



# Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders MG CLUB

[www.MG-Edinburgh.co.uk](http://www.MG-Edinburgh.co.uk)



February 2021

V8 anniversary  
at Thirlestane Castle



Credits: Helen, Craig, Lindsay W, Jim T, Allan & Evelyn



## MEMBERS' CARS

Craig's Midget makes progress -  
see article



## INTERESTING CAR

Spotted at Cameron Toll



# **MRS GRUMPY'S GRUMBLE**



I'm sure we're all totally scunnered with Covid and the restrictions - even more so since lockdown 2. There's still inconsistencies - all businesses closed except construction. Why? Previous inconsistencies - it was OK for me to meet Tony for coffee in a crowded cafe but not OK for him to sit in my dining room (at socially distanced opposite ends of the table) for a coffee?

Then to the Doctor. Telephone triage only as too risky to come into the surgery to meet a Doctor face to face. If you can't see the problem, then you're likely to mis-diagnose, which is what happened with my itchy eyes. The drops didn't work and I was told to see an Optician, which I did. The Optician said the problem was the eyelid skin and I should see a Doctor!

Now, here's the rub - Why is it OK for me to spend an hour in a tiny room with someone about 2 ft from me, but not OK to spend five socially distanced minutes, with a Doctor, in a large room at the surgery? Just asking.

Those new cycle lanes in Comiston Road and their danger to pedestrians and cyclists. I was walking down Comiston Road and the traffic was busy heading into town and a cyclist was whizzing down the hill, heading into town. Then a plonker driver nearly wipes out the cyclist and me.

A van was turning right, an impatient driver undercut the van (without checking his mirror) so taking the car into the cycle lane - this was possible as there was a junction to the left and the hefty bollard holding blocks were absent. The whizzing cyclist wasn't an advanced cyclist and didn't anticipate what might happen - so she had to slam on her brakes when the car cut into the cycle lane. She skidded, just missed hitting the car and very nearly fell off. Had she fallen, she would have knocked me over - even though I was still on the pavement. I was totally unaware as all this was happening behind me and the first I knew was the cyclist narrowly missing me as she struggled to keep upright. The plonker of course, just drove on.

If you are walking down Comiston road, then stick to the very inside of the pavement!!

## **INTERESTING CAR** Jaguar SS

### **MAY BE OF INTEREST**

The International MG & Triumph Spares Day is now taking place at the superb Telford International Centre on April 18th 2021.  
(Ed: Hopefully)

The Moffat Show scheduled for June 2021 has been cancelled.

### **MANY THANKS**

Many thanks to Lindsay W, Craig and Jim T for their articles in this month's mag. I padded it out with the Beginner's Guide to changing your plugs - but we could do with more articles from the rest of you!!!! Please send in photos and a few words of anything you have done with your MG - it could be mechanical, bodywork or a run you managed to do before lock-down. All are welcome!

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### **FOR SALE FOR SALE FOR SALE**

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Peebles area: Early RB MGB GT, project car or for spares, engine not seized but bodywork not great. Offers. Contact Paul at 07932 353219.

Edinburgh area: Midget (probably Mk 1) spares as follows -

Two new doorskins  
One used bootlid (good condition)  
One compete fibreglass 'front end'

Sensible offers considered. Contact Ken at [k.g.crombie@btinternet.com](mailto:k.g.crombie@btinternet.com)

## MADAM ROUGE

I don't know whether it was Allan's note that he was going to get his 'B tarded up or my addiction to Bangers and Cash, but I trolled down to the lock-up on Sunday to see how Madame Rouge was keeping. I had closed the door on her in October 2019, as the indicators required some TLC.

Then came the Spring and Lock-down - so she was abandoned, as I couldn't get her to my friendly local auto-electrician who has the necessary tools for the job. Then Daphne's demise in August threw me a bit.

However, I put her on charge on Sunday afternoon and toddled down today to see how she would fare. Good old BMC B Series, after a few turns, then a minute to let the fuel dry out on the next turn she fired up on all four. No bangs, no misfires, into gear and out.

