



Side Curtain News

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Nov 2021

Proud chapter of the
Austin-Healey Club of
America since 1979.

Gateway Healey Association
St. Louis, MO



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Rumblings

Well, as promised, a newsletter in two months. I had hoped to have the car ready to start but as luck would have it crazy things happened at my work and I had to spend time working silly COVID related issues. Anyway I do have a distributor cap to put on it and I hope that by Thanksgiving I will have at least tested that and maybe straightened out my throttle linkage problems. Related to that I have included an article on that very subject. I plan on following the instructions on the linkage adjustment. The amount of detail in the article gives me great hope that I will get it right.

I imagine most of you all have moth-balled your toys for the winter months. While there are a few great days left in the year, like today when I was writing this with the sun out and temps in the low-70s, the days are getting very short and winter is coming. Now is the time to get with family and friends as the holidays are coming.

A few things to note, a lot is going on with AHCA with membership enrollment. Also the Christmas Party will most likely happen in January.

I have also updated the GHA distribution list so I am hoping that all GHA members will get this newsletter and also those that somehow got dropped accidentally. I am not sure how that happened but I spent a few hours getting the mailing list checked and rechecked. ALSO, note that the GHA website has MOVED, see below.

Most likely the next newsletter will happen in January. Please have a happy and healthy Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and Christmas holiday season. Also note that there usually is no meeting in December. I believe there will be a November meeting. Watch for the announcement from Jim Reiter. Please try to attend, they are a good time and there is always interesting stories being told. I am often fascinated by some of the St. Louis history or even great information about cars and people.

Phil Ellerbrock, GHA SCN Editor



Me and my better half
Elizabeth



GHA Meeting: 4th Tuesday of the Month, 7 PM at Keith Bester's
115 N Sappington Road, Kirkwood MO 314-821-2372



Don't forget to visit the Gateway Healey Association Web-Site at
www.gatewayhealey.com

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October Meeting Minutes—Ron Varley

Members/guests in attendance: Keith Bester, Sean Dowell, Dennis Dowell, Ron Varley, Dave Massey, Phil Ellerbrock, Jim Cravens, Bob Paster.

President Sean Dowell called the meeting to order at 7:40pm.

Treasurer/membership chairman report: We have five new national club members for 2021.

The new AHCA club management system (Club Express) will allow for paper registrations as well as online registrations. The new system will also provide faster rebates of local club dues.

We have a new website address for Gateway Healey Association: gatewayhealey.com.

Our annual holiday party for this year has been postponed. It will be scheduled sometime in early 2022.

September Meeting Minutes—Ron Varley

Members/guests in attendance: Sean Dowell, Dennis Dowell, Bob Paster, Lou Salini, Bob McElwee, Richard Etz, Mike Poirot,

Meeting called to order by President Sean Dowell at 7:30pm.

Phil Ellerbrock, Ron Varley.

There was no treasurer's report since the treasurer (Keith Bester) was unable to attend the meeting.

Cudo's to Phil Ellerbrock on resuming our club newsletter Side Curtain News with the publication of the September 2021 issue - and a well-done issue it was.

Ron Varley reported that there was a record turnout at the 2021 All British Car Show. Pictures will appear in the next issue of

"Side Curtain News."

The last Cars and Coffee event at Fast Lane Classic Cars in St. Charles will take place on October 9, 2021.

The last Cars and Coffee event at West Port Plaza for this year will take place on October 16, 2021.

A possible RUMP luncheon is planned for the week of October 18, 2021 with the venue to be determined.

The car show at Sonic Drive-In in Kirkwood on Friday nights will continue until the end of October 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Events calendar in the St. Louis Sports Car Council Gateway Relay at-
www.stlsc.org

March 2021 GHA Wash-Up / Tune Up



Fascinating images and data:

Top Ten Car Producing Countries In The World: 1950 - 2019

If you've not seen this previously, it is quite stunning, and not just the changes in world car manufacturing leadership (which are plenty sobering) but also the always-moving digital graphic technique.

