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Most of the tips below are drawn from repair jobs that have passed through our workshops since the last bulletin.

Rattle Those Push Rods.

Most older British engines have side covers which allow access to the cam followers. These covers are notorious for oil leaks. The last thing you want to do is disturb them if they are not leaking. When you pull the cylinder head off, the push rods have to come out and sometimes they draw the cam followers out with them. You then have to pull the side covers off to reinstall the cam followers and go through the agony of resealing the side covers. The simple solution is to remove the rocker gear before lifting the head and then 'rattle' the push rods sideways to break the film of oil that holds the push rod and cam follower together.

The Accelerator Cable Trick.

Do you disconnect the accelerator cable from the carburetor linkage when you remove the engine or take the head off your Sprite or Midget? If you do, there is an easier way. All you have to do is unhook the inner cable at the accelerator pedal end with a pair of pliers. It only takes a few seconds to remove and replace as long as your car is fitted with the original specification accelerator cable that fits through the hole in the bulk head. The other benefit of this method is that you never have to reset 'full throttle'.

Sealing Leaky Oil Filters.

Whilst we are talking about engine oil leaks, we may as well tackle the mother of all oil leaks, the cartridge oil filter! There are three ways to overcome the problem. Firstly, if the canister is sealing OK before you start, DO NOT attempt to fit a new 'O' ring. Secondly, if you do need to fit a new 'O' ring there are three different thicknesses (.065", .090" and .130") depending who manufactured the filter head fitted to your car. Of course, 'Murphys Law' guarantees you get the wrong 'O' ring supplied with each new filter. At Gillspeed we can supply all three sizes. The third solution is to fit a Gillspeed 'spin on' oil filter conversion kit and solve all these problems for ever. They are easy to fit yourself at home and the replacement filters are cheaper.

Broken Inlet Manifolds.

It is very common for inlet manifold lugs to break off on Sprites and Midgets and to a lesser extent on larger MGs. They are more likely to break if extractors have been fitted. The reason is that the flange on the extractors is usually thicker than the flange on the inlet manifold. When the standard 'thick' manifold washers are tightened up on these uneven flanges, the washer ends up being tight on the thick extractor flange but loose on the thinner inlet manifold flange. When you consider how much leverage is exerted on the inlet manifold flanges by the heavy twin carburetors and air cleaners, it is easy to see why the alloy cracks and breaks. The simple solution is to bend the 'thick' washer as shown in the sketch below. This results in even pressure being applied to both flanges.



Heavy Duty Or Heavy Duty?

We recently had an MGC arrive with an overheating problem. The previous owner had fitted a newly reconditioned 'heavy duty' radiator. It was certainly in excellent condition but seemed to have too few tubes and fins. Our radiator specialist confirmed our suspicions. Heavy duty has two meanings. To a truck radiator repairer 'heavy duty' means mechanically strong enough to withstand the wear and tear of a road train pounding across corrugated dirt roads in central Australia. These radiators use thicker materials and fewer tubes and fins per inch for maximum strength. They require a large frontal area to give adequate cooling. This was the type of core fitted to the MGC. What the MGC needed was 'heavy duty' radiator in terms of increased heat dissipation. This was achieved by fitting a new core with extra water tubes and more fins per inch. The problem was solved. If you have an overheating 1275 Midget, MGA fitted with a MGB motor, or a race car that runs too hot, we can supply this type of core for your car.

P.T.O.

Whilst on the subject of 1275 Midget radiators, we have seen several cars fitted with Cooper 'S' multi blade fans. They bolt on OK but blow the air the wrong way. . . .out the front of the car! Another thing we often notice on MGBs in particular, is three blade fans that have been put on backwards with the 'cupped' side of the fan facing the front of the car. They still draw air through the radiator but with reduced efficiency. One final suggestion, when you refit a fan, spin it by hand before starting the engine to make sure it doesn't hit anything. This is particularly important 1275 MG Midgets fitted with plastic six blade fans. They instantly explode in a dangerous shower of expensive plastic if they hit the radiator or oil separator.

Pop. . Scratch. . Oh No!

When it comes time to pop rivet the chrome side moulding clips on to your \$3000 paint job, make sure you hold the 'sharp end' of the pop rivet gun with your spare hand. . . . otherwise when the rivet 'pops', the gun will skip across your new paint leaving a nasty scratch.

How To Do The Impossible.

If you have ever had to fit the tiny spring washers and nuts to the soft top pegs around the back of most MGs, you will know it's almost impossible. . . . unless you have magnetic finger tips. Next time try the 'coat hanger' trick shown below. All you have to do is slide the washer and nut on the coat hanger wire, keep your finger pressed against the end and position the washer and nut under the hole. Gently remove the wire and screw in the peg. With a little practice it works every time.



Check The Diameter First.

If you happen to come across some cheap 1100 Sprite/Midget 7.50" lever type clutch pressure plates beware. . . . they may look the same and bolt up to the flywheel but they have a bigger outside diameter that hangs over the outside of the flywheel. This will foul the bendix drive on your starter motor. Since the starter motor is..

generally installed at the end of the job, it pays to check the outside diameter of the pressure plate first.

Some Things Never Change.

These three problems regularly crop up on all Sprites and Midgets. The first problem is the alloy body on the front shock absorber which compresses slightly over time and allows the three 3/8" diameter mounting bolts to work loose. The only solution is a regular check of bolt tension with a spanner. The second problem is that the front tyres rub on the rubber brake hoses. Oversize tyres compound the problem. The inside end of the brake hose can be 'set' to clear the tyre but it always pays to check regularly. The third problem is the clamped joint on the steering column at the steering rack end. The 1/4" diameter clamping bolt is not up to the job and eventually the splines get worn and sloppy. The steering column moves in and out and can come completely adrift! A very ugly business!

It is not uncommon to find all three problems in one car as we did recently. A few days later second car arrived on a tow truck with the right front shocker adrift because two of the three 3/8" mounting bolts had broken and the third one had fallen out. It only takes five minutes to check all three problem areas. Ring Gillspeed on (03) 568 0688 for parts or repairs immediately you find any of these problems.

Fitting Windscreens.

Fitting new laminated windscreens to any MGB roadster, late model Sprite or Midget can be a nightmare if the car has been smashed and poorly repaired. Laminated glass cracks when flexed! Read the workshop manual before you start, cross your fingers, and hope for the best. Actually most screens fit without a problem if you follow these basic tips. Get a second person to help you. Always replace the same number and thickness shims between the body and windscreen pillars. Make sure the 3/16" diameter screws that hold the windscreen surround together go back in their original holes and do not extend through to the glass! Never over tighten any screws or bolts. Make sure the new screen is no larger than the old one. Clean the inside of the windscreen frame where the glazing rubber sits to 'as new' condition. Use a new rubber glazing seal and plenty of liquid soap. Most importantly, if something feels wrong, STOP and do that bit again. Finally, never pull yourself out of the seat by pulling on the windscreen frame. . . you could crack the glass!