Then came the Grumpy moment. I tootled round to the Shell station at Braidburn (not the busiest in South Edinburgh, due to its exorbitant prices) to find that the compressor was out of order. Everything else was working. As it was cloudy, I didn't risk going over to the Dreghorn Spur or even to the Esso at Hillend but I took her to the house for a quick wash (not much dust after 14 months, so the lock-up is a good place for the old girl).

Took her back to bed and promised to return shortly to get the tyres inflated, although they are not that soggy.

Anyhow, this is really to say that I hope she will be fit for summer and, Nippy Sweetie permitting, we can meet up at one run or another. [Lindsay Walls](#)





## LET'S GET SHOW BODY READY!!!

Last article was how I had managed to get an SS exhaust sorted for the car and I had left you with the hope that I should still have a Midget sized space in the garage, while the car was away being fettled and painted. As is always the case, things didn't quite go according to plan. Having got the car back, I took some photos of the work needing done and began searching the net for possible people to do work.

My first port of call was in Bathgate, they had done some previous work for me and they were reasonably local - always handy if you need to pop into discuss any issues. With the photos attached the e-mail was sent and within a couple of days I had received a reply. Understandably they were erring on the side of caution but there's being safe and being downright cautious. Phrases such as 'needs total restoration' were quoted - so that was a no.

Secondly, I tried an even more local firm. However, they were more interested in insurance work and felt this was more of a long-term project, so not of interest to them, but they kindly recommended another coachworks.

Onto the third option - the recommendation. Rather than send an e-mail, I was able to pop in and discuss the work. However once again the answer was a no, as is this wasn't the type of work they do.

Back to the internet I sent yet another e-mail to a firm in Broxburn. I chose them, as I am hoping to build the Midget as a fast road/track day car, and they had some experience in this area. Once again, a prompt reply was received asking me to phone and speak to the bodyshop manager. This was looking promising as it wasn't a direct no. Having found some time to phone, the outcome however remained the same and unless I could trailer the car there then they too were erring on the 'safe side'.

Now I'm no expert in bodywork, but I've been around these cars long enough to know what I need/is required and while I can understand the reluctance of garages to quote, it doesn't inspire confidence. Maybe this is something garages will need to look at in the future. Now we are all making more use of Zoom/Teams etc is this the way forward? Or do they employ someone to come and visit clients - food for thought?

Obviously, the issue I had, was the car wasn't driveable and I couldn't really spend the time trailing the car around various garages. There is however light at the end of the tunnel. Chris from CBC autos (who I am sure is a familiar name to at least a couple of members) kindly agreed to come out to the car and look at what is required. *(Ed: Chris did a great job on my Min and Emo's Midget)*

He has taken a list of what I need along with photos to remind himself and hopefully by the time you read this I should have a quote and if all is good (fingers crossed) will be awaiting a date to transport the car to East Lothian (Emo I will let you know the date!!) [Craig Fotheringham](#)



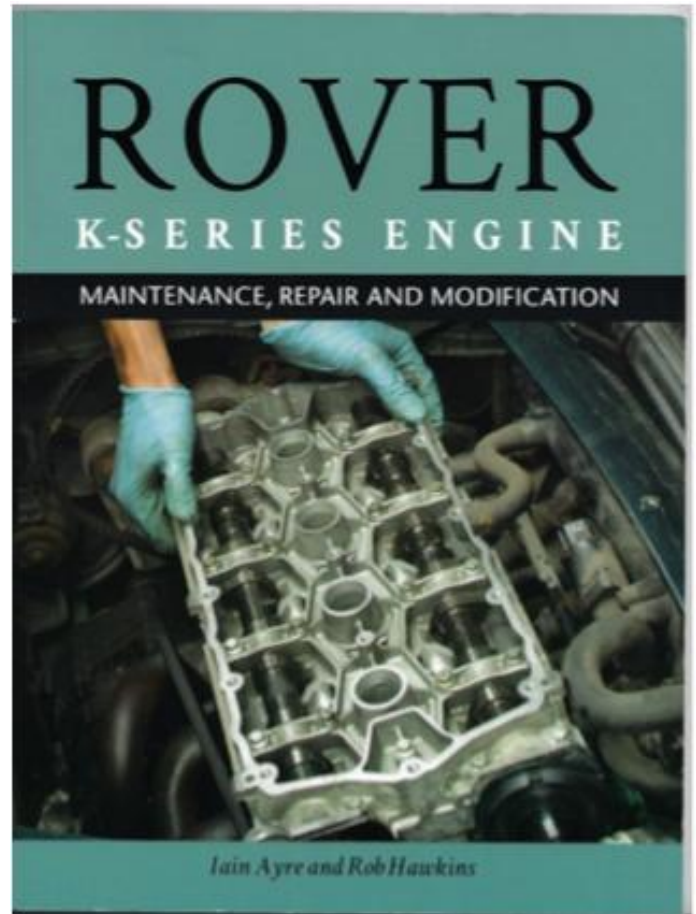
# K-SERIES ENGINE MAINTENANCE, REPAIR and MODIFICATION

