

FBHVC –newsletter №5 2011

E-petition to restore a rolling 30 year old exemption to VED

On the face of it, this is an understandable move to eradicate the invidious gap between the VED treatment of pre-1973 vehicles and more modern classics, caused by the actions of Gordon Brown who, when Chancellor, stopped the rolling nature of the Historic VED category. The FBHVC have consistently asked for reinstatement on a thirty year basis (originally it was 25 years) but whilst Labour were in power it proved impossible.

Prior to the election last year the Conservatives acknowledged the anomaly and agreed to review it if they gained power, while warning that it would probably need to be fiscally neutral. (That's before they opened the books!) The political climate (Coalition) and economic situation have deteriorated dramatically since the change of government. With the programme of deficit reduction adversely affecting government spending, including that for vulnerable sections of society, it is, *in my personal view*, the wrong time to raise the profile of this anomaly and could prejudice any future change for many years.

The theory behind e-petitions is that if the petition gets 100,000 signatures, and gets the support of the Backbenchers' Committee, it will be debated in the Commons. It is inevitable that the coalition would be against change at this juncture since it cuts across the main government policy and would give away revenue to a minority interest. You can also imagine the reaction of the opposition; it would be perceived as giving away revenue to 'Hooray Henrys' in their expensive classics whilst at the same time cuts to expenditure on the NHS,

Social Services, concessionary fares for OAPs and libraries continue. Issues raised in any debate would leave a lasting bad feeling against our movement and make it politically impossible to change the concession for many years. It is also possible that some opposition members might question the continuing existing concession. It is vitally important to retain public and political support for our movement and to avoid any accusations of being a blinkered self-interested minority. Adverse press coverage would be inevitable.

The FBHVC board will debate the merits of this petition at its next meeting on 21 September and no doubt it will also be a topic for discussion during the AGM.

STABILITY ADDITIVE TESTING

At the time of writing the testing of the additives is now halfway through the thirteen week programme. The results are expected in time for the AGM and Conference on 15 October – for details about tickets, see elsewhere in the newsletter.

The fuel used in the test is subjected to an ageing process at elevated temperature; it is recognised by the industry that 13 weeks' ageing is equivalent to one year at normal temperatures and this is therefore believed by the petrol industry itself to give an accurate and representative account of the products tested. Those additives that pass the test will be entitled to carry the FBHVC's endorsement – this means that they will protect against corrosion but it must be noted that there are currently no additives available that can protect against material incompatibility issues.

USE OF KEROSENE IN PETROL IN HISTORIC VEHICLES

Interest in adding kerosene to petrol for use in historic cars arose in the early 1990s after the disappearance of 'two star' leaded petrol. Some believed that higher octane four-star petrol could not be safely used in older low compression engines. This line of argument has been overturned, and in fact it is now generally accepted that while 'excessive' octane quality might be a waste of money, it is not harmful in low compression engines. The alternative view, that the greatly increased volatility of modern petrol is to blame for operating problems in older engines, is increasingly accepted. This aspect of modern fuels has been brought into focus again recently over the issue of addition of ethanol to petrol under the EU renewable fuels directive. Ethanol addition increases volatility, so any problems associated with high fuel volatility are not likely to be reduced with fuels containing ethanol.

With this in mind, there has been a renewal of interest in the addition of kerosene to petrol. Kerosene has a boiling range from about 160°C to about 250°C, whereas petrol boils over the approximate range 35°C to 195°C. Problems experienced in older engines, such as overheating, power loss, poor hot starting etc. have been attributed to the increased proportion of low boiling material added to petrol in more recent decades. This is believed to result in vapour formation in the wrong places, thereby upsetting fuel-air ratios, and in the main, causing enleanment of fuel-air mixtures reaching the combustion chamber. Addition of a high boiling material such as kerosene does not affect the 'front end' of the fuel in the sense of preventing low boiling-point

hydrocarbons in the fuel from vaporising (low boiling point hydrocarbons in the fuel will boil off and form vapour long before the kerosene starts to boil), but if kerosene is added at 5% or 10% by volume for example, the proportion of the 'front end' components will be reduced by a corresponding amount, and this may be just enough in some engines to alleviate the negative effects of potentially excessive vapour formation. Some owners of historic vehicles report significant benefits from the use of kerosene in this way.

However, the main point about kerosene, which is its higher boiling range, should not be overlooked. The high 'back end' boiling temperatures associated with kerosene may result in incomplete combustion, since a fuel which has not completely evaporated will not burn. Any unburned material will find its way into the sump where it will dilute the lubricating oil. A significant amount of diluent derived from kerosene addition in the lubricating oil would run the risk of lubrication problems, with consequent increased wear of bearing surfaces. There has been some confusion over the use of kerosene blends in historic agricultural tractors, particularly as some of these used car-derived engines. However, in order for these machines to burn kerosene-blend fuels efficiently, a special vaporising inlet manifold was used on the tractor version, to ensure that complete combustion occurred, without the risk of oil dilution. The same engine in a passenger car, if operated on kerosene-blend fuels, will not be so well suited to these blends.

Kerosene addition is likely also to increase the risk of deposits in the fuel system, and may also increase the formation of sooty particulates in the exhaust gas.

Overall, while it acknowledges that some historic vehicle owners have suffered from poor engine operation with modern petrol, the FBHVC does not feel able to recommend the use of kerosene in petrol in older vehicles. Instead, the Federation endorses the recommendations contained in a booklet published by the Vintage Sports Car Club, entitled 'Fuel Problems – Use of Modern Petrol in Older Engines' some years ago. These recommendations are felt to address the causes rather than the symptoms of the problem, and are still relevant today. The following suggestions are made in the report:

- adoption of local solutions to reduce heat input to the fuel system, principally from hot exhaust components
- use of insulating gaskets or other thermal breaks between fuel pump and engine and/or between carburettor(s) and inlet manifold
- use of heat shields to prevent heat being radiated from the exhaust system to the carburettor(s) and other fuel system components
- careful routing of fuel feed lines away from sources of heat en route from the tank to the carburettor(s)

These suggestions will be of most value in engines where the inlet manifold and the exhaust manifold lie on the same side of the engine. Engines where carburettors and exhaust are on opposite sides of the cylinder head tend to be much less affected by volatility related problems.

In addition, the condition of the radiator in water-cooled engines should not be overlooked. Old radiators can become really quite inefficient over time with accumulation of scale, debris and sludge on heat transfer surfaces, but the process can be slow and may not be noticed. Chemical flushing can improve cooling efficiency, but in some cases a replacement radiator core may be the best way to restore efficient operation.

EXEMPTION FROM VEHICLE TESTING

Goods vehicles over 3500kg Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) first used before 1 January 1960, used unladen and not drawing a laden trailer are exempt from testing. This definition comes from the DVLA V112G form, called Goods Vehicle Testing – Declaration of Exemption (item 30). Some of these vehicles will have a ‘Ministry plate’.

Goods vehicles irrespective of their age which are 3500kg GVW or under will be subject to MoT testing. Where a vehicle has a Ministry plate, the GVW on that plate should be used to determine the type of test for that vehicle.

Where a commercial vehicle is close to 3500kg GVW, some owners may be unclear of the vehicle’s status. This is an area where specialist vehicle clubs may be able to offer assistance to owners and some publish a list of the vehicles that fall into their area of interest, indicating the GVW of each model, and if an MoT or Goods Vehicle Test is needed. As a general rule, for post-war non-military vehicles, if a vehicle has single rear wheels, its GVW is less than 3500kg, so the vehicle will be subject to an MoT.

One commonly used (or misused) testing exemption relates to breakdown vehicles. Exemption 3 on V112G reads as follows: ‘Breakdown Vehicles with permanently

fixed lifting gear which are only used to lift and tow casualty vehicles'. The installation of a beaver tail does not in itself make it into a recovery vehicle that is exempt from testing, there is also the usage criterion in the exemption, which implies commercial use.

Another exemption relates to fire engines. Exemption 8 reads: 'Vehicles designed and used solely for fire fighting or fire salvage purposes'. However fire engines registered before 1960 are treated as good vehicles and are exempt from testing.

REGISTERING COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

When a commercial vehicle is being registered, if the vehicle has a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) over 3500kg, there is a DVLA requirement to indicate the GVW on the V55/5 form (Registration of a used motor vehicle). It would be expected that specialist commercial vehicle clubs would have access to archive information which indicates GVW for each post-war model. With pre-war models, the information may not be available, and it may be necessary to resort to adding together the nominal payload of the vehicle to the unladen weight to give a GVW. VOSA have lists of design weights for goods vehicle from 1951, which is available if required. The contact is *enquiries@vosa.gov.uk*