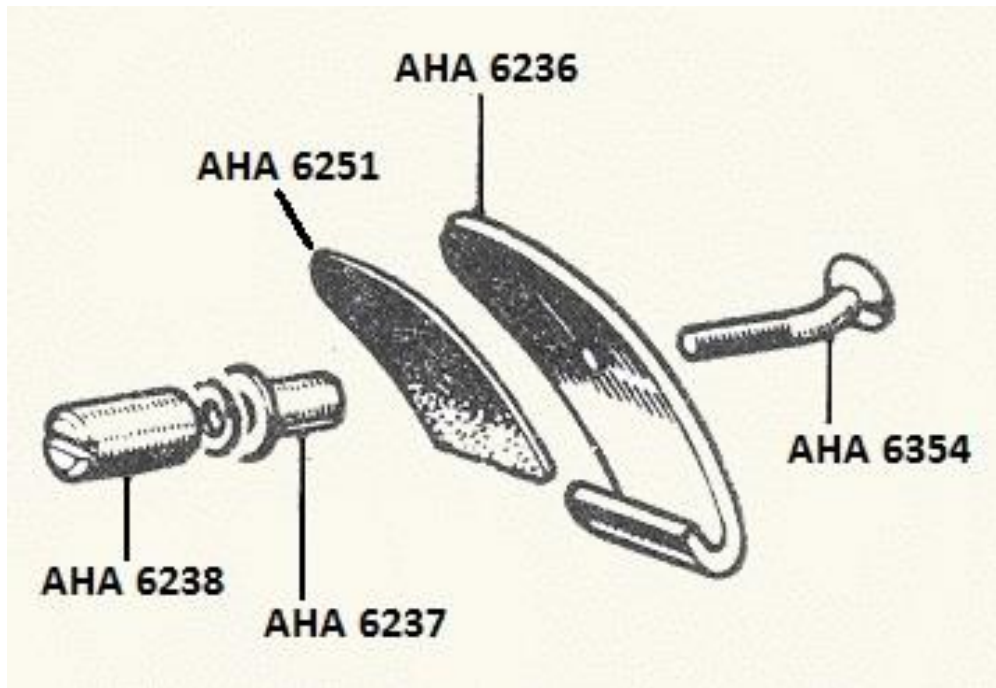


FRONT CLAMPS FOR SPRITE MK2 / MIDGET MK1 FACTORY HARDTOPS

(see MASCOT Nov 2019 p36)



Surviving clamps are often rusted beyond repair



AHA 6236 This is the part that has proved the most difficult & time consuming to make. A local Engineering Firm managed (finally) to make them on their bending machine, starting from laser-cut pieces of satin finish stainless steel. The result was worth the 10-month wait delayed by Covid19: they are an extremely good match to the original parts.

AHA 6354 These started life as standard M6 stainless steel coach bolts. The head of each was first machined on a lathe to give the correct diameter and the correct countersunk chamfer. Glossing over many failed attempts to bend them, they were finally bent successfully by (a) gripping them firmly in a vice (b) heating the head of the bolt until it glowed bright red hot and then (c) gripping the head with a pair of pliers and bending it with an action rather like a dentist pulling a tooth. Inevitably, there will be a few witness marks on the heads of these bolts, a consequence of how they were made. The bend angle (very critical) was achieved using an original as a template followed by trial & error fitting on one of my hardtops.

AHA 6238 The original nut is cylindrical with a slot in the end to receive a one-penny piece or similar. I have substituted a standard 'long-hex' M6 nut which serves just as well if a 10mm socket is used to tighten it rather than a one penny piece. These nuts should not be over-tightened.

AHA 6327 These 'top hat' spacers should still be firmly in your hardtop but they can either fall out or rust out (and so become lost). If they are still in your hardtop, you will not need these extra bits. The new washers are exact replicas of the originals (same measurements), but made from stainless steel.

AHA 6251 Each clamp comes with a rubber pad to sit between clamp and hardtop. I've never seen an original 'sealing pad' but it must have been something like this.

Notes:

1. The original clamps were always something of a b*****r to fit – the bolts always seemed to be a little too short and the fit just a little too tight. It was often very hard to make the head of the bolt fit snugly into the countersunk hole in the bracket. The replicas are a little easier to fit because the bolts are a little longer and their diameter is a little less than an original UNF bolt. Nevertheless, the fit may not be perfect – but then the original fit of most bits on these cars was never perfect!
2. When fitting the hardtop, I recommend first loosening the four set screws which secure the two rear brackets to the hardtop. Then secure the hardtop to the windscreen with the two new clamps. Then install the two coach bolts at the rear and tighten the two wing nuts. Then, to finish the job, tighten the four set screws which were loosened at the beginning.



3. If the coach bolts are lost, a 110mm M8 coach bolt with an M8 wing nut will do. You may have to shave one ¼ side of the head of the bolt to enable a good fit to the bracket.
4. For a better match to the original coach bolts, take a 150mm M8 coach bolt that is threaded just at the end (not all the way). Cut it down to 110mm and cut a 5/16" UNF thread onto the end. Then use an original style wing nut - a big Healey part, available at a frightening price from AH-Spares (part no HOD263). Again, you may have to shave one ¼ side of the head of the bolt for a good fit.
5. A suitable replacement for the rear rubber seal may be purchased from C O H Baines Ltd., 9 Park Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9JP (Tel: 01892-543311 Fax: 01892-530682). The part number is SRS 071. Note that the large 'flap' of this seal should point inwards (into the cockpit).
6. I purchased my top seal from MGOC (I think it's for an MGB). The part number is 'V600F H/TOP FRONT SEAL (NEOP)' and it seems to work fine. It should be stuck to the side of the front channel which faces forwards (not the part that faces downwards). This ensures that the seal is properly squashed against the rear of the windscreen frame.

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