

RUNNING BOARDS MORRIS 8 CARS 1934 to 1938

This article is based on the experiences I had with my 1938 Series II saloon, however in the main it is relevant to all Pre-Series, Series I and II Saloons, Tourers and 2-Seaters.

Original Equipment

All cars were fitted with black rubber covered steel running boards, the rubber covering being applied in one process including extending the rubber over both ends and edges. The horizontal face was ribbed (five flat rib faces per inch width) but the area below the body cill was plain around the three slotted bolt holes, and the ends were plain. The vertical face, extending beyond the curve between horizontal and vertical faces, was all plain. The lower edge and front edge were round shaped similar to piping, and the rear edge was similar but also extended down to form the exposed abutment face for the spacers between running board and rear wing.

These spacers (two each side) were cylindrical shaped rubber.

Running boards were coach bolted to the back of the front wing (the wing flange having square holes to receive the head of the coach bolts); and similarly to the front of the rear wing sandwiching the two spacers. On the saloons the inner edge was bolted upwards into captive nuts in the cill, and (presumably) screwed to the cill on the Tourer and 2-Seater. Each running board had a wide vertical plate welded on towards the front, and another at the rear, both drilled to enable bolting to the face of the front and rear running board brackets which were attached to the chassis.

Note.

When these cars were made in the thirties, before lowering the body onto the chassis, as far as I can ascertain the chassis had the front wings/valance etc. fitted complete, and the body had the rear wings and valance fitted complete. The running boards were fitted afterwards, and the rubber spacers allowed for 'tolerance' in final assembly.

Running Boards on my car before restoration

I am well known for going on and on about 'originality' on my car DOX 835, but I never ever saw the original running boards!

My car was used throughout the war years, as the owner was a nurse, and along with headlamp mask and white painted bumpers etc. the edges of wings and running boards were painted white. In the late 1940s the wings were repainted and the running boards renewed. The running boards were re-covered throughout with ribbed rubber, the sheet metal of the boards themselves being turned up at the long edges and bent over to hold the rubber in place. At the front and rear wing abutment, the exposed rubber was enclosed with specially made flanged enamelled plates, fitted over the ends and sandwiched between the running board and wing. The front one was of 'L' shaped format, and the rear one straight, to follow the profiles of the wings and running board. I have retained all these parts should anyone be interested. I still wonder whether or not they were a proprietary 'kit', possibly Wilmot-Breeden, as at that time they had a local factory.

How I fitted and covered the Running Boards during restoration

As I had no source of supply for 'New Old Stock' items, I decided to renew everything to the specification of the post-war alterations as previously described.

I purchased the new steel running boards from Dave Parrish; they were of rolled/wired construction along the outer edge. I had to add the wide vertical plates to the underside to line up with the chassis brackets. After drilling and trial fitting with wings in place, I had the running boards stove-enamelled.

I had the special flanged plates re-made to match the existing ones and had these stove-enamelled.

I purchased plain rubber sheet ($\frac{1}{8}$ "") and ribbed sheet (5 ribs per inch) from Harry Edwards.

With a new stanley knife blade and using an aluminium straight edge, I cut the long edge of the plain sheet to give a true vertical cut; and did the same with the ribbed sheet cutting just into the deep ribbed part. These cut edges were to be joined together.

I roughened these edges with coarse abrasive paper, then turned the two pieces of rubber face down.

Abutting the edges closely together on the bench, I held them tight up and applied strong self-adhesive carpet tape to hold the two pieces together temporarily.

I then carefully turned the temporarily joined sheets face up, and placed a length of timber underneath, behind the joint, this opening the joint slightly.

Using Araldite Two-Pack Epoxy adhesive, I filled the joint, then removed the timber, flattened the joint and wiped off excess adhesive.

This was left to cure for about 24 hours in a warm place.

Taking a deep breath I checked that the two sheets had bonded.....it was successful!

At this stage I trimmed the two part sheet roughly to size, removed the tape and roughened the rear face, and the enamelled running board, with coarse abrasive paper, making sure that all surfaces were dust and grease free after.

