

# TEE ONE TOPICS

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Issue 73 March 2008

## IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

Only this morning I was corresponding with an enthusiast overseas who it appears has a particularly nasty variety of cancer. Fortunately at the moment he is in remission but in the context of general activities he was planning he was scheduled for his periodic CAT scan. Most of us in the pending box have periodic checks in various forms. Usually the only time we get anxious is when the doctor puts his hand on our shoulder for just a little bit longer than usual, when we go for the result! But my correspondent confessed that his checkups were more nerve wracking because you see, he is a physician!

I tell this story because in barely 14 days I am expecting to wheel the old Spur out onto the Queen's Highways or are they now Mr Rudd's, and expect the dear old thing to cover several thousand miles without hesitation? My problem is that I know too much about the car, so much so that I realise how little I perhaps don't know. After all I am not about to completely dismantle the thing as some form of prophylaxis against stopping! Compare this with an owner I sidled up to recently while his car was hoisted heavenwards for a completely innocuous oil change or brake adjustment. 'Going to the Rally' I casually asked, 'Yes, yes' he cried with much enthusiasm, 'just thought a bit of a service wouldn't go astray'.

Feeling malicious and responsible at the same time, I casually pointed out the rotten brake hoses, a leaking height control valve, fan belts with which I would hesitate to tie up my sagging aspidistra, various split rubber protective boots and a pair of those wonderful English tyres that were just starting to rid themselves of their wire carcass! At that point I fled, the service was being done by his man (really reliable chap you know) and I did not want to invite recriminations. As far as I can gather any specialist for these cars is currently flat out!

Well I had my own list of things to fix. Remembering that I am still a Gunner, have been gunner do a number of things to the Spur for years, but this time I was firm. So how about, radiator out and cleaned and two small leaks repaired, two hydraulic joints re-sleeved (they have been spotting the floor as long as I can remember, all the things that screw into and feed out of the transmission had their seals replaced – they all leaked to some extent, the sub frame mounts on the rear of the front unit were replaced, the hydraulic reservoirs were sealed yet again, a new tyre on the spare, and given the length of the journey, I am fitting lumbar supports to the front squabs!

I really would be better off simply relying on 'my man' since some owners seldom seem to be seen on the side of the road unlike the writer on his way to Parkes 2 years ago! Anyway we will keep our fingers crossed. For those fellow travellers – good luck!





## THE GERMAN CATCH

Following my little burst in the January issue about the hazard of spare wheels dropping all over the public highways, I had a number of enquiries about THE modification. Here is the principal bit, the hook. When you lift the spare wheel with your raising and lowering device, it is important that the hook, seen above is swung up through the central hole in the wheel and the little lever above it is swung across the hook. In theory you could then remove the supporting cradle and throw it away as the wheel would just hang on the hook! A little bit of maintenance here though, especially if you live in car eating countries with salt on the roads. The two swivels, one of which is seen here need a periodic dousing in oil otherwise one or both will seize up and you won't be able to lower the wheel at all. Best do this at the regular tyre pressure checks you do each month through this same aperture!



And if you are really thorough you will undo the nuts at the bottom of the lifting screw, screw the latter out, give it a good clean and grease-up and re-assemble.



Remember the lowering arrangements for the Corniche and the leather gouging required to rotate the top nut because

the rear panel of the car, unique to that model, overhangs the mechanism.



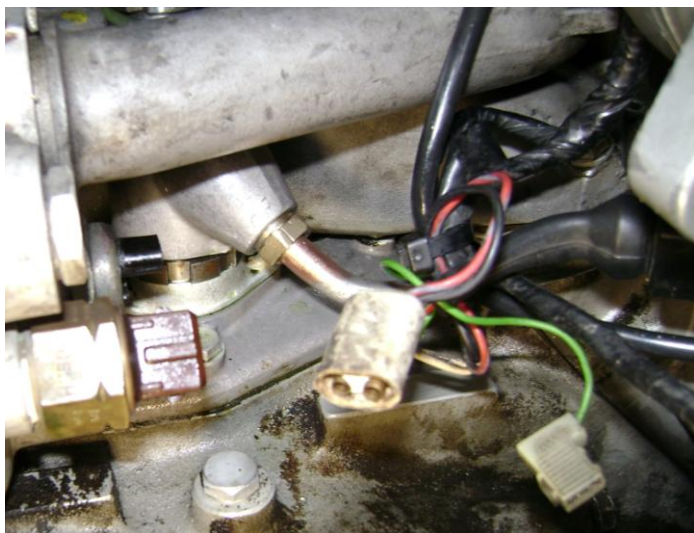


And here is the other bit of the modification. The small tube at lower left is intended to receive the wheel brace handle so that having lowered the wheel as far as possible the entire assembly can be lifted off the hook seen here at the bottom of the lowering tube. The spare wheel cradle has had added the holding bar seen poking to the right which in turn sits in the hook. And as seen below when you shoe the car with large mag wheels as on a Turbo, things are going to hang down a bit!