Note particularly what has happened to the UK, Russia, and other European countries, and also especially note what has happened to China.

It was not even on the Top 10 list for the first 50-60 years of this chart, but watch what happens, *and how FAST it happens, once China decides to get into the automobile business!*

It really is quite an amazing video.



<https://para-rigger.posthaven.com/top-ten-car-producing-countries-1950->

4 tips for when your car won't start away from home

Kyle Smith



With a Thermos full of warm coffee in the passenger seat and the burble of a 1275-cc four-cylinder in front of me, my Saturday morning was off to a great start. I steered my new-to-me little blue Austin Healey into a gas station to top off the tank before heading home. When I went to start the engine after fueling up, it cranked and cranked, but no fire.

This car has been generally reliable, starting every time I turned the key during my few months of ownership. After the third turn of the key without hearing the engine sputter to life with that signature British burble, it was clear the Healey had a problem.

In the end I managed to drive the car home. How did I avoid the tow truck? Check out these tips for how you can remedy basic trouble on a future drive.

Be cognizant of your battery



In past instances that I'd experienced a no-start condition like this I cranked, cranked, and cranked the engine some more, just trying to will the car to start. Wrong thing to do. Once you have realized that it is not starting like it should, don't touch the key again until you change something. Seriously. Sit back and think, rather than idiotically spinning the starter until you have a dead battery. A car that doesn't start for *two* reasons is even worse.

This tip is especially important for cars equipped with big engines or small batteries. You only get a finite number of tries before your battery won't have the juice to spin the engine over or fire the ignition. You could pivot to push-starting at that point, but diagnosis while pushing starting is very difficult.

Take a scientific approach

You're stuck, so take that time to think through the process of how an engine starts. Fuel, air, compression, and spark. Lift the hood and start investigating everything you can without turning the engine over. Does pumping the throttle shoot raw fuel into the engine from the carburetor?



retor's accelerator pump? Is there a blockage of the air cleaner?

Dirty, but has gas in it and when the electric pump was running I could see fuel flow

In my instance, I checked the clear fuel filter while the key was switched on to activate the electric fuel pump. Fuel was flowing, but after a handful of tries to start the engine, I was beginning to think I might have flooded the engine with fuel. The engine was not even trying to start. No random cylinders firing or catches that could have kicked the starter drive out. I had fuel and air, and if I lost compression while pumping fuel it would have been a special

kind of British car miracle. That left one option: ignition problem.

Look around for help, and not just from people

Like a rookie, I left the house that morning without any tools. Zero. Meaning I was going to have to get creative about the diagnostic process if I was not able to disassemble anything. In order to find out if I was having a problem with weak spark rather than no spark, I started by making sure the battery cables were tight. They were. Then, realizing I was at a gas station, I went inside and bought the combustion equivalent of a Band-Aid—starting fluid.

Before you skip straight to the bottom of this article and write a comment, hear me out. There was no one at this particular station at the hour I was there, so having someone crank the ignition while I was underhood (trying not to electrocute myself while holding a plug wire to see if it arced to the plug or engine block) was not an option. The next best thing was to create a situation within the engine where combustion would occur with pretty much any spark at all.



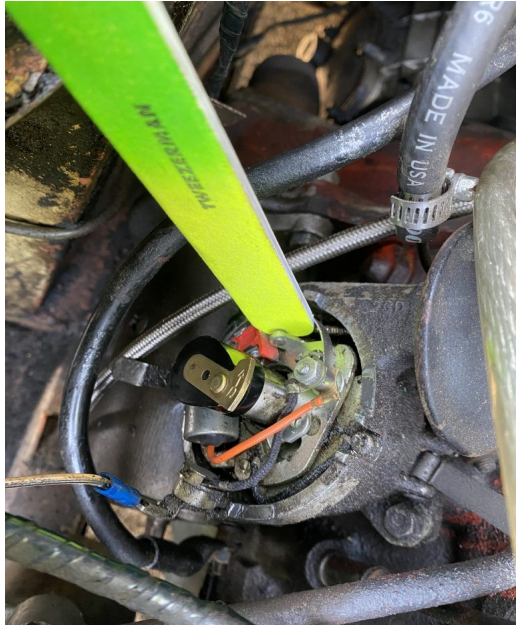
No signs of carbon tracking or arcing meant the cap was okay. Another sign suggesting the points.

Now then—couple quick shots down the air cleaner snorkels later, I leaned over the low door to turn the key. No dice. This meant I likely had ignition trouble. Luckily, the Healey's four-banger has a distributor cap easily removed by hand, so I pulled it off and inspected for any carbon tracking or other signs of faulty operation. Nothing weird there. Next item to check was the points—an area plenty of folks might have jumped to right away.

Get creative

The faces of my ignition points were charred and gray. I could have made it home by giving them a scuff, but I had nothing on my person that could be used for scuffing. I

walked around the gas station staring at the ground looking for something to use and even asked a few folks who pulled through the pumps. “Could I borrow a nail file for a minute?” is a great way to be labeled a crazy person, but it would have solved my problem in no time.



Finally I declared defeat, pulled my phone from my pocket, and called my fiancée who was anxiously awaiting my return to start some home renovation projects. I told her where I was and asked her to please bring a nail file. A few minutes later, after enduring the “I can’t believe I had to rescue you again” look, I was able to give the points a few draws with the nail file. With a turn of the key, the humble four-banger fired right to life.

This is a big file, and it just barely worked for my situation. A the file you can find attached to most small nail clippers is the ideal version of this hack.

Now the car is home, and I need to at least adjust the points—probably better to replace them completely. I would have loved for this to be a story of me sorting my problem with nothing but wit and ingenuity, but at least all it cost me was a phone call and a favor. Having to call for reinforcements before I could declare victory is miles better than defeat.



1953
Mel Torme drives
our Austin Healey
100 during Indianapolis
500 night club tour

Healey Technical

SIX CYLINDER THROTTLE LINKAGE REPAIR AND ADJUSTMENT

by Mr. Finespanner®

PART ONE: REPAIR

One problem with six cylinder Healeys very often overlooked in the course of a service or restoration is the condition of the throttle linkage, particularly the bushing assemblies through which the gas pedal and linkage cross shafts pass. It's easy to understand why these can be neglected, since the cross shaft is basically invisible on a finished car, and you can't tell by just looking at the other bushings if they need work.



Fig. 1 Bushing and housing on outside of driver's footwell

So try this test sometime: get an observer to watch the link from the manifold to the carb shafts while you slowly depress the gas pedal, and have him tell you the exact point the link begins to move after the gas pedal begins its travel. On a car with tight linkage the gas pedal should move no more than 1/4" down before the carb butterflies begin to open. If the pedal travel is in excess of 1/2" it indicates wear or slop somewhere in the throttle linkage. If you have an inch or more of movement before the carb

shafts are affected then you have a severe dead spot, which not only limits the top speed but also causes a significant lag in the throttle response. This can have a very negative effect on your ability to avoid or escape nasty traffic situations.

So what causes this dead spot? Basically, it's a function of rot caused by heat and time. The shaft bushings are packed in a steel housing that the mounting brackets can hold. Originally the packing material was felt, which was changed to a rubber compound called "compo" on later cars. The felt, or compo as the case may be, dries out and deteriorates over time, especially in those bushing assemblies closest to the exhaust manifold. These are the bushing on the outside of the footwell where the gas pedal shaft goes through to the engine bay (Fig. 1), and the bushing on the left

