

WELCOME TO OUR WINTER 2012 NEWSLETTER



In May, the UK Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency confirmed that classic cars and bikes made before 1960 will be exempt from the MoT test, following a public consultation. This of course means that all UK XKs, bar late 150s, will be exempt; saving their owners the £54.85 annual test fee and a nervous hour or so at the garage. Good news at first glance but is it really? On top of this, on the horizon there is the threat of a new EU alternative test that could see many XKs and other classics becoming illegal, despite being in perfect condition.

The announcement that MoTs are to be dropped for pre-60 cars and motorcycles was made by Roads Minister Mike Penning. He said: "We are committed to cutting out red tape which costs motorists money without providing significant overall benefits.

"Owners of classic cars and motorbikes tend to be enthusiasts who maintain their vehicles well - they don't need to be told to look after them, they're out there in all weathers checking the condition of the engine, tyres and bodywork.

"Owners of classic vehicles will still be legally required to ensure that they are safe and in a proper condition to be on the road but scrapping the MoT test for these vehicles will save motorists money."

The change in the law means that from 18th November 2012, cars and motorcycles made before 1960 are exempt from the MoT.



Good news to many perhaps at first sight, but the classic car world is not as happy about this as perhaps some would imagine. I can think of a few cars tucked away in the dusty corners of garages that would never pass an MoT, whose owners might be tempted to put them on the road. But it's not only a question of cars that are in a poor state. As any mechanic will tell you, doing few miles is often worse for a car than regular use; brake cylinders and pistons can become stuck, brake pipes can corrode on poorly stored cars, oil seals

fail, electrics become unreliable and much more deterioration can take place. Many owners who carry out their own maintenance seldom have the opportunity, skills, or the use of a vehicle lift, to be able to closely examine parts like steering and suspension joints, brake components and even the tyres. Yet it will be their responsibility to ensure that their cars are properly maintained and heaven help anyone who has a serious accident due to poor maintenance.

This you would think must be a worry for classic car insurers but they seem undecided on the issue. Some were at the Goodwood Revival in September and the question was put as to whether they would insist on any form of regular examination when MoTs were no longer required. Of the half dozen or so asked, only Hagerty appeared to have an answer. They will request all their clients put their cars through an MoT test, even though not required by law, or to have a full service done annually. This seems a very sensible attitude given that it is feasible given that, in the event of an accident on the road, the owner of the vehicle will be personally liable for any costs incurred if it can be proved that the car was not in a roadworthy condition. Most of the other insurers appeared to think that it was an odd question to ask. However it will be them that may be forced into difficult situations if an insured vehicle is involved in an accident claim where the condition of the car is questioned.

BROAD 50-POINT SAFETY CHECK

MoTs or not, my advice to owners is to make sure that your car is safe. Here at Guy Broads we have been asked many questions by customer speculating about all the changes with MoTs and about keeping their cars safe. As a result, we are going to start collating customer information so that we can offer an annual 50-point Safety Check and service for customers here in our workshop. There will be special offers for the collection and delivery of cars for UK customers who can't drive their cars here. The other option that we shall be introducing is a Guy Broad safety kit, in which will be a 50-point Safety Check sheet for the owner to fill out or to give to the mechanic with the safety kit. So please feel free to register your details with us over the phone and we shall put you on our database for an annual phone call for your Guy Broad safety kit.

Just to put maintenance in context, the original service schedule for most cars in the 1950s and 1960s was to carry out a service every 3000 miles or three months, with one of those services being a major one at 12,000 miles or annually: the major service comprising complete bumper to bumper checks, with lubrication to all points as well as new plugs, points, filters, an engine oil change and a lot more. Modern cars today can often go years without the need for a major service and this to a great extent is due to modern lubricants and fuel. So does this mean that your XK can benefit from this technology too? No is the simple answer. It can be argued that today a set of plugs will last more than 12,000 miles or a year. Equally, modern oils are a lot different from older ones but then modern oils are not suitable for many older cars. Many XK owners never drive their car 12,000 miles or more a year, and not using a car is in many ways worse for it than regular use. An annual service should be carried out and all the safety checks that go with it. Mind you with the horrific cost of some synthetic oils today, changing your 20/50 annually is a lot cheaper than running a car for two years with a top synthetic that you don't need.

Unless you have some sort of valid qualification I would seriously recommend that a 'professional' safety inspection is carried out and documented and this is where our new Check Sheet comes in. In this litigious world, if something should happen that puts into question the condition of your car then unless you can prove otherwise the buck could stop with you. I would hope that with the demise of the legal requirement for MoT testing, garages will be able to offer classic car 'MoT equivalent tests' at reduced rates from the statutory rate, which is expensive for the amount of time it takes to examine an older car.

