



*David Busby's TF (see page 23)*





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# THE EDITOR

Well, it's that time of the year again when I make several visits to the Bank to pay in scores of cheques. Strange how the Bank clerks get used to seeing me in the queue and do their best to avoid me!

I am referring, of course, to subscription renewal time. The rates for 2008 are as follows:

UK members of the MG Car Club	£10
UK non-members	£15
Europe	£16
Rest of World	£18

As previously mentioned in the July TTT, there is no increase for 2008. Donations from some Internet subscribers have certainly helped, as have quite a few 'hard copy' subscribers who have paid over and above the published subscription. I must not forget our Advertisers, who have been extremely loyal over the past four years.

Enclosed with this issue of TTT you should find a subscription renewal form with a tear off slip at the bottom. I would be grateful if you will deal with this as quickly as possible so that I can wrap the exercise up for another year and concentrate on bringing you your bi-monthly digest of T-Type news and technical articles. I know that a few of you have sold your car and may not want to continue subscribing to TTT (but I hope you will!). If you don't wish to continue subscribing, I would be grateful if you will let me know to save me 'chasing' you.

Whilst on the subject of 'chasing', I seem to have to 'chase' the same people year after year for their subscription. This makes inroads into my time, particularly more so, now that I have responsibilities for "Safety Fast!" If you are one of the 'guilty' ones, please make a special effort this year!

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There is one last item to mention on the subscription renewal exercise. As previously referred to in September's TTT, there are boxes to tick if you are interested in a CD (or a 'hard' copy) of an index of the first 25 issues of TTT. There would be a modest selling price to cover our costs. Also there are boxes to tick if you are interested in a DVD version of the XPAG and TD/TF Gearbox videos. The cost for these would be less than the current selling price (£15) of the videos.

Our 'Rebuild' event in 2008 is being held on a Saturday (29<sup>th</sup> March). The reason for bringing the date forward by one day is that we are expecting a larger attendance than usual, due to the appearance of Mike Sherrell. The venue we use can accommodate more people on the Saturday than the Sunday (some of the rooms are pre-let on a Sunday). Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Early booking is also strongly advised for the 'T' Register trip to the Ardennes in May. Organisers, Bill and Sally Silcock already have 17 expressions of interest, so with little advance publicity, it looks as though close on two thirds of the available spaces are about to be taken up.

We held our Autumn Committee meeting at Kimber House and were joined by newly appointed MGCC General Manager, Richard Jones. It was a useful two way dialogue and I was particularly impressed with the plans to improve the working environment for the staff on the first floor of Kimber House and to make the sales and display area downstairs more welcoming and attractive. The latter will entail completely revamping the ground floor area and adding an extension to serve as a conference room. All this can be achieved within a relatively modest budget, which the Club can well afford from its reserves.

Chairman, David Butler, has come up with an excellent idea to add another item to the Register's range of technical publications. He has obtained Carl Cederstrand's permission to reproduce the booklet "Ring and Pinion Interchanges for the MG TD/TF". The original publication, by the Vintage MG Club of Southern California is no longer available and Carl has given the MG Car Club 'T' Register permission to reproduce it, for which we are very grateful.

Finally, I intend to review the Register's year in 2007 in the January 2008 "Safety Fast!" T-Type Newsletter. I shall be giving an upbeat assessment of the year as far as the Register is concerned and how the year has been enhanced for me personally by having been given the opportunity to improve "Safety Fast!" The new "Safety Fast!" arrangements are a win/win situation, for not only have we managed to slash costs (which shows in the bottom line) by ceasing the arrangement with a commercial magazine, but we now have a Club magazine to be proud of. Yet this is just the beginning – there is so much more to achieve with "Safety Fast!" – watch this space!



# T REGISTER NEWS (Compiled by John James)

## PAST REGISTER EVENT

### 1. The Autumn Tour 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> September

We say the same every year, but this was the best Tour yet and after the disastrous summer in the UK, the weather could not have been better for this enjoyable weekend. Graham Brown has provided a write up for the next "Safety Fast!" T-Type Newsletter, which will appear in the January edition of the magazine.

## FUTURE EVENTS

### 'Rebuild 08'

Organiser, Peter Cole has provided me with the following:

"Next year promises to be another exciting 'Rebuild' event. We have invited Mike Sherrell, author of *TCs Forever!* to come over from Australia to speak to us. *TCs Forever!* has become the 'bible' for beam-axle T-Type restorers and Mike has done more than anyone to encourage us and show us how to restore our early T-Types. Mike will be giving a presentation and will be available for a Q&A session.



The date next year is Saturday, March 29, and as always, the venue will be St Neots Community College. The day begins with a bacon roll and coffee at 9.30am, with the first session beginning at 10.00am sharp.

Those with TDs and TFs should not feel left out. We will ensure there is a balanced programme for you all. We plan to have a session on setting up the mercurial TD/TF back axle, which we haven't covered in detail before.

At least one topic, which will be of interest to all T-Typers is planned – for example, we are hoping to arrange a session on do it yourself nickel plating.

The final programme will be drawn up over the coming weeks and the aim is to publish this in the January Issue of TTT and the February edition of "Safety Fast!"

The price this year is £30 including VAT for MGCC members and £35 for non-members. This includes the usual hot lunch and all refreshments. Please apply early to avoid missing out on what is bound to be a popular event. Send your application to Peter Cole, 8 Aldbourne Drive, Bognor Regis, PO21 4NE. **Please make your cheque payable to “MGCC ‘T’ Register”.**

As we did last year, we would like to encourage the ‘next generation’ T-Type owners, so if your son or daughter shows any inclination to acquire your T-Type when you are too old to drive it, they can attend Rebuild for free. All we ask is that you pay for their lunch, which this year will be £10. These places will be limited to 20, so again apply early.

We will publish a more comprehensive programme as soon as possible”.

## **2. Proposed ‘T Types to the Ardennes’ Trip May 2008**

Bill and Sally Silcock have really got their skates on to finalise, as far as it is currently possible to do so, the arrangements for this event. Here are the details they have provided.

### **“T Types to the Ardennes 16 – 20 May 2008**

The story so far . . .

**Accommodation:** we have provisionally booked all the rooms in the Castel les Sorbiers ([www.castellessorbiers.be](http://www.castellessorbiers.be) if you'd like to see what it's like) 10 miles south of Dinant in the Belgian Ardennes for four nights from 16 – 20 May 2008. The hotel has two single rooms, four doubles and 22 twin rooms, so the absolute maximum is 27 cars including the organisers.



Since the nearest alternative places to eat are at least ten minutes' drive away along a narrow, twisting road, we have decided to book all evening meals at the hotel. Our intention is to have an informal buffet (with a choice of two hot dishes) available from 7pm to

9pm on the first night, to enable those with a long drive to arrive in time for dinner. One other dinner would be informal – possibly a barbecue, depending on preferences and weather – and two would be group meals, including a gala dinner from the gastronomic menu on the last night.

Prices **per room** per night are 67.50€ single and 105€ double for half board: if there are more than two takers for single rooms there is a supplement of 15€/person/night for single occupancy of a double/twin room.