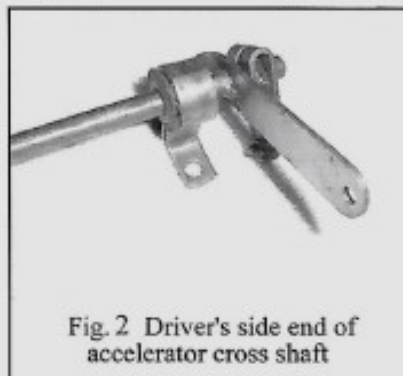


Fig. 2 Driver's side end of accelerator cross shaft

end of the linkage cross shaft (Fig. 2). When the packing dries out it just turns to chunky black bits and disappears, leaving the bushing flopping in the housing when the

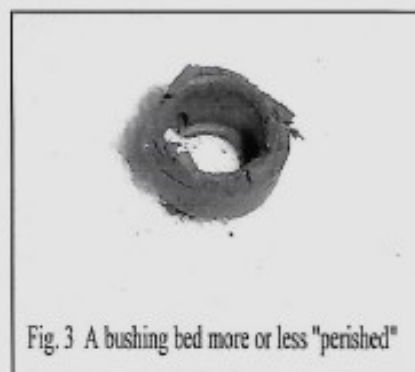


Fig. 3 A bushing bed more or less "perished"

gas pedal is pressed (Fig. 3). The free play caused by the missing packing must be taken up by the bushing contacting the housing before any of the movement is transferred to the rest of the linkage. Thus the dead spot. Another more obvious slop location is the bushing on the firewall (Fig. 4) for the top linkage

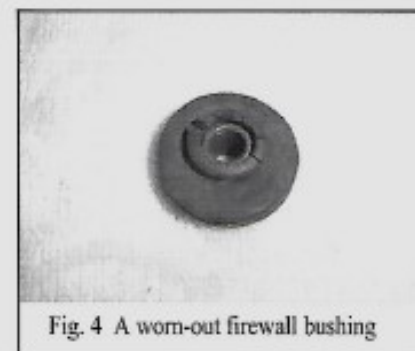


Fig. 4 A worn-out firewall bushing

shaft running forward on the intake manifold. This one is not rebuildable, but is the easiest to replace.

There are a number of ways to deal with the other shaft bushings.

Unfortunately, the linkage cross shaft is virtually inaccessible with the motor in place (see Fig. 5). It IS possible to

get it in and out by yanking the gearbox cover and working from behind, but it's a royal pain. So my recommendation is to tackle that aspect with the motor out if you can. The gas pedal shaft is much

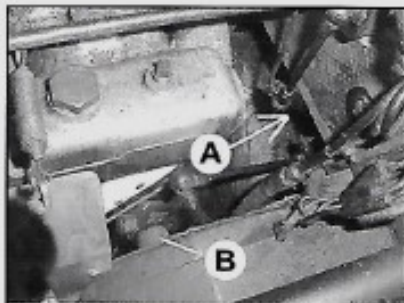


Fig. 5 A=location of cross shaft
B=pedal shaft footwell bushing

easier. You just take the yoke off the end in the engine bay and remove the two screws inside the footwell holding the pedal shaft bracket to get the entire pedal shaft assembly out. At that point the bushing housing for the yoke end of the shaft can be removed from the outside of the footwell. Note the gas pedal shaft has a bushing for the holding bracket (Fig. 6) as well as one for the yoke end. Now, it is possible to get replacement bushings from some suppliers. The ones I've seen are nice, made from Delrin and a good permanent fix.

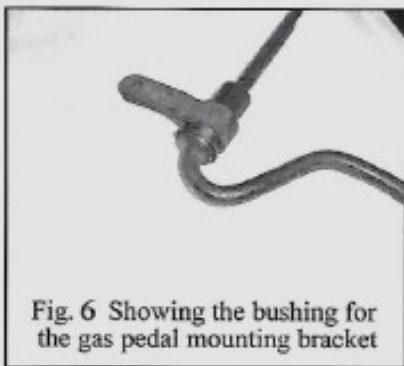


Fig. 6 Showing the bushing for the gas pedal mounting bracket

However, the Delrin bush and housing sell for around \$43.00. The following is a good fix at a fraction of the cost, and even more concours. First a simple alignment tool is required. Get a tall-shouldered 3/8" bolt about an inch and a quarter long, with some flat washers

