SCARCE

SADDLEWORTH CLASSIC AND RARE CAR ENTHUSIASTS

# NEWSLETTER No. 34 –BICESTER HERITAGE SKILLS ACADEMY - Oct 2018

This year I was offered the chance of attending a 2 day course arranged by the Alvis Owners Club to improve our skills in looking after our post war cars. It was not especially cheap costing £250 for the 2 days and another £200 for accommodation at a nearby Premier Inn but as it coincided with my birthday I felt the urge to treat myself. After having tasted the opportunity I will certainly be looking forward to participating in any future offerings. I am well aware that there is something of a hidden agenda to get old cars off the roads as a single breakdown on todays congested roads can cause a serious nightmare and whilst we have been granted a concession allowing motor cars older than 40 years to be spared an MOT this gives us nothing like carte blanche to ignore maintaining our vehicles to the highest standard - in fact it puts the onus firmly on us if anything should go wrong.

It was handy that the course was organised by people at the AOC who are very up to date with the law regarding our cars and when I mentioned that I still thought I would always take my old cars for an MOT I was cautioned that the law now means that an old car leaking any oil at all should be impounded by the MOT station and not released back on to the road until any leakage has been cured. Remembering the old adage about many classic cars that "if it ain't leaking oil there's no oil in it" it certainly makes you think before putting ones old car in for an MOT. Perhaps paying the garage to give the car a comprehensive health check might be the wiser option. Your choice.

Anyway I certainly had a great time down at Bicester and I would urge anyone who has not seen the Heritage Centre to grab the opportunity should they be offered the chance to have a look around. Whilst we were there dismantling various types of SU Carburettors a couple of dozen folk from the MG car club descended on us for 5 minutes before being told to move on as there is a lot to see.

The 9.00 to 5.00 course revolved around a dozen of us meeting in an office complete with white board and various slides discussing a variety of topics illustrated in the workbooks that were provided before going through to the workshop and putting theory into practice. On the second day two of our merry band brought their cars into the workshop to be used as guinea pigs and by sheer coincidence both of them had fuel leaks from their carburettors. Could have been rather embarrassing on the way back home. One of the unfortunate problems with the typical Alvis set-up is that the inlet manifold is directly next to the exhaust manifold so whilst neither of them caught fire there was a considerable stench of petrol fumes! In the case of the TD 21 it was simply a matter of replacing a faulty washer on the fuel supply inlet whilst the other fault was caused by a sticking float that also required the float height adjusting.

The full list of topics we discussed consisted of : The purpose of the Ignition System; The Ignition Coil; Contact Breakers and Condenser; Changing the dwell angle; Centrifugal advance mechanisms; Sparking plugs hot and cold and the meaning of the various codes; SU carburettors - adjusting mixture, idle and balancing multiple setups; Electrical circuit failure using a test lamp (Beware - do not use these on modern cars!) and how to locate the source of the fault using volts drop; Dynamo operation, testing with a multimeter and repolarising by flashing the field windings.

We were also given a complimentary tool kit containing a small assortment of King Dick screwdrivers along with a test lamp and a brake fluid tester. The latter of these was used to demonstrate that the fluid in our test car was below par and it was also found that the bottle of brake fluid being used to top-up contained too much water so the moral is that once a bottle of brake fluid has been opened dispose of the rest. Our final session was a brainstorming session on what we each thought we should take with us on a trip abroad. This obviously varies with the model of car and whilst it may seem OTT to carry, for example, a full set of gaskets just think how long it could take to locate a new head gasket for your classic if it blew somewhere off the beaten track in the middle of France. One member related how fortunate he was that he carried such a spare part as the garage he found was quite capable of doing the work overnight but that would not have been much use had it taken a week for the part to arrive. As it was he was able to catch up with the rally the following day.

Tips for your trips - Spares for your car: Plugs; Points; Capacitor; Fuel float; Fuel pump diaphragm (or refurb kit); Fibre washers for fuel connections; Spare piece of fuel pipe and jubilee clips to fit; Gasket set (if you are confident you might just pack a sheet of gasket paper); Hylomar/ Dirko or similar; Spare top and bottom radiator hose inc. jubilee clips; HT leads; Rotor arm; Fuses; Bulb set; Puncture repair. - Tools: Spanner set; Plug spanner including bar (this might double as a small 'jemmy' bar); Adjustable and/or small stilsons; Jack (probably best not to rely on the Alvis issue – a small bottle jack or trolley jack is useful); Starting handle; Test light and/or multi-meter; Leatherman type multitool. - Other items: Duct tape; WD40 or similar; Spare oil (the grades you want are unlikely to be available); Water (possibly also a collapsible camping bucket); Washer fluid; Brake fluid; Power Steering Fluid; Jump leads; Tyre pump; Mirror on a stick; Cleaning materials (important if you are away for a while and the weather is inclement); Glass cleaning materials; Various cable ties; Magnet on a stick; Warning Triangle. - To carry in the car: High viz - make sure it is to hand; Fire extinguisher; Torch. - For your passenger who may not enter into the spirit of mending a vehicle by the roadside: A book; Ready mixed G&T (take three but hide one in another part of the car – that one is for you when the car is fixed – or in extreme circumstances – you have to wait for recovery). How pleased I am that the Alvis has such a large boot! After making a sizeable hole in the bank balance let's hope none of these items is required.
Happy Motoring,
Tony.

**New 2018 MOT regulations**

Some of you may have already heard that there are big changes coming to the MOT test this May. Here are just a few of the biggest changes that are most likely to affect you. Please take these with a pinch of salt as nothing will be finalised until the end of April and will probably still be subject to change after that date. Remember it will take your MOT tester time to get up to speed with these too! So...

Advisories are being replaced with minor fails. These are all pre-written & approved by DVSA. You will still get a pass but they will be noted on your test certificate. Manual advisories are still being worked out but may disappear completely. Those of you who have changed your standard headlight bulbs for HID's will now get a major fail even if the aim is correct. It has always been an offence to fit HID bulbs to halogen headlamps so the MOT is now in line with that.

Reverse lights are now part of the MOT for any car registered from 1st September 2009 (59 plate onwards). Daytime running lamps (DRL's) & front fog lamps must work on vehicles registered from March 2018 (18 plate onwards). Engine Management Light is now a major fail. It must come on with the ignition and then turn off when the engine is started. Brake pad warning lights are a major fail. Handbrake with excessive travel is now a major fail. Before it would only a fail if there was no reserve travel.

Contaminated (dirty) brake fluid is a major fail. Not sure how that will work as the MOT tester isn't allowed to remove the fluid cap. Oil leaks (engine, gearbox etc.) can be a major failure if they are deemed large enough. It seems they have removed the failure for tyres not being fitted according to sidewall instructions. Inner/outer or rotation incorrect.

Any modifications/removal to emissions related devices, this includes DPF'S and EGR's is now a major fail. Where a DPF canister has clearly been cut open and re-welded, it will now fail. A vehicle fitted with a DPF that emits any kind of visible smoke during the metered test will now fail. Emissions limits for diesels registered on or after 1st of January 2014 have been reduced.

All diesels will now need to pass the limit that was set by the manufacturer when the car was new. This can be found on the VIN plate. For example the current limit for your diesel car may be 1.50. That could change to as low as 0.30 with the new rules.

These are just some of the bigger changes to the MOT test the average motorist is likely to be affected by. There are dozens, perhaps even over 100 changes to the actual MOT test and to the way testers record tests on the MOT computer. Please remember these are all subject to change in the coming months and remember spare a thought for your MOT tester before you say... "Well it passed like that last year!"