Cost **per car** will therefore be 420€ if sharing a room, or 540€ in two single rooms (660€ in two double/twin rooms), plus a supplement of about 70€ per car for two group dinners (this is based on 2007 prices - it may not be as much as this, but we haven't yet agreed menus and prices).

**The total hotel cost should therefore be about 245€ per person sharing a double/twin room, and about 365€ per person in separate rooms.**

To ensure prices and availability, the hotel requires a 10% deposit (£40) by the middle of December (for details of how to pay this, see next page), and a further 40%, payable direct to the hotel, one month before arrival (we will try and find a cost effective way of doing this): the 10% deposit (£40) will be added to the entry fee (see below). The balance would be payable direct to the hotel on departure. Additional costs will be lunches every day, plus drinks and incidentals.

As last year, there will be an entry fee of £35 to cover miscellaneous expense items, which will be added to the 10% deposit (£40), making a total of £75 payable by 15<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Travel to and from the Ardennes**

The nearest ports are Calais, Dunkirk, Zeebrugge and Hook of Holland – the hotel is about the same distance from each. Those going on the tour will need to organise their own ferry or Eurotunnel booking. We intend to include in the final briefing a suggested scenic route from a lunch stop about two to three hours from the above ports, but we recognise that some participants may wish to go direct to the hotel.

## **Routes through the Ardennes**

There are a number of scenic routes in the area, including some recommended by the Michelin guide to the region. There are also a number of places worth visiting, including caves at Han sur Lesse and a micro-brewery near the hotel.

We aim to provide a roadbook with suggested routes for Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The Sunday run will be centred on Han sur Lesse, and we hope to organise dedicated parking in the town square at lunch time, with an invitation to local MG owners to join us. There will be a chance to visit the caves if you wish – we can get party rates and an English-speaking guide if sufficient people want to go.

**Bookings are now required. (see next page for details).**

*Totally T-Type, November 2007 7*

Please e-mail Bill Silcock at [bill.silcock1\(at\)ntlworld.com](mailto:bill.silcock1@ntlworld.com) or telephone 01525 750468 for an entry form: if you have already expressed an interest you will be sent a form automatically. **Your completed entry form and cheque for £75 (£40 representing 10% deposit plus £35 entry fee) payable to "MGCC 'T' Register, should be returned by 15<sup>th</sup> December.**

It is inevitable that demand will exceed supply (we already have expressions of interest from 17 car crews) so in deciding how to allocate places, due account will be taken both of the timeliness of responses and whether intending participants have previously taken their T -Type on a Continental Tour. If you have not been abroad before with your T -Type, please mention this when contacting us or on the entry form.

**Bill and Sally Silcock**

**3. Silverstone 2008** Register Secretary, Chris Sundt is a member of working group under the Chairmanship of MGCC Director, Chris Hunt-Cooke, which is looking at ways to increase the attractiveness of the Silverstone Weekend. It is likely that the Register will be involved in a co-ordinating role to oversee some new activities. Further details will be published as soon as they are available. In the meantime, you might wish to make a note of the provisional date for Silverstone 2008, which is 13/14/15 June.



#### **4. T-Party 2008**

At the Committee meeting held in Kimber House on 30<sup>th</sup> October, it was agreed to hold the 'T' Party in conjunction with the South West Centre's Auto & Aero Day. The date is Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July and further details (including the venue, which has not yet been finalised) will be published when they become available.

Despite the appalling weather at last year's event (the weather forecast was set at Red - severe warning - by the Met Office) and takings on the gate being one third of what is normally collected, it was still possible to donate £100 for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, £150 for the local church, £75 for the Venture Scouts and £100 for Minety Pre-School. The £230 profit made on the tea and cakes went to the neighbouring parish of Crudwell

#### **5. AUTUMN TOUR 2008**

Next year's Autumn Tour is being jointly organised by Chris Tinker and Graham Brown. It is based on the Elizabeth Hotel, near Ipswich and we shall be touring Suffolk coastal areas and the Suffolk countryside. The date



is the weekend of 5/6/7 September 2008.

Further information will be published as soon as it becomes available.

## **6. PRACTICAL SKILLS WORKSHOP 2008**

At the Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October, it was agreed to plan for a one day workshop in either the second or third week of September. Further details to follow.

## **7. 2009—YES 2009!**



### **The Ednam House Hotel, Kelso**

It is impossible to book for a weekend in this area because of the forward booking (for years ahead) of rooms by salmon fishermen.

Provisional bookings have been made at two hotels in Kelso. The larger of the two, The Ednam House Hotel, is pictured above. The smaller hotel, The Cross Keys Hotel, is pictured on the right.

The provisional bookings allow for around 35 to 40 cars and an upper limit of 45 cars (to include some local cars) has been set.

The purpose of this early notification is to let you know that we will be running two Autumn Tours in 2009.

The first is neither being held on a weekend, nor in the Autumn! It is at Kelso in the Scottish Borders and the dates are 17/18/19 August 2009.



### **The Cross Keys Hotel, Kelso**

*Totally T-Type, November 2007 9*

Hotel accommodation in the Borders is expensive, no doubt due to high demand from the fishing fraternity and we have the added complication of trying to arrive at a forward rate for 2009. The best we can come up with at this point in time is that the Tour will cost around £550; this includes the entrance fee and the cost of the accommodation.

The organisers, John and Claudette Bloomfield have already mapped out the routes (one in the English Borders and one in the Scottish Borders) but before we go into more detailed planning, it is just as well to ask for expressions of interest at this stage of the proceedings. Please let the Editor know of your likely interest by 31<sup>st</sup> December. He can be contacted by e-mail [jj\(at\)octagon.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:jj(at)octagon.fsbusiness.co.uk) or by telephone on 0117 986 4224. An update will be published in January's TTT.

The second Autumn Tour in 2009 will be held in the West Country on either the first or second weekend in September and is likely to be in Devon or Cornwall. We shall be seeking the assistance of the Devon and Cornwall Centre to find a suitable venue.

The Editor with his "thinking out loud" cap on, considers that a hotel on the Devon/Cornwall border would be ideal as it would be conveniently situated for a tour of part of Devon and a tour of part of Cornwall. However, we will let the experts decide!



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# [WWW.TREGISTER.ORG](http://WWW.TREGISTER.ORG)

It's goodbye to Steve James, who designed the original (2003) 'T' Register website and also its replacement in 2005 and has been the Webmaster since its inception. Steve, pictured right at a friend's wedding reception, has "itchy feet" and is off on his travels again. This time it's the Trans-Siberian Railway and down through Mongolia and thence to China and the Far East.

Steve is taking his laptop with him and even though he is away, he will be keeping his M.G. links by doing some work for the V8 Register on the enhancement of their website.

Steve is an MGA fan (funny, so is his dad!) so who knows what might be possible!



It's Hello! to Richard Cole, son of Peter Cole, our 'Rebuild' organiser. Richard introduces himself as follows:

"I have been working in IT for HSBC for the past two years. I am primarily a Java developer working on systems used by traders in the Bank's dealer rooms. I live in London with girlfriend Kerry and enjoy spending time in my home town of Bognor Regis.

I have started to take over running the site from Steve by undertaking daily maintenance tasks, as well as looking at new features suggested by the

committee. I can be contacted by e-mail on [Richard\(at\)tregister.org](mailto:Richard(at)tregister.org) but will continue to monitor Steve's address ([steve\(at\)tregister.org](mailto:steve(at)tregister.org)) for the time being.

I first became interested in MGs when Dad bought his TC, when I was eight. He promised to pick me up from school in it before I left primary school. He also promised Vanessa it would be ready to drive them away from their wedding in 2005. I'm not sure what the latest promise of when it will be on the road is, but I take them all with a pinch of salt now".

*Totally T-Type, November 2007 11*

# Re-bushing the Bishop's Cam Steering Box

***Following the reproduction in September's TTT of the flip charts used for Eric Worpe's steering box presentation to this year's 'Rebuild' event, I've persuaded him to let us have an article on re-bushing the steering box. Over to Eric.....***

An alarming number of the steering boxes that I've looked at recently have been "bodged", one so badly that it could have seized up. This may well suggest that it's becoming increasingly difficult to find competent machine shops willing to undertake small one-off jobs, such as re-bushing our B.C. steering box. However, there are many model engineering enthusiasts who have the skill and equipment to overhaul the steering box.

I hope the following can serve as a guide.

The three main choices for restoring the sector shaft are:-

1. Retain original shaft, but have it hard chromed and ground to say 10 'thou. oversize. Ream out steering box's bore to suit sector shaft.

This may seem an attractive financial approach, but the old sector shaft has an unknown fatigue history which, when combined with reports of shaft failures, rules out this option on safety grounds.

2. Choose the +20 'thou. oversize new sector shaft. The steering box will need to be reamed out to 0.770 inches, a non-standard size, so an adjustable reamer will be needed. These are not easy to set up and a good finish is not guaranteed, partly due to such reamers having straight flutes. However, another consideration arises from the material used to make the box. The box would have originally been made from cast iron and then subjected to intense heat to burn off some of the excess graphite to produce malleable iron. This is much stronger, but lacks the high level of free graphite which gives cast iron its good bearing qualities. The sector shaft needs to have good fatigue resistance. This toughness can only be achieved at the expense of some hardness, resulting in a less than suitable bearing surface for the malleable iron of the housing.

3. Choose the standard size sector shaft. The box needs to be bored out to receive two suitable bronze bushes. Wrapped bushes are available which have a steel outer sleeve supporting a thin layer of leaded bronze. This may well represent the optimum approach, but boring out the box to 7/8 inches to take the wrapped bushes does weaken an already less than robust housing.

The geometry of the box is such that some of the top bearing's support has to be machined away to give clearance for the cam block. However, by

using a longer wrapped bush combined with the strength of the steel outer sleeve, the concern about compromising the box still further is reduced. The leaded bronze lining of the wrapped bush has self lubricating qualities and complements the partially hard surface of the sector shaft.

One of the all important aspects of a reliable bearing is the surface finish; any high spots can give the impression of a good initial fit but this will soon disappear as the high spots flatten out. It's for this reason that a good  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch hand reamer should be used to line ream the two bushes after they have been pressed in.

A further concern is the surface finish of the sector shaft; in the past this has been variable due to the shaft having a turned as opposed to a ground finish. I've been able to improve poor finishes by mounting the shaft in a lathe and polishing the surface with a strip of 800 or 1000 grade wet and dry soaked in light oil, with the lathe set to run at a modest speed. This polishing action may need to remove up to 0.3 'thou. from the diameter, which will affect the running clearance. However, if the sector shaft is spot on 0.750" then some slight reduction in diameter is desirable, especially if it results in an improved finish.

The clearance can be adjusted to the point where some play between the shaft and its bushes when dry can just be detected whilst rocking the shaft with a modest force. However, when the bushes and shaft are lightly oiled, any play should almost disappear and when the shaft is allowed to drop under its own weight through the bushes, its progress should be at a controlled rate or, put another way, oil damped. More harm is caused by tight fits that allow the bearing surfaces to rub and block oil from flowing around the contact areas.

## **Procedure**

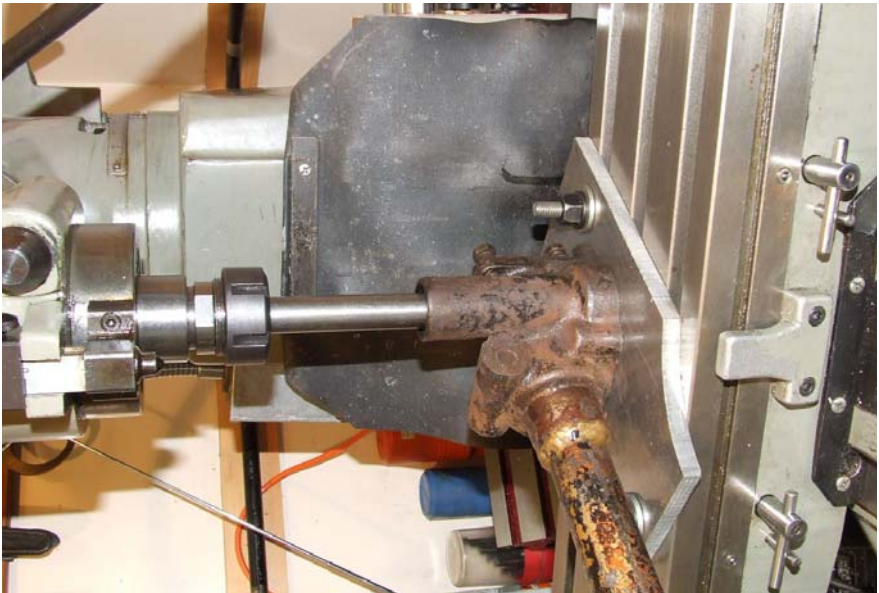
1. Check that the threads in the top flange really are 5/16" BSF as UNF bolts are sometimes forced in. Fit short Helicoils in any stripped threads.
2. Clean the top face of the steering box, remove any burrs or raised edges and true the face by rubbing it on some 320 grade wet and dry placed on a flat surface.
3. Make up a support plate from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch ally plate. This needs to have a margin at least an inch greater than the top plate to allow clamping to the milling table. Drill and counter-bore 3 holes to take three 5/16" BSF socket cap screws that will secure the support plate to the top flange of the box. See Fig. 1 on next page.
4. Attach support plate to box and clamp to milling table.





**FIG. 1**

5. Install a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " mandrel in the quill of the mill, and use this to pick up the centre of the sector shaft's bore in the box. This needs to be accurate. Fig. 2 below.



**FIG 2**

6. Counter-bore the end of the housing to take the new oil seal. Diameter is 1.125 inches by 0.25 inches deep. Machine slight lead-in chamfer. Fig. 3.



