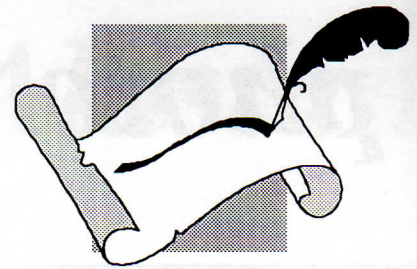


Toolbox

YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Freda,

As a modest attempt to distract you from the trials of life, I am herewith keeping you posted on our TF front:-

- 1 667EXA was locally converted to lead free fuel at the beginning of January. The bulk of the job consisted of changing to 8 unleaded seat inserts with their corollary cutting and trimming, facing the valves and fitted modified valve seals, slight skimming of cylinder head, shimming of tappets, re-assembly with new cylinder head gasket and timing belt, at a total cost of £500. You will note that neither the valves nor their guides were changed: this was said to be unnecessary by the ROVER people. I must add that the service at the MERCURY garage (tel 01708 342810 in Harold Wood, Essex where this job was carried out) was very friendly, the car was always under shelter during the one and a half weeks the job took, and highly skilled, they found that the ignition data from the original manufacturers manual were not giving the best results and, by returning it, they managed to deliver a much more responsive car which pulls out more powerfully and more quickly than before with the original leaded fuel for the time being. Although we live in Hertfordshire, I found that the Mercury garage was not only cheaper than Brown & Gammons in Baldock, Herts by £130 - but also easier to commute to (allowing for some shopping in London) as they are literally 2 minutes walk away from Harold Wood Station. I will keep you posted on how the car performs, as a chemist myself, I am unsure of the effect of the lead free fuel on the various rubber gaskets and membranes, say at the level of the pump and carburettor.
- 2 In a totally different register the speedometer went numb as I cruised happily on the M25. I quickly traced the fault to a severed inner cable at the gearbox pick up point. In fact this was due to the external sheath having suffered from the exhaust heat (melted pvc outer liner allowed moisture ingress>rust>seizure.rupture) I enquired by the Naylor Co. whether it was the Ital original speed cable I needed: they were very courteous, as usual, and confirmed they believed it was. I was then

sent on a wild goose chase visiting several "All Parts" and the like, finally ending up at a Rover dealer which procured successively 2 cables of different lengths but too short any way and with a snap on connector on the clock, whereas we require a knurled knob. Finally I found that Speedy Cables (tel 0171 226 9228 in Islington) were manufacturing bespoke cables. They were extremely helpful and gave me full satisfaction, once I had taken the old cable, for a mere £24.09. Thinking about you I asked about the necessary references which would allow them to produce a speedo cable, without the need to bring them the old one and here it is (Mike Morley has been in touch with them as well and spoke to *MIKE HOWES* who is the person to ask for):-

3mm cable - five eights x 18 instrument end - 105E gear box end - 78 inches long.

Obviously I re-routed the new cable to keep it away from the exhaust system heat.

- 3 After 16,000 miles on the original 1985 tyres, the car had developed judders on the steering wheel at 55 mph, so I looked for a wheel balancing station which could keep the Naylor badges in place: they are few and far between. Finally I ended up at Central Tyres (01923 234582 in Watford, Herts) as they were very understanding and helpful (taking care not to damage the spoked wheel paint) I had a new set of four budget tyres fitted for £140.81 balancing included. They are HANKOOK steel radial 880 (165 R14 84T) which look slimmer than the original Good Year Grand Prix, thus giving a more period look to the car, and a much lighter steering (it is as if a power steering had been installed!).

EDITORIAL NOTE - In the summer of 1998 Bitz required new tyres and John checked with Good Year on the availability of them. At that time they had over 100 of them in stock and they could be ordered by your usual supplier who had a Good Year account and if demand was sufficient after that, they would then do another production run. If you want to use the same tyres, then if you have a problem talk to Good Year direct. Ours were fitted by A.T.S.

37-28 Guy Frot, 6 The Close, Radlett Herts, WD7 8HA, tel 01923 856537.

CONGRATULATIONS.

We send our very best wishes to Karyl (nee Harris) and Rob on the occasion of their wedding. We hope that you will be able to join us with your Hutson at one of the events this year.