there comes a point in the sports car enthusiast's life when the children have grown just too big to fit in the luggage compartment of "the sports" . . . when the wife is a little less keen on the wind whistling through her hair . . . when your business position requires a car with a somewhat more refined exhaust noise. A sad moment indeed, you think; a moment to pause and look back over many happy years of club competitions, of rallies and of countless little "dices" which you have enjoyed on the open road. That is all over, you sigh; you must become, you hesitate to utter the word, an ordinary "saloon" car owner.

But wait—what was it you heard about the M.G. Magnette? No ordinary saloon car . . . a powerful sporting engine . . . graceful body styling . . . crisp, traffic-beating acceleration . . . luxuriously finished interior . . . meticulously planned driving position . . . wide, uninterrupted vision. Yes, this is the car for you; and the wife; and the children. You are not ejected from the sporting fraternity after all; you are promoted—promoted to a new high level of "Comfort with Performance" "Safety Fast" motoring.



**LIKE THE WIND . . . AND smoothly!**

## Further Information

Through the life of the Z type Magnette two types of TRICO windscreen washer bottles and pumps were used. The earlier type had the pump located on top of the lid, while the later type had the pump mounted inside the storage bottle. Label wise, both bottle carriers have identical labels (T) but the label (Z) on the pivoting lid only applies to the later washer bottle. The earlier washer bottle has no label on its black pivoting lid.

Apparently Magnette body shells were assembled elsewhere and delivered to the MG factory, hence the requirement for identification in the form of stamped coded strip labels 2a, 2b and 2c. Coding on labels 2b and 2c is from my 1958 Magnette. The ID identification Plate (1) was fitted by the factory - Detail on the ID plate was also ground/stamped into a recess (relatively) close to the right hand bonnet hinge.

Distributorships on mainland Australia had one central arrival point in each of the five States. Apparently only Lanes of Victoria identified their Magnettes with stock numbers, a metal plaque (label 9) and a companion paper label on the wind screen bearing the same number. While the Distributorship of P & R Williams, New South Wales, used a non coded identification plaque (label 10). No history or labels (?) seem to have survived from West Australia, South Australia, Queensland or Tasmania.

## Acknowledgements

This article would not have been possible without labels or information being provided by:

- |               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| LEON SIMS     | - | Bravely removed his Factory Trim Instruction label (7).   |
| JOHN SCOTT    | - | Had the presence of mind to claim a P & R Williams dealer label for me 10(a). Donor car wrecked in South Australia. |
| WARREN MARSH  | - | Warren sent me the commemorative labels. Incidentally Warren is the historian for the UK Z Register.                |
| FRANK WELLMAN | - | Comments and insight into Lane's Motors dealers labels 9a and 9b. (Ref. Wheel Spin Oct 1986, page 83).              |
| BRUIN BEASLEY | - | Kindly provided a Patents (Body) Label 1.1 for ZA.  |

Have I fired your interest to add more detail.

If so publish or send me a copy (or both).

As a prompt

- Do any dealers records exist for the Z type Magnette.
- Are there other dealers labels about.
- Can you expand on my limited knowledge.



L. Scott.

*Laurie Scott.*  
*Australia*

**LATE FIND - PRESSED STEEL CO. LTD**

Found spot welded to the passenger side seat well (not the footwell). Revealed after removing bitumus body deader (Anti drum).

Label - Stamped into thin sheet steel.

Dimensions - 2.25 x 4.375 inches [Spot welded outside these dimensions]

