

INTERIOR

Many subtle (and not so subtle) changes were made to the interior of the MGB over the 10 years of Australian assembly. These largely followed those in the UK, albeit with varying dates of introduction. I have broken this topic into the following sections:

FASCIA PANEL

FLOOR COVERING

SEATS

STEERING WHEEL ([STEERING](#))

DOORS & SCREENS (coming)

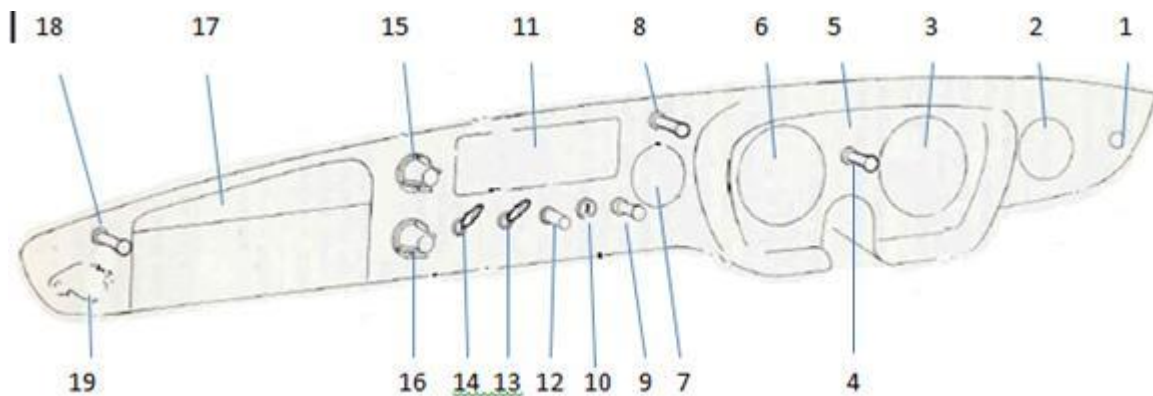
OTHER (coming)

FASCIA PANEL



Starting with the fascia panel (with the standard black 'crackle' paint), the features (and changes) are detailed on the following page.





1. Overdrive switch: The overdrive switch was not present on the early Australian vehicles as overdrive was not offered until much later than in the UK. The location on the fascia panel was filled with a blanking plug instead. When overdrive was finally offered, a chrome, pressed escutcheon, bearing the words (pressed into the escutcheon) 'NORMAL' and 'OVERDRIVE', surrounded a black, plastic toggle switch. Initially it was a matching toggle switch to the others on the fascia panel, but soon changed (1965) to a 'hooked' style as shown below. As overdrive didn't arrive in Australia until 1968, there should be NO cases of the straight toggle switch being used. *T Aczel*



Overdrive switch and escutcheon (early type)
(NOT USED IN AUSTRALIA)



Later style 'hooked' overdrive switch . (ALL
Australian overdrive switches should be of
this type.)





Jaeger fuel gauge (later to be Smiths)

2. Fuel Gauge: Smiths' gauge, with the markings 'E 1/2 F'. (initially this gauge was a 'Jaeger').



3. Tachometer:

The first tachometer was branded 'Jaeger' and was mechanical. This was changed around Feb. '65 to an electrical tachometer, now bearing the name 'Smiths'. This all coincided with the introduction of the **18GB** engine. In the bottom centre of this dial was a red ignition warning light.



Mk 1 showing the rheostat switch. Note also the thin chrome strip around the inside of the instrument hood

4. Rheostat switch: Black plastic switch (with a white 'P' pressed into the face) for controlling instrumentation brightness.

5. Indicator warning lights: Triangular cut-outs with green plastic

background, situated above the rheostat.

6. Speedometer: Jaeger initially, changing to Smiths (as in **3.** above) with a trip meter and a mileage meter incorporated, with the reset device underneath (and protruding from) the fascia. A blue 'High Beam' indicator light was at the bottom of the speedo.