by Iain Ayre and Rob Hawkins

This book was published in 2018 by [www.Crowood.com](http://www.Crowood.com) and I purchased it immediately. It is a valuable aid to those of us that have a MGs with the K series engines including the KV6. It covers all aspects of the K series engine and also included is a section on the KV 6. The bonus with this book is that it is illustrated throughout. It consists of 9 Chapters and I will briefly describe what is covered in each one. My only criticism is that I originally expected this book to cover detailed engine strip down, but it covers many items and lots of invaluable information within the 176 pages. I was not disappointed with the book in any way.

## 1-Introduction and History of the K-series.

The first section covers the brief history as from the concept of the engine to the use of it in the Rover 200 in 1988 and then eventually through other MG Rover Land Rover cars to its inclusion in the MGF and TF. The last models to use the K series Engine was the Chinese TF and MG6. On car engine investment return this was a very short time scale (My comment).

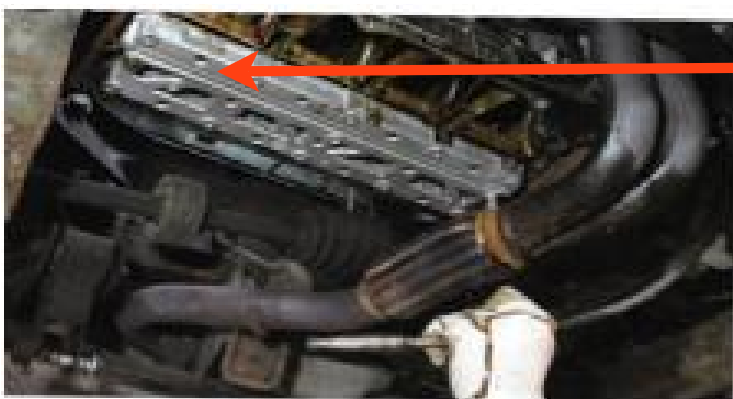


## 2-Who Likes The K?

A really good question that is fully answered in this section. Lotus and Caterham are among the fans of this engine. It explains that the reputation it has is not really fair given that the bigger brother cars engines, such as Jaguar and Porsche that are among the many that have produced engines that are prone to failure as well. The failure is not perhaps the cylinder head gasket though! It also details other uses that this engine has been put to such as with Frontline Developments and others that have installed it to modify their cars Midgets included!

## 3-The Head Gasket.

The detail covered in this section is well known to all that have cars with this engine fitted. It covers the solutions to prevent failure as well as the faults that cause them. This section covers the removal of the head and steps required in detail and as mentioned previously, it is also with photos to accompany the text. More importantly it mentions in detail the replacement of the oil rail which is the most sensible item to accompany head gasket replacement if it is not already replaced previously!



**New oil rail**

6. Fit the new oil rail into position and secure it with its two original 10mm nuts. Refit the oil pickup pipe.

#### **4-Maintenance.**

This section covers everything that we all know as petrol heads, but the detail is very good. It covers service tasks above the basic skill level that a percentage of us lack but is pictorial and easy to follow provided that you can follow of course (sorry). It is from basic routine servicing to cam belt replacement and more importantly how to access the engine on an 'F or TF. Engine strip down is also detailed and proves the worth of this book.