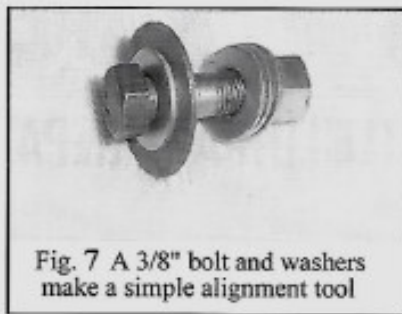


Fig. 7 A 3/8" bolt and washers make a simple alignment tool

and a nut (Fig. 7). Then clean out all the old packing from the steel housing and the bushing so they are both down to clean, bare metal. Rough the outside of the bushing with a file or hacksaw to give the silicone a better gripping surface. Then use an RTV silicone gasket material like Permatex Ultra-Black to lay down a thick bead of silicone sealer in the housing and another around the bushing. Put the bushing into the hous-



Fig. 8 Gooping the bushing into the housing with Ultra-Black

ing and then fill in any low spots (Fig. 8). Smear a little grease on the side of the flat washer that will go against the wet silicone and then assemble the alignment tool (Fig. 9), centering the flat washers on the bushing housing and tightening the nut finger-tight. Note the side of the housing that the bolt head is

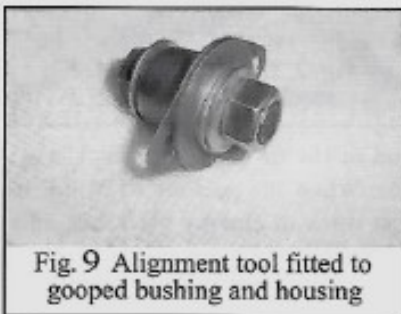


Fig. 9 Alignment tool fitted to gooped bushing and housing

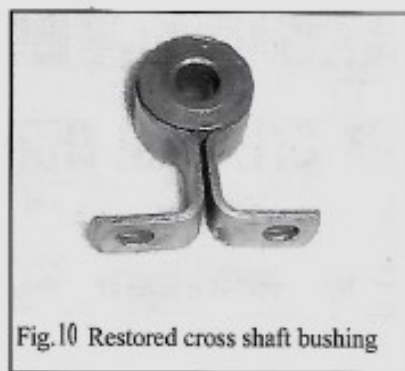


Fig. 10 Restored cross shaft bushing

on in the photo. With the bolt passing through in this direction it will not pull the new bed out of the housing when it is removed. Then just set the whole deal aside to dry for a day or so. It does take a

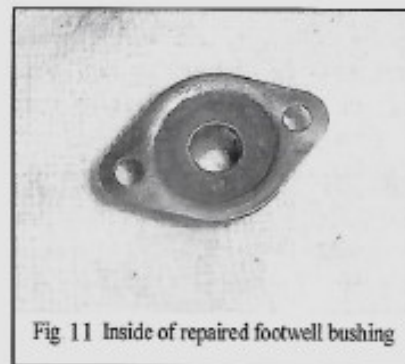


Fig. 11 Inside of repaired footwell bushing

while to set up. After a day, remove the aligning bolt and washers and let the silicone continue to dry uncovered until it is all completely firm. Scrape off any excess dry sili-

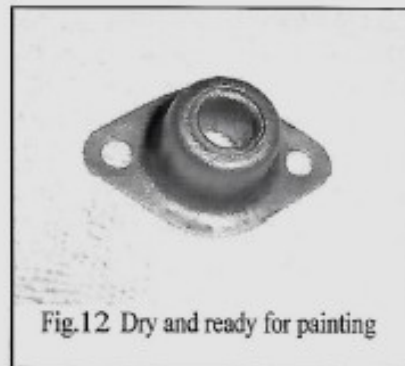


Fig. 12 Dry and ready for painting

cone from the housing and bushing bore and you are ready for painting and reassembly (Figs. 10, 11, & 12) ▢

Healey Technical

Six Cylinder THROTTLE Linkage Repair and ADJUSTMENT PART II

by Mr. Finespanner®

OK, now that you have succeeded in stoppin' der floppin', it's time for adjustment.