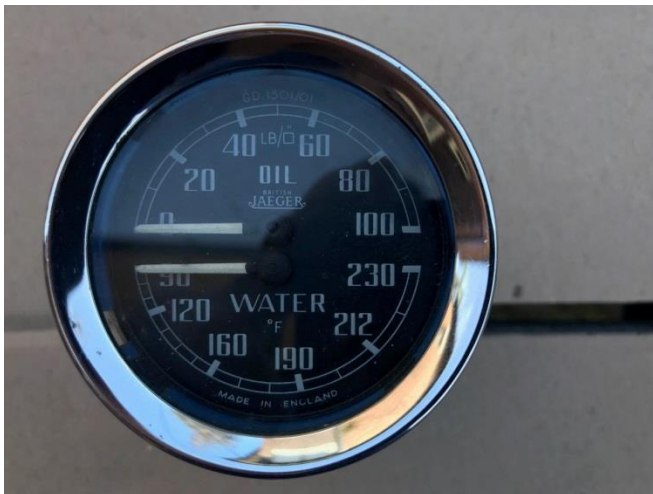
7. Oil & Temperature gauge: This was a dual gauge; oil pressure on the top half and coolant temperature on the bottom half. The initial gauge read temperature in Fahrenheit. There are also examples of Centigrade gauges as well as those marked with the simple 'C-N-H' marking. Whilst the Parts manual shows gauges changing from F° to C° at YGHN3 3820, there is enough evidence to render



Jaeger speedometer (later to be Smiths)

this information dubious at the least.

8. This location housed two different instruments with two different purposes. Initially, this was the location of the windscreen washer pump, which was later (late '66) moved to position **12.** Replacing this was the headlight switch, which had changed from a black plastic toggle switch to a two-stage pull knob with a headlamp symbol shown.



Jaeger oil & water gauge (note temp displayed in Fahrenheit)

9. Choke knob: Originally, this was a smallish black plastic knob (similar to item 4.), with a white letter 'C' in the centre. This was changed to a larger knob showing a 'fan' symbol. Evidence suggests this was done with the introduction of the Mk II.



Early style choke knob



Later style choke knob

10. Ignition switch: This was a combination ignition lock/starter key hole. This location was later to be filled with a chrome blanking disc when the ignition was moved to the steering column in 1970 with the 'facelift' model.

11. Radio blanking plate: As radios were not fitted ex-factory, a blanking plate (painted the same black 'crackle' paint) with a chrome surround, was fitted in this recess. On the face of the plate was a chrome, ('art-deco' design), MG symbol with horizontal wings. (**NB.** Many owners, thinking this piece was too attractive not to use, positioned it in various locations [most popular being either the glove box or speaker housing] BUT IT WAS ONLY EVER INTENDED TO BE ON THE BLANKING PLATE). Radios were dealer fitted. Later on, with the MGBL 'flow thru' vehicle, this location housed two plastic, adjustable air vents "This change meant the body was different in the bulkhead so the tubes from the dash centre vents could be plumbed directly into the rear of the heater air inlet box. (below chrome air vent in scuttle)." S. Ratcliff

12. Windscreen washer pump: Originally, this was the location of a two-stage, black plastic toggle switch for the lights. This was replaced by the washer pump in late 1966.



Windscreen washer pump





YGN3 719, clearly showing the early locations of the washer pump (above the oil/temp gauge) and the headlight toggle (next to ignition). Also note the 3 blanking plugs for heater (on left) and overdrive switch (on right).

13. Wiper switch: In this location a black, plastic, toggle switch was present for the wipers (initially single-speed but changing to dual speed with the introduction of the Mk II in the second half of 1968.

14. Heater fan switch: The final toggle switch was for the two-speed heater fan.



1970 MGBL showing heater controls (just), toggle switches, washer pump, chrome ignition blanking plate (that is not a blob of chewy – it's the reflection of the photographer's finger), later style choke knob, later style headlight switch, temp (C-N-H) & radio blanking plate.

