

MGB V8 Roadster restoration project – Report 42

Wednesday 15th July 2015

Today was a bit of a 'wash out' on the MG front. After a leisurely breakfast we took Virginia to North Walsham station to travel back to London. On saying goodbye to Virginia I said to her that I would get Dugald back to her before Christmas! As we were fairly near the Vernon Arms Dugald and I thought it may be a good idea to go and visit the pub and have a late morning drink as 'the sun was over the yard arm'. After a couple of pints of Adnams we arrived home for lunch only 30 minutes late! During lunch Jane answered the telephone and it was a friend from primary school, scouts and secondary school who was in Sheringham on holiday. Could they come and visit. The last time we saw them was about 8 years ago, so the afternoon was spent reminiscing. It turned out that Stewart also knew Dugald. By the time they left it was time to have a bite to eat before Dugald and I went off to the pub to meet the other Saga Louts. Dugald is now being an honorary member. After discussions on solving all the world's problems Dugald asked Robert how metal separation plants worked (Robert was a scrap metal man, not in the 'Steptoe' sense). Dugald is now an expert in separating Rhodium from brass, copper and pound coins!

Thursday 16th July 2015

Dugald and I were determined to get on with finishing the spit today. We got stuck in at about 9am.



We had one of the brackets to weld together that is the rotating bit of the spit and the holes to drill in this bracket for the locking disc to bolt to. I put the pivot bolt through the bracket that was already drilled along with the locking disc and scribed where the holes should go. I also scribed holes for the outer ring of holes that would be hidden by the disc so that all the locking holes could be used when the bodyshell was rotated. There was absolutely nothing about any of this in the instructions. After scribing around the holes I used a square and odd leg callipers

to mark the centres of the holes and centre punched them. It was now time to drill the holes.



At first I drilled a pilot hole for the four holes and then the correct size for the two centre holes that would hold the disc and the bracket together and used this as a second pilot hole for the two outer ring of holes that would not be able to be used if

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not drilled through the box section. I finished off by drilling the correct size for the two outer holes.



One of the last jobs was to make the feet for the 'A' frames. Although the instructions did not mention anything about grinding the ends at 45 degrees I thought I would give better penetration to the weld.



The 'A' frames complete with legs. When we bolted the two brackets shown in the top photo to the box sections we put a washer between the 'A' frame upright and the brackets so that after welding there was clearance between the feet brackets and the 'A' frame vertical so that they would not be stiff to move if you needed to adjust the height of the rotating part of the spit. I may fit castors to the legs so that

the whole bodyshell and spit can be moved or even put on a trailer to go and be painted if I decide not to have a go myself at the paintwork. One of the advantages of fitting casters to the bodyshell spit is that it will make moving the shell around the workshop much easier. At the autojumble at the Skyton Goat car show, earlier in the year, I bought some new casters that would be OK for mounting the bodyshell spit. They have sat in a plastic bag with the kit of parts for the spit. Looking in the bag there are four casters. Now, after building the spit I realise I need eight! Looking on the internet it looks as if it is going to cost me a lot for an extra four new matching casters. As the four casters at the autojumble were about five or ten pounds for the four I suppose I have saved a bit. I may just have a search on eBay for some matching casters.

I am now going to jump forward a couple of days after Dugald went back home to North London only to explain the rest of the assembly and welding of the bodyshell spit.



Having tack welded the spit together with Dugald's help I was left to weld all the bits that were tacked together. I was looking forward to doing some really nice welds after all that practise I had with the sump on John's Toyota pick-up. It wasn't to be! Although the welds were strong enough to probably lift an elephant, they looked rubbish in my eyes. I

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blame the MIG. As they say – ‘a bad workman blames his tools’.



The one part I am proud of is thinking of the following. The pin for locking the bodyshell at an angle was loose in its location holes and could fall out when the bodyshell spit was not being used – and then probably be lost, or at least a long time trying to find it. I found a washer that would fit over the pin shaft. Slid the pin to the point that it was just through the second hole and tack welded the washer to the pin shaft. Hey-presto, no chance of ever losing the pin – well hopefully as long as the tack weld works! Having finished the welding, thoughts turned to:-

1. How to make the brackets to fix to the bodyshell?
2. Where to mount the brackets on the bodyshell?
3. How to raise the bodyshell to the height of the spit?
4. How to find the centre of gravity of the bodyshell?

