



TOOLBOX

Bob Gale has passed me the Newsletters of the Federation of British Historic Cars and the following three items are from them:-

Item 1—**Tyres**

Following on from the last piece on tyres :-Car tyres are made from a synthetic styrene-butadiene rubber which is easy to manufacture and has a significantly lower cost than natural rubber, but it does have the disadvantage that it is more prone to oxidation. To counter this, tyre compounds contain anti-ageing additives as well as 'extender oils' that improve grip and elasticity. Unfortunately, the chemicals that provide these properties are themselves harmful to human health and the amounts that may be used are strictly controlled at a level that provides a compromise between the need for the tyres to last a reasonable time and the requirement to minimise the health risk. The 'reasonable time' is around ten years, which in the context of tyres for vehicles that are in regular use is more than adequate. The oxidation means that the character of the compound is deteriorating from day one, but the effect is barely perceptible in the first few years if the tyre is looked after or stored properly.

If a tyre has been in regular use beyond that period

there should not be a problem provided the tyre is kept at the correct pressure (to avoid the risk of overheating). But if the tyre has been standing for months on end, the oxidation of the compound means a stiffening of the tyre walls so that when it is next used the unaccustomed flexing will cause heat to build up more rapidly than it would in a newer tyre or one that was used regularly. When the tyre warms to a critical level, the natural degradation of the compound increases rapidly causing the long molecular chains that give the compound its flexible properties to shorten, and ultimately causing the tyre to start to break up. The tyre failure on the MGB (mentioned in last issue) was consistent with that picture."

Item 2—**Number plate inspection on MOT.**

The Association of Rootes Car Clubs alerted us to a rumour that the inspection of number plates at MoT would be extended next year to include a check that the plates of all post 1972 vehicles carry the BSAU 145d standard marking. We were not aware of any amendment to Statutory Instrument 2001/561, the regulations governing the display of number plates, which require that standard **only** for vehicles first used after 1 September 2001. (Plates for vehicles made from 1st January 1973 to 31 August 2001 need to comply with the earlier BSAU 145a, or equivalent.) The obvious concern was that plates marked with the earlier standard, or without any marking, would have to be replaced in order to pass the MoT.

Happily, that is not the case. But as usual with such rumours, there is an element of truth behind it. VOSA has confirmed that since 1st October 2007, the MoT inspection procedure for number plates has required a check on the BSAU 145d mark (or equivalent), but only for vehicles first used after 1 September 2001. Plates on vehicles first used before this date should be inspected only for the usual legibility and format. FBHVC would like to hear of any cases where earlier vehicles are failed on the BS mark (or lack of it).

Editor—our thanks to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs.