A Word of Warning

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The following article was published in the Jaguar Driver magazine, September 2016, and is reproduced here with kind permission from the author, ALAN HAMES, *C.Eng., MICE, MCIHT*
Alan is a multiple concours winner in UK, with his 1972 E Type V12, which he has owned from new.

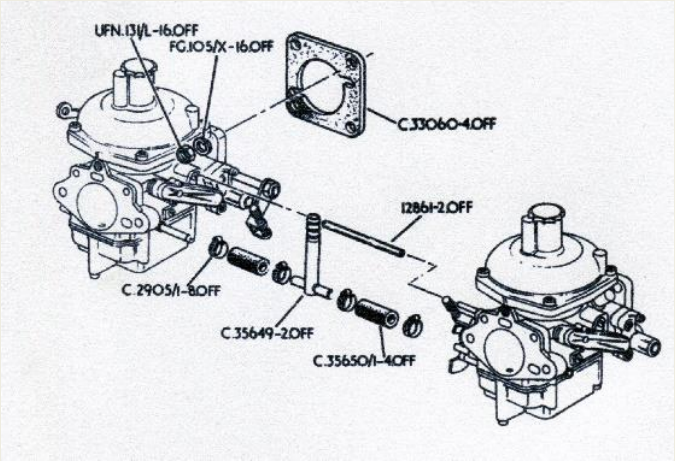
Stromberg carburated V12's
Hazardous Petrol Leaks in Engine Compartment

Those of us who are lucky enough to own a V12 "E" Type will now have a car that is at least 40 years old and even a well maintained "E" Type will have many parts that are likely to be "well past their sell by date"!!

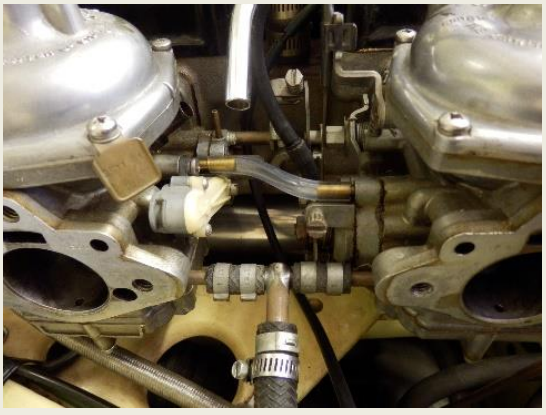
In my case, having owned and maintained AVV 1 from new for 44 years, I always thought that any dubious items were being picked up well before there was any possibility of a problem, particularly ones that could have disastrous results.

How easy it is to be proved wrong! Earlier this week, when taking my car from cold out of the garage with choke engaged, I ran the engine for a minute or so and all seemed well, until my friend who was alongside pointed out that there was a puddle of coolant (?) under the nearside engine bay undertray. However closer inspection and the standard "smell test", quickly confirmed that this was a petrol leakage and in an area in close proximity to the exhaust manifold that was by then quite warm and certainly worrying!

Further and speedy investigation, found that clearly the problem was arising in the above area of the twin Stromberg carburetors, however the failure point was not immediately obvious with so many pipes and linkages obstructing any clear view.



As those of us who are mechanically minded and have a basic knowledge of the carburetor operating system, we will be aware that there is a somewhat unexplained small bore clear, (or green), plastic tube linkage between the carburetors on both the nearside and offside twin carbs. This does not have any obvious function and when the bonnet is lifted when cold, or when the engine is at operating temperature, this tube does not seem to have any fuel visibly passing through. However, it has an important job to do when starting the car from cold and when operation of the choke is necessary, as this allows fuel to pass through to enrich the mixture.



A close inspection of these short and inaccessible tubes, that over the years are likely by now to be well discoloured brown from the passage of fuel for so many years, makes any assessment from above very difficult. In my case this was the situation and the arising split in the tube could not be seen and could have been the cause of a fire, fueled by streams of petrol on both sides. When the tubes are removed it is clear that the sharp bends at each end, where they locate over the carburetor brass tube stubs causes them to fracture at this point which cannot be seen.

Having found the problem and being in a position where replacement was necessary, a check on the Jaguar Parts

Manual turned up their original Part Number 12861. However, as expected, this cannot be obtained from Jaguar, as this is now a superseded part. In my case, with my store of so many hoarded parts I was able to replace one with an old original Jaguar part, but the other one required some web searching for tubing suppliers and the purchase of a suitable length, so I am pleased to say that my problems have been solved. Anyone else needing the part I am sure will find that this can be sourced from various of the Jaguar Parts suppliers, but be careful to ensure that whatever is on offer is a tube that is petrol resistant, as some plastics are not suitable and may even be too flexible and not heat resistant enough for this location.

As I said above, take note of the warning and carry out a check on your car, (and the other small rubber connecting tubes in this area), as I am sure that many V12 owners will be unaware that there is a problem in waiting that could be not only costly, but with petrol in mind also life threatening. Hopefully a simple check carried out before the next trip will avoid a potential disaster to one of our treasured cars.

Twin Stromberg carbs were also fitted to the early V12 XJ's, so this warning is equally applicable to these models. Ed.