**FIG 3**

7. Drill out the original  $\frac{3}{4}$ " bore to 22 mm diameter, or bore out to about 0.860 inches diameter. See Fig. 4 on next page
8. Use  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch (0.875") machine reamer to open up bore to take the wrapped bushes.
9. Press in the top bush so that its oil aperture is adjacent to the section that's relieved for the cam block. The wrapped bush will need to be filed away so as to follow the profile of the relieved housing. This should result in an enlarged oil aperture which will help feed oil to the groove in the bush.
10. Press in the lower bush. This now leaves a "reservoir" gap of about 10mm between the two bushes. It's tempting to channel a feeder oil groove from one end of the lower bush (oil reservoir end) to meet the bush's own oil groove, before pressing in.
11. Hand ream the two bushes in line with a good  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hand reamer. See Fig. 5 on next page.

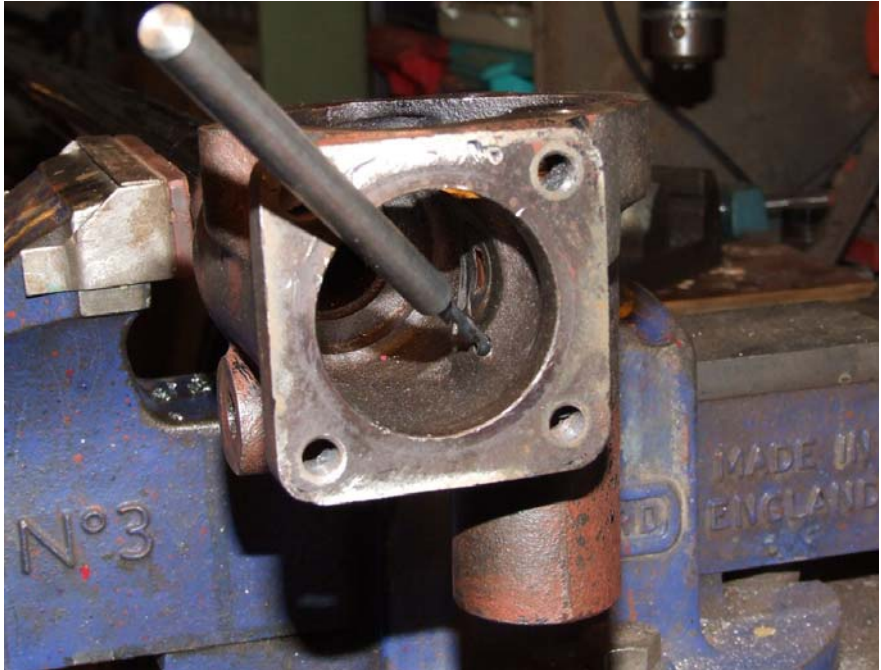


**FIG 4**



**FIG 5**

12. Improve oil feed to bushes by drilling a small hole, max. 4mm dia, from the main chamber into the area of the "reservoir" between the two bushes. This should be drilled through the end aperture of the box, starting at a point just below the relief machining for the cam block. This is quite tricky as the drill needs to be mounted in a 60mm extension tube about 8mm in diameter. This tube can rub against the box's end aperture at an angle equivalent to 11 o'clock when viewed looking at the end flange. Fig. 6.



**FIG 6**

13. Clean any swarf from the box, a paraffin spray gun is effective here.

14. Try the fit of sector shaft and adjust the running clearance as previously detailed, it's worth aiming for a very smooth finish. I've even buffed the bearing surfaces of the sector shaft which may seem a bit over the top - could be the medication!

15. Press in a new oil seal, the closed end of the seal should face outwards.

After all the above effort to improve the steering box, you may still be disappointed by how your T type steers. There are many aspects that contribute to steering and even when methodically set up some T types fail to improve much. Such situations are a strong inducement to fit a VW box if all else fails.



# TF Overheating Problem

***My apologies to Dennis Barker for 'sitting on' this article for so long!***

The Autumn Tour approached with amazing rapidity, during a hectic year since our move south. I must confess to a less than measured and thorough approach to servicing the TF. However, the MoT had been successfully negotiated and it was running well.

Eight days before the departure for the tour I resolved to carry out a 3000 mile service, which is my normal practice before a big event. The car refused to start! Having established that the fault was electrical, I went through the whole system, new plugs, condenser, points, coil, and of course, rotor arm (which has caught me out before, as regular readers may remember). Finally, I tackled the leads from and to the distributor. The HT lead from the coil to the distributor proved to be the culprit and had caused me to lose 5 days (in fact whilst waiting for the postman, with my spares from B&G, I prepared the MGB as a backup - horror of horrors, the Chairman turning up in a B to Harrogate was not a happy thought!). A successful road run achieved, it was back to business.

Therefore it was now finish the service, clean and Autoglym (why did I bother? - Yorkshire doesn't like clean shiny cars in the Dales, as we all found out). Thursday saw us set off for a leisurely drive up the A34 to Bedford for an overnight stay with our eldest son. Approaching the Chieveley interchange (Newbury) I noted the temperature building, so cut back the cruising speed. This initially seemed to have the desired effect, but by Abingdon it was building once more. The traffic was heavy and I pulled into a BP service station just before the M40. A quick inspection indicated a loss of water through the water pump gland.

In my haste with servicing I had overlooked the small matter relating to Fan & Water Pump - *"Every 1,000 miles (1600 km) apply grease gun, filled with grease to Ref. C to lubricating nipple and give two strokes"*. I had it in the back of my mind that this operation was needed every 3 - 6,000 miles. Allowing the engine to cool I had no problem in releasing the radiator cap, careful refilling of the system tended to indicate it was almost empty.

We continued our journey with me stopping to purchase a grease gun (not something I have hitherto carried) and obtaining Ref: C grease with some difficulty. That evening I applied the requisite grease, filled up with water and loaded the car with an additional 8 pints in supermarket milk bottles.

The journey North on Friday was broken by a visit to Matlock to inspect an Autec Electro Hydraulic car lift that had come up on Ebay 24 hours before we left home.





**The Autec Electro Hydraulic Car Lift purchased by Dennis Barker (this was put to good use when removing the radiator from the car).**

Following our stop, the radiator level was inspected and no additional water was required. Neither did we need any when we arrived in Harrogate. I was therefore fairly certain that the problem was self inflicted, although I have to add that I was not pushing it on the way up from Bedford and also staying off M-ways as much as possible.

The weekend passed and there was no sign of overheating, but again we were touring.....that is, when the rain allowed!

Monday saw us head South with the intention of getting back home to the New Forest in one day. So we took the M1 south of Harrogate and gradually cranked up the cruising speed to 65-70 mph. Approaching Leicester, the needle started to rise once more. Off at Lutterworth, but there did not seem to be any loss via the water pump. We proceeded via the A5, Daventry and onto the M40, to the A34 heading for home, a reduced cruising speed and completed the trip, 5 hours 50 minutes - Harrogate to Brockenhurst 260 miles. Inspection of the rad header tank showed small lumps of a calcium like deposit in the tops of the tubes, so I decided to get professional help.

Kingston Radiator Services, 20 Kingston Rd, Southampton - Tel: 023 8022 5959 have a man who specialises in old radiators. He has taken the header tank off, to blow and rod through the tubes, painted in matt black and it looks like new. He also brazed on a ¼" BSP nut to provide for a drain plug at the bottom. All complete in three days. I have had difficulty balancing the carbs, so a trip to Burlen Fuel Systems in Salisbury, following a lengthy

discussion on the problem, has resulted in me leaving them for re-conditioning. Due back around Christmas or just after, The Saga will be continued, Editor permitting.