I then applied quickly and evenly with a 2" brush both the enamelled metal and the rubber with a coat of strong heat resistant contact adhesive similar to AF178 from William Marston, and allowed it to go tacky.

The next stage was difficult, you really need two pairs of hands. As I remember it, you need to proceed as follows:-

Line up the joint in the rubber with the top of the running board longitudinal radius, and press down the rubber sheet along the full length of the radius only. The ribbed section is only on the flat part, it does not curve down. This is the stage where the second pair of hands helps.....keeping the bits that you don't want stuck away from each other!

Then, working across from this longitudinal radius, press the ribbed part into place, easing it away from the radius with a pad, rather like wallpapering, ensuring full contact and no air pockets. Make sure your assistant prevents the plain part from bonding at this stage. The ribbed sheet is more flexible than the plain and is easier to smooth out.

Then, working downwards, apply the plain material. This requires quite a lot more pressure than the ribbed material.

Just do one board at a time, in my case I then spent an hour or so continually pressing and smoothing until the rubber did not move.

When the adhesive had cured I then trimmed the perimeters with a sharp stanley knife.

All that then remained was to fit the board complete with flanged plates, piping at front wing joint, spacers etc. and bolting up. I used black rubber door stops as rear wing spacers.

In order to prevent water build-up below the cill, I used black tap washers as spacers placed between the running board and cill when bolting up.

Whilst the installation on Dox is not perfect, it does look workmanlike and tidy. After twelve years, the plain rubber has suffered surface hairline cracks, and there is one small area where the joint between plain and ribbed rubber has started to lift slightly, but other than that it has lasted well.

I know, I'll call this slight deterioration '**patina**' shall I?

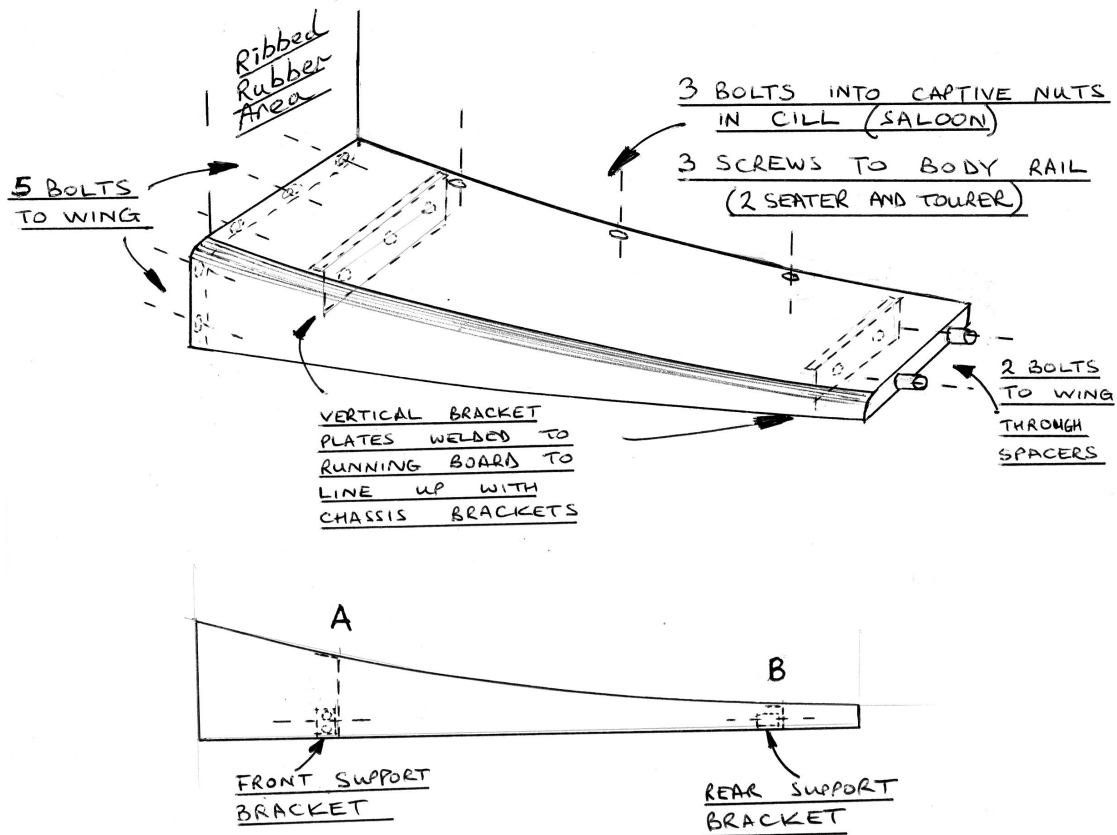
Note See also '**Gallery**' photos of this on my website.

