



More on Tyres

We had two pieces of feedback following our warning about the risks associated with older tyres in the last issue. That warning had been triggered by the death of the driver of an MGB that had overturned following a blowout.

First, the Tame Valley Vintage and Classic Car Club, of which the unfortunate MGB driver was a member, wrote to say that the deceased had been a tireless worker for the Children's Adventure Farm which provides free holidays for under privileged and special needs children. This year the club's 2007 annual 'A6' charity run was in support of, and ended at, the adventure farm where a bench commemorating the driver's life was unveiled.

Second, a reader gently took us to task for not explaining how we were certain that it was the age of the tyre that had caused the catastrophe, and not some other cause, such as picking up a piece of debris or overheating due to under-inflation that might have caused a new tyre to fail in the same way. The quick answer is because that's what the official reports said and it matched with experience - but the point was well made so we looked a little further.

A large section of tread had parted company from the tyre. The police recovered this missing section of tread and matched it to the remains of the tyre. It was found in the verge some eight metres before the first indication of any tyre scuff marks on the carriageway. The report did not specifically state there was no evidence of contact with debris and there was no way of knowing what the pressure in the tyre was prior to the accident, but it was noted that the pressures in the remaining three tyres were above manufacturer's recommendation. The effects of the burst tyre might have been exacerbated by the fact that the wheel spinner on this wheel was not fully tightened.

Car tyres are made from a synthetic styrene-butadiene rubber which is easy to manufacture and has a significantly lower cost than natural rubber, but it does have the disadvantage that it is more prone to oxidation. To counter this, tyre compounds contain anti-ageing additives as well as 'extender oils' that improve grip and elasticity. Unfortunately, the chemicals that provide these properties are themselves harmful to human health and the amounts that may be used are strictly controlled at a level that provides a compromise between the need for the tyres to last a reasonable time and the requirement to minimise the health risk. The 'reasonable time' is around ten years, which in the context of tyres for vehicles that are in regular use is more than adequate. The oxidation means that the character of the compound is deteriorating from day one, but the effect is barely perceptible in the first few years if the tyre is looked after or stored properly.

If a tyre has been in regular use beyond that period there should not be a problem provided the tyre is kept at the correct pressure (to avoid risk of over heating). But if the tyre has been standing for months on end, the oxidation of the compound means a stiffening of the tyre walls so that when it is next used the unaccustomed flexing will cause heat to build up more rapidly than it would in a newer tyre or one that was used regularly. When the tyre warms to a critical level, the natural degradation of the compound increases rapidly causing the long molecular chains that give the compound its flexible properties to shorten, and ultimately causing the tyre to start to break up. The tyre failure on the MGB was consistent with that picture.

Electronic Vehicle Licensing (EVL)

DVLA is keen for more vehicle keepers to use EVL as it offers considerable cost savings and a more accurate database. FBHVC has received a growing number of observations and complaints from historic vehicle owners that they have not been able to obtain a licence via EVL despite being invited to use the service on the V11 renewal form. It appears that the system refuses to proceed on the grounds that the records do not contain a specific date of manufacture and thus cannot determine requirement for a Mot certificate. This seems rather ridiculous since we have not yet come across a vehicle that was manufactured after it was first registered!

Members have complained that they cannot tell from scrutiny of their documentation whether their vehicle meets EVL criteria and assume, quite correctly, that an invitation to use EVL upon the V11 renewal document implies compliance. A clue may lie in section 3 on the front page of the V5C certificate. A modern vehicle will have a notation 'declared new at first registration', or similar wording if it was imported referring to a specific year of manufacture. (Vehicles unable to offer a specific year of manufacture are now allocated a 'Q' suffix mark.)

A check on www.vehiclelicence.gov.uk will confirm whether the year of manufacture is recorded; many historic vehicle entries will have 'n/a' on the relevant line. EVL is a complex subject and the difficulties that historic vehicle keepers are experiencing must have roots in an IT programme that was developed to cater for modern vehicles and databases.

Members contacting DVLA have been advised that they could have the record amended provided that they obtained a dating certificate from the manufacturer. In many cases this will be impossible, in others it will incur an expense that may be considerable. When most of our vehicles were current it was not a requirement for a date of manufacture to be inserted upon an RF60 or VE60 registration logbook; the assumption was that most vehicles when first registered were new. The EVL checking process lacks the flexibility to take account of earlier procedures.

This is frustrating for those who thought that EVL would be an answer to the problem posed by Continuous Licensing and SORN to people with an active lifestyle involving frequent travel. We have taken the issue forward with the Agency as we consider it unsatisfactory, if not discriminatory, that keepers of older vehicles may be required to incur significant expense in order to use EVL, a system that is in essence designed to save money for DVLA!

Register Website Revamp

I am delighted to announce the improvements instigated by Mark Grimshaw to the AROC Giulia 105 website have now been completed. The Register now has a new fresh look on the Internet. One of the many new features is the facility to join the Giulia 105 Register on-line. We also have our own dedicated email address for correspondence 105register@aroc-uk.com. I hope you will find the time to visit the site very soon.

Go to www.aroc-uk.com and follow the link from 'Registers'.

We also now have our own dedicated email address: 105register@aroc-uk.com.

Benvenuto

September and October were busy months with several new members joining the Register. Among them were Stelios Stylianides with his lovely Spider 2000 Veloce. Stelios informs me he was the third owner back in 1982. He sold it in 1985 but then bought it back in 2005. It must be love!



Geoff Dixon has purchased John Roberts' Sprint GT. This is one of the earliest Bertone coupes known to the Register having been manufactured in 1964. The car was originally sold by Lightburs, an Alfa Romeo dealer in Adelaide and imported into the UK back in 1990.



Stuart Taylor

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