

# Rufus - Dashboard Part 4.

## **Introduction:**

The instruments on Rufus were in poor condition and in particular the chrome bezel rings were badly rust pitted. The dual oil pressure and temperature gauge was beyond redemption (by me anyway) and I sent off some emails requesting repair quotes, these come back at circa £220 plus VAT and postage in both directions. An internet search revealed that the MGB Hive was selling NOS gauges for £94.95 so I purchased one.

This all coincided with accompanying a friend (a fellow motorcycle enthusiast) on a pilgrimage to Nottingham to visit an instrument restorer. The restorer was very helpful and suggested that most instruments could be improved just by cleaning the glass and renewing the bezel rings. When we left I had the details of his bezel supplier in my notebook.

\*\*\*

## **Refurbishing the gauges:**

With the exception of the combined oil pressure and water temperature gauge (I bought a NOS item) all the instruments were refurbished with new bezels and seals.

\*\*\*

## **Sourcing the bezels:**

These were obtained from.

BGBM

British Gauge, c/o Moduron Hafod

Pontrhydygroes

Ceredigion

SY25 6DQ,

The first job was to identify the bezel type (apparently two different styles, full 'V' and half 'V' were fitted to Smiths Instruments. I sent a photo of the gauges by email to BGBM (British Gauge British Made) who identified them as half 'V'.

I ordered three bezels for 2" gauges at £4 each and two bezels for 4" gauges at £8.80 each the total cost including VAT and postage was £40.92.

\*\*\*

## **Removing the bezels:**

I decided to practice on one of the smaller gauges and the first one I picked up was the Voltmeter. The bezel is secured by metal tags that are bent over the rim of the gauge; these were prised up with a small electrician's screwdriver. Once all the tags were clear the bezel and Glass simply lifted away.

## **Note.**

*The same bezel removal procedure applies to all the gauges.*

\*\*\*

## **Cleaning:**

The front face of the instrument (Voltmeter) was very clean and I just covered it with a clean cloth to keep it that way while I used a proprietary window cleaning fluid to clean the grime off the glass. There was a rubber gasket between the glass and the bezel which was in good condition so I re-used it.

\*\*\*

### **Fitting a new bezel:**

This was fairly straightforward and after fitting the original rubber seal in the bezel ring I placed the glass and bezel (complete with seal) over the instrument.

With a piece of cloth covering a flat piece of wood as a support I pressed the bezel down with my left hand and using a thin brass drift in the right hand I pressed the tags over the instrument rim. It was that simple.

\*\*\*

### **Restoring the rest of the instruments:**

This should have been a repeat of the above procedure, but unfortunately this was not the case. By chance I had picked up the Voltmeter first, which was the only decent instrument out of the five gauges.

The next one selected for refurbishment was the Fuel Gauge and I could immediately see that it was beyond redemption. The bezel had obviously been removed and replaced sometime in the past and during assembly the glass to bezel sealing ring had been omitted. The result was corrosion of the instrument face sufficient to relegate it to the scrap bin. Searching through my box of bits I found an identical Smiths gauge that looked to be in much better condition (I also found another one that was as bad as the original one so after removing the bulb holder and bracket it also ended up in the bin). After removing the bezel from the 'new' fuel gauge the bezel to glass seal disintegrated. The fuel gauge was carefully wrapped and stored away pending sourcing a new seal.

Removing the bezel on the Speedometer revealed another ruined seal which also disintegrated leaving bits stuck to both bezel and glass. The speedometer was also stored away.

\*\*\*

### **Sourcing new seals:**

I expected this to be a problem but an internet search turned up several suppliers and I chose.

Speedoheads  
15 Maple Drive  
Ferndown  
Dorset  
United Kingdom

+44(0) 7713 125662

[dave@speedoheads.co.uk](mailto:dave@speedoheads.co.uk)

The seal is sold by the metre and I ordered 1 metre of 3mm diameter for the 2" gauges and 1 metre of 4mm diameter for the 4" gauges. In addition I ordered the square section rubber instrument to dash seals for all five gauges. The total cost including VAT and postage was a very reasonable £11.05.

Once the seals were received I refurbished the remaining instruments.

\*\*\*

### **Fitting the instruments:**

The small gauges were a nice tight fit in the holes so they were inserted in the dashboard and secured with their respective clamps.

The large gauges were a bit sloppy so I put two wraps of amalgamating tape round them, inserted them and secured the brackets.

\*\*\*



**How it was.**



**Ditto.**



**The finished dashboard.**

**Summary:**

Those who have read (and digested) this article will realise that as I bought a new dual gauge I didn't need to buy three of the 2" bezels. The extra one was purchased just in case I mucked the first one up, which I didn't. I now have a spare which I'm sure will come in handy one day.

The fitting of new bezels turned out to be a little more involved than I first thought it would be. The main problems were obviously down to being exposed to the elements in an open top car, which had affected both the bezels and their seals and in the case of the fuel gauge being exposed to a previous owner whose

enthusiasm exceeded his ability. The second problem was not buying the new seals at the time of ordering the bezels.

To be honest the gauges have not been restored, rather they have been aesthetically refurbished enough to prolong their lifespan for a few more years.

With the dashboard finished it was stored away pending completion of the body refurbishment. The only thing to remember is that the dashboard must be fitted before the steering column; but before fitting I will wire it up.