

Just a little bit fancy ...

■ Words & photos: Ron Macdonald



Gracie, my Grace Green NB8A, had her 12th birthday in November 2010

and, although I think she does pretty well for her age, there are a few little bits and pieces that are showing some signs of wear and tear.

One of these items is her gear shift boot; the OEM material for this boot was vinyl and many gear changes later it has a small hole and a section where the vinyl is coming adrift from the backing. If I was going to go to the effort of replacing this item I thought I may as well "lash out" and fit a leather replacement.



My search took me to a company in the UK called JF Boots Ltd which advertises soft Italian leather boots with matching or contrasting stitching. I decided to go with a black boot with green contrasting stitching (it will match a future project). I also purchased a matching handbrake boot to replace the nasty plastic thing that is standard.

Seven days later a small package arrived from England (*woo hoo*). Within 15 minutes of opening the envelope I had the tools out and was ready to go.



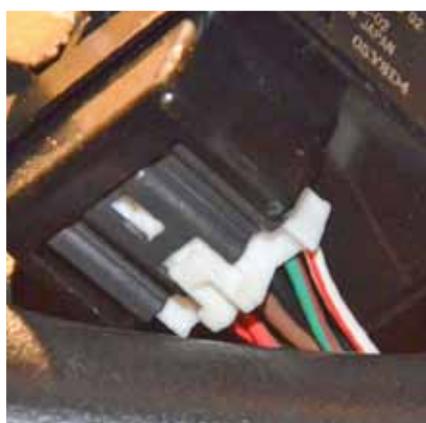
First thing was the handbrake: one screw removed from the passenger side and,

with a bit of a wrestle, the plastic cover is removed. Fitting of the new leather handbrake boot is even easier than removal of the old cover – simply slip it over the handbrake handle, job done.

The shift boot replacement was a tad more involved, but not a lot more. First thing to do here is remove the console as set out next. If you open the "console box" section you will see two screws; remove them and set them aside.



Next, remove the ashtray and you will see one more screw in there, again remove and set aside.



Next pop out the electric window switch and "unplug" the wires, then remove the shift knob.



Finally on the side of the console (level with the shift lever) you will see two plastic buttons (one each side); pop the buttons open (they are hinged) and remove the screws (one each side).



The console is now detached and the only thing holding the console is the wiring for the electric windows.



You will see a plastic clip holding that loom to the ashtray area; pop the loom off the console and it is ready to remove. Lift the console from the front clear of the shift lever, and position the boot release and fuel door release levers level with the wider section of the slot they are in and slide the console forward.



With the console out of the car, turn it over and you will see four Phillips head screws holding a black surround; remove those screws and the surround and you can now remove the shift boot.



The shift boot is held on to its frame by little black metal clips (spikes?). Remove the old boot from the spikes then fit the new boot's pre-cut slots to the spikes.



To refit the console, simply work backwards through these instructions.

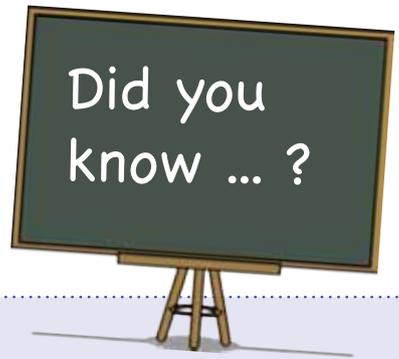


At the end of the day this was quite an easy upgrade, nothing scary and it only took about 20 minutes. Total cost for the shift boot, handbrake boot and postage was \$22.15 (damn cheap I thought).

This job could easily be undertaken by anyone with a very basic understanding of hand tools (you need one Phillips head screwdriver for the entire job).

Please note: this work was done on an NB8A and, although I am sure the other models are very similar, the above instructions are only valid for the early NB cars. If anyone would like further information feel free to "collar" me at one of the Club runs or e-mail me: ron@gracies-place.net

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Why Mazda?

Mazda is a name we all know very well of course, however do you know what it means?

I personally had assumed there was a Mr Mazda somewhere along the line or it was Japanese for shyte hot cars. The reality however is quite different.

Mazda is an abbreviation of Ahura Mazda, who was an ancient Persian God, the highest deity of worship in Zoroastrianism. Ahura Mazda's name translates to intelligence or wisdom and was said to be wise, benevolent and good.

Further investigation however shows that my first hunch was half right ... Mazda say the second reason this name was chosen was because their founder's name was Jujiro Matsuda.

When Toyo Kogyo Co moved from manufacturing machine tools to manufacturing vehicles in 1931 they marketed them as Mazda (first model was the *Mazda-Go*), however it was not until 1984 that the company formally adopted the Mazda name!

ZOOM-ZOOM

To zoom or not to zoom, that is the question ...

I don't think there would be a club member who is not aware of Mazda's Zoom, Zoom, Zoom promotion, however did you know that the original song doesn't actually say zoom, zoom, zoom?

The song *Zum Zum Zum* was taken from the soundtrack of the 1994 movie "Only the Strong" and is performed by the Brazilian group Serapis Bey. It is a *capoeira* song that was originally sung in Portuguese, the native language of Brazil.

Capoeira is a form of martial arts dancing created by the African slaves in Brazil during the 16th Century as a "sly" way to train to fight, however these days it is simply a dance technique and no longer used for fighting.

The lyrics to the song (and there are not many) are:

| Portuguese | English |
|---|--|
| (4X) <i>Zum zum zum Capoeira mata um</i> | (4X) <i>Zum Zum Zum Capoeira can kill one (someone)</i> |
| (4X) <i>Onde tem marimbondo E zum zum zum</i> | (4X) <i>Where there are wasps It's Zum Zum Zum</i> |
| (4X) <i>Oh ah oh ah yeh Quero ver bater quero ver cair</i> | (4X) <i>Oh ah oh ah yeh I want to see it hit, I want to see it fall</i> |
| Repeat | Repeat |

If you would like to hear the original song I have used it as a soundtrack to this video: http://youtube/CO_kxU_OA9c