## **TF Overheating Problem - Pt 2.**

Following the return of the radiator, work has progressed at an erratic pace in the workshop during the winter. I decided that before refitting the radiator I would investigate one or two other tasks which would occupy the time until the carburettors were ready for collection.

First up was an investigation of the Dot 5.1 brake fluid which was replaced just over 18 months ago when a new master cylinder was fitted because of rust and crud in the system. It is recommended that this should be carried out every 2 - 3 years. The evidence on my system showed severe clouding of the fluid, with very rust like particles in suspension. Therefore without hesitating further I changed the fluid completely. (I am seriously considering converting to Silicon Fluid next winter as I have in the MGB, since I have had no problems in the 12 years since I rebuilt it).

The Rubber coupling bushes on the steering column showed signs of splitting and the MoT man mentioned them about 4 years ago so the 6 new bushes were fitted. A word of caution - once the pinion flange is separated from its mating at the bottom of the steering column - DO NOT PUSH the column too far up into the dash, otherwise the upper felt washer pops out and it is the devil's own job to get it back in position. - BE WARNED!!

With the carbs not in position I decided to have a look at the clutch operating link mechanism and the much talked of modification, so well reported on in TTT. - I have duly carried out the modification ie: drilling the extra hole, reconnecting and adjusting. It is very worthwhile but will take a little longer than the article tends to indicate. Do not rush it, take your time and the fiddle of fitting the clevis pins, washers and split pins will not drive you to distraction (particularly if you wear glasses!!).

A chance to change the engine oil in preparation for the new season made me decide to fit an oil filter conversion so that screw on cartridges can be used in place of the paper elements. Again there was a sting in the tail - more of which later.

The radiator and shell were reassembled (I was glad to have taken copious photographs), ensuring that it was all secure and the correct distance pieces and rubber pads, washers, nuts etc went in the right places. The workshop manual, whilst dealing with removal makes no mention of reassembly - the shell and block should and will slip back into position - BUT not without some persuasion- I found to my cost, in time, that following the reverse process needed some patience.

Wriggle the assembly until the two set bolts which go through the wings can be started into the captive nuts and ensure that you have got the rubber mounting washers and 3/8 BSF nuts and washers positioned on the cross support member (I shortened the studs on the base of the rad by approx 1/4 inch to enable easier access for the washers and nuts). The radiator stays with their securing nuts and bolts also need to be entered and loosely assembled. It is all fairly straight forward from there.



**Radiator and shell all in one removed as per Workshop manual.**



**Strip out radiator core.**

The carbs were duly collected from Burlen and are now as new. It was interesting that within a few hours of leaving them with Burlen they rang me to say did I know that they had been modified and did not have the choke mechanism fitted (hence why it has always been a pain to start!!). Now it starts second pull from cold.

All fitted and duly road tested today with a nice run through the New Forest hood down in the spring sun shine. I am eagerly awaiting the Normandy Tour in May.

I am pleased to report that it has an 82 degree thermostat and it runs at just under 85 even when pushed, I have not had chance to try the Motorways yet but they have never been a priority with me. I find 65 - 70 quite comfortable and I am never far behind the 80 -90 mph merchants and often pass them when the unmarked cars pull them over.

Finally, to report on the new oil filter arrangement. When starting up and reversing out of the garage a nice new line of oil traced its way on to the drive way. It was therefore a case of draining down and investigation. Because the unit was Alloy and a steel retaining spigot, I was loath to over tighten it. However, a call to the supplier revealed that the spigot should have a torque of 27 ft lbs and be assembled with a smear of Loctite (the variety that will allow the unit to be unscrewed if necessary).

I am pleased to report that it is now behaving perfectly and after a good Autoglym Wax polish we will be raring to go for the summer - hope to see you in Normandy, or the Autumn Tour in Chichester. - Sadly not Silverstone this year due to a prior engagement -

**Dennis Barker**

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## Of Unexpected Occurrences and Third Parties!

***Subsequent events to David Busby's purchase of a TF have conspired to try his patience, but he has triumphed over adversity and enjoys his car all the more for it.....***

"Like James Sutton I had problems with my TF but unlike James, my problems were more with third parties or unexpected occurrences. I got the car at a reasonable price from a seller who was moving. Mechanically it seemed sound, underneath, was as clean as a whistle, and a few additions such as new radials made it seem very appealing. The paintwork had some surface rust but absolutely no rot so I knew a paint job of some sort was required. The seats were good but the tub and the hood were showing signs of wear and tear

The first problem was on driving it away on exchange of monies. The brakes failed!! This meant arranging transport for the car, thereby delaying the highly anticipated moment. Once that was sorted out I had a few weeks of driving the car and after removing all the bright work it went into the body shop for a bare metal re-spray. This is where I made my first mistake. As I was going away for a longer than usual holiday, when asked when I wanted the car, I replied that there was no hurry as I would be away. You can imagine the conversation at the paint shop – "Which is the next car boss" "Don't bother with that one – he is on holiday". So it had not even been started by the time I got back and the summer was moving on. Eventually, I got the phone call and bounded down to collect it – only to find that the rear scuttle was missing – yes, missing! "I thought it looked odd" was the comment and thus began a search to find the missing part. This was extended to the sand blaster who also had no luck. A new one ordered, prepared, painted and fitted. More delay! Having got it back home, I started to re-assemble and one afternoon after running the car for 20 minutes just to circulate the oil, I noticed smoke coming from under the dash. I raced around the car to remove the isolator switch having visions of the car, my garage and my other MG, a YA going up in flames.

Somehow a short had occurred and gone through the loom – result, a new loom. The TF was going to be off the road even longer. I had a stroke of good luck here. I found an auto electrician who was good at his job and reasonable. Mick arrived at 9.30am and left at 10pm with not only a new loom fitted and working but also the defunct heater sorted out, new indicator lights and spots working and the dip switch operational. Perhaps the "proper" maiden drive was approaching.

Next, the trim. I found a local outfit who offered a good price so we sorted out when and the materials and I left him with my door cards etc to give me a call when he wanted the car to do the tub. The next thing I know is that

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he never answered his phone. I drive to the workshop to find it closed and shuttered and no sign of anybody. The next door unit tell me that he has been broken into and paint splashed everywhere and material torn and slashed. Again visions of a half finished car and more expense. I did eventually track down the owner and he had been burgled and vandalised – by his estranged wife!! I was assured however that as soon as the insurance had been sorted, work would progress and by the way, my door cards had been on the top shelf and had not been touched. After further delays the work was indeed completed. Next, the hood.

After that particular fiasco, I decided to take fitting the hood to another trimmer who was brilliant but even that was not straight forward. Within an hour of leaving it with him, he was on the phone to tell me that the wooden header bar at the front of the hood had wood worm and was rotten!! Good old Brown & Gammons had one in the post to the trimmer the next day.

Thrown in with all the above was a faulty new reduction gear, bolts then turning out the wrong size, despite the catalogue saying they were the right ones, and an MoT failure, (small one!).

