

Staniforth's Sacerdotalism

(LOOK IT UP!)

Further to your piece on sticking clutches, I was the man charged with solving this problem. I was highly qualified by being, I think, the first man to have to strip one (including going to London and back with our then ace trim fitter, take it all to pieces, replace the box etc, etc, and come home again) in a long day.

I would suggest that step 4 (spinning rears on jacks and slamming the brakes on) has a high degree of potential drama about it. There is also a serious risk of breaking a gear in the box.

All the warming and drying out techniques are good possibles. The long term solution, I hoped was a special lining on the clutches. All those normally supplied enthusiastically absorb water, rust the face and stick. Going to Mintex at Cleckheaton, we found they were well aware of the problem, in fact they already had a test rig in a humid box to see how long and hard they stuck.

But "the man" there said they would easily come free. It turned out they....the test sections....did indeed come free easily when prized off, but in real life of course, they are in shear, a very different situation indeed. In shear they tried to wreck their test rig.

The important thing is that they did have, and presumably still have somewhere, a material with a very low absorption rate. Our problem at Naylor's was that the standard clutch plate came complete with the engine supplied by BL, sorry Honda, Rover, BMW.... Our only short term hope was to strip the clutch on the new engine, get the lining off (no simple job), buy the better lining from Mintex (or send the plates to be relined) and rebuild the clutch.

For very obvious commercial reasons this was not a good plan, but it was how the "red dot" engines had been modified. The very morning the broker's men arrived, I had an appointment with Mintex to arrange further supplies, but the Receiver made it clear they would never be paid for so I rang "the man", apologised, and there it all ground to a halt. Although I, unfortunately, do not have a note of the material code, I feel an approach from the club might just bear fruit, especially if you had a small syndicate willing to buy such an improved lining for immediate or future installation. Obviously I never had a chance to know how well it would have worked, but the test figures in the humid tester looked very promising.

Apropos Tony Aspinall's letter on his 9