#### **5-Stripdown.**

This section is what it describes a strip down which most of us will never do. It shows how to replace the oil rail, which to be boring, must in my opinion be carried out if you are replacing the head gasket. This engine in its design is simple and easy to work on.

#### **6-The KV 6.**

The KV6 is fitted to the ZS and the ZT and extremely reliable. This section again covers strip downs and rebuilds. Nothing much more to say on this but a really good, interesting section to read. Will help the lucky people that have a V6 engine Zed car



#### **7-Modifications.**

This is a lengthy section starting with fitting a K series engine in an ancient Midget (this sound familiar?) and detailing and fitting better camshafts. Included are modifications that can be carried out to the VVC version. Interestingly it devotes a few pages to Turbocharging and Supercharging which maybe something that I do with the ZS in the future. The last part covered is the exhaust as we all know that is essential to any performance modifications. This is a really interesting section.

#### **8-Electronics.**

The electronics on this engine is probably first edition ECU type of design and although improved over all the years this engine was used for. The engine uses 18 to 21 sensors and the ECU

is still modified by specialists to suit individual needs. The book details all of them and what they do how to test and how to fault find. The initial pages cover the ECU tests that are required as part of the fault detection. It also covers tweaking the engine and mainly via the ECU. To me this section explained exactly how to deal with K series electronics. Again, the commercial tester is a Pscan which I covered earlier in the year through the pages of this wonderful newsletter. *Ed: :-)*

#### **9-Comparisons.**

It is what it states a comparison of the various alternatives available that are fitted by BMC (yes A series) Honda, Vauxhall, Yamaha, Suzuki, Fords, Toyota, Triumph and Alfa's. It compares what the K series offers against the other equivalents. This will help the people that wish to add engines to other makes and models to improve performance.

#### **Conclusion.**

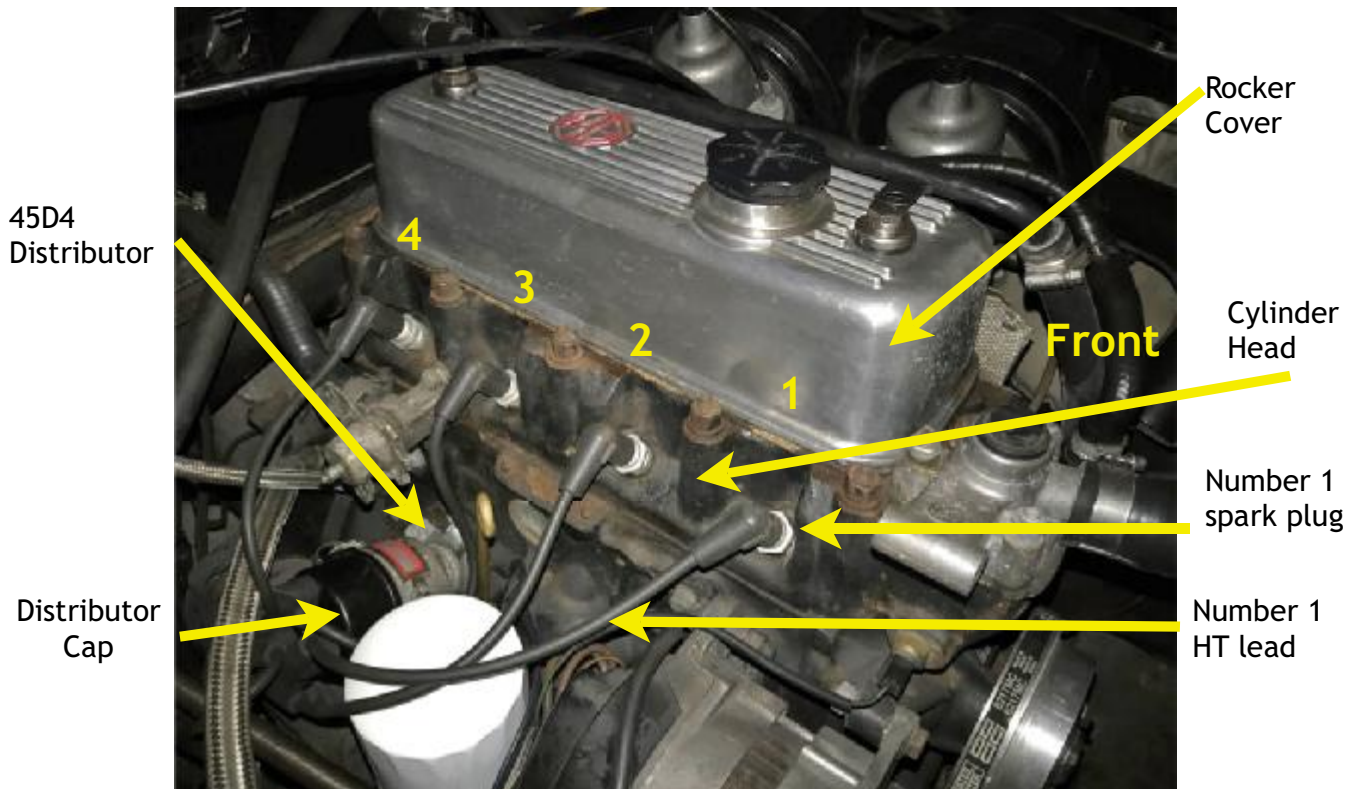
I just wished to add a few comments to suggest that this book is very worth while IF you own a car with a K series engine and need to have a little inside knowledge of the engine maintenance and how it goes together. I also use the factory manual a to help me out, but this book makes it very easy to follow the necessary on a higher level. For detail the Factory manual is the best and also the Haynes book can assist as well. If advice is required, the first and best person to contact is Roger Parker of the MGOC or the technical forum. Recently I tried to use another club that organises the register of ZED's, but they do not have any technical expertise readily available.

