



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. Selseys 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.