## A HAZARDOUS TASK

One of the regular tasks on our vee eights seems to be re-sealing of one or both of the hydraulic pumps. As you know these are fed simply by gravity to a casing surrounding the main body of the pump. The fluid be it either RR363 or LHM is retained in the casing by a couple of large 'O' rings. The latter probably shrink or like most of us just get tired.



Fortunately the leak is usually slow and first indication is the low fluid light coming on the dashboard! Armed with a torch, slim people like me usually sling their gut over the mudguard, wedge themselves into the engine compartment and get to a position where they can look straight down on the pump. The rear pump is the difficult one. With carburetted cars it is carefully kept in sight but placed just sufficiently under the air horn assembly to preclude access to the pump without undoing the whole intake assembly and carefully moving

it fo'ward as say on board ship! For fuel injected cars I have yet to experience that challenge since all those pipes and things which must have some purpose have to be removed!

Peering down over the pump and particularly the surrounds, you will as likely see a nice oil slick or staining where the slick has been roasted onto the casting. The job in the case of the front pump is a good opportunity to show your mechanical abilities. Step one is to stop the oil flowing from the reservoir to the floor since it is very difficult to scrape up and should not be reinserted in the braking system assuming you are still enamoured with this life.



The simplest way to stop the flow is with clamps here seen in a pretty shade of yellow so that hopefully you will remember that they are there and can find them when they drop down into the gubbins beside the engine. They are very

inexpensive and available at most auto places.

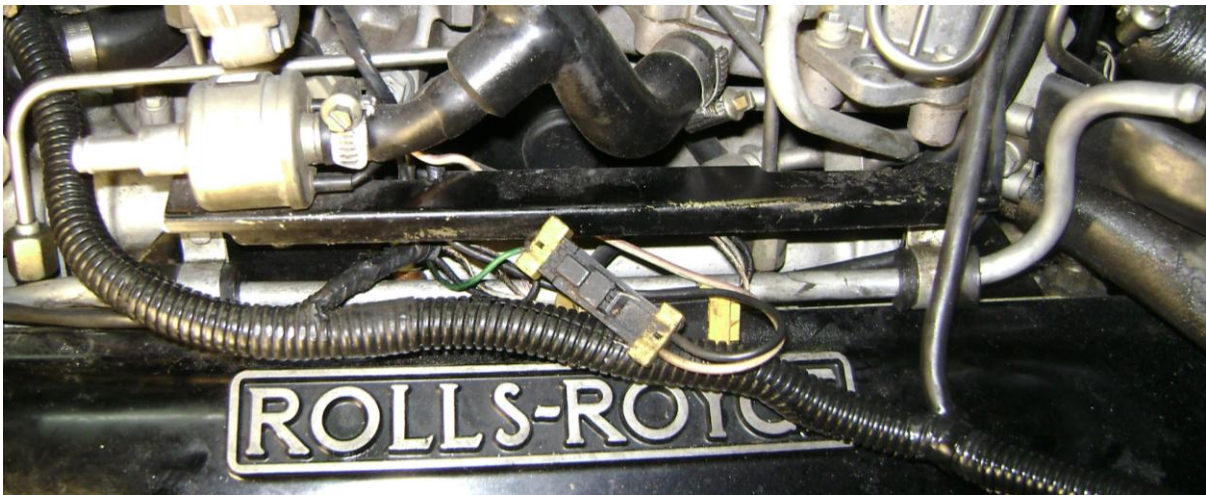


The next step is to remove the outlet pipe from the top of the pump. No you are not going mad pump below is on an earlier carburetted engine. Note that the inlet pipe here goes down into the outer casing whereas the first picture shows the later pump where the pipe goes up into the casing.

So with both pipes disconnected, put some old cloth around the pump to soak up most of the mess. The circlip which can be clearly seen here is squeezed open and lifted off the pump. Do get yourself some decent circlip pliers for this job and don't muck around with the wife's knitting needles or bits of nail etc etc!

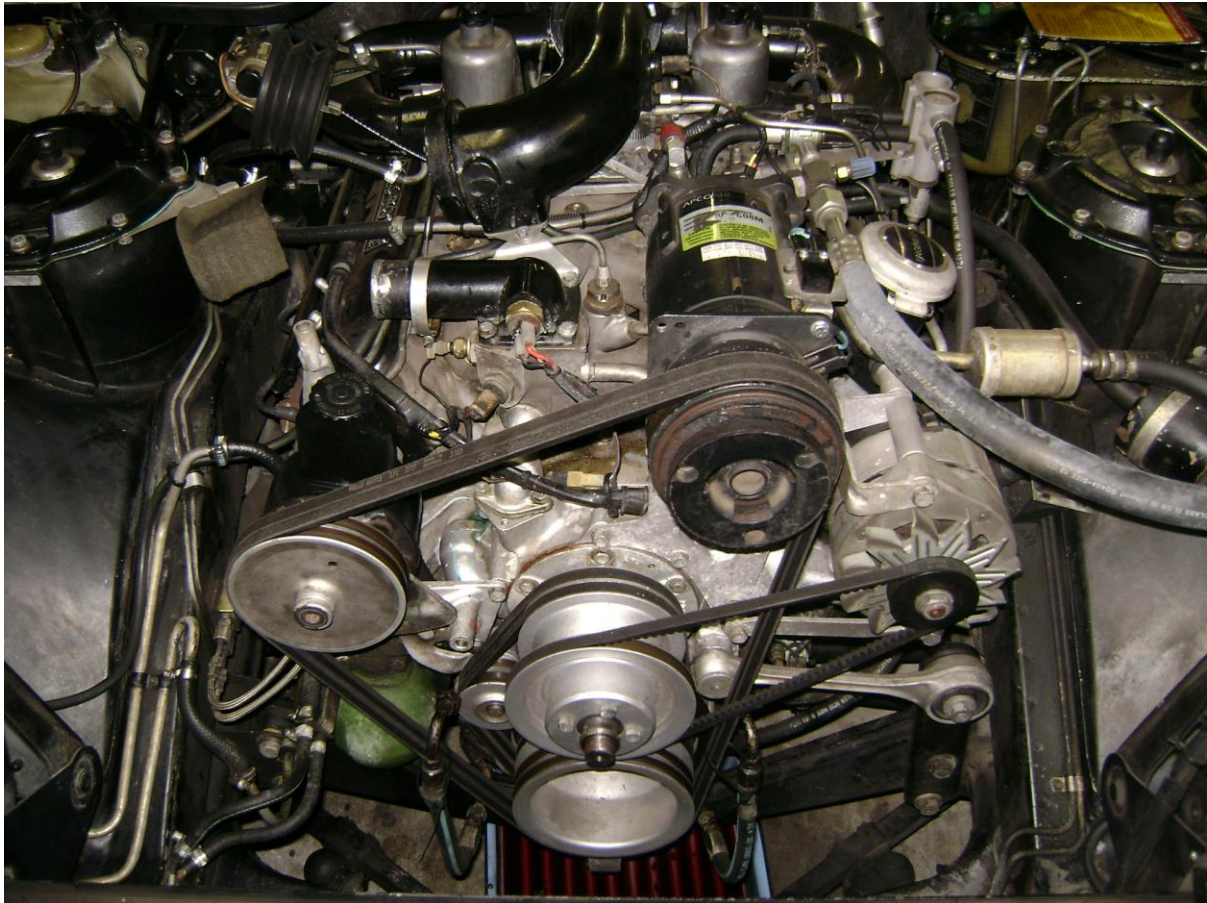


The outer casing can then be gently prised off, the 'O' rings replaced and the whole lot re-assembled. The hazard?? This lies in the nipple in the supply line. It is easily cross threaded and with pumps on the fuel injected cars with an upward insertion fitting, this hazard is particularly popular! In these cases it is highly advisable to remove the bonnet so that you can work over the front of the grille.



General advice is use only genuine pump kits as any others just do not seem to last. If you have the slightest doubt about the condition of the outer sleeve – that is the inside surfaces, have it re-sleeved by a good brake shop in stainless steel! The last picture shows the feed pipe for the front pump running along the top of the rocker cover. On this car the nipple thread on the feed pipe was damaged and the whole pipe had to be removed for repairs. Clearly a lot of mucking around!





## **AN ALL TOO SELDOM VIEW OF YOUR ENGINE**

Part of the project to assuage Bill's terror that something will go wrong syndrome, involved the removal of the radiator core including the fan and associated pipes etc, giving this superb view of the front of the engine. Oh and one other small detail – the bonnet was removed. During my ownership the compressor has been replaced, the alternator overhauled, the timing case seal replaced as was the front engine mount. The water pump has had a thorough going over as was the idler for the belt tensioner. Of course all belts and hoses have been replaced as was the thermostat and a couple of air conditioning hoses! It's not that I am pessimistic! At the top of the radiator there were a couple of very small weeps which were repaired and the 'man' said the next move in that department was a new radiator. Did I mention that having observed a small slick of transmission fluid on the high pressure power steering hose, I had that re-made as well at about a sixth of the price of the genuine article! This car is blessed with the latest steering rack – not of my doing- and to date there are no leaks. Watch this space!



"Speed has never killed anyone, suddenly becoming stationary...  
That's what gets you."

Jeremy Clarkson





## PARALYSIS AND ROLLS-ROYCE SEATS

Faced with sitting on these things for some thousands of miles, I decided to spend some time and money on the orthopaedic aspects of the car. This project temporarily brought me out in recollective boils when I remembered some self anointing blurb that came out of the Factory years ago showing a faceless designer working on a seat to improve it with the implication that it was akin to re-planting the Garden of Eden!

Apparently the authors of that bit of spin AND the designer were unaware of the lumbar region of the spinal column in the vertebrates for which these cars were intended. For those a little short in the physiology department this is the chassis of your body, the foundation of your spine, the framework God provided you with to stop your bum falling down your legs!



When you sit, the framework known as the pelvis tends to tilt back to balance the spine and hence the body above it. Left in this position for a while, with the muscles in the area working hard to stop you folding up like a deckchair, the whole area becomes quite painful. When you get out of the car, the thing you really want to do is fall flat on your face and stay there until the whole assembly sorts itself out and the muscles relax again!

The solution has been known since Noah took up carpentry. Simply provide lumbar support. This can be as simple as a rolled up newspaper wedged in behind your back running

across the top of the pelvis. This stops the latter tilting back taking your spine with it. Or you can update your car to a 1990 model when with the push of a little switch (on the side of the front seats – see pic on previous page ) a little electric motor whirrs into life and pumps up an inflatable cushion in the same area of the squab (the bit that you lean back on as distinct from the seat that you sit on!). OR!

You can rip open your hallowed seats and poke in an inflatable cushion, lead an inflating tube out in an appropriate place and pump up the thing until you are comfortable. This is an account of that task performed on a Silver Spur.



Here is the seat 'deflated'. The 'bladder' sits under the padding immediately behind the pleating seen here. This padding and the rest of the leather cover is one unit that is stretched over a great hunk of moulded foam plastic and the seat frame!

It is not necessary to remove the seat. First step is to hoist the seat up and as far forward as possible for access. For those with good eyesight you will notice two cross braces at the



bottom of the seat frame just above the foot rest which I left there to provide some atmosphere for the photo! These braces do not exist according to the spares manuals that I have seen. Some cars have them some cars don't! Some cars as did mine have none of the driver's side and not on t'other! In my view (said with an avuncular frown) they should both have them and if they are missing get some from a wrecker! However for this job, remove the braces to improve access. Next step is to remove the back of the seat which varies



from model to model. The Spirit/Spur is so simple with two small screws at the bottom sides and the whole back lifts off complete with tables, compartments, cocktail shakers et al!