At long last I am driving my TF and enjoying it hugely. I am very aware that I speed along with a silly grin on my face out of sheer pleasure at the final realisation of owning a car that I have wanted since I was a teenager. But the saga seems not to have finished yet. I have ordered a new tonneau cover. It was ordered in late July/early August. Paypal took the money, but the manufacturer had no record of the order!! After several phone calls he now assures me that delivery is imminent!!



It's a good job we love them!"

**David Busby**

David's TF and YA. Fortunately, these did not go up in flames. They were saved by an isolator (battery cut out) switch. Do you have one fitted to your T-Type?

## Oil mixing in with the water cooling system (MPJG engine)

A couple of months ago your Editor received an e-mail from TA owner, Martin Moore, saying that he was having real problems with oil mixing in with the water cooling system. Having replaced the head gasket (because of this problem) and had the head skimmed and pressure tested, then refitted with original Payen gasket liberally coated with Wellseal, he was extremely disappointed when after only 200 miles he had to siphon off 2 pints of emulsified oil/water from the radiator. Yet the engine was running really well with no trace of water in the oil or sludge in the rocker cover.

The request was "Did I know a TA guru?" Well, anything remotely TA, I refer to Brian Rainbow (poor chap always gets clobbered with queries I pass on!) and true to form, he was able to help. Here's what he said:

"It sounds very much as though your cylinder head is cracked, but if you have had it pressure tested it should not be that. It could be that the block is cracked, but if that was the case I would expect to see some water in the sump with the oil. Did you have the radiator flushed after the head was skimmed and tested? Once you get oil in the cooling system it is really hard to remove all traces of it, and it will continue to contaminate the coolant. Did you also flush out the block as well?

You could try flushing the cooling system again, and then try Ceramic sealing the system (as recommended and used by Derek Hopper). The stuff that Derek recommends is called Irontite, you will need a bottle of Irontite Thoro-flush and a bottle of Irontite Ceramic motor seal. I purchased them from Glensyl Lockwell Ltd, Unit 6, Glensyl Way, Hawkins Lane, BURTON-ON-TRENT, Staffs, DE14 1QL Tel: 01283 516673, the cost was around £52. It must be worth a try...

The other option is having the head (and maybe the block) vacuum resin impregnated, this process can be done by Ultraseal in Slough. They repair many porous castings with this process. The downside to it is that the components need to be stripped right down, even having studs removed. The telephone number for Ultraseal is 01753 526877".

Brian went on to recall a similar problem to that experienced by Martin, as follows:

"I had a similar problem a couple of years ago, when I came down to do the 'Cornish Riviera Run'. I was spooning out big lumps of what looked like cream putty from the radiator after about 100 miles. When I got the car home I stripped it down and found the head was cracked across the top

under rocker 5. Because the cooling system is not pressurised, the water sucks oil through the crack and it emulsifies in the radiator. I took my head to Ultraseal who pressure tested it, but said the crack was so big and in such a place that Vacuum Resin impregnation would not work. They recommended that I took the head to Surelock in Oakham for metal stitching. I took the head to them, but I decided that at the price they quoted, it was just not cost effective to have it repaired. At the moment it sits in my garage awaiting the desperation to have it repaired. I am currently using a spare head, but still get a bit of oil in the water, but it is not at an extent that is worth worrying about. I console myself with the thought that it is lubricating the water pump!! I recently did 1600 miles in 14 days touring around Germany in the car, and never added any water to the rad whilst I was away".

Martin sent me another e-mail, following his correspondence with Brian and having acted on Brian's advice, here's what he said:

"I am pleased to report that at this moment having completed about 200 miles there is only a trace of oily froth in the radiator, not a couple of pints of syrupy emulsion as before.

I tried Brian Rainbow's suggestion of a Ceramic sealant from Lockwell and touch wood, it appears to have done the trick, I would obviously recommend anyone else to give this simple remedy a chance, beats stripping the block and head anyway !"

A couple of weeks later, Martin copied me in on an e-mail he sent to Malcolm Taylor, compiler of "Technical Torque" in the Octagon 'Bulletin' as follows:

"I have had a long chat with David Heath and we have come to the conclusion that my problem was caused by a fine crack, probably in the head. Fortunately the "Irontite " sealant appears to have cured it at least temporarily for me.

We then discussed at length the possible cause which we believe to be over heating in the head. The obvious first line of consideration would be the cooling system, to fit a thermostat or not, which way up, block off the bypass etc. We then talked of the probability of the combustion chamber temperature being too high, a possible cause being running too lean with the standard S.U. jets at higher revs. This brought us back to a topic raised by the Clubs to carry out experiments on a rolling road to determine suitable settings for ignition and carburetion for MPJG & XPAG engines with modern fuels, is this still a project in waiting?

Heads for MPJGs are no longer available so we need to conserve as many as we can from cracking".

**Ed's Note:** I don't understand how a pressure test would have failed to have found a crack, unless it's a hairline crack which only opens up when hot, but then, I would have to ask what's the point of pressure testing if it fails to find hairline cracks? Notwithstanding this, I am keen to get the rolling road experiment, well..... rolling!

As the problem of cracked cylinder heads is acute with the TA engine, it is my view that we ought to start with the TA and see what we can learn from it.

This is a bit of a chicken and egg situation since I don't have the Committee's authority to spend the money, but we have to start somewhere. I suggest therefore that we ask for a couple of TA owners who would be willing to allow their car to go on a rolling road. There is a particularly good rolling road engineer at Sigma Engineering near Gillingham in Dorset, so ideally, cars should be based within reasonable travelling distance of this location.

A word of warning before you volunteer – I have been to Sigma Engineering with a J2 and they don't half rev the engine. We would probably need to set a rev limit of 4000 rpm and you would need to be comfortable with this as the Register would not accept liability.

Please contact me if you wish to put your TA forward for this experiment (my contact details are on page 38). I cannot promise that the Committee will agree to spending the money, but at least they will know whether we have members willing to volunteer their car (please see also pages 35/36).



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## A Problem with 'Primrose' *TA 2073 AUT 188*

I bought my TA in 2004. She is a primrose yellow 1938 TA, hence the name. The "originality police" comment on the colour, but I read on page 39 of Paddy Wilmer's book that an approved extra was "paint to a colour of choice excluding metallic".

The steering was all over the place when I bought it, but after a fair bit of adjusting, tracking and even tightening up loose nuts and bolts and track rod ends, it now drives really well.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005 I returned from a visit to Richard Woollett (TTT May 2005 TB rebuild) and on pulling up at my drive, clouds of steam appeared. Oh dear! - you've guessed it - a blown head gasket. Tomorrow's Sunday run is definitely out.

Sunday was spent stripping the head and cleaning up etc., - usual marks on block but nothing too bad. Monday, ordered gasket etc. The parts arrived from NTG on Wednesday, all back together by Saturday. The car started well so off I go on a trial run, a quick check after a mile or so revealed a water leak from the back of the block. Head nuts checked, rear offside corner doesn't feel right, also water seems to be seeping through the block. Back home, head off again - bad news, a crack has appeared across the corner of the block. Wriggling the stud about breaks a corner of the block - oh s\*\*\*, what now? On investigation it seems some joker has boded the stud with JB weld or something similar.



After a lot of ideas on how to do it on the cheap my wife, Gill, the sensible one in the family, says "do it properly and it will only have to be done once".

So off with bonnet and radiator, out with the seats and floorboards and lift out the whole unit with lifting gear borrowed from Richard. With the engine apart from the gearbox, Danny, a neighbour, was called in. He is a very clued up guy with experience of rebuilding rather upmarket cars such as Bugatti and Maserati etc, his expertise told me it was worth doing as the

bottom end was OK.

What now? I don't know a welder. Trying locally I could only find an electric welding firm, no chance! - so I phoned Peter Edney for advice. He couldn't have been more helpful, instead of saying bring it up and we'll fix it, he said "we have used a welding firm in Leicestershire, I will ring you back with the phone number". True to his word, within the hour I had the name and address of a good cast iron welder. The company is Cast Iron Welding of Coalville in Leicestershire, Tel 01530 811308. The man to contact is a Mr David Palmer, again a very helpful man. "Send it up, and we can fix it" he said. So the block was duly stripped down to the last nut and bolt, core plugs removed, and cleaned out with a pressure washer, which removed an enormous amount of rust etc. and taken up to Coalville. On checking it David said no problem, but the heat might distort the rear cylinder.



Two weeks later back to Coalville to pick it up, this included a very interesting look round of the works where very large castings were being repaired in purpose made firebrick "ovens". The classic car repairs were done in a small corner of the building again with some very interesting repairs in progress.

Back home again, Danny checks bores and yes the rear one is distorted, it would work but probably use a lot of oil. Oh well bite the bullet,

down to Bell Engineering of Herne Bay to have new liners fitted, original ones already at maximum. I could have got away with one and bore it to match but let's do the job properly. I bought the pistons from Sports and Vintage of Shrewsbury Tel 01939 210458 and Bell Engineering supplied the liners. At the same time I had the flywheel and pressure plate skimmed as these were rather pitted, and of course, I sent the clutch plate away for recorking. Back home, all the normally unreachable parts were cleaned and repainted as necessary. And once again I found another problem, a crack in the bell housing, probably caused by the front engine mountings having broken apart. They were the old TA type with the nuts just vulcanised into the rubber so the engine was not fixed at the front at all.

The bell housing was taken to a local restorer a John Savoring from Shatterling who again did a first class job.





My friend Danny rebuilt the block. Yet another problem - an oil ring broke, even though he was using a fancy piston ring installation gadget. A quick phone call to Sports and Vintage and two new rings arrived free of charge the next morning, How's that for service! The original bearings etc were all used as they were in as new condition, the engine must have had very little use since an engine rebuild in the late 90s when the araldite must

have been used on the stud.



I lightly reground the valves and rebuilt the head, fitting two woodruff keys that had been left out, they stop the rocker shaft rotating and so blocking the oil ways.

Next fit the core plugs, don't hammer them in I was told by Brian Rainbow, an expert on TA MPJGs, you might crack the block. Fix them in with JB weld from Frosts and only tighten the head down to 30-35 ft/lb, it will be fine

- these engines are rather fragile and must be treated with care. Before bolting the head down, again on advice from Brian Rainbow, I squeezed a tube of Wellseal out into a jar and painted both sides of the gasket block and head and let them almost dry before fitting.

Whilst rebuilding the engine all the bolts and nuts were renewed, helicoils fitted where necessary, especially in the oil sump as they were very bad. A lot of the bolts on an MPJG, by the way, are non standard metric 8mm they are 8 x 1, but these and taps and helicoils are easy enough to come by. Also don't forget the starter motor gasket on the MPJG, the clutch runs in oil and this leaks all over the floor if not fitted. I know because when I bought the car the motor had just been bolted on metal to metal.

Early December now and engine is painted and shiny bits polished, ready to put back in. It went in easy enough but now there's another problem; the clutch pedal won't connect to the clutch operating lever. Now what? I then realise that I have fitted the release bearing fork the wrong way round - yes it can be done and it will go together like that. Back out comes the unit, off with the bell housing and correct it. In it goes again, no problem this time. The front engine mounts fitted are now, TC type as these are a better design with a longer bolt and a securing nut under the bracket, it just means opening out the hole in the bracket to fit. Next reconnect all the engine wires cables water hoses and fit radiator and floor boards.



Static ignition timing was set as per instruction manual and carburettors left as they were before the rebuild to be set up later when the engine has settled down.

January 1<sup>st</sup> switch on, pump ticks away nicely - a good sign. Pull the starter and the engine turns over about three times, fires up as if it has never been apart, save for a little smoke that is, which soon clears.

We have since done about 2500 miles in 'Primrose' with, much to the amusement of other T Typers, a piece of card about a third of the way up the radiator. You see, the engine runs very cool, probably because I have a nice clean radiator and pressure cleaned the water ways when it was stripped down. And yes, I do have a thermostat fitted.

I have all the contact addresses and phone numbers of suppliers of all the various parts and services. I even found a man who would make me one piston ring, so if you need any help contact me on, [mg188\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:mg188(at)btinternet.com) Also if any one recognises the number or the car I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Happy MG motoring

**Mick Pay**

**Ed's Note:** Thanks Mick for a really informative article – it's what T-Type ownership should be all about – sharing experiences and helping others. 'Primrose' will appear on the front cover of the January Issue of TTT.

Mick is trying to trace the history of his car, so if you can help, please get in touch with him.

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# QUESTIONS TO AND ANSWERS FROM THE TD/TF TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

*Barrie Jones, the Register TD/TF Technical Specialist kindly keeps me informed of requests for technical advice received by him and the answers he supplies. Here are some of the questions and answers since the September TTT.*

**Question on TD temperature gauge reconditioning** I have a 1952 TD (T register No 1000). The Water temperature gauge used to register around 70 degrees when hot but now struggles to move off the needle at 30. I have checked the thermostat (OK) and water pump (again OK). The radiator temperature seems OK (the hands on test). I concluded that there must be something wrong with the gauge or radiator unit. I made an enquiry of Brown & Gammons last spring and they suggested sending the gauge in for reconditioning. If this should be done, now seems to be a good time as the car will need to be laid up while the gauge is away.

**Answer** Before you pay any money, why not test your gauge first? Get a pan of boiling water and put the bulb into it. The gauge is mechanical, so it should read correctly.

If the gauge struggles to move off 30 degrees, it needs refurbishing, but at least it reads something, so it is not completely broken. The bulb is full of Ether. If there is so much as a pinhole it will gradually evaporate and the gauge will become sluggish ...

If you put the bulb and the tube in hot water, you may see a stream of bubbles coming from the break. I have known some people mend it themselves, but Ether is nasty stuff, so I would get it refilled by Vintage Restorations of Tunbridge Wells (01892 525899).

**Question about preparing a car from USA for the UK MoT (mainly electrical)** I have just imported an export model MGTD (but RHD) into the UK from the USA. It is a lovely car in excellent condition and I am very pleased with it. However, I obviously need to get an MoT and there seems to be three problems that I thought you may have encountered before:

1. Headlamp dipping. At present, when the headlamps are dipped, all four filaments light up, but dimly. This implies that each pair of filaments in a bulb is working in series and this could be a wiring fault - the connections could have been juxtaposed. I haven't yet checked this out but it could be an easy one to remedy.

2. Indicators: A flashing system has been fitted with a manual control under the dash. The front sidelights appear to have dual filament bulbs so that the sidelights still work, but of course the indicators flash white rather than

*yellow. At the rear, a bulb behind the red light cluster flashes. Will all this pass the MOT or are some mods required? Or can I just say that there are no indicators?*

*3. Rear number plate. This is fixed to the left (nearside) of the rear but is otherwise exactly similar to the usual TD rear number plate. Does this need to be moved to the offside rear?*

### **Answer**

1) The headlamp problem could be a bad earth, or the wires may be wrongly connected to the bulbs. Sounds easy to sort out.

Also, you will need the headlamps to dip to the left. This can be solved by fitting UK bulbs. I recommend halogen bulbs if you can find them.

2) The law regarding turn indicators is:

a) If they are fitted, then they must work.

b) You must also have a warning light visible to the driver.

c) For a car of this age, white indicators to the front and red to the rear are legal and should not fail an MoT.

Personally, I think red rear turn indicators are no longer safe on today's roads, and I would change them to amber.

There is also a front conversion kit available which shows a white sidelight, but changes to amber when the turn indicator is activated. It has two separate bulbs and fits inside the original sidelamp.

3) By law, a rear number plate must be fitted to the centre of the car or to the offside.

### **ALSO**

4) In the UK you must have two rear reflectors, at least 18 inches above the ground, no more than 15 inches from each side, and mounted symmetrically.

5) Since the windscreen folds flat, you are not required to have a screenwash.

Not all testers are familiar with the law regarding older cars, so I recommend that you find someone who is both knowledgeable and sympathetic.

### **Question about converting a LHD TD to RHD**

*I have just bought my dream car a 1952 MG TD LHD (18,000 miles from new!) and am importing to New Zealand where I have to convert to RHD. I am looking for any written technical information/papers about doing the conversion. Do you know if anyone has written anything and if so can you point me in that direction?*

I am not aware of anyone who has written this up.

The actual pedal box is available from companies such as Brown & Gammons. They have converted dozens of ex-USA cars for the UK market, and may well sell a complete conversion kit if you ask nicely.

You will need different pedals. Some people just bend the clutch & brake pedals, but they never look right or feel right.

Obviously you will need a new dashboard and steering rack, and the floorboards will require some work.

The wiring loom will need replacing, but after all these years the original one is a fire waiting to happen. I recommend that you buy a new one with additional wires for separate amber turn indicators. The front lights can be upgraded with special inserts from Stafford Vehicle Components. Try this link [http://www.s-v-c.co.uk/lights\\_indicators.html](http://www.s-v-c.co.uk/lights_indicators.html)

There is a pivot on the other side of the sump to take the clutch mechanism (and it will be unworn!), and the actuating cross-shaft has a keyway on both sides, so that is an easy job.

You will have to move the rear number plate to the other side of the car and fit red reflectors. Depending on the lens type, you may need to change the headlamp lenses. Some are symmetrical. The headlamps will need different bulbs. I recommend that you upgrade to Halogen bulbs. They are available in BPF pattern.

It isn't as difficult as it sounds. Write it up and we will publish it in Totally T-Type.

**Ed's Note:** Some items have been held over until the next issue.

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***The following has been received from Dave Heath and is germane to the rolling road debate:***

"As a long time TA owner (30 years), my experience of tuning the MPJG engine led me to doubt whether the standard carb needle (AC) and the standard ignition timing (0° BTDC) was best for our engines running on modern fuel.

Some time ago, I recall reading an article by a chap with an 18/80 (or similar) who had done extensive work on trying to make it go as well as it did in Pre-War days. He was fortunate enough to possess a fully equipped workshop and to cut a long story short, he concluded that modern fuel requires a high compression ratio to deliver its power. Accordingly, he modified the cylinder head to raise the c/r from 5:1 (I think) to something much higher.

The TA has a c/r of 6.5:1 and taking note of comments like 'modern fuel burns hotter' and reports of burnt exhaust valves and cracked MPJG



heads, I felt some testing of a low compression engine on a rolling road would provide us with valuable data. Not only would it help our engines to go better, but it could help us to avoid damage.

I put the idea to the Octagon Car Club and the MGCC 'T' Register, hoping for (a) funding and (b) a volunteer(s) with a good engine where the crank & con rods have been crack tested and the assembly has been balanced.

It seems that the 'T' Register might take the idea forward (although funding is not yet 'in the bag') and against this background we need to identify a volunteer(s). Do I hear the cry 'Well you suggested it, why not use yours?' Fair comment, but my crank is under the standard minimum size and is not crack tested (nor are the rods). It would therefore be unwise to risk it.

A rolling road test might support my stance on a possible way of overcoming a serious problem – i.e. MPJG heads crack, in the top middle, allowing oil to enter the waterways. Why they crack is a matter of opinion and I will give you mine:

I feel that at speed, the standard AC needle becomes too weak, producing a plug colour which indicates a combustion temperature of 800°C ish. The Siamese centre exhaust port probably gets very hot indeed, yet the top of the head will be at water temperature of say, 70°C. Something has to give!

By using a richer needle, the combustion temperature can be reduced to say, 400°C, the lower end of normal combustion temperatures, so preserving our heads and our exhaust valves.

I made my own needle profile by 'turning down' a spare AC needle. I put the needle in a cordless drill chuck, the drill into the bench vice. With the aid of some small files, fine emery paper and a micrometer, it produced a profile to which my gut feeling had led me.

The nearest standard needle in the book is a QA and is predominantly similar to an AH2.

Another TA engine which has 'seen' a rolling road has a needle very similar to the above, which I only discovered after my work at the bench.

The resultant plug and exhaust valve colour now shows a sort of dark grey or just sooty. This is very similar to plugs I have removed from modern engines using unleaded fuel, which has a tendency to soot up the plugs at low speed.

I use unleaded fuel with an additive, which may accentuate the sooty colour, but what is important is that it indicates a lower combustion temperature. Coupled with an ignition timing of about 5° BTDC my engine runs a treat, returning 35 ish to the gallon.

So I've stuck my head above the parapet and expect it to be shot at!"

**Dave Heath**

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## **In January's TTT**

The Editor has been doing some work on his TC's back axle casing (with not inconsiderable help from Eric Worpe). Part 1 of what is hoped will be a series of articles from bare banjo casing to fully rebuilt axle will appear in January's TTT.

It is some time since we had an article from John Steedman in his "Notes from a Rebuild" series. He has one on bonnet fit, which restorers/rebuilders should find helpful.

Dennis Barker has given me an article on updating the flashers on his TF, using the Steve Taylor conversion.

The Editor has an article of unknown origin on TA electrics, given to him by Mike Hawke.

The above is not enough to fill January's TTT, but at least it's a start!

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