



Troubles with electronic ignition

Fitting electronic ignition often provides enthusiasts with a Factory MGBGV8 with a much smoother engine and better starting but Ian Ailes encountered some problems. Here he explains how they were cured.

About 2 years ago I fitted a budget electronic ignition to my Factory V8. It already had a Newton electronic ignition but it did not seem to be that great. It turned out to be incorrectly fitted so that the vacuum advance could not work properly and that turned out to be broken. I got it repaired by the Distributor Doctor.

The new ignition kit is easily fitted, very neat and worked well for a while then started to play up. After about a year of looking for a cure, I finally traced the fault to the bonnet catch which had worked its way through the loom to the ballast cable to the coil. When the car had been resprayed, rather than use the correct clips to run the loom along the edge of the slam panel, the garage had used p-clips to run it under the panel and through the catch escutcheon; neat but it fouled on the catch and eventually wore through and shorted out. Buying four 60p clips and some insulation tape fixed the problem.

On my way back from MGLive! at Silverstone this year much the same problem started but much worse, losing power on acceleration and limping home at 50mph. The supplier of the electronic kit advised checking the circuit by substitution, so I spent a week swapping, coil, rotor arm distributor cap, leads and plugs. Having a

spare base plate and fittings I finally decided to go back to points. As I was taking the ignition unit out, I realised the earth wire had

melted itself on the casing of the distributor and was shorting out. V8s get very hot under the bonnet but I was surprised at this. The intermittent shorting on acceleration was probably caused by the vacuum advance moving the unit away from the casing and back on deceleration. Again insulation tape and a cable tie have fixed the problem.

The lesson is once you change a car from standard specification you may expect problems. Don't rule out the obvious but don't expect the problem to be obvious. If it was obvious you could fix it in minutes. Now all I need to do is set the timing properly.

See pages 86.35.20 sheets 1 and 2 of the MGBGV8 Workshop Manual Supplement [AKD8468](#)

Tracing a puzzling misfire on a Factory V8 and finding replacement wiring harness clips

See the article contributed by Ian Ailes in May 2014 on tracing the misfire caused by the bonnet catch working its way through the wiring loom to the ballast cable to the ignition coil he mentioned above. [Article](#)