If you purchase this book you will enjoy it. [Jim Tierney](#)

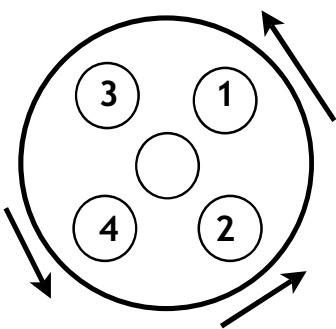


## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CHANGING THE SPARK PLUGS ON YOUR MGB

I've never worked on a Midget - am sticking with what I know! But it'll be broadly similar.



Number 1 cylinder and spark plug are always at the front of your engine and then it is 2, 3 & 4 is the one at the back. The job of the spark plug is to produce a spark to ignite the petrol - the HT leads carry a high-tension current to each plug, so producing the spark. The distributor, its cap and the rotor arm make sure this HT current goes to each plug in turn. The plugs have to fire in the correct order, which is 1, 3, 4, 2 - so looking at the top of your distributor cap, where the plug leads come out, the leads should be fitted in the order shown below. The middle connector goes to the coil, which along with the contact breaker points, helps to trigger the HT current - see end of the article for more detail.



If you are lucky enough to have a V8, the firing order is on the inlet manifold, but goes in the opposite direction.

Since it is so important to have the firing order correct, it is advisable to mark the HT leads, 1, 2, 3 & 4 - or just mark the first 3 as the one without a mark has to be 4! A little dod or two or three of Tippex or paint will do the job - or you can get fancy numbered labels which attach to your HT leads, and look a lot nicer. It is also advisable to mark which is number 1 HT lead on the distributor cap itself, with a dod of Tippex or similar.

The spark plugs, HT leads, distributor cap, rotor arm and points have to be changed at regular intervals to keep everything working efficiently. I won't deal with points here and if you ask, then I'll suggest you get electronic ignition as fitting and setting the points is a real faff and easier done with the distributor removed - which is beyond a beginner!!!! Electronic ignition is much more reliable, but like all electronics if it does fail - you're stuffed. At least with a traditional points system, you (or the AA/RAC/helpful friend) can usually guzzle about and get it going well enough to get you home.

