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MILFORD VINTAGE ENGINEERING LTD

Volume 5 Issue 1

December 2013

Welcome to our winter 2013 newsletter. As we have said previously, we remain extremely busy here in the workshop with bookings fairly full for the next few months towards April/May. If you are thinking of having some work carried out prior to next season, please get in touch as soon as possible to book your car in so that we have it in the diary and can accommodate your needs. You can keep up-to-date on our blog (<http://vintage-engineering.blogspot.com>) and also find us on Facebook



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ETHANOL IN PETROL

We have heard from a friend who is a chemical engineer at Grangemouth that, as of October, all petrol in Scotland contains at least 5% ethanol, even the premium grades. It is still worth paying the extra for the premium petrol (which has the lowest percentage) and the old cars seem to run better on it, achieving higher miles to the gallon, thus offsetting any extra cost. A couple of customers suffered from fuel vaporisation this summer and one was told by the AA that more than 70% of the call-outs for vaporisation were from supermarket fuels.

In the workshop we have had several instances of fuel starvation or flooding in carburettors caused by plastic needle valves swelling up and sticking in place. These needles were supplied in carburettor repair kits up to around the year 2000. If you experience either of these problems we would recommend changing the plastic needle for a brass "vitton" tipped one. Ethanol is also attacking the old-type floats and we have been fitting new "stay-up" floats to counteract this. Another problem has been fuel vaporisation in fuel lines, so we are increasingly having to either wrap the fuel lines in heat-reflective tape or make a heat shield to minimise this.



Needle valve
stuck in position

A Final Farewell to the Tax Disc

With the demise of the tax disc in 2014 (with officialdom relying on computer records), you may be interested in some of the history of the humble disc. Arriving on the scene in 1921 as a very plain grey piece of paper with black writing, the tax disc was born. Although the Roads Acts of 1919 and 20 specified that they should be displayed in a circular holder, the 'disc' itself was printed on a square paper with no perforations so people either cut round the disc or folded the edges over to fit the holder. Colour discs made an appearance in 1923 in an attempt to combat fraud. In the early years, all tax discs expired on 31st December, so the rate would be adjusted as the year went on. Perforations didn't arrive until 1938 but stopped again in 1942, possibly due to the war, and were back permanently from 1952. The more modern style of disc was brought in during 1961 with the "Guinness Bottle" type tax disc, so-called since the label on a bottle of Guinness was so similar that it was not unheard of for these to be altered to look the part! In 1963 the discs were improved with additional expiry dates printed in the lower half of the disc in a lighter shade of the main colour. The 'wavy line' designs started in September 1987 and have had a few alterations to what we use today. The Chancellor announced in his autumn statement that the disc itself will no longer be used from October 2014 since it is no longer cost-effective to produce the tax disc. Road fund licence will, however, still be payable on many cars (although not our historic ones, thankfully).

2013 In the Workshop

We have had another busy year with some very large projects keeping us occupied. Both the Alvis Speed 20 SB and the Rover 16 were completed in early November and they both look spectacular. The Austin Heavy 12/4 is just waiting for the new trim and then that should be finished. We have now started on an Austin Light 12/4 partial restoration which came in last year, as well as finishing off a few bits on a 20hp Rolls-Royce which the owner has been working on for a number of years. The car looks beautiful and the leather trim is unbelievably soft. We have often commented on how the cars and jobs in the workshop seem to come in batches; we seem to be inundated with Alvis cars at the moment. Apart from the Speed 20 SB, this year has seen a Gräber Alvis TC21 for repairs to the rear bumper; a TF 21 with carburettor problems; a TA21 for an engine rebuild, a rewire and some other minor things; another TF21 which is losing power steering fluid; and some very small jobs on a 1920s Alvis 12/50. In between all of this we have had the usual servicing and repairs to Jaguars, various Rolls-Royce and Bentley models as well as MGs and Lagondas, etc.

2014 bookings are already looking busy. We have several of our regular cars booked in for pre-season servicing, as well as a Derby Bentley to get ready for a rally in Australia in 2015, but more of that in future. We will be fitting seat belts to a R-R Silver Cloud - a modification that is fairly straight forward. There are a number of options available relating to seatbelt clasps, fittings and strap webbing colours so that they can give you added safety without compromising the look of your car.

We took a stand at the Scottish Transport Extravaganza at Glamis again this year and were blessed with a lovely dry weekend for a change. It was good to catch up with so many of you and the cars on display looked great. We decided not to go to the Farming of Yesteryear at Scone since Ian was down at the Beaulieu Autojumble, and Sarah went south with him taking in a visit to the Goodwood Revival on the following weekend. This is well worth a visit if you have a chance, especially the paddock area where, with the appropriate ticket, you get unlimited access to the cars and teams (there are a number of photos on our Facebook page if you would like a sneaky peak). The sounds and smells of the race track took you right back to the golden age of motoring and we are hoping to go again next year. We have had a number of club visits, too. These included the German pre-war motorcycle club which included four cars - a Austin 7 special, an Austin Big 7, an early BMW and an Adler. If your club would like to have a look at what we get up to, please get in touch.



OPENING HOURS

We are open
Monday to Friday
from 8.00am to
4.30pm
Other hours by
arrangement



We are staunch supporters of FBHVC however their change in logo and the regulations regarding its use means that it will no longer be on our letterhead

STAFF UPDATE

Most of you will have met Alan, who has been our van driver since 2005. At the age of 81, Alan decided to hang up his driving gloves this summer. He has been a great help to us over the years and driven many of you to and from the bus or train when dropping your cars off. We wish him the very best for a long and happy retirement, but feel sure he'll find something to keep him occupied (including his stationery engine).



In his place we have new van driver and classic car enthusiast, Peter, who has recently moved here from Staffordshire. He is currently finding his way round to our more obscure suppliers and getting to know the area quite well.

A number of you also know Ian and Sarah's oldest daughter, Amanda, who is a petrol-head herself and has often helped out in the workshop, van driving and at shows. She has graduated from Aberdeen University this year with a degree in petroleum geology and now works for an American oil company. She has been given strict instructions to keep the oil flowing so that we can all continue to enjoy our cars for years to come!

We will be closed for our annual Christmas break from 20th December until 6th January. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your custom over the last year and wish you a very Merry Christmas.