15. Heater – temperature control.

16. Heater – air distribution.

NB: In Australia this became quite confusing. Initially (in most cases) these two locations (**15.** & **16.**) were covered with black blanking plugs, as many of the vehicles left the factory with no heater installed.

Heaters were optional in the Australian MGB originally. Somewhere around early 1968 the Australian Design Rules mandated that a windscreen demister had to be installed on all new cars, so BMC fitted a “fresh air box” option to those cars which did not have the heater option chosen. This was basically the heater box and fan but without the heater matrix installed in the box, and the relevant pipes, heater tap control cable, heater tap and the dashboard knob were missing. The dashboard had the now operative fan switch connected and the air distribution control knob was fitted. The heater control knob hole was still blanked off.

“The heater (more correctly the demister) became mandatory on 1 January 1971 under ADR 15. The introduction of this ‘on line’ would have preceded this. As the MGB was the premium sports car and fitting the heater was a fiddle job, I would suspect all Zetland production were fitted with heaters.”

John Lindsay

“Eventually I’m sure the assembly complications of assembling some cars with a fresh air box and some with a heater outweighed any cost benefit of only installing a stripped out heater and all cars thereafter had heater/demisters as standard.” Tom Aczel

“Nov ’68 Heater fitted as standard for all markets except Australia ...: Australian cars (MGB roadster CKD kits) continue with optional fresh-air unit.” Clausager, p145

“Apr ’69 Heater now included in MGB roadster CKD kits for Australia (and fitted to other Australian cars), fresh air unit discontinued.” Clausager, p 145

17. Glove box: Metal, key-operated, glove box lid, painted in matching black, ‘crackle’ paint, with the only adornment being a horizontal chrome strip, below the chrome key access.

18. Map light switch: black plastic (originally Bakelite)





Map light and switch (Bakelite on this Mk I)

19. Map reading light: chrome and glass (Note: the same light is used on the rear bumper overrides for illuminating the number plate)

The use of the steel fascia was never replaced in Australian assembly (as opposed to UK & overseas markets). One barely noticed change was the exclusion of a thin chrome finisher that surrounded the hood encompassing the speedo and tachometer (from YGHN3 926 on).

There were some other less subtle changes to the pressed panel around (circa 1970). This all occurred with the introduction of the MGBL 'facelift' vehicle (from **YHN9 1774**).

MGBL "facelift"



The most obvious of these changes was the relocation of the radio blanking plate (11.) This was replaced with two plastic, adjustable air vents (this also necessitated changes in the engine bay – mentioned elsewhere). Some cut-outs disappeared (19. & 18. – map reading light and switch), whilst others were changed to rectangular cut-outs to house the new style of switches ('rocker' instead of 'toggle')



Switches affected:

- 8. Lights changed to a rocker switch.
- 10. Ignition switch, which changed to a blanking disc, which was changed to a 'wipers' rocker switch.
- 13. From 'Wipers' toggle to 'Fog lamp' rocker switch (optional)
- 14. From 'Heater fan' toggle to 'heater fan' rocker switch.

Speaker console

From the beginning there was a speaker console spanning from the fascia panel to the transmission tunnel with the transmission tunnel carpet lapping over it. Apart from the slight modification to the bottom of the console to accommodate the change from the 'narrow' tunnel to the 'wide' tunnel, the introduction of the MGBL 'facelift', the console was completely revamped.

Originally the console housed only an octagonally shaped piece of mesh, surrounded by a chrome trim. This was to conceal the positioning of a radio speaker.

Thin, chrome strip around inside of instrument hood

With the introduction of the 'facelift' vehicle, its whole purpose changed. Starting from the top, a new design, chrome, map-reading light was positioned. This could be operated by either a rocker switch or remote door switch. Below this was the familiar radio blanking plate, with the chrome winged MG symbol. Finally, a row of controls (or blanks in many a case) were positioned. Reading from R to L: map-reading light rocker switch; cigarette lighter; a round 'hazard lights' warning light,



Photo showing MGBL (facelift) with air vents (11). Note: rocker switches instead of toggle, new console with radio, map light above radio, toggle switches or blanks. Also note new seat design (blue), arm rest and ash tray, temp gauge in C-N-H, steering wheel and column ignition/steering lock.

followed by a hazard light warning rocker switch.

BMC Original Documents

- Radio interference with impulse tachometer

[C16.68](#)

- Speedometer flexible drives

[C68.68](#)

- Altering locking mechanism to suit an alternative key.

[C11.69](#)





Worth looking at...

The new MGB is a car worth looking at. Order it with SMITHS fresh-air heating and ventilating equipment (an optional extra) for even greater motoring pleasure. The British Jaeger instruments on the dashboard match the car in efficiency and design; the accurate information they provide contributes equally to safe driving and to proper maintenance. They are worth looking at, too.

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mgbsmadeinaustralia.org

FLOOR COVERING

Floor covering in the Australian MGB was only ever PVC-coated rubber mats. At the time of writing, there is only one place in the world that still provides these mats and that is in Sydney.



Two-piece mats used in all Australian MGBs



The sills of the car were covered in a ribbed PVC-coated rubber strip.



Rubberised sills





Rear of rubberised sills



The following photo shows the under-felt that was used on the floor.



Under-felt



The transmission tunnel was covered with loop-pile carpet (black), with ½" jute adhered to the back (this was only ever one-piece). The kickboards were carpet, glued to the panels, with vinyl edging and attached with chrome-plated screws, to be changed in late '63 to 'Florentine bronze' screws. The rear sill above the battery boxes was covered in carpet, as too were the rear wheel arches and the vertical wall below the battery box.

For a detailed look at the flooring, John Clarke's article in "Opposite Lock" (MGCC Sydney – Dec 2017) covers the topic completely.

[MGB Musings](#)

Care of Upholstery.

2 x original BMCLH documents on caring for the upholstery (1963 & 1964)

[1963](#)

[1964](#)

SEATS

The first Australian-assembled MGBs (assembled at PMC, Enfield, NSW) were assembled with the leather seats on offer from the UK (albeit with a reduced range of choices). These seats had



contrasting colour piping (white) and were either red or black (this contrasting piping had gone by late '64).

[Original black leather seats with white piping](#)





Alternative red leather seat (Note: carpet on rear)

It wasn't too long (by 1966, if not earlier), before Australia converted to black vinyl (Ambla) and non-contrasting piping.



Black vinyl seats with non-contrasting piping (Ambla)

The **seat pattern** changed in 1970, coinciding with British Leyland's (BL) takeover.





'70 BL seats with vertical pleats and basket weave centre pleats

The first BL MGB ('70-'71) came without **headrests** (headrests were not compulsory until ADR 22 (Australian Design Rule), 1st January, 1972. These later BL cars had very dark blue seats with narrow centre-welled pleats that were plain vinyl, not the patterned, basket-weave type used on BLs up to 1972.

Reclining seats were introduced sometime in late 1969. *Sports Car World* (8/70) states... "layback seats are now standard".

The early '69 reclining seat-covers were only used up the BL design of 1970.

In summary:

'63 – '68 non-layback, vertical pleats, carpet on back of squab.

late '69 layback with similar covers but pleats across the seat (8 on back, 6 on base) and no rear carpet on the back of the squab.

'70 BL type pattern with narrow basket-weave centre pleats.

'72 same pattern as 1970 but dark blue with no basket-weave.

NB: The centre console/armrest came with the Flo-thru cars of 1972.





F'72 Dark blue seats



First BL seats with headrests. Also just visible is chrome reclining lever





Late '69 reclining seats. Notice direction of pleats (6 on base and 8 on back)



Post '70 BL Note reclining seats, basket weave insert and reclining hood