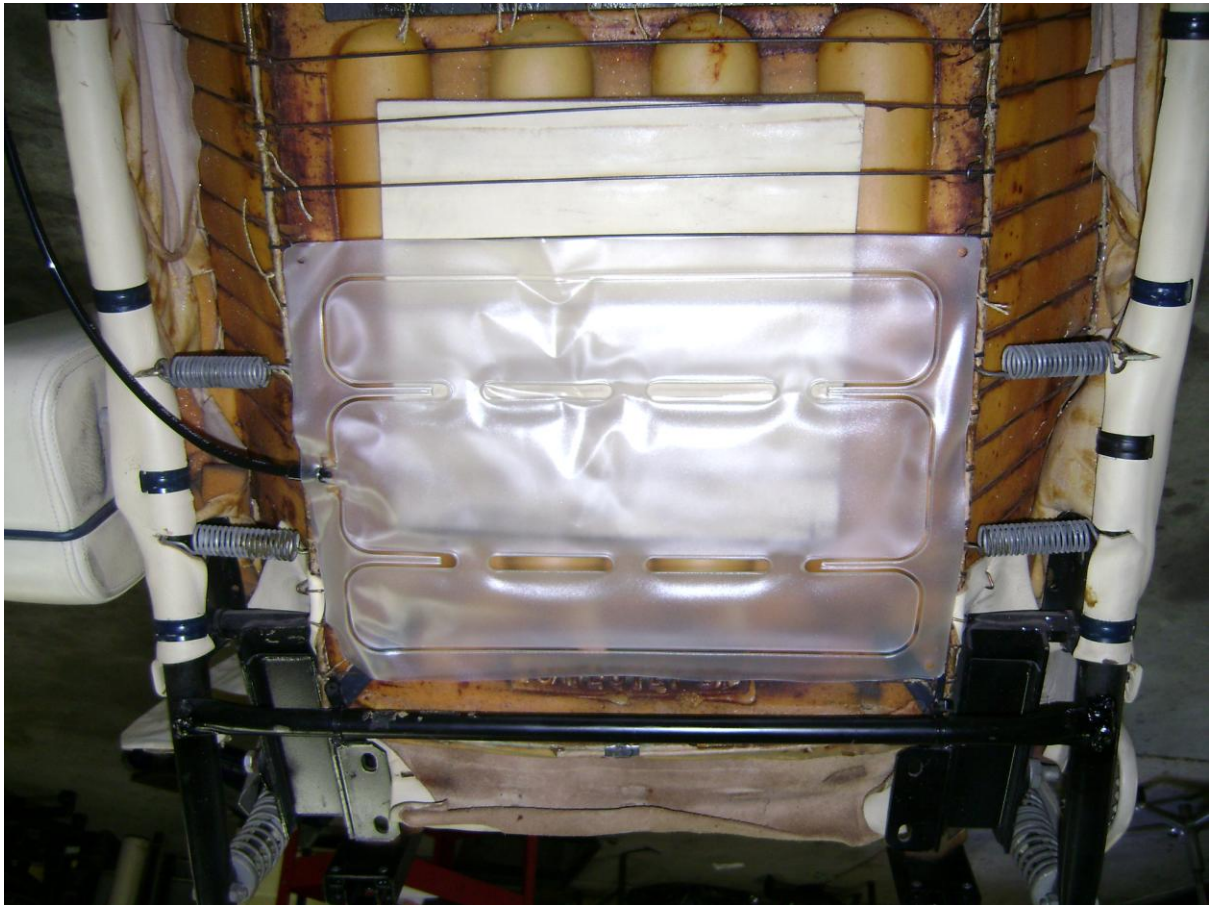


Here the bottom edge of the seat cover has been detached from the metal tube, bracing the bottom of the seat frame. The leather complete with clips simply pulls off, the clips are removed without tearing the leather or your fingers too much. Here can be seen the bulk of the squab – much foam with extra support from wires and springs etc! On this car on the driver's side which did not have the cross bracing, the anchor rod seen above had broken away at the side welds on both sides!

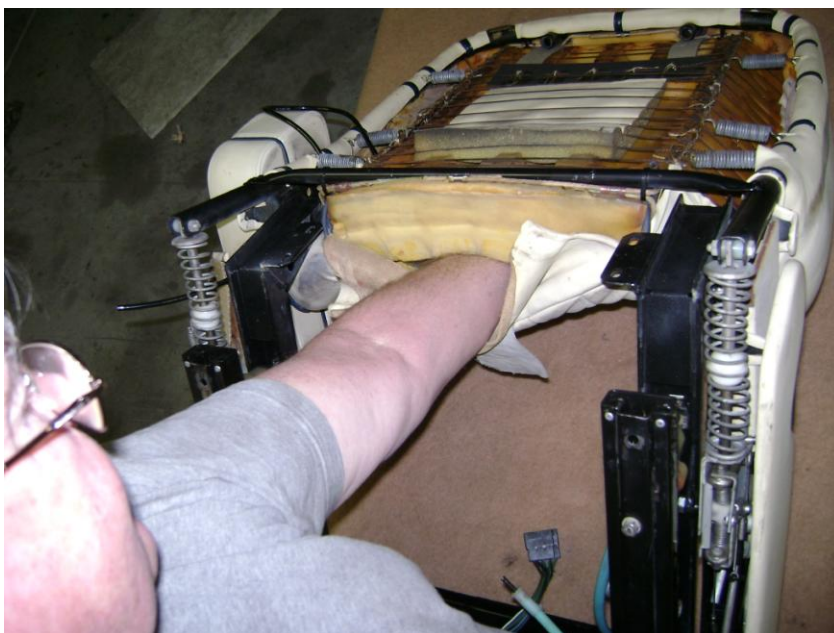


Here the pleated cover with padding has been pulled away from the foam block. It is the space between where the bladder needs to be placed.





And here is the bladder available from any worthwhile auto upholsterer. The three inflatable sections are connected so that each can adjust to the shape of your back. The inflating tube is seen off to the left here.



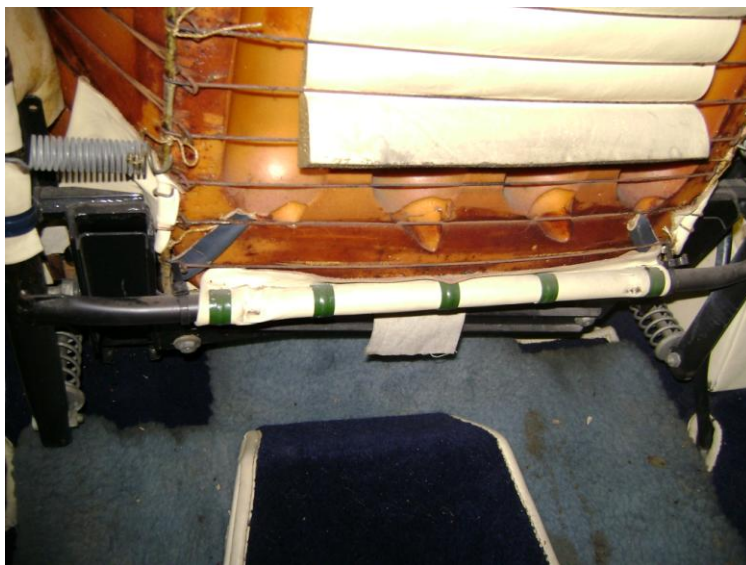
Thank you but I do not need captions for this picture. The seat in this case was removed while I worked out what to do and how. My probing hand with flexing arthritic fingers is wiggling its way into the bowels of the seat separating the cover from the cushion. This was the hardest part physically mainly because it hurt my fingers. The two items are not glued together but having been pressed together for the past 20



years, have stuck naturally. Separation is pursued until you have enough space to get the bladder in where you want it!



