



The Walnut Dash Company

By Janine Elliot

Now, I love my MGF. I've looked after it passionately for a number of years, cleaning it regularly, even talking to it and giving it a name. I love the metal effect dashboard dials and the metal gear lever and leather gaiter, but it seems that the money must have run out when they got to the middle column itself. After a few years of playing with the heater control dials and fog lights it's all started to look rather ragged. So imagine my delight when I read the advert on *The Walnut Dash Company* in *Safety Fast!* a few months ago. At last I could cover the fascia with a light or dark walnut or even carbon fibre to make my car look more like a Jaguar or Koenigsegg inside.

Indeed *The Walnut Dash Company* makes kits for most cars, with the MGF TF coming under the 'Rover' banner. At under £50, the walnut veneer fascia is very inexpensive and was delivered to me within a few days, arriving in a large flat cardboard box complete with instructions. I quickly unpacked it to begin my building. On close inspection, I could see that it was a computer-cut photo wood effect veneer on a synthetic base, rather than the solid wood that I had hoped for, but I guess for £50 I shouldn't complain! More expensive real wood fascias are available for some cars.

To carry out the work (which takes less than an hour) you need cleaning liquid to firstly remove any oil or polish that might

have accumulated over the years, and a clean cloth and hair drier when attaching the walnut. The first stage of the operation is self-explanatory, but peeling off the wood veneer and attaching it to the car was a little more complex, needing reasonable eye sight, a steady hand and patience.





I commenced with the wood for the air vent surrounds. That was easy, as indeed was the wood to cover the aluminium on the doors. The wood effect 'MG' badge on the front dash was less easy to do, simply because of the closeness to the windscreen, but I managed it without any problems.

The biggest problem, though, was doing the central fascia. As the walnut veneer is 'spongy', it is easy to stretch the fabric as you lift it off the backing paper and when placing it around the dials. Extreme care needs to be taken when applying it to the correct spot as any subsequent removal and adjustment could not only lessen the stick-ability but also stretch the veneer. I did find that one thin edge had stretched slightly, meaning that sticking it flat was impossible (see the photo) and consequently I had to do a bit of microsurgery that would have made any surgeon on Holby City proud. By slicing off the protrusion and sticking down the remaining two ends, I produced a perfect match.

Whilst sticking down the veneer is generally simple, care has to be taken that you aren't too rough with the cloth or overzealous while heating with the hair dryer. Until it is all stuck solidly to the plastic, it is



very fragile, especially the tapered ends that fit either side of the gear lever at the base of the console. However, when it is all in place it is nothing short of stunning. All I need now is a wooden CD-radio to finish it off!

Within an hour, all the work was complete, and it looked so good I didn't

actually care whether it was solid or imitation wood. It all looked like a million dollars and I just wanted to open up the soft top and show it all off to the world. But then, I thought, perhaps I should keep it all hush-hush, as I don't want everyone's MG looking quite as good as mine....