The only parts left over from the kit were a couple of angle brackets and a couple of odd lengths of 25mm square box section. I thought of dragging out the spare steel I have in stock, but it was all stored under the workbench in the lower shed and behind the lathe with other crap that I could not find a home for on the shelves. Time for a break – I'll think about those items on another day – too much to think about when you are old, fragile and tired!



The front and rear stands for the bodyshell spit fully welded and ready to make the parts that will connect to the bodyshell. Although I ordered the spit to use on a 1978 MGB nothing came to make the brackets up with. The packaging did at least have MGB written on it in felt pen! I did expect metal for brackets to come with the kit, but never mind. I like a challenge!

If you wish to purchase one of these extra large ‘Meccano Sets’ with minimal instructions you can purchase it from: Handling Solutions, David Amis, 2 Glebe Cottages, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Hertfordshire. SG7 5HE. Tel: 07828 912 986, email; david_amis@msn.com and <http://www.rolloverjigs.com/index.html>

The cost for the kit I bought, including VAT and carriage was £205. You can buy the spit ready made up for extra cost, but it looks as if you will still have to make the brackets to fit between the bodyshell and the spit. In addition, you have to paint the spit yourself, if you want it to look nice.

1. How to make the brackets to fix to the bodyshell?

My original intention for the brackets to fit on the bodyshell was to; at the front, use the four large bolts that are used to hold the front crossmember in place on the bodyshell. On the back I was going to use the rear spring hangers, all four of them. The reason being that when the car is on its wheels virtually all the loads apart from the rear dampers are going through these points. This would mean that with the bodyshell mounted on the spit it would be equivalent to the MGB being on its wheels.

2. Where to mount the brackets on the bodyshell?

Lying under the front of the car, and trying not to drop off to sleep, I spied some threaded 5/16" or 3/8" bolt holes that were stiffened with an extra 1/8" thick plate. These holes are not much further forwards of the crossmember bolts and could serve my purpose of fixing the front mountings for the bodyshell. At the rear it is a bit more complex if I decide to use the spring hangers. I will need to have lots of

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bits of metal in the way of cleaning and removing rust from the underside. I think I will remove the glass fibre rear valence, which we fitted earlier on for safe keeping, and have a gander at what may be suitable for mounting points. Many on these types of bodyshell spits tend to use the bumper mountings. I am not too happy about this, as it is putting vertical loads on the body rather than the horizontal loads they were designed for. This may distort the body and make the door fits rubbish. At present the door fits are acceptable. Another thought has just crossed my mind. I could strip out and repair the doors first and then fit the doors back on to the bodyshell and then mount the shell on the spit? All this thinking is giving me a headache!

3. How to raise the bodyshell to the height of the spit?

When I bought the bodyshell spit kit I could have bought with it a mechanism for lowering and raising the bodyshell on the spit frames. It consisted of, I think, a long threaded bar with a nut on the end that would move the bodyshell up and down. It added more to the price and I was not very happy with having long bits of threaded bar to bang your head, or other parts of your body into. By the way, it's not true that when I go into the pub the first thing they say is "Have you remembered your wallet?" Or, that they try and catch the moths when I eventually get my wallet out and open it! My original intention of mounting the bodyshell was to jack the bodyshell up to the height of the spit. No problem, apart from the fact that all the jacks and axle stands I have are too short to get the bodyshell up to the correct height. Thinking back to my days at Enfield Tech and the design classes, I was told to sketch out all the ideas that came into your head, even if they were silly and then pick the solution that was best for the purpose. I better have ago at doing this before I decide on the best method – but not just now.

4. How to find the centre of gravity of the bodyshell?

The reason for doing this is that if the pivot for the spit is not mounted at, or near the centre of gravity. The bodyshell will be extremely difficult to rotate on its pivots and may need two or three people to turn it on the spit. It will also put a large load on the locking pin and the disc with the locking holes in it. And you thought all this restoration and rebuilding was a 'piece of cake'. I seem to remember that somewhere in the dim and distant past, in writing these reports, I put in a photo of Dugald or John marking the places front and rear where we thought the centre of gravity was? I shall have to go back through my file of reports and have a look.



Parts I have left over to date from building the bodyshell spit.



These are the holes at the front of the chassis rail that I am thinking of using to mount the front spit for the bodyshell instead of the crossmember bolts. By the way, you can see the amount of bitumen underseal that has been sprayed under the MGB to hide up the rust for some unsuspecting customer.



The spit stored until needed. As usual; any comments, motivation, help, suggestions, abuse or encouragement to [-mikemacartney@btconnect.com](mailto:mikemacartney@btconnect.com)