Running Board Components and Mounting Brackets

The boards are fixed to the flange of the front wing, the flange of the rear wing through spacers, into the underside of the body cill, and to the front and rear support brackets which are attached to the chassis.

In the following sketch drawing I show the main construction of a nearside running board (for a RH Drive car), predictably the other side will be a mirror-image.

Schematic Sketch of Running Board (not to scale)

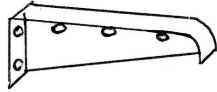


At **A** above, the Vertical Bracket Plate welded to the underside is drilled and bolted three times to the rear face (i.e flat side) of a Front Support Bracket (similar to Morris Part No 53083) that is available from Harry Edwards amongst others. This Front Support Bracket is fixed to the chassis, with it's flat face towards the rear of the car, with one long and one short bolt and nuts. The long upper bolt goes through a tubular spacer (already welded to the chassis) from the inside face and into the bracket. The short lower bolt goes into the body/side plate mounting hole in the chassis flange immediately below the long bolt. Originally the lower part of the saloon body was shaped, indented and pre-drilled for these bolts, but repairs in this area can mean that this has been obscured; if this is the case, pilot drill through from the inside face of the chassis before fitting. In the case of the 2-Seater and Tourer, the separate chassis side plate will already be pre-drilled for these bolts.

At **B** above, the Vertical Bracket Plate welded to the underside is drilled and bolted twice to the rear face of a Rear Support Bracket (similar to Morris Part No 53084) that is available from Harry Edwards amongst others. This Rear Support Bracket has two integral tubular spacers welded in, through which it is bolted to the rivetted chassis mounted rear bracket (Morris Part No 53086). The Rear Support Bracket fits within the two horizontal projecting legs of the this chassis mounted rear bracket.

These chassis mounted rear brackets usually rust away, and they need to be removed by drilling out the rivets, and replaced by bolting a new one on **BEFORE** the body is replaced. The general shape is shown at **C** below and can be made in 2mm approx. thick mild steel. If the old one is flattened out it can be used as a template then drilled and shaped to suit.

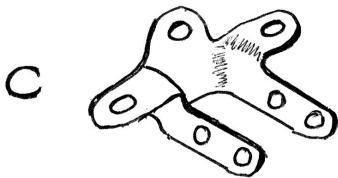
Support and Chassis Brackets (not to scale)



FRONT SUPPORT BRACKET
NEAR SIDE RHD



REAR SUPPORT BRACKET
NOT HANDED, EXCEPT FOR
DRILLING REAR VERTICAL FACE



CHASSIS MOUNTED
REAR BRACKET

Note

Cars up to Ch No 198628 but excluding 198391 to 198500 had bronze brake cable guides fitted against the front face of the Chassis Bracket/Rear Support Bracket assembly on both sides of the car, using both of the Support Bracket bolts.

Cars from Ch No 102808 onwards but including 102354 to 102500 also had an exhaust bracket fitted against the rear face of the nearside (RH Drive car) Chassis Bracket/Rear Support Bracket, using the inner Support Bracket bolt only.

I hope all this is of use, and as usual, I invite your comments and constructive criticism!

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