However Big Brother Europe has yet another black cloud threatening us. The EU is proposing a new 'MoT' type regulation that would insist that all older cars must never be modified or modernised. This says that if the new 'MoT' test were to be adopted, any car that has been modified from the

original would fail. This means that any car that, for example, has had its brakes upgraded, or better lights fitted would become illegal. It is just ridiculous that on one hand Westminster is dropping legislation to 'cut out red tape which costs motorists money without providing significant overall benefits' but on the other is considering a far worse alternative. All I can suggest is that you lobby your MP and MEP about this because it would be the biggest backward step ever seen in the classic car world. If you do not live in the UK and are reading this elsewhere in the EU, I suggest you check to see if your government may be considering adopting the same legislation – it must be stopped.

WINTER WORK



Most XK owners reading this will probably have their car safely tucked away for the winter, hopefully having done the work we have recommended to ensure the car is stored properly. No doubt they will be reading the latest *XK Gazette* and dreaming of the sunny days when they can get the car out again and enjoy the spring sunshine. But maybe they will also be wondering about what they could do to enhance their car to make it that bit more enjoyable. Such as swapping the clumpy four-speed Moss gearbox for a silky smooth five-speed box? Or upgrading their brakes? Or maybe putting on some larger carburettors? The choices are vast.

But what generally happens is that either these ideas fizzle out because time has flown. The car is back in action with a full schedule of events or you've left it too late to book it in for the work and the workshop is fully booked.

The answer is simple – strike while the iron is hot. Do it now.

So what about those choices? My first choice, I have to say, is to fit a five speed gearbox. This not only makes the car an absolute joy to drive, with a light silky-smooth gear-change, but it also makes it so much more flexible, particularly in traffic. The gearbox conversion we offer is one I developed personally and isn't based on the old second-hand GETRAG gearbox like times of the past, and in some cases still very much the present, our box is tailored to the job. I had the aluminium casing specially cast to fit the original XK bell-housings, so you don't need sandwich plates and major alterations, in fact the gearbox fits perfectly and the only modification you will need to make is the prop-shaft, which we can supply for you, if you choose not to alter your existing prop-shaft. The Cosworth gears, which I also managed to acquire for these gearboxes, are particularly well suited to the XK with a superb set of ratios. Included with the gearbox is everything else you will need to fit the gearbox including clutch plate and speedometer cable. When you replace your gearbox you tend to find the alignment gets resolved on the car as well stopping the common problem of a fork snapping off the operating fork.

EXHAUSTING TIMES BUT NEW MANIFOLDS ARE ON THE

HORIZON

One of the most distinctive features of XK engines is their shiny black enamelled exhaust manifolding. The two manifolds (headers) look fantastic when new but grim as the enamel flakes and rust starts appearing, as inevitably it does. Refurbishing or replacing the enamelled manifolds is an expensive job and it is generally a question of time before the beauty fades. New technology can play a part here and there is a coating called Zircotec 'Liquid Black' that can virtually replicate the factory vitreous enamel finish with the added advantage that it offers heat protection thus reducing the amount of heat radiated. However, this is an expensive choice but no



matter how well finished those manifolds are they are not particularly well gas-flowed. This means that despite the design of the XK cylinder head with its cross-flow porting and hemispherical combustion chambers, the departing gases from the engine are restricted by the tight contours of the cast manifolds. The ideal is to have manifolding with six separate equal length pipes, one from each exhaust port, with larger radii that provide the hot high-speed gases the least possible restriction and best possible harmony. This is called gas-flowing and what it does is maximise the inertia of the exhaust gas 'slugs' or pulses leaving the cylinders. This actually creates even lower pressure during the intake stroke in each cylinder, pulling in extra fuel/air mixture so that more power is produced by the engine.



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A change to manifolding with elegant chromed sweeping pipes not only improves the under-bonnet looks of your car but also gives the engine more power. The really good news is that we are just putting the final touches to some spectacular new manifolds that do just this. We have been involved in the development of these to ensure that they not only deliver maximum power increase but also that they are a perfect fit. There is a long version and a short version and we are now taking orders for these. The long manifolds (see photos) fit 120 and 140 models and there will be an XK150 variant shortly. These mate up with our 'big bore' exhaust systems and in addition to the power boost, the exhaust note is something to savour as well. The second photo is of our 'short manifold' this fits all XKs and E-types too.

While on the subject of exhausts it would seem timely to run down on the systems we offer for XKs. We have single and twin systems for the XK120, both in stainless steel. The single system is a two-into-one down pipe from the manifolds that links to a 'straight through' silencer (muffler) and single tail pipe. The twin system has two separate down pipes a single silencer with two 'straight through'

internal pipes and twin tail pipes. For the XK140 we offer the choice of stainless or mild steel twin systems. These have two separate down pipes, silencers and tails pipes. Similarly the XK150 system has two separate down pipes, silencers and tail pipes but we only offer stainless steel.