

Tech Article: November 2008

I thought I would give a few clues to how to make your car perform better this month. Then I found another bad part and thought about ranting against the quality, or lack of, in our replacement parts. So I will do both. First, a few symptoms and tips to correct them.

If you are driving a steady speed around 60 mph and feel a slight surging, your carbs are just a tad (small adjustment less than a little but more than a smidge) lean. If you have SUs, turn the adjustment nut one or two flats down to richen. If you have the later SUs, HIFs, turn the mixture screw in  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn. With Strombergs, you need the special allen wrench to adjust the mixture but  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn should do on them. You may need to readjust the idle and then test drive.

If you have popping and backfiring from your carbs when you accelerate, just add a little oil to the dampner. That backfiring thru carbs means a lean mixture also but more so than the surging. On acceleration, the oil in the dampner gives the mixture the richness it needs. If you get a lot of carb backfiring when cold starting, you either need oil or the choke adjusted to allow a little more gas in when cold. If you adjust the choke, remember to adjust the fast idle also. This is usually a screw that rides on the choke cam on the side of the carb.

On carbs with a manual choke, it is best if you press down the accelerator pedal when pulling the choke cable. It relieves some tension on the choke cable because you are not dragging the fast idle screw along the choke cam. It does not put any gas into the carb so no need to pump the pedal.

If you have later Strombergs with an automatic choke, you have many options of problems. The easiest to test is to rotate the choke body and richen the mixture that way but you need to be careful as you can create a water seep or pop the whole choke assembly off the carb as the three retaining screws are often loose. So check their snugness before rotating anything. If you are not very familiar with the automatic choke, you may want to leave that to us pros to screw up. It can be taken apart and repaired and there are a few exact clearances that need to be set to make it work correctly. And there is the smallest "O" ring in there that you have ever seen.

Does your brake pedal feel a little soft but you are sure that you are loosing no fluid. Try adjusting the rear brakes correctly. Safely jack up the rear of your car. Back off the hand brake cable a little and then turn your brake adjuster until the wheel rotates with just a tad scraping noise. You do not want them too tight so they should be easy to turn by hand. Then readjust the parking cable so that when you pull the handbrake about  $\frac{1}{2}$  way, the wheels lock. On some cars, you may need to look by the drive shaft for the cable adjuster. If your cable has stretched and you really do not want to replace it, they make a cable shortner, yes they do, and these work reasonably well.

Do you have a vibration between 55 and 70 mph only? Then get your tires trued, not balanced. Weaver brake and alignment in Marietta has one of the few remaining tire lathes in Atlanta and they will turn the tire perfectly round on the car then balance them. This will cure your vibration from your wheels. And if your wire wheel is not perfectly round, but solid with no loose spokes, the lathe will correct it. It may not be necessary to get new wheels.

I have preached this one before, but have not yet taken my own advice, if you have halogen headlights, relay them before your switch goes bad like mine. It has been discussed enough on how to do this so read about it and do it.

Do your front brakes squeal when applied? If the pads and rotors are good, remove the pads and cut a piece of roof flashing the exact shape of the pad. Get some brake quietner and spray the back of the pad and not the front. Let it get a little sticky and adhere your shim to it. The roof flashing easily cuts with scissors. Replace your now shimmed pads and bleed if necessary. That should take care of the squeal and last a long time. There used to be some Lucas shims made from soft aluminum but they never lasted very long as they were too soft and the caliper piston cut thru them very quickly. The squeal comes from a vibration between the back of the pad and the piston, not from the pad surface and rotor. The flashing adds a dampening effect and eliminates the noise.

Now for my short rant. I put a brand new Borg and Beck clutch in an MGB last week and this is one where the engine comes out to do it. At the same time, I rebuilt the clutch hydraulics. After putting it all back together and bleeding the system, I found that the clutch did not fully release or disengage. More bleeding, eliminating the play from the clevis pins, the pivot point in the pushrods, did not improve things. So, I pulled the master and took it back apart. Well, I didn't actually pull it this time, I removed the guts only. I took another rebuild kit and compared seals. One was different; the main pressure seal was just a tad too long and was not allowing the fluid to properly fill the master cylinder bore.

A quick rebuild again and more bleeding made the pedal feel a little better. Success, I thought. As this car is owned by a short person, about 4', I could not drive it. But I could test it and it still did not work. By now, I had had enough and decided to pull the engine back out as there had to be a problem with the clutch unit. 45 minutes later, I had the pressure plate off and was comparing it to the old one. All clearances looked correct.

I put it in my press and used a big socket to push down on the center section as the TOB does and watched what happened to the clamping plate. There are three holes in the cover that you can see thru. In two, the plate pulled up into the cover, as it should. However, in the third, it pushed away from the cover. That would put more clamping force on the disc and never let it release. It was a bad pressure plate.

This was the first bad Borg & Beck I have ever seen to be bad. And it was new old stock, not something made in the last two or three years. It had been sitting in storage waiting to go into a friend's car. With another new pressure plate in hand; tested before I installed it this time, I had the car running in about 3 hours and all worked, as it should have the first time. Two bad new parts on one car; how lucky can I get. It is getting ridiculous that so many parts are bad. I wasted a day not believing the parts could be bad before pulling it all apart again, another day wasted fixing it. So remember, if the shop you use lets you supply your own parts, be prepared if they have to charge you twice to do the repair. They cannot be responsible for faulty parts they do not supply. If they supply them, they are responsible and should not charge you twice. Just do not get mad at them when they tell you the part is no good. Almost all the parts come into this country thru Moss whether they will admit it to you or not and even they do not make most of them. Local suppliers do not make them either and can only replace them when they fail.

I just wish that labor were covered as we loose a lot of time and money having to do the job more than once. I guess that I will now check even what I consider the best parts before installing them. Would you believe it if I said that I do not like to replace condensers in the distributors as so many new ones are faulty. If the car is running ok when it comes in, I will not want to replace a good working condenser with what could be a bad new Lucas one. I would rather use an aftermarket one here. Barry