Anyway, if you are a total beginner and don't want to get involved in firing orders, then the tip is to change each plug (and HT lead if you're doing them too) one at a time - then you won't get in a muddle! However, if you have to fit a new distributor cap, then it gets a bit more complicated - I'll deal with this at the end, for the more ambitious,



The HT leads are a push fit, so you don't need any special tools - but you will need a plug spanner to remove the spark plugs. There are a variety of types - some come with your socket set and fit onto your ratchet and some are stand alone. Since most socket sets have plug sockets for a wider plug and one for a narrower plug, I'm assuming there are fat and thin plugs - but have only seen fat ones as that is what my GT & V8 both have! However, if you have a V8, most plug sockets in standard DIY socket sets are too thick walled to fit between the spark plug and the cylinder head - so make sure you have one with thin walls! Plug spanners shown on the left, thin walled in the middle. You will also need a feeler gauge set - metric or imperial - shown on the right.

To remove the spark plug, pull off the HT lead, fit the plug spanner and unscrew the plug - sometimes a tap on the handle of your ratchet will help break it free. You can tell a bit about your engine from what your plugs look like - black & sooty means the mixture is too rich, grey brown means just right and whitish means too weak. If the plugs are oily, then there's a problem with the engine.



You can order the correct plugs for your car from any reputable MG supplier - not sure if Halfords still has MGBs on their list. Take your new plug, make sure the cap is screwed on and check the gap between the electrodes with your feeler gauge. The gauges have their thickness etched onto them, either in thousands of an inch if imperial or hundredths of a mm if metric - and some, helpfully, have both scales.

Select the thickness you want and pull the gauge between the electrodes - you should feel a slight dragging as you do if the gap is correct. For the early distributors (25D4) the gap is 0.025 inch (25 thou) and for the later distributors (45D4), electronic ones and for V8s, the gap is 0.035 inch (35 thou). For the metric minded, the gaps are 0.65 mm or 0.90 mm respectively.

If the gap is too wide, a gentle tap on a hard surface will narrow it. If it's too narrow, then you have to gently bend the electrode out - there is a special tool for that which I can't find to photograph!

Once you have the gap set correctly, then fit the new plug. Screw it in by hand to begin with - very carefully - you do not want to cross thread it as that could be costly to sort. Be especially careful if you have a V8 with its alloy cylinder heads - which are more easily damaged than the cast iron MGB ones. Once it is threaded properly you can use your ratchet to run it up until it starts to tighten, then give it a quarter turn. Again you don't want to over-tighten it. Push on the HT lead and you're done. Repeat with other plugs.

If you are fitting new HT leads, then you can do them one at a time as you fit the new plug. Some sets come with leads of different lengths, so you might have to work out which one fits where - it helps if they are numbered! V8 HT leads do come numbered and are of different lengths to aid fitting and you should remember that after they leave the distributor, you shouldn't have numbers 5 & 7 adjacent to each other in the holder on the rocker cover. The leads are a push fit at the distributor cap too, so pull out the old one and push in the new. There will be a fifth HT lead in your MGB set - that goes from the centre of the distributor cap to the coil and it should be obvious which end goes on the coil - it's generally a bit of a fiddle to get it onto the coil, whichever end you use!

Make sure the cap is screwed on.

