

## HINTS FROM AUSTIN'S MORRIS GARAGE

### PREPARING YOUR MG FOR SPRING

This month, I'll try to provide you with a few things you should do to get your MG on the road, now that it has rested inside a cozy garage or in a breezy but dry carport.

1. Check that oil. If it's dirty, change it. If you have a solid can-type filter, you should soak it thoroughly in a good solvent or gasoline to remove accumulations of sludge. Change the replaceable type, preferably with a felt element.
2. Get the air compressor going and fill the tires to the correct pressure. Note that the maximum (recommended) is usually emblazoned on the sidewall. If you have more than one brand and the pressure ratings are different, pick the lowest and inflate all to that number.
3. Check the brake fluid. Also look below at the wheel cylinders to make sure none is leaking. Rebuild as necessary. When bleeding them, it is so much easier when two people perform that function. If you prefer not to use the tube-into-the-see-through glass-bottle method (when you can see any escaping air bubbles), prepare to get whatever surface beneath the car very stained with brake fluid (you may even get some in your eyes if not careful). After (4), bleed the brakes anyway, even if there are no leaks. Observe that the fluid is clear and has its original color, and make sure all lug nuts are tight.
4. Adjust the tire pressure and brakes when any wheel of the car is off the ground.
5. Look at the fan belt and all the radiator and brake hoses. If any shows signs of leakage or serious deterioration, get new ones in place before you venture out to the road.
6. Drain the radiator and give it a good flush. A radiator shop can do a reverse flush to remove most of the sludge that has built up

over the last year if you prefer. The anti-freeze (if any) has lost its strength by now, so don't bother trying to save the drainage. Of course, refill, using antifreeze in the correct proportion. You'll find the ratio on the container.

7. As a precaution, check the steering (especially the three bolts, nuts and six pads at the rack coupling on a TD or TF). If there is looseness, the cause must be found before you get back on the road.
8. Charge the battery, check the operation of the wiper motor, and replace the blades if they are shot.
9. Check the security of the doors, making certain they close tightly to the second step in the striker. Repair as necessary.
10. With the ignition on, check the fuel pump. If it fills the carburetor bowls, it probably needs no attention. But make sure the bowls do not overflow. If they do, clean the bowls and/or replace the needle and seat(s).
11. Check all the lights, replacing any burned out bulbs, of course. Make sure the stoplights and turn signals (if fitted) work (when the ignition is on only).

After all above steps are taken, it should be safe to start the engine. However, do not rev it until the oil gauge indicates pressure.

Let it warm up and check the idle, if necessary, adjusting those noisy valves first, followed by the ignition points and timing, and (always last) the carburetors.

Finally, take the old girl (or other gender or name) out on a short test drive, making sure the brakes and steering are good and that the seats and doors have been adjusted properly.

You should be ready to enjoy another season of MG fun (here's hoping anyway).

Regards, Jerry