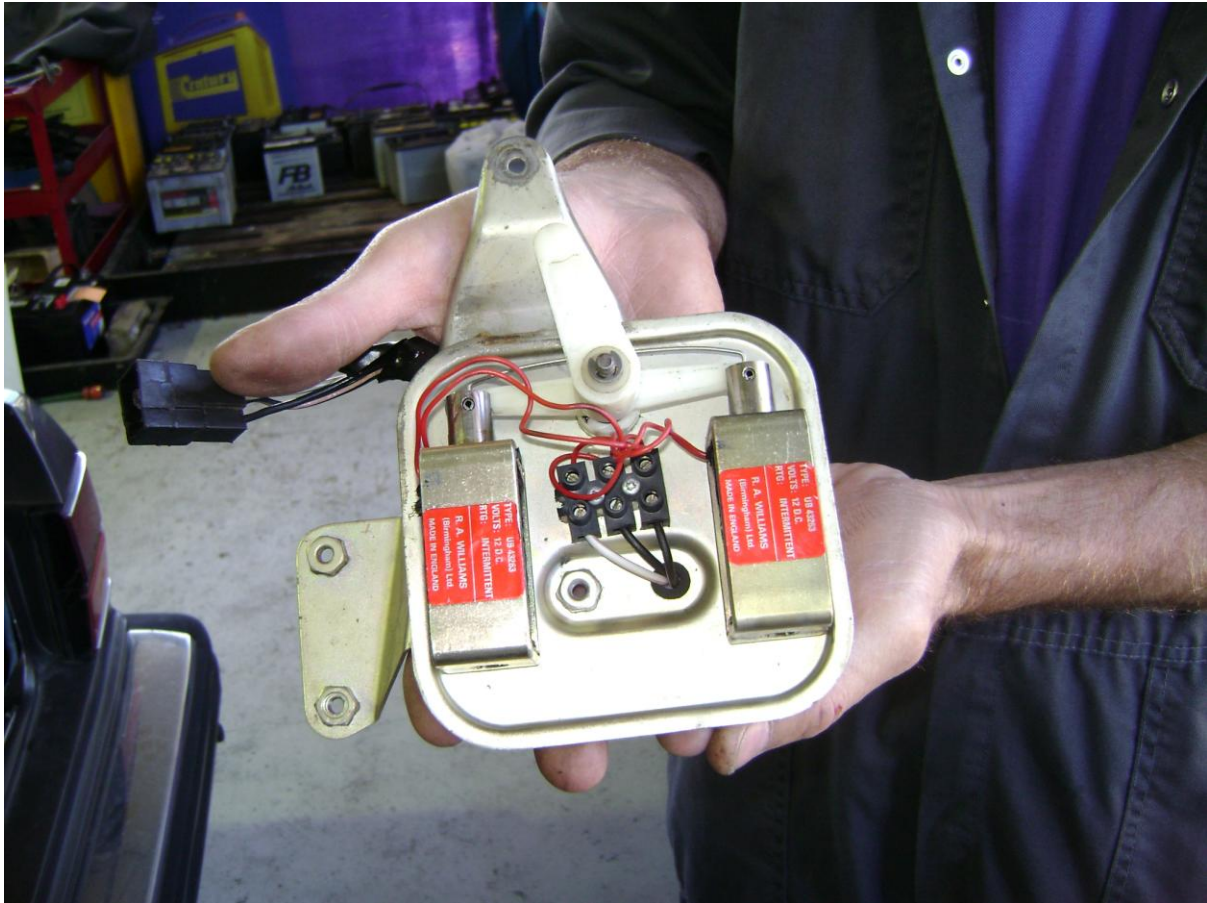
The bladder is in, lying flat between the outer cover and the foam squab block. It is helpful to pump the thing up now to make sure everything works!



The screw driver is poking a hole through the side of the foam to make a hole for the inflating tube which for the moment can lie with its pump in the centre console.

Here the leather cover has been clipped back to the lower cross bar and the cross braces re-fitted. It simply required locating the pumper and replacing the back of the squab.





## **ARE YOUR BUTTONS GETTING STICKY?**

The Factory did not think of keyless entry until very late in the piece. Frankly I find remembering to punch the button or poking keys a bloody nuisance mainly because my Ford had keyless entry 15 years ago! Anyway the owner of the hands in the above picture, Greg Toone, the priceless automotive electrician who tends to these cars in Canberra was pointing out the mechanism that pushes and pulls that beautifully styled knob that pokes out of the exquisitely finished timber waist rails on a Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit. You will note that the assembly normally buried deep in the bowels of that beautifully contoured door, houses two solenoids diametrically wired to achieve the push and pull.

The more observant reader will have noticed an unc customary use of superlatives in the above paragraph. Recently I have been submerged it seems in this form of writing, the pinnacle for which came with a request from a writer, the author of a number of books on our cars, requesting photographs, drawings, pictures etc, for inclusion in a new book. The model that was his subject is reknown for some hideous body problems that are quite difficult and very expensive to rectify.

I was very very tempted to drop him a line and ask whether perhaps he would like some photos of the manifestations of these problems which might perhaps temper the adulation of his future readers and either dissuade them from purchasing an example of the model or at best display the valuable side of these cars, the faults and hopefully the means to rectify them in the hope that they will be preserved! But I didn't as I recalled attending a small rally of



cars in the States and noticing that a Silver Dawn had a quite destructive earthing system on the engine, the bonnet of this immaculate car having been left open for the adoring masses!

The owner happened to arrive and I pointed out very quietly the problem, that he should correct it with the aid of a couple of spanners unless he wished to continue reducing his engine to a solution resembling the sediment of a well tended grease trap outside a large kitchen. He regarded me with the eye of a haunted man, confused, offended and quite off-balance. With a deft flick of the wrist he extracted an exquisite linen handkerchief from his upper blazer pocket and proceeded to dust the rocker cover of his car. "They get quite dusty you know" he said and closed the bonnet and locked it. I learnt my lesson.

