

TAKE A SEAT...

Actually, it's one of the pair for our Project SFX Spitfire and, to find out precisely what is involved in restoring such a seat, we visited the world's leading manufacturer of classic car interior trim

Story: Tony Beadle, Photography: Glyn Barney

NEWTON COMMERCIAL

Like many famous companies in the classic car industry, Newton Commercial started in humble circumstances – in their case, it was Vera and Richard Newton's kitchen table that the business was based on! Back in the late '70s, Richard was working for Serck Services in Ipswich, when a major customer asked for some truck seats to be renovated. A search to find a trimmer willing to carry out the work proved fruitless so, rather than risk losing the valuable fleet business, Richard decided that the only solution was to do it himself.

After sourcing the materials, Richard persuaded his wife, Vera, (then a nurse) to sew up the seat covers on the aforementioned table. The customer was so delighted with the results that he ordered another batch – and the rest, as they say, is history. To begin with, the couple concentrated on the commercial vehicle market, and Newton Commercial was formed in 1979. Relocating to a small industrial unit at Leiston (about 20 miles from Ipswich) in 1982 coincided with a move into the classic car sector.


Over the years, the company continued to expand and now occupies several larger buildings (as well as the original one) and employs fifty people. Celebrating 25 years in business in 2004, the future of the company looks assured, with their son Jonathan Newton recently taking on the post of Operations Director.

Jonathan confirmed that the Triumph marque was Newton Commercial's top seller, and that 85 per cent of their business was supplying to the


trade, with retail customers accounting for only 15 per cent. As an illustration of how global the market has now become, the company is currently shipping three containers of trim a month to the USA alone! Despite a vast existing range of products, Newton is always seeking to expand its core business and is today looking further afield for new ideas and opportunities.



This is what we started with – a typical well-used Spitfire seat with a split in the tired vinyl cover. Our seats (Spitfire Mk IV, 1500 and GT6 Mk 3 are all the same) were obtained from AD Autos




TRIUMPH TRIM



*Herald 13/60 Light Tan interior
Moulded Beige carpet sets available*

Manufacturers of interior trim for
Spitfire, GT6, Herald & Vitesse



Newton Commercial, Eastlands Industrial Estate, Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4LL
Tel: 01728 832880 Fax: 01728 832881
www.newtoncomm.co.uk