

When One Member Helps Another!

A few weeks ago, Eddie Loader and I went to Richard Youard's house to try to get his A7 PD started, with a view to taking the car out on 'Drive it Day'. We succeeded in starting the car, despite the petrol being several years old, and I wanted to take a short run in order to check the brakes. Driving the car was difficult owing to the very dodgy petrol. Under load the engine would only run on almost full throttle which made climbing the fairly steep hill of Richard's drive challenging. At the top of the hill the drive turns sharp left and the incline increases. I should have been in bottom gear for the last bit but wasn't. Trying to keep the engine running, change down to first and stop the car running backwards was very difficult and I failed, managing to break a half-shaft. Richard was very good about it but he wants me to drive him in the Seven to the Madley Show, so I have got to get it going again by then!

The car has not been driven on the road for about three years, the battery had died on it's feet and we needed my 12v emergency pack to start the car and then we ran it on Eddie's spare battery. We cleaned the battery terminals, changed the plugs and the points and re-timed the ignition. Although we had brought a gallon of fresh fuel we did not drain the tank, only using a small amount of new fuel in the carburettor bowl to get the engine going; that was a big mistake. Although I knew that fuel deteriorated over time I had no idea how much and how badly this effected the engine performance. Although the engine would run at small throttle openings it had almost no power and would die as soon as it came under load. This meant that any start was a racing start i.e. almost maximum engine revs and release the clutch. You can imagine applying this regime on a steep hill is not easy and in this case it resulted in the broken half shaft. The next stage was to dismantle the rear hubs to see the damage and there was a small chance that it was only a broken woodruff key but, I was not betting much on the that chance!



I started to investigate the lack of drive to the rear axle (suspected to be a broken half shaft) by removing the offside rear hub. This revealed that the woodruff key and the keyway were in excellent condition and so it was on to the nearside hub. This transpired to be the source of the problem. The key had sheared (see photo) but luckily there was no real damage to the keyway. The taper, of course, had been damaged and will require to be lapped with the hub. The condition of the hub taper appears to be worse than that of the half shaft taper and I have found in Richard's extensive stock of A7 spares, a hub in better condition than the one I have removed, so I think I will use the new one and lap that to the shaft. I have also found a pair of new keys in the aforesaid stock so it only remained to find a pair of hub gaskets and these have been kindly provided by Brain Bedford.

I need to discuss with Richard whether I should disturb the hub bearing and replace the felt oil seal or even insert a modern lipseal. I will let you know how I get on!

Ron Sadler.