Found On - 1958 ZBV

PRESSED STEEL CO LTD

COWLEY OXFORD

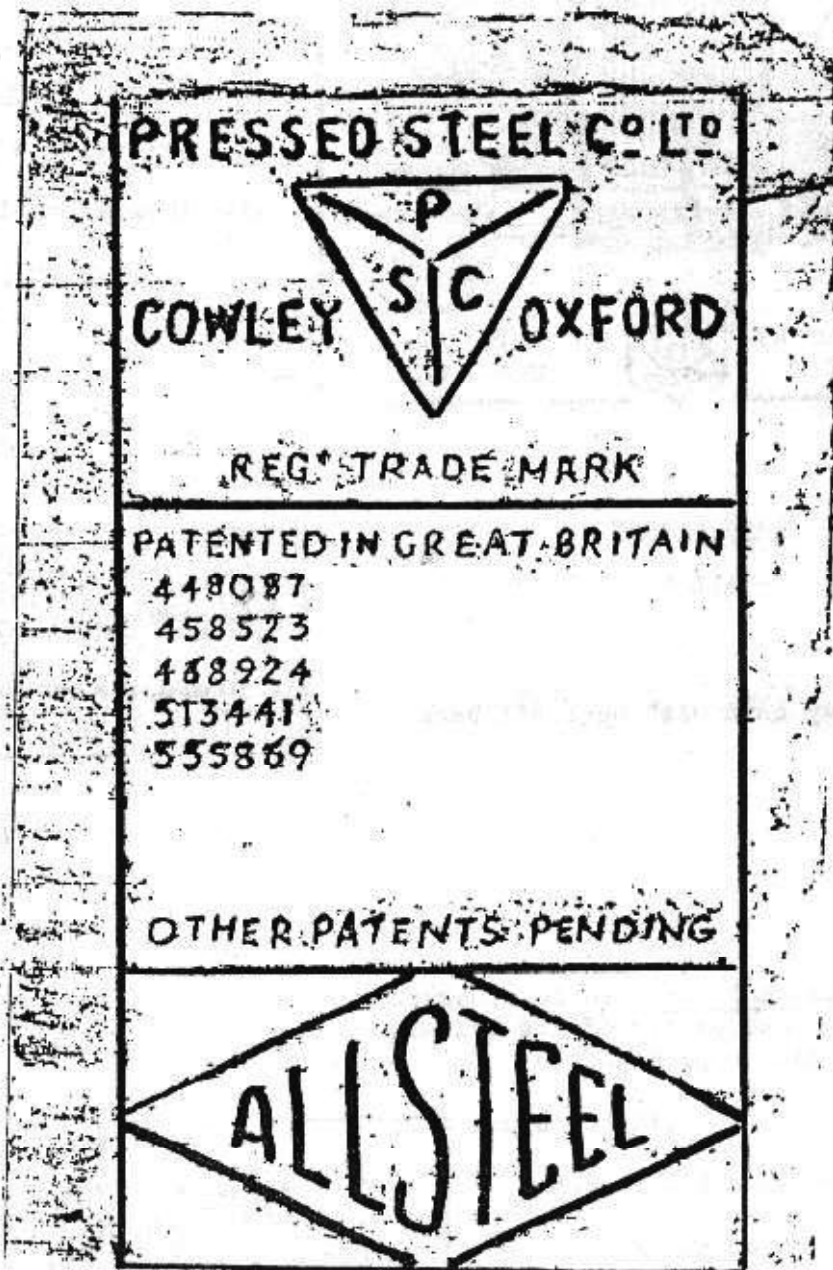
REG'D TRADE MARK

PATENTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

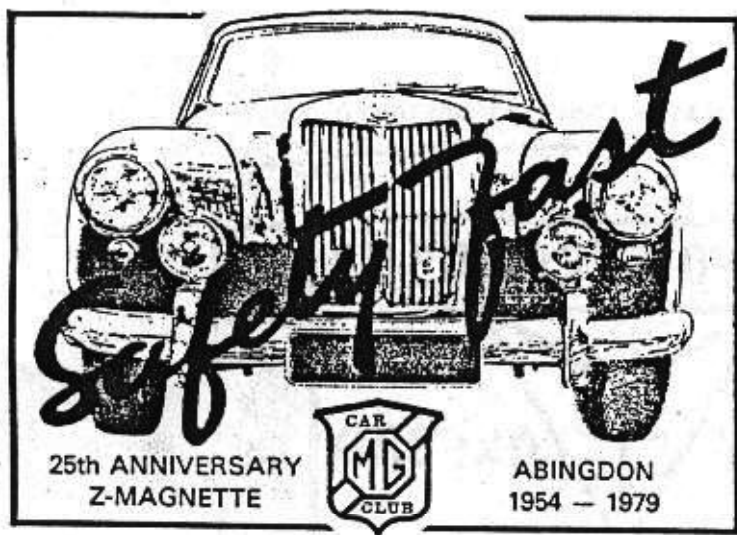
448087  
458523  
468924  
513441  
555869

OTHER PATENTS PENDING

ALLSTEEL



13. COMMEMORATIVE - Produced by Z  
Register England



a. Window Sticker - to commemorate  
the 25th anniversary of the  
release of the Z type Magnette

i. COLOUR -

Magnette shape (RED)

Lettering & Logo (BLACK)

ii. Dimensions 101.5 x 77 mm

iii. Printed on paper

b. Dash Board Plaque

i. Colour - ALL RED

ii. Dimensions 62.5 x 31mm

iii. Heavy card with peel off back

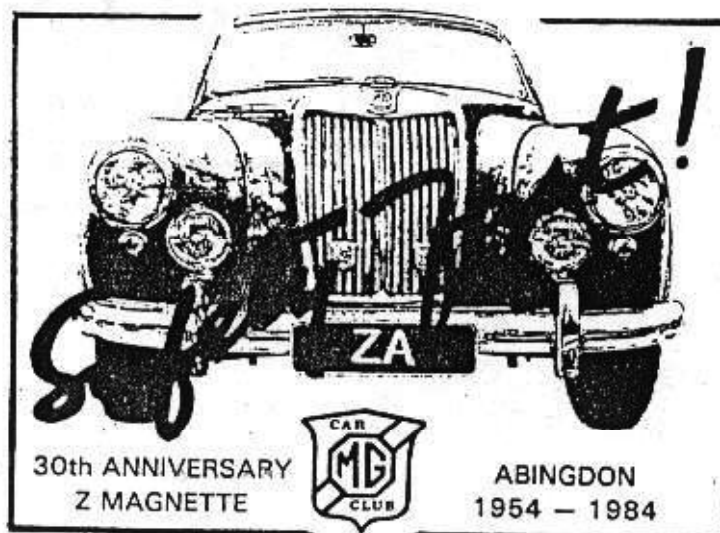


c. Window Sticker - to commemorate  
30th anniversary of the release  
of the Z type Magnette

i. COLOUR - ALL (light) Blue

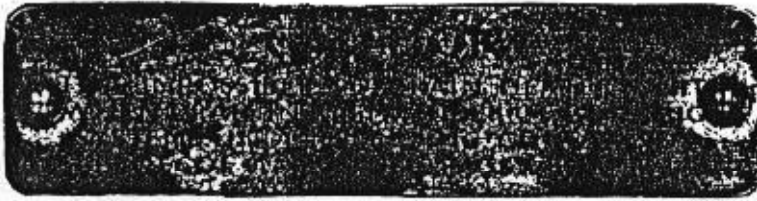
ii. Dimensions 100 x 78mm

iii. Printed on paper





## 11. WARNING LABEL- HEATER PIPE



### GENERAL

Due to poor contrast of this brass plate and difficulty in providing a good pencil rubbing, both an outline C1 and part pencil rubbing C2 have been provided.



### CAUTION

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DRAIN HEATER UNIT WHEN DRAINING REMAINDER OF COOLING SYSTEM - UNDER FREEZING CONDITIONS BLUECOL ANTI FREEZE MUST BE USED.

### LOCATION

Clipped on to the steel heater pipe. Note, this label has attached spring clips.

## 12. PICNIC ADDITIVE(AUSTRALIAN)



### GENERAL

No true Australian outing could be complete without a bit of Veg. to go on the sanga (sandwich). And I feel certain that those first Magnette owners of the fifties would not dare travel far into the bush without a jar of Vegemite.

### LOCATION

The glove box of the Magnette.

### COLOURS

Yellow - background  
Red - diamond  
white, black and  
red lettering.

### DIMENSIONS

Size directly  
proportional to  
distance away  
from guaranteed  
supplies.

