# More Ramblings & Rumblings from the Workbench.

*By Grumpy Geoffrey O'Connell. 2019.* *Part 1 of the year.*

Early in November 2018 we set-off on Wednesday 7th for the Jaguar Drivers' Club Lower Northland Rally to Whangarei via Orewa. That was the second month after our return from a European summer based at our French home. At Whangarei the JDC members stayed at the '*Distinction Hotel*' beside Riverside Drive. After a busy few days there, we all departed for our Bay of Plenty homes on the morning of Monday 12th.

At about 5am that Monday morning I peered out of our hotel room windows to perceive that the passenger side, rear tyre of our E-Type Jaguar was flat - totally flat. Oh dear me! Leaving Rose slumbering, I staggered out to the '*beast*' to assess the situation. However it had not been a mirage, the wretched thing was on its wheel rim. Fortunately it was not raining so the necessary unloading of the boot commenced. Unfortunately the scissor jack then in my possession would have had difficulty lifting a Vespa motor scooter and despite my struggles it proved extremely difficult to make even half a turn at a time. Whilst ruminating the seemingly impossible situation, my at that time befuddled brain recalled that I had listened to the advice of a fellow member - Roger Clark. He had suggested I obtain a 12 volt battery powered, air compressor tyre pump, which I had so done.

I removed the device from the boot and pumped up the wretched tyre to a pressure of some 50psi, which air pressure it fortunately held. That allowed me to wind up the inadequate scissor jack and apply a bit more lift which just raised the tyre off the ground. With a struggle I was able to remove the wheel and damaged tyre and replace it with the spare wheel and tyre. It has to be noted that the overarching curve of the wheel arch bodywork ensures it is no easy task to wriggle a wheel off the splined wire wheel hub. Incidentally, as the morning hours wore-on a scatter of bystanders added their encouragement – but not assistance! Despite all the problems, the job was completed at about 0730hrs, to an audible sigh of relief as I was rather worn-out.

After the mandatory hotel breakfast, I settled into the driver's seat to start the car. However the '*beast*' proved extremely reluctant to burst into life. A second '*Oh dear me*' moment that morning. Not to be downhearted, I hung around until the particular friend I had in mind had finished his '*troughing*' – no name, no pack drill you notice. Once he was replete I begged the favour of my using his car's battery to which to attach my jump leads. Of course he agreed but it transpired he did not know where the vehicle's battery was located. We searched around the engine compartment but there was no evidence of the item. I suggested we investigate the boot but was assured it was not therein. Accordingly we had one more go at attempting to persuade the '*beast's*' engine into life and extremely reluctantly it did finally cough and splutter into motion. Whoopee! A bye the bye is that the car's battery was mounted in the boot of his car!

Incidentally these two concurrent difficulties persuaded me to invest in both a low profile hydraulic trolley jack and a jump starter power pack which now reside in the boot. Unsurprisingly the scissor jack was discarded.

Subsequently we almost had a trouble-free journey home – that is apart from the nightmare of the multiple road junctions and traffic lights at Warkworth which caused the E-Type to rather spectacularly overheat. At rest at one of the countless traffic light holdups, and enveloped by a cloud of steam, a helpful fellow motorist pulled up alongside us and opinioned that we appeared to be overheating! Bless him. We did manage to reach home after some judicious refilling of the radiator header tank at the roadside café where SH2 branches off from SH1.

Apart from purchasing the necessary tools detailed above, I had to consider the engine starting problem. It became symptomatic that after a night's *'rest'* the engine was extremely reluctant to burst into life. Once that was overcome the car would start easily all day long but not after an overnight lay-off. As described in the July 2017 Club magazine I had removed the original '*Lucas OPUS*' electronic ignition system and replaced it with the '*REOPUS*' installation manufactured by an Auckland firm. Despite that, in a 2018 Club Magazine article I advised that '*REOPUS Engineering*' had ceased to manufacture the product and expressed my interest in the American based '*Pertronix Performance Brands*'* and their offerings.


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The products of particular interest were the: '*Ignitor*' electronic ignition which simply fitted inside the existing '*Lucas OPUS Distributor*'#, replacing the contact breaker points, condenser and amplifier; coupled to their '*Flame-Thrower*' high performance, oil-filled Coil, which can deliver up to 40,000 volts. The latter is available with a black or chrome finish, the black unit being the less expensive option. A footnote+ details the '*Pertronix*' part numbers in respect of the particular items for the 5.3 litre, V12 E-Type Jaguar. However readers should be aware that different versions of the '*Pertronix Ignitors*' and '*Flame-Thrower Coils*' will fit almost all, if not all types of vehicle.

The New Zealand representative for '*Pertronix*' is '*Philspeed Ltd*' *++* which is based in the South Island, some 19km north of Christchurch. The business is owned and run by the seemingly somewhat offbeat but very helpful Phil Harbison. To place an order it is obligatory to advise the exact details of the vehicle concerned as well as the specification of the existing distributor.

The cost of the items to me were: the '*Pertronix Ignitor*' @ $386.40; and the '*Flame-Thrower*' Coil (black finish) @ $113.85, both of which prices included GST. To these figures must be added a freight cost of some $19.00 unless the parts are collected from the business. Incidentally, it might be necessary to install a '*Resistor*' (10 ohm/1/2 watt) in-line if the Rev Counter is recording double the engine's actual rpm output.

In addition I had '*Tauranga Auto Electric*'** remove the existing installation and fit the new '*Pertronix*' system which set me back some $254.00. That latter decision saved me a lot of angst, grief and heartache – believe you me!

Here endeth the ignition lesson.

*Geoffrey*

*'*Pertronix Performance Brands*', PerTronix LLC, 440E. Arrow Highway, San Dimas, California 91773. USA.

#The '*Lucas OPUS Distributor*' fitted to the 5.3 litre Series 3, V12 E-Type Jaguar has the Part No. 36de12.

+'*Ignitor*' – Part No. LU-1122A – and '*Flamethrower Coil*' – Part No. 40011.

++*'Philspeed Ltd*.' Auto Parts online, 10 Hills Street, Kaiapoi 7630. Tel No. 03 327 2702; e-mail: philspeed@xtra.co.nz

***'Tauranga Auto Electric*', 109 Third Avenue, Tauranga 3100. Tel No. 07 578 4441; e-mail tauranga.auto.electric@xtra.co.nz