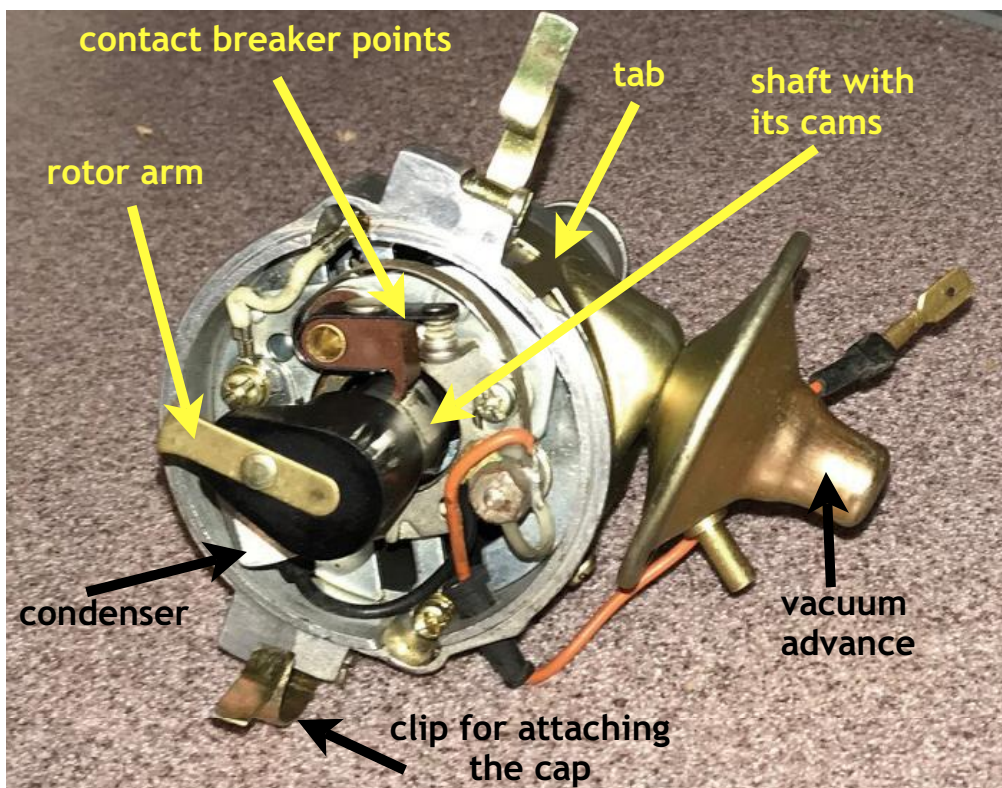


You have to set the gap between the electrodes.



If you need to change the distributor cap, then you obviously have to remove it and change over all the HT leads - so it is important to have the position of number 1 plug lead marked on the cap. If you know where that is, you can work out the others from the firing order. The cap only fits onto the distributor one way as it has a slot in the rim which fits over a tab on the distributor body.

So, remove the old cap and hold your new one next to it in the same orientation (ie the slot in the same position) and fit number one plug lead to the same post as your marked one - mark the new one too. You can then add the other leads (in the correct order) before fitting the new cap - again it helps to have the HT leads numbered.



The photo of the distributor itself shows the relevant bits - although if you're just changing the cap then you only need to concern yourself with the tab that fits in the slot in the cap and the two clips that hold the cap in place. These clips can be awkward if you've got weak fingers like me!!

I'll mention the other bits just so's you know what they are. The rotor arm turns on its shaft with the engine and directs the HT current to each plug in turn. It doesn't last forever, but is easy changed - it is a push fit and can only go on one way due to another slot and tab system.

As the shaft turns, it has cams that open and close the points, so triggering the the coil to produce the HT current. The condenser (white in this pic 'coz corroded - it should be silver) stops arcing between the two bits of the points as they open. Both the points and the condenser failing can cause several problems and interesting misfires and my V8 has been through them all in the past 37 years!!! When the points are open there should be a gap of 15 thou - too wide or too narrow will also cause problems and you have to set this gap when fitting new points and the whole process is such a faff, that I recommend giving it to a professional - or fit electronic ignition! **Mrs Grumpy**



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*Please feel free to contact the committee if you have any queries.*

*Monthly meetings still cancelled due to Covid.*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All provisional

<i>March</i>	<i>Carvery Lunch</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>Run</i>
<i>April 25</i>	<i>Drive It Day Run</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>Weekend away to Northumbrian Classic Show at Corbridge.</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>Stirling Classic Car Show</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>FAVVO show at Ladybank</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>Gymkhana at Vintage Bus Museum</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>Wheels &amp; Wings Show,</i>
<i>June 6</i>	<i>BVAC Show, Thirlestane</i>	<i>September 26</i>	<i>Gathering of the Clans at Doune</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>Run</i>		
<i>July</i>	<i>Dunbar RNLI Day.</i>		May be of interest:
<i>July 11</i>	<i>SVVC Show, Glamis Castle</i>	<i>August 15</i>	<i>Classic Car Show at Conifox</i>
<i>July</i>	<i>Run</i>	<i>August 22</i>	<i>Cumbria Classic at Dalemain House</i>