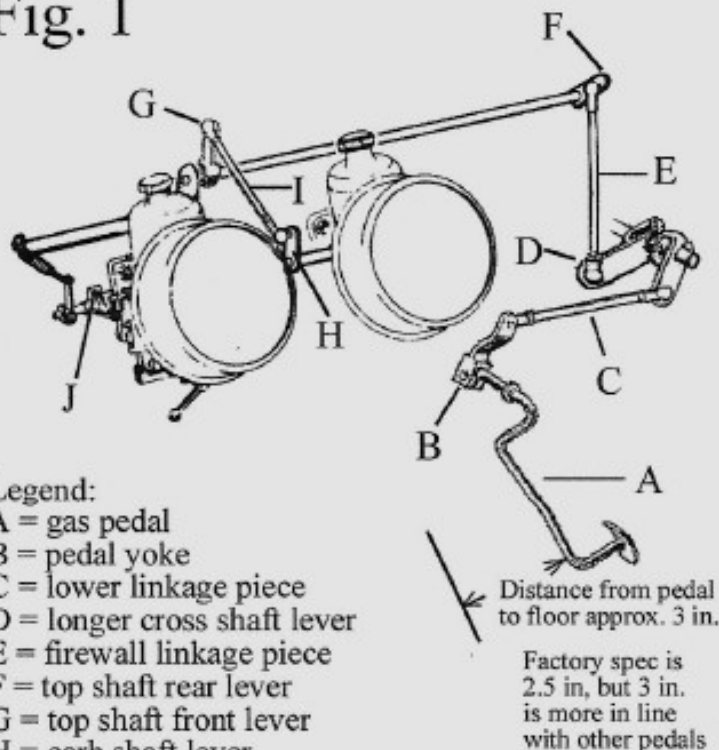
The part of the factory manual dealing with this topic is at the end of Section A, but there are a couple aspects not touched upon in the official publication. The reason given for this adjustment is "to prevent the throttle linkage being strained and the throttle levers working loose." The Book states that the "linkage may be adjusted to allow

the toe board to act as a positive stop to the accelerator pedal when the throttles are fully open," but they leave out the fact that only the pedal should be stopping the movement of the linkage, and never the stop tabs on the carburetor shafts impacting on the carb body. In fact, if the carb shaft stops are halting the movement of the linkage, instead of the pedal bottoming on the toe board, the backlash from this abrupt contact can not only strain things but also break the plastic bushing which mounts on

the intake manifold and holds the end of the accelerator spindle. If that occurs all acceleration is lost, and you go nowhere until the situation is rectified. This is a more common problem on BJ7's and 8's, due to the greater leverage exerted by the longer spindle.

You can go by the factory procedure and adjust according to the book, or incorporate any or all of the tweaks herein discussed. Take a gander at Fig.1, which shows the general overall linkage layout for BJ8's in the fully OFF (idle) position. My problem with using the BMC method is that the gas pedal is limited to 2.5 inches of travel, which is a little on the short side and leaves the gas pedal set lower than the brake and clutch pedals. I prefer my three pedals pretty much in line with each other, which breaks down to a distance more like 3 inches between the gas pedal and the point where it touches the floor. Whichever dimension you go by, the object is to adjust the various parts of the linkage so that when the gas pedal is buried in the carpet the clearance between the stop tabs on the butterfly shafts and the flats on the bodies of the carburetors is .025" (see Fig. 2). At this position the throttles are fully open, with the butterflies parallel to the carb bores, but because the shaft stop tabs do not contact the carb bodies there is no reverse pressure put on the linkage. Instructions given are based on BJ8

Fig. 1



Legend:

