

Tech Article: Trunk Space in a MGB

by Jim Vickery

For those of us that have traveled extensively in our MG's, we have learned several things. First we have learned that the MGB is *usually* a very reliable car. It is also quite comfortable for extended driving especially if they are equipped with cruise control, a wind deflector, and overdrive. The one limitation is the availability of storage in the car. This article is meant to address that issue.

Many club members who travel long distances (including Lynda and I) carry a pretty extensive tool selection as well as spare parts that can be installed on the side of the road. We also carry engine/transmission oil as Castrol 20-50 is not always available in convenient stores/gas stations in the Midwest. I also carry a workshop manual and a Moss catalogue in case we need to order parts to be delivered overnight to a motel. (By the way I have never had to do that.) Lastly, several of us have installed a second fuel pump that can be switched on in case of pump failure. I did this after changing a fuel pump on the side of the road in the Colorado Mountains out of cell phone range of the rest of the caravan of cars I was traveling with.

I mentioned that one of the limitations of the MGB is limited trunk space, so I have gotten a little creative. First I followed Ron Kuhanu's lead on storing oil on a shelf in front of the radiator on our '76. This can only be done on pre '77 cars without oil coolers. (In '77 they moved the radiator forward and put electric fans in place).

The largest space hog in the trunk is the spare tire. Some club members have addressed this issue in different ways. One I know of has taken the spare out of the trunk entirely and bought a can of "Fix a Flat". Another has purchased a "donut" tire that comes standard on many modern cars. Both of these fixes are valid. I, however, felt uncomfortable with either of these solutions. I read in a publication somewhere about turning the spare tire over. There is a large pocket on the back of the wheel that can be utilized to store tools, parts or whatever.

If you are going to utilize this option, the first thing you need to do is to remove the spare tire. I would recommend that you



check the pressure and condition of that tire before going forward. If the tire needs replacement, now is the time to do it. I think the spare tire is probably the most neglected replacement part of the entire car. After checking out the tire, place the tire and wheel upside down over the attachment fixture on the trunk floor. You will need to make a small metal or wood plate and drill a 3/8" hole in it. Get a 3/8-24 bolt about 1 1/4 long and fasten the tire and wheel to the trunk floor.

Looking at the spare, you now have a fairly large cavity to fill with tools, parts or whatever. I ordered a couple of "Bucket Buddy" bags for Jumper cables and they fit exactly in the cavity in the rear of the wheels. I have all of my tools, manuals, catalogs etc. in that newly found space. If you are going to travel in your MGB, they are usually very dependable cars, but after all, the newest ones are 34 years old with 34 year old parts.



Originally published March 2014 in the Chronicle.