



## STEERING WHEELS

Most post-52 cars from the Slough factory have a brown plastic covered steering wheel of rather thin and elegant proportions. However, they have one serious drawback. After a few years use (or abuse) small cracks begin to appear in various places. These grow rather rapidly and turn a once beautiful (and delightful to use) wheel into an eyesore.

For restorers the problem of availability of replacement wheels of correct type in good condition is enormous. Do not despair for all is not lost! Where replacement is not possible "restoration" becomes necessary. Although it appears an impossibility the task is really a lot simpler than one imagines. Even a quite delapidated example can be saved with patience and attention to detail. Our own Wal Burkhardt has just made an excellent job of his wheel by undertaking these simple procedures:

1. The first step is to thoroughly sand the remnants of the outer glazed surface from the wheel.

2. Using a hacksaw or jigsaw blade, carefully chase out each crack until a wide and even gap is produced.

3. Back the lower surface of the crack with putty so that approximately 1/16" into the crack is filled.

4. Pour in prepared 3 day Araldite until it fills the entire crack except the final upper 1/16". Allow to cure (3 days).

5. Remove putty (this has prevented the Araldite from running out the other side). The Araldite will (or should) be approximately 1/16" below all surfaces (most important).

6. Fill the remaining 1/16" with a proprietary Body Filler (Z Bond, K & H etc.) and SAND smooth.

7. Sand entire wheel smooth and be careful not to mark surfaces with greasy fingers.

8. Selleys and Estapol make an excellent antique finish which requires the use of a base and toner, these are available in many shades. Choose a toner as close to the original shade of the wheel as you can.

9. Make a suitable work stand out of an old broom handle (or similar material) to avoid touching the wheel by hand.

10. Using the toner, stain surfaces of the wheel until the desired color is obtained (uniform ALL over).

11. Spray or brush on Estapol clear lacquer (the long life variety, not instant Estapol). If you choose to spray have a can of paint stripper handy and IMMEDIATELY dismantle and clean the gun with stripper, otherwise a new gun will be necessary.

12. If you choose a brush, a clean brush is essential (preferably a new one of good quality, because loose hairs can mar the surface).

The first coat should be neat. Allow to dry (sand wet/dry). Thin 10% for second coat, allow to dry and sand (600 grade wet/dry). Subsequent coats are progressively thinned and sanded until desired finish is obtained. After drying, mount your new wheel to the car and go and show it off to another club mate, PREFERABLY at a club meeting.

## DASHBOARD POLISHING

Slough built tractions are graced by a rather superb piece of solid walnut in which are embedded instruments and sundry other controls. Sadly, few members today can remember the magnificence of the original French polish finish that was applied. For in most cases after thirty odd years the blistering Australian sun has done its dastardly worst and left a series of deformed and emaciated ridges that once was a smooth mirror-like surface.

Happily, however it is not too difficult to restore the original finish quality, and today we have the availability of products that will ensure that your hard work remains good almost indefinitely.

1. Once the dash and capping (also door cappings on earlier models) have been removed, apply paint stripper and leave for 15 minutes, then hose off. Stripping is a long process on French polish because it softens and dissolves only a little at a time. It is however, much faster than sanding because sanding clogs



the paper very quickly and one tends to go through a lot of sand paper.

2. Once all traces of original finish are removed, thorough sanding becomes necessary to smooth down the grain. As all woodworkers will tell you, SAND WITH THE GRAIN, 200 and then 400 W & D used dry so as not to raise end grain.

3. Watty market an excellent grain filler which incorporates a stain (available in walnut). This is rubbed into the wood with a dry cloth and allowed to dry (10-15 minutes in warm weather). Then polish the surface with a soft cloth until all excess is removed and a soft lust-

rous finish is obtained. The wood will now look good enough to fit to the car, but it will not last.

4. Spray with long life Estapol.

5. An alternative to spraying is the brush, but great care is needed to avoid runs and to ensure smoothness. These steps are as follows:

- a) Place the Estapol lacquer in a pot of hot water to encourage flow and brush on neat with the grain using long smooth flowing strokes. Dry and sand, 600 W & D.
- b) Then thin 10% and repeat.
- c) Thin a further 10% and repeat.
- d). etc. etc.

Five or six subsequent coats are usually necessary and a dust free environment is essential (winter is a good time of year as atmospheric dust is at its lowest).

Spraying has the advantage of applying a first and final coat to achieve a glass like finish. But clean the gun with paint stripper straight away!