### MATERIAL

paper

### PROCESS

Printed

# 7. FACTORY TRIM INSTRUCTION

167/MM/83

M.G. MAGNETTE

ISSUE No. \_\_\_\_\_

BODY No. 19729

BODY COLOUR Birch Grey

TRIM COLOUR Maroon/Grey/Grey

## Paper Label

### Preprinted Form, (stating:)

- MG Midgette
- Body No. (19729)
- Issue No. (167/MM/83)
- Body Colour (BIRCH GREY)
- Trim Colour (MAROON/GREY/GREY)

Dimensions 12.1 x 10.3 mm

# 8. SEAT MANUFACTURES LABEL



There were probably many suppliers to the Abington MG Factory. This label came from a ZA Midgette, being clipped to a spring in the back seat. The part you sit on, not the back rest part.

# 9. AUSTRALIAN DEALERS LABEL - VICTORIA



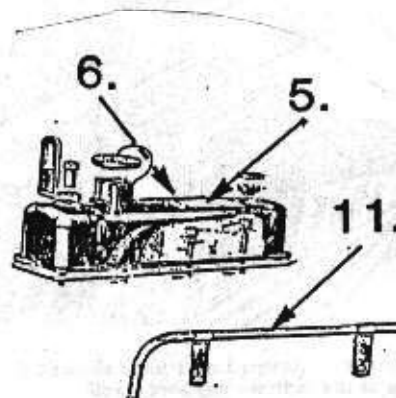
# 10. AUSTRALIAN DEALERS LABEL - NEW SOUTH WALES



#### 4. HEATER UNIT



Only the later model MG Z type Magnettes are fitted with a label on the heater unit.



**Fig.2 Location Of Engine Labels**

#### 5a. ROCKER COVER - PATENTS



Both types of labels are fitted to the Z type Magnette. 5b to the earlier models and 5a to the later models. Codes are identical on both labels and each have the same dimensions. 5b is shown larger for reasons of clarity.

#### 5b. ROCK COVER - PATENTS



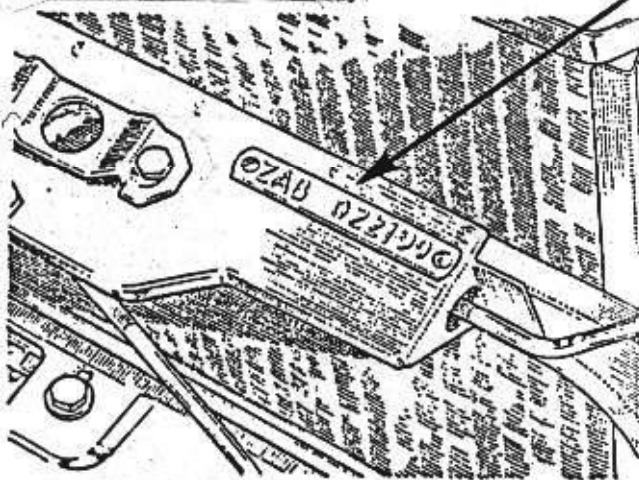
#### 6. ROCKER COVER - MG

MG Identity label for Rocker Cover



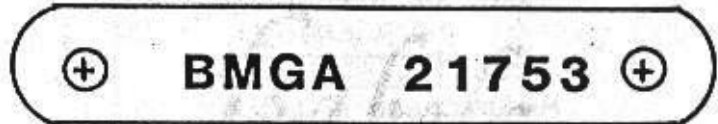


2a. BODY Number

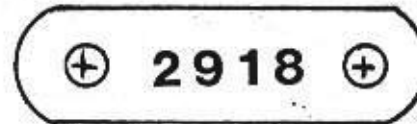


Body Number: This is stamped on a plate secured to the top of the radiator support cradle

2b. BODY Number



2c. BODY Number



Besides the strip label 2a on the support cradle two more labels 2b and 2c are screwed to the body. 2b is close to the wind-screen wiper hole in the fire wall, while the smaller label, 2c, is screwed horizontally to a flange about 6" away from 2b.

3. washer unit





The ZA and ZB model Magnettes are fitted with a Patents label that provides a series of patents numbers taken out against the vehicle and a further series of numbers giving the application codes for ( Pending ) patents. The label shown above is from a 1958 ZB Mquette. Patents Labels applicable to earlier model Magnettes may have different codes indicated? If readers have plates with different codes, they may like to submit details and a copy for reference purposes. Also would anyone be able to come forward with information on what the specific patent numbers refer to?

# 1. ID PLATE (CHASSIS PLATE)



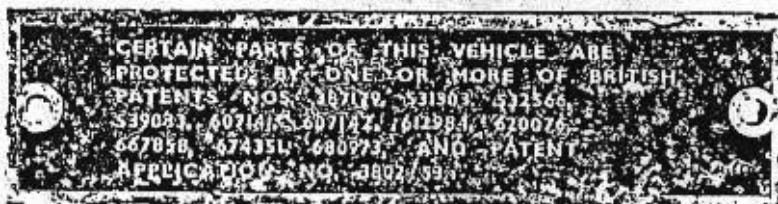
Identity Plate as fitted to all ZA Magnettes (1953 to 1956)

## 1.1 PATENTS (BODY) LABEL



The label above is shared by both the ZA Mquette and Wolseley 4/44 (Last Code 30396/51).

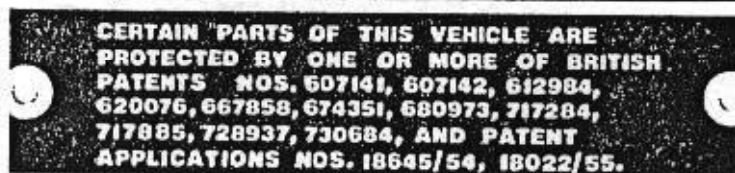
PATENTS NOS 387179, 531303, 532566, 539033, 607141, 607142, 612984, 620076, 667858, 674351, 680973, AND PATENT APPLICATION NO, 3802/53



Above label is believed to come from a ZA late in the series. Shared by Morris Oxford.



Identity Plate as fitted to all ZB Magnettes (1956 to 1958)



Patents label above is shared by the ZB Mquette, Morris Minor 1000 (1958) and MGA (Last code 18022/55)

# Magnette-ic Labels

Most people have a fascination with badges and labels attached to cars. A symptom of this attraction is seen when cars become non-functional. The first things to be removed are obvious badges, labels and any attached signs.

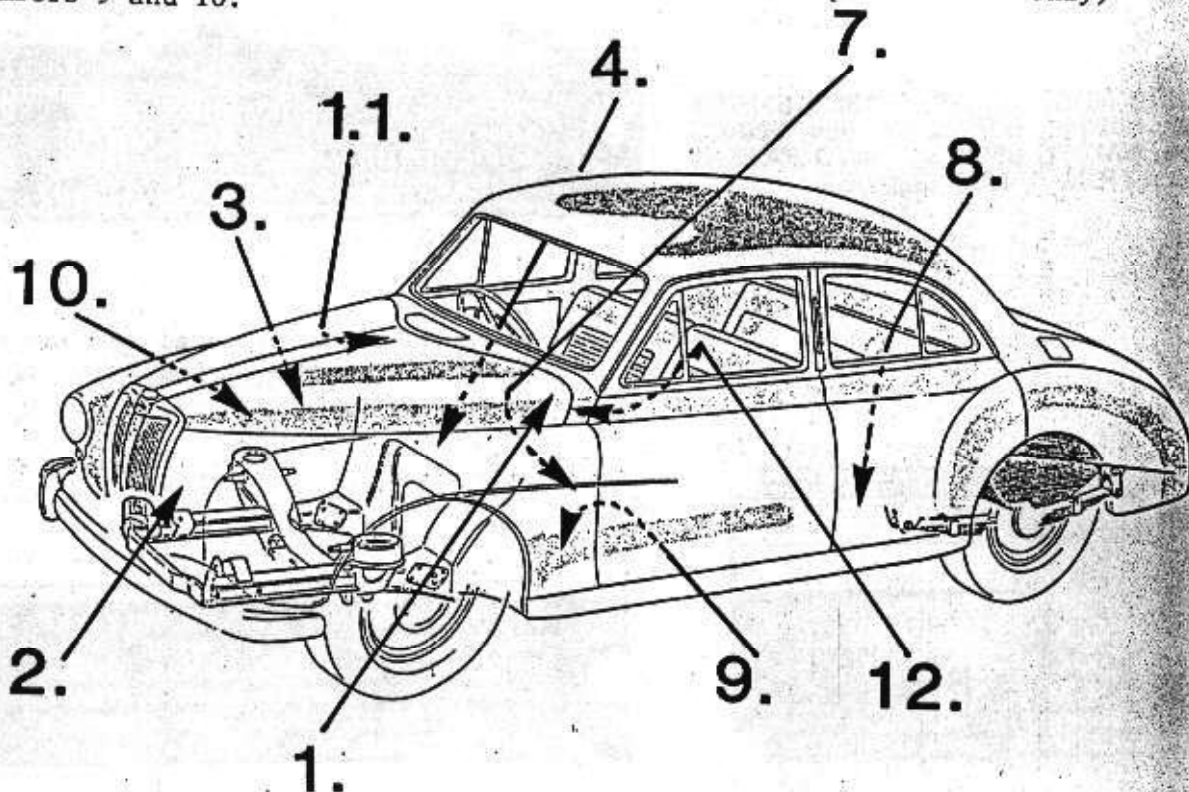
This article has been put together to stimulate interest and feedback from people who have more detail to add on what I'll nominally call the flat label category, i.e. information provided on sheet metal, paper, card and adhesive label.

To act as aids to showing approximate location of labels shown or indicated in this article two reference figures are provided :-

Fig. 1. is an outline of the Z-type Magnette body which has an associated sequence of numbers that match a unique number in the text for a body label.

Fig. 2. is an outline of the Z-type Engine rocker cover and steel heater pipe in approximate perspective to each other. The associated numbers should be referred to in the text for the specific engine label.

Further, the labels depicted below are in two basic groups. The first group being the 'Standard labels' (known to me ) numbers 1 - 8 and 11, while the latter group are Australian Dealers labels (Two dealers only) numbers 9 and 10.



**Fig.1 Location Of Body Labels**

## Addendum

The latest issue of Practical Classics & Car Restorer (September, 1989), a British publication, has a general article about re-veneering wood, and the author describes a process that generally is not necessary for "weekend wood-restorers" in this country. Veneers sold in Britain generally are in the "raw" form pictured in the article, making necessary the process of re-hydrating them, "stretching" them flat to dry, matching them and cutting the necessary shapes with a sharp knife and great care. This is painstaking, precise work with a high potential for mistakes and, considering the cost of quality veneers, probably is best left to professional wood-workers, particularly if "book-matching" the veneers (as was done originally for the door trims of the Magnette) is planned. There is an alternative, one that I believed would be chosen by members of the Registry after reading "KNOTS" and deciding to attempt to restore their veneered woods.

In the U.S., most veneers sold have a card-like backing applied to them, sufficiently thin to maintain flexibility and sufficiently thick to hold the veneer flat and provide a stable base for adhesives. The carded-veneers do not require the process described above, and consequently are considerably easier to work with. In most cases, panels of veneer are "book matched" onto one standard sheet, which reduces wastage resulting from the irregular shapes of "raw" veneers, and one sheet can contain as many as four panels for an extraordinary, mirror-image effect. For our purposes, the carded-veneers offer more advantages than the "raw" veneers, and I recommend their use when re-veneering the wood of a Magnette.

BOB YOUNG

sandpaper. You may be tempted to use power tools to assist you in this tedious work, but their twisting motion can splinter and distort the veneer, and possibly damage the base as well.

After the veneer is trimmed to your satisfaction, the refinishing process described earlier in this article, and in the previous article, can be used. The veneer, being "fresh" wood, may need stain before a finish is applied. As before, apply some of the finish you intend to use on a small area of one of the pieces to determine if stain is necessary.

The instrument panel cover has beveled edges around the instrument openings which originally were painted black. If you wish to repaint them, apply a coat of finish to the cover first, to seal the edges and prevent them from absorbing the paint, and after it dries, apply automotive-quality masking tape adjacent to the edges and paint them, using a small, artists-type brush.

After the finish has dried, re-install the chrome trim, brackets and thumb handle for the glove box door (which is solid mahogany and can be refinished, if necessary, in the same manner as the trim in the previous article). The screws securing the chrome trim are number 3 cabinet screws, flat head, and if they do not "hold" in the wood, try replacing them with the same size screw in a longer length - 5/8". Re-installation of the walnut-veneered pieces is a reversal of the removal process.

Now, then. Aren't you sorry, now, that you put off refinishing your wood?

p.s. I made most of this up. If any of it helps you, good. If it doesn't help you, and you want to complain, I'm not at home.

BOB YOUNG



leave the surface sanded to a level of 100-grit sandpaper, the slight roughness serving as a grip for the adhesive. Clean the surface thoroughly with a brush, making sure that it is dry and free of dust. Place the veneer face down on a full sheet of newspaper and coat the back of the veneer with a spray adhesive, such as Scotch 77 (recommended to me by a cabinet maker because it can be applied evenly and dry without lumps), making sure that it is covered completely with a medium coat. After waiting 10-15 seconds, or until the adhesive is tacky, place the piece, or base, that matches it on top, apply a little pressure and hold it in place for another 10-15 seconds. Examine your match, being careful not to allow the adhesive to touch the surface of the veneer, and making sure that the veneer is positioned correctly on its base. If it is not, the veneer still can be moved slightly, but do so carefully as it can be chipped or wrinkled if it is forced. One side only is coated, to allow re-positioning if necessary; if both sides are coated, the veneer and the base will stick together quickly and very hard when given the chance. After you are satisfied with the positioning, clamp the veneer and base together in the same manner as suggested earlier in the article for re-gluing separating veneers, and allow the adhesive to dry at least 24 hours. Repeat this process for each of your pieces, allowing sufficient time with each of them to be satisfied with your work. If any adhesive comes into contact with the surface of the veneer, remove it immediately by trying to scrape it from the surface, carefully, with a razor blade.

After the adhesive has dried, trim the excess veneer with a pair of small, curved and very sharp scissors. I try to trim it to within about  $1/32$ " from the edges of the bases, but every inch of the veneer can be different and I've learned, through experience, to use care. Trim the rest of it using a small, flat medium-cut file and medium-grit sandpaper, always bearing down on the edge of the veneer and never pulling up against the adhesive. Cut the instrument openings in the instrument panel cover by clamping a piece of soft wood against the veneer to brace it, drilling a  $1/4$ " hole through the veneer covering the openings from the back of the cover and into the wood, removing the clamp and then cutting with scissors from each of the holes around the outlines of the openings. Trim the excess with a small, half-round medium-cut file, or a small wood rasp, and sandpaper, as above. Cut the holes in the lower half of the instrument panel cover for the knobs and, for the ZB, the windshield washer button with wood bits slightly smaller than the diameters of the holes, after the veneer is braced, as above, and dress them with small, half-round files and

lower in your area. One Magnette uses about four square feet of veneer, but, as when buying leather, purchase an extra amount, about half again as much, to allow for wastage and give some latitude in selecting the most pleasing parts of the sheet. One sheet should be enough for two cars, then, or two owners who want to divide the cost of the veneer. Other alternatives exist, as you will find when you shop for veneer, and after you remove the old finish and stain from your pieces and examine the original veneer in a relatively natural state, you should be able to look at other kinds of veneers and visualize their appearance after being stained and finished. You may find that other veneers are more pleasing to you, and that the burled effect in other woods, such as elm or maple, can be just as satisfying to you after being finished as the original veneers. (Before I receive letters accusing me of heresy for not recommending only the original format, let me say that I believe not all Magnettes are in a condition now to justify a serious restoration to original standards, and those that are should be restored correctly and serve as definitive examples of a fine automobile, and those that are not should, simply, continue to give pleasure to their owners and be preserved, in the main, for the next generation. In the end, their owners will decide.)

Assuming you have a sufficient quantity of a satisfactory veneer, spread it out flat, face up, and lay your pieces on top of it, selecting the best combination of coloration and grain pattern for each piece. In the case of the door trims, you may want to match the veneers for the side-to-side pieces; if so, use the originals as an example and lay out your pieces in a similar manner. Lightly pencil each outline onto the sheet, allowing about  $1/8$ "- $1/4$ " more than is necessary on straight cuts, and cuts with the grain, and at least  $1/4$ " on curved cuts and cuts against the grain. In all cases, the veneer can splinter or "chowder" when being cut - use care and the sharpest pair of scissors you own when cutting the sheet. For added protection, you may want to brace the veneer by applying automotive-quality masking tape, made by 3M and other companies, and designed not to damage the surface it is adhered to, over your outlines, re-draw them if necessary, and cut through tape and veneer at the same time. After you have cut the shapes you need, and are satisfied with them, put them aside and begin preparing your pieces to receive them.

Applying veneer is similar to applying wallpaper or laying linoleum: the surface to be covered must be level and free of imperfections, such as cuts, lumps or grooves, or the covering will betray every flaw. Remove the old veneer in the same manner as described earlier for the door trims, but

wood against moisture and prevent warping. The radio opening cover (if fitted) also has a solid mahogany base, but the instrument panel cover and the glove box door have plywood bases and cannot be refinished in this manner.

If the damage to your veneered pieces is extensive, or you believe you would not be satisfied with repaired areas, consider replacing the damaged pieces. The instrument panel covers for the ZA and ZB are different, and not interchangeable, but every other piece can be replaced with a better example from either model. Sources for them include other members of the Registry (an ad in the "Parts Wanted" section of our newsletter may be helpful), members and classified sections of newsletters from other MG clubs, the "M" parts section of Hemmings Motor News, in which parts Magnettes are sometimes advertised, and automobile swap meets, some of which specialize in a particular car. John and Lou Shorten, 44, The Street, Lenwade, Norwich NR9 5SD England, supply parts for Magnettes and may have pieces available for sale or be able to supply information about other sources. Their telephone number is 011 44 603 872436 (remember that England is five hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time). The instrument panel cover for the right-hand-drive Home Market Mquette is a mirror image of the cover fitted to left-hand-drive North American cars, and not interchangeable, but the other walnut-veneered pieces can be used here.

If simple refinishing, or repair or replacement of damaged pieces, is not a satisfactory solution, then consider re-veneering. Before you begin, determine what veneers are available in your area. Large lumber mills or yards usually stock a small range of them, in varying qualities, but you may have to visit a wood specialties supply store, or the supplier for the cabinet makers, kitchen refinishers and other finish carpenters in your area to find what you want. Bring a sample - one of the pieces that has a pleasing coloration and grain pattern - in an unfinished state, with its old stain removed, and try to match it with what is available. If you telephone for information, ask for "walnut veneer," or "burled walnut veneer." Prices will vary for a standard, 12 square feet (eight feet by 18 inches) sheet, based primarily on quality, which, in this case, is a subjective measure of the degree of the burled effect, the grain pattern and the contrast in coloration. A standard sheet of burled walnut veneer of a quality at least high as the original veneer presently is selling for about \$120.00 (yes, about \$10.00 per square foot) in the San Francisco Bay Area. Sheets of lesser quality burled walnut, and walnut, veneer can sell for about one-half to three-quarters of that price, and prices, in general, may be higher or



to be when moist, and shrink slightly, as well. Choose a shade slightly darker than that of the intact veneer surrounding the damaged area and plan to apply it in at least two layers, making the last layer as smooth and as flush to the surrounding area as possible to avoid any more sanding than is necessary. Apply the filler with a smooth, clean plastic putty knife, and wipe away any excess from the veneer with a clean, damp cloth. An alternative to commercially-prepared wood filler is a home-made variety - my carpenter grandfather sometimes sanded wood of the shade he wanted and used the resulting sawdust and a clear glue, or some of the liquid finish he planned to use, to make a thick paste that could be spread onto a damaged area and would harden as wood fillers do today. The advantage of this method is that the paste, being made from wood, can have a natural appearance after it dries, is stained (if necessary) and finished. In either case, apply some finish to a small area where the veneer and filler meet to be sure you are satisfied with the match between the two areas before proceeding. If you are not, use a stain, as suggested above, to blend them more closely together.

One last suggestion (but not, necessarily, a recommendation) - if your door trims have veneers that seem to be beyond repair, and you want an easier, and less expensive, alternative to re-veneering them, you may want to consider sanding through the old veneers to reveal the solid mahogany underneath, which, in many cases, is of the same ribbon-stripe quality as the mahogany veneers on the dashboard fascia pieces. One Magnette owner, I understand, has done so, refinishing the mahogany in the same manner he refinished the other pieces of solid mahogany trim, and then re-installing them on his car. His justification, apparently, is that the old veneers would have to be removed before the new veneers can be applied, and until he finds the time to apply them, the trims are preserved underneath their new finish and completely presentable. If you want to consider this possibility, examine the rear faces of the trims (where the brackets are attached), as the coloration and grain pattern present here probably will be virtually the same as on the other side, underneath the veneer. If you decide to sand through the veneers, do so with a block or pad sander fitted with medium-grit sandpaper (100) and do not sand any more than is necessary to remove the old veneer and its adhesive and to make the surface level. Sand the surface very lightly with a very fine-grit sandpaper (220 or 240), buff it with a very fine-grade of steel wool (0000) and apply stain (if necessary) and a finish in the same manner as was done for the other pieces of solid mahogany wood trim in the previous article. Remember to apply finish, or at least a sealer, on the rear faces of the trims to completely seal the



effect of the damage to them. A repair, in most cases, can be detected after close examination, but otherwise is unobtrusive and "invisible" at first glance. If the damage to your veneers is noticeable, but not to the extent that the piece(s) should be replaced or re-veneered, then consider trying to repair the damage before refinishing them.

In the case where the veneer has a dark stain, try lightening it by rubbing furniture refinisher on it with a fine- or very fine-grade steel wool pad and then buffing with a dry steel wool pad of the same grade. If this has little effect, then try darkening the surrounding area with stain, using a small cotton ball or a Q-tip to apply it selectively, to lessen the contrast between the stain and the surrounding area. As I suggested earlier, sanding the veneers, or using wood bleach on them, should not be considered because either alternative can damage them irreparably. Fortunately, most of the walnut veneers used on the Magnette have a significant contrast in coloration and grain patterns, and dark stains usually can be blended into those contrasts relatively well.

In the case where the veneer has been bleached colorless, either by sunshine or water, try applying a stain to the affected area in the same manner as above. I suggest trying a shade of stain slightly darker than the surrounding, unaffected area as, in general, the finish you apply can emphasize the patina of older, undamaged wood (particularly if it is tung oil, or a similar varnish) and make it appear darker than wood that is stained and has little, or no, patina. Again, it may be best to apply some finish to a small area where the undamaged and the stained veneer meet and be sure you are satisfied with the match between the two areas before proceeding.

In the case where the veneer is "holed," or a part of it is missing, a piece of veneer of the correct thickness and cut to the size and shape of the missing piece can be glued in place, in the same manner that veneer separating from its base was re-glued, as described earlier, stained as necessary to match the surrounding veneer, and finished normally. Cabinetry shops and cabinet makers in your area can be a source for small, scrap pieces of veneer from various woods which, when fitted and stained properly, can make a satisfactory repair. If you own a "parts" Magnette, you may be able to "cannibalize" enough loose and separating veneer from it for your repair, assuming that veneer is not dried out, brittle or warped. If you cannot find a source for small pieces of veneer, and the areas to be repaired are relatively small, consider applying a colored, or pre-stained, wood filler such as Fix Wood Patch. Wood fillers dry lighter than they appear

me that tung oil is not suitable for use in "high temperature environments, or where there is prolonged exposure to sunlight," because either situation can cause "deterioration of the finish." I do not know of any wood finish - oils, polyurethanes, varnishes and various sealers - that is sufficiently clear to reveal the coloration and grain of the wood underneath and that would not suffer deterioration of its finish in those situations, and I do not know if the closed interior of a car parked in sunshine qualifies in either case. I do know that the tung oil finish on the wood of my "daily" Magnette has deteriorated only to the point of having lost some of its luster, changing from "gloss" to "semi-gloss" in appearance, after being exposed to three years of California sunshine, when it was rarely covered and never garaged. It seems to me, then, that in milder environments than that of California, or where a car is covered or garaged at least part of the time, a finish of tung oil is at least as practical as any other clear wood finish and can be recommended.

However, because of the fragile nature of the veneers, and because some of the pieces can receive contact from fingers, fingernails and keys (and shoulders, in the case of door trims attached to doors that are hard to open), you may wish to apply polyurethane as the finish for added protection. If so, I recommend Varathane Professional Finish, a fast-drying polyurethane that can be brushed or sprayed. Because it dries quickly, more than one coat may be applied in a day, there is less "open" time when dust and other contaminants can stick to a coat before it dries and when any excess can well up into drips and runs, and a newly-applied coat can be handled usually within one hour, allowing a refinished piece to be moved, if necessary. I usually spray polyurethane because, with care, a consistently-smooth, brush stroke-free surface can be applied, whereas brushing it can leave tiny "tracks" that may become apparent with age, particularly if the finish turns yellow after exposure to sunlight.

Other finishes are available, of course, and your choice may depend on your own experience in refinishing wood, or on the recommendations of others, including salespeople in stores where finishes are sold. Whatever your choice, remember that the veneers are, in general, fragile, and that if you have little or no experience with the finish you choose, it may be best to test it on a small, inconspicuous part of one of the veneers and be sure you are satisfied with the result before proceeding - stripping a finish from veneer can be the hardest part of the project, and there is no sense in having to do it more than once and risk damaging the veneer.

Repairing damage to veneers means, in general, minimizing the visual

walnut veneer trim a similar shade, the latter usually being darker and in contrast to the mahogany, and to compensate for the lighter coloration of fresh wood. That fresh wood is now at least 31 years old, the last Z-Series Magnette being built in late 1958, and has developed patina underneath the old finish and stain unless it has been damaged in some manner. In general, the walnut veneers do not need stain, unless you want to attempt to restore them to their original coffee-with-cream shade, want them to be all of a similar shade, or want to cover or hide flaws on the surface. If you decide to apply stain, remember that the coloration and shading of older, darker wood will affect the final result, and that there are no guidelines, other than trial-and-error, to determine the shade of stain to be used for a particular result, or to predict its chances of success. A word of caution here - if you apply a stain and are not pleased with the result, try removing it with furniture refinisher, in the manner described earlier. Avoid using wood bleach or any other harsh chemical cleaner, either of which can remove all of the color from wood, including its patina, dry it out and give it a waxy, ashen look no matter what stain and finish are used later. If you are not concerned with restoring the veneers to their original shade, consider applying a finish only. For example, when I refinished the door trims from a friend's Magnette, I found, after removing the old finish and stain, that the front trims had a light brown coloration and the rear trims a dark brown, almost black, coloration. Because he uses his car daily and is not concerned with maintaining originality in every aspect of its appearance, and because all of the trims appeared to have a nice patina, I used tung oil only, with a coat of polyurethane for protection. I decided not to use stain to make the trims a similar shade, as I thought it would lessen the contrast in coloration of the front trims and mask their details. Looking at them now, the difference in shading between front and rear trims seems unusual only if the viewer expects them to be the same shade and, as the grain patterns are matched side-to-side, is unobtrusive.

As for the choice of finish, I recommend using tung oil as a "primer" coat, whether or not another kind of finish is used for the top coat. As I suggested in the previous article, tung oil "lubricates" (re-hydrates) dry, older wood, displays and emphasizes the colorations and grain patterns of wood, particularly the walnut veneers, at least as well as any other finish available, and can act as a sealer for wood before a top coat is applied. I recommend it as the top coat, or finish, as well, just as it was applied to the pieces of solid mahogany in the previous article, with this disclaimer - a representative from Homer Formby's wood care products company suggested to



refinisher a second time to determine if the old finish and stain are being liquified and absorbed into the pad. If the old finish is in good condition and the refinisher seems to have little effect on it, or if you believe a previous owner applied a polyurethane (plastic) finish, use a mild paint remover, such as 3M's "Safest Stripper," or one that is formulated for wood. Leave it on the old finish no longer than is necessary to soften it and cause it to blister, then lift it away from the surface with a plastic scraper. It is better to apply two thinner coats, and remove the old finish in stages, than apply one heavy coat. Try not to use any more strength - either chemical or muscular - than is necessary, and do not use sandpaper, at all, for two good reasons: it is relatively easy to sand through the old finish, and then through the veneer (which can be very thin if it has been sanded in the past) without realizing it, producing a feathered "hole" which will be prominent after the new finish is applied; and the walnut veneers used in the Magnette have grain patterns that generally are not linear, and sanding in a straight line, or in any manner, can leave marks which may not be able to be removed. To illustrate the latter point, the veneers have developed "patina," a natural darkening of their colors from age (unless they have been damaged by water or bleached by the sun), and the abrasive grit of sandpaper can cut through the darkened surface and expose fresh, lighter-colored wood underneath, producing sanding "tracks" which will be prominent after the new finish is applied. If this problem already exists with your pieces, try buffing the damaged areas with fine- or very fine-grade (000 or 0000) steel wool, applying a dark stain to cover the tracks (not generally recommended), or let the veneer darken naturally again with age.

After the old finish and stain have been removed, buff the pieces with fine- or very fine-grade steel wool until all residue from the chemicals has been removed, the surface is very smooth, and the grain patterns and contrasting colorations of the veneers are pronounced and almost reflective. Examine the pieces again for any flaws or imperfections on the surfaces that may not have been apparent underneath the old finish, including patches of a light grey or tan wood filler used originally by MG's woodmen to fill small openings and normally covered by the original stain, and decide whether the pieces still can be refinished, as they are, to your satisfaction.

Assuming they can be, decide whether you want to use a stain underneath the new finish, and what kind of finish you want to apply. MG's woodmen used stain to color the mahogany wood trim a similar shade, and the



removing the pieces, refinishing them as they are preserves them and defers the need for other woodwork until you decide it is necessary.

If you decide to refinish them, examine each of them for separation of the veneer from its base, and in the cases of the instrument panel cover and glove box door, for separation of the plies of their plywood bases. If any separation exists, it is better to re-glue the veneer and the plies and allow them to dry completely before refinishing, as the chemicals used to remove the old finish may soften the glue in the area around the separation and make the problem worse. Carefully scrape away any residue of the old glue that remains underneath the separation, using a knife blade, and lightly abraid the area to expose fresh wood as a "grip" for the glue to be applied. Avoid causing the veneer and plies to separate any further, unless they do so easily; if they do, determine the extent of the weakness and decide whether the entire area can be re-glued satisfactorily after being prepared as above. The goal is a flat surface, with veneer and plies having enough strength to remain glued in place. After preparing the surfaces, apply a good quality wood glue in a light-to-medium coat on both surfaces, spreading it with a knife blade over the entire area to be glued. Elmer's Carpenter's Wood Glue works well, and any excess can be removed with a damp cloth before it dries. Bear in mind that excess glue may seep through thin, dry veneer, or dry in lumps underneath the veneer and appear as "pimples" on the surface. Avoid letting the glue come into contact with the surface, as many glues can "leach" the color and patina out of the veneer, leaving light spots underneath the finish and possibly interfering with its adhesion to the veneer. Clamp the glued area, using a piece of soft, flat wood as a "buffer" between the jaws of your clamps and the veneer, protecting it and also serving to spread the compressing force of your clamps around the area to be glued. Use aluminum foil between the veneer and the buffer to ensure that the two will not stick together if glue does seep through the veneer. Allow the glue to dry at least 24 hours, or at least as long as the directions on its container suggests. After the clamps are removed, examine the joint for strength and trim any seepage of glue from it, carefully, with a razor or sharp knife.

Start removing the old finish with a furniture-refinishing product, an acetone-based solvent made by Formby's and other manufacturers, rubbing it onto the finish with a medium- or fine-grade (00 or 000) steel wool pad. If the old finish is broken or dry, the refinisher should remove most of it with a little buffing, but a second or third application can be necessary in many cases. Look at the bottom of the pad before dipping it into the

depress the inner ring of each escutcheon plate (the chrome trim ring behind the door and window riser handles) until the pin that secures the handle onto its square spindle is revealed, push out the pin and remove the handle and plate (remember, when installing the handles, that the symmetrical plates are used behind the door handles, and the offset plates are used behind the window riser handles), and lever the spring clips around the periphery of the panel and the opening for the door pull cord (front) and the arm rest (rear) away from the door. After the panel is removed, unscrew the phillips screws securing the brackets of the trim to the door and pull, gently, downward to remove the trim. Finally, remove the chrome trim and the heater controls "gate" (painted brown and semi-circular in shape) from the instrument panel cover, the brackets and clips from the radio opening cover, the thumb handle from the glove box door, and the chrome trim and brackets from each of the door trims.

Examine each of the pieces carefully, looking in particular for parts of the veneers that are cracked, chipped, separating from the wood underneath, or missing. Look, also, for stains or any other blemishes that appear to penetrate the veneers completely, thereby being difficult or impossible to hide or repair, and for signs that the veneers have been worked on previously: rounded corners and edges, sanding marks underneath the finish and feathered "holes" in the veneers that reveal the wood underneath. If you are building what you hope to be a show car, to be judged on its details, look, also, at the numbers stamped on the backs of the door trims: the numbers of the left and right trims from the front doors should be the same, and the numbers of the left and right trims from the rear doors should be the same, indicating that they are matched sets (as they were when the car was new - place a set side by side to see the similarities in color and grain pattern). After examining the pieces, decide whether they can be refinished, as they are, to your satisfaction, or whether they should be repaired, replaced or re-veneered.

In many cases, most, if not all, of the pieces can be refinished satisfactorily, even if they have minor blemishes or flaws, and there are many reasons for making this choice: it represents the least amount of work, i.e., removing the old finish, buffing the surface, and applying stain (if desired) and the new finish; it preserves at least some of the originality of the interior, and the blemishes and flaws that remain, some members of the Registry have told me, represent the history of that car and embellish it with "character;" and because of the relative ease in

## KNOTS!

The continuing saga of a wood-refinisher and his efforts to restore the wood trim of an MG Z-Series Magnette. When we left our hero last time, he had stripped, buffed and finished his way through the solid mahogany forest of the interior, but now he will face a more formidable opponent - the dreaded veneers!

I want to thank the members of the Registry for their comments on the previous article about wood refinishing, and for sharing their experiences with me. The subject of this article, the walnut veneers, are prepared for refinishing in a different manner, but the stain (if used) and the finish can be applied as they were for the solid mahogany pieces, using the same techniques. There are other pieces of veneered wood that won't be discussed in this article, i.e., the mahogany veneered fascia pieces of the dashboard, but as they generally are in poor condition and sometimes require replacement, and as the dashboard itself may be veneered, their restoration and refinishing can be the subject of another article if there is sufficient interest.

Simply speaking, a veneer is a surface applied to a base or form, and is used because it is more attractive than that base or form, or because it complements what is already present. In the case of the Magnette, a walnut veneer was applied to the instrument panel cover, the radio opening cover (if fitted), the glove box door and the four door trims. It is very thin and, at this point in time, probably very fragile.

Remove the instrument panel cover by depressing the pins visible through the small holes in the bases of the knobs and pulling the knobs, gently, away from their hexagonal spindles, unscrewing the small, slotted screw in each of the heater control knobs and pulling the knobs, again gently, away from their blades, and unscrewing the two chromed phillips screws in the lower part of the panel. If the panel will not clear the steering column, remove the bolt and nut securing the clamp of the column to the frame of the car, push the column downward until the panel does clear it, and remember to reconnect the column before the car is used again! The radio opening cover can be removed after unscrewing the wood screws securing the brackets on its lower side to the dashboard, and the glove box door can be removed after unscrewing the wood screws securing its hinges and strut. Remove the door trims by removing the door panels first:





Safety



fast!

Mid-Winter #5  
1990

Dear Enthusiast,

No the spring news letter isn't early. I decided to send out an interim newsletter to help cure the winter blahs. (Cold winter weather spoken here). This newsletter was written by Registry members, so it was an easy one for me.

Bob Young has written a follow up to his first wood refinishing article. I received this as I was preparing the last newsletter and was sorry that I could not fit it in.

Laurie Scott, a new Registry member from Geelong, Australia, wrote an article about the name and number tags found on our Magnettes.

So relax by the fireplace or stretch out on the beach, and enjoy these two well written articles.

Safety Fast!

Jeff

#### NEW MEMBERS

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#### CHANGES

New Address for Steve Haney:  
9411 Dartridge  
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New Area Code (708) for: Jeff and Sharon Powell  
Dennis Klemm  
Dennis C. Maceyak

Jim Pelletterie has purchased Roy Licari's '58 ZB.