

THAT DAMNED TYRE

By Barrie Brighton

Some two years ago I decided that the Silver Lady needed a new tyre on the front. Tyres of that particular size not being readily available at the local garage, an order was duly placed and the new tyre was fitted on the spare wheel which in turn was substituted for the near-side front. I did not know it, but this was the start of my troubles! I had the tyre fitted by the garage since I still had vivid memories of a violent struggle with an earlier tyre which I fitted myself, at the cost of several broken finger nails, trapped fingers, and heavy duty tyre levers being flung around the garage by the recalcitrant tyre, to the consternation of all within a considerable range!

On this occasion all went well for about a fortnight, at the end of which time I discovered that the new tyre was flat. It was duly re-inflated (a procedure complicated by the fact that the nearside was next to the garage wall). After a relatively short time it was flat again! Convinced that I had picked up a nail or some such, the tyre was again re-inflated, the car driven out of the garage and the wheel removed for a close examination. Nothing! A faulty valve perhaps? A new valve core was introduced and the wheel replaced (on the off side this time). A few days later and "That damned tyre" was flat again. This was becoming beyond a joke and advice was sought from knowledgeable members, or anyone who could shed light on the mystery. Advice varied from 'find the puncture' to 'remove the tyre and turn it round on the rim'. The former was too simplistic, and the latter so horrific as not to bear thinking about! I soldiered on, blowing up the tyre as required and carrying a trusty foot pump in the boot, just in case.

After about a year of this tiresome procedure (please forgive the pun) I reflected that this state of affairs would not have satisfied Sir Henry, and there must be an answer. The wheel was far too big (and heavy) for any receptacle I had, so that complete immersion of the wheel to watch for bubbles was out of the question. I mixed a strong detergent solution and applied it liberally around the valve. Nothing. I next filled the tiny gap between the metal rim of the wheel and the tyre-wall with the liquid, and retired for lunch. On my return, success!! A considerable portion of the tyre had vanished under an enormous wedge of foam which had developed at one point on the rim, but similar treatment to the other side of the tyre produced nothing of interest. I let all the air out of the tyre again, and walked around the tyre using my heels in an attempt to move the rim of the tyre on the rim of the wheel. It was at this point that I noticed that all of my detergent liquid between the rim and the tyre had disappeared - perhaps that would assist the tyre to bed on the wheel rim. The next job was to blow up the tyre, hard. Using a small compressor this time (it is awfully hard work with a foot pump), I inflated the tyre to twice its normal pressure, even the compressor was gasping at this point and I confess that my own courage failed me as we approached 55lbs per sq. in.

Whether it was the high pressure, or my own 13 stones pushing the rim down, or again the effect of the detergent liquid acting as a lubricant in seating the tyre, I know not, neither do I care. That damned tyre has stayed up ever since!

BWB