- A = gas pedal
- B = pedal yoke
- C = lower linkage piece
- D = longer cross shaft lever
- E = firewall linkage piece
- F = top shaft rear lever
- G = top shaft front lever
- H = carb shaft lever
- I = front linkage piece
- J = carb throttle stop

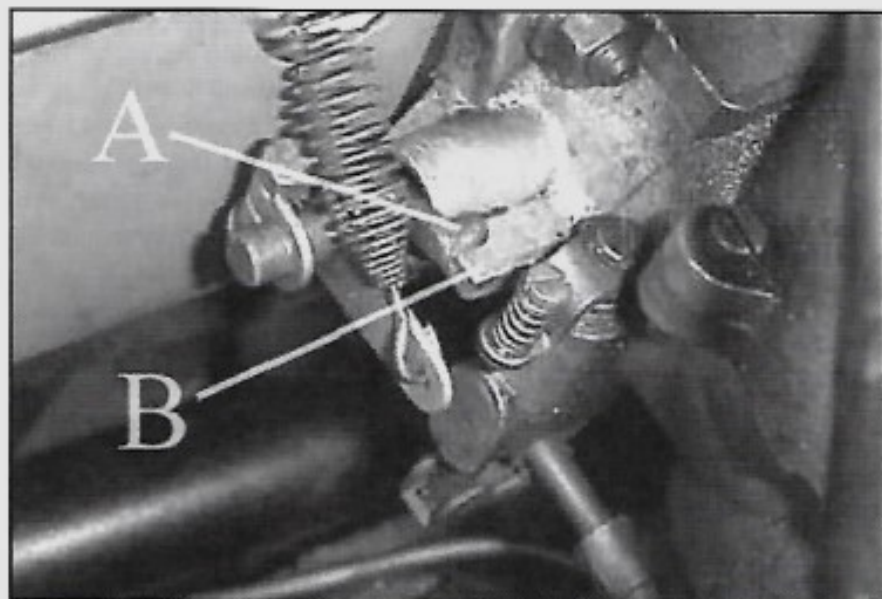
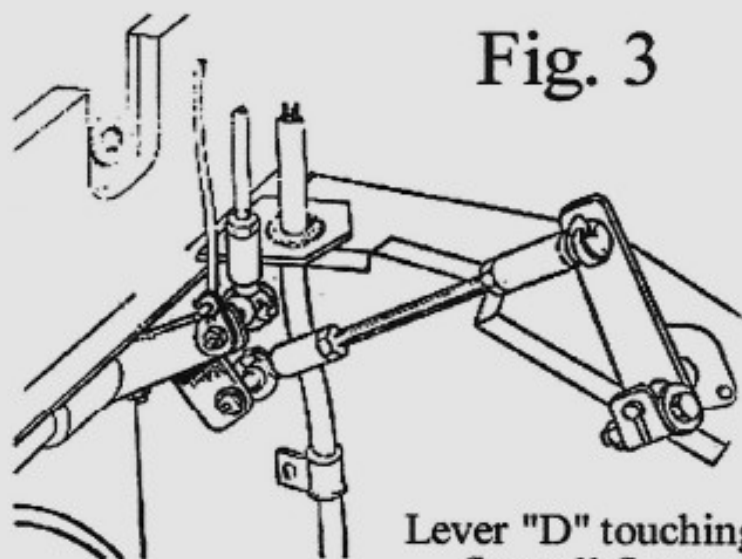


Fig. 2 Showing the throttle fully open
 A = stop tab on carb shaft
 B = throttle stop on carb body
 Clearance between "A" and "B"
 should be .025"



**Lever "D" touching
 firewall flange**

cars, but generally apply to earlier models without going into the finer points like synchronizing tri-carbs.

To adjust for the correct clearance I start at the gas pedal and work up and forward to the carbs. First, align the brake and clutch pedals with each other. On early model cars with the same master cylinder for both brake and clutch the two pedals should be aligned already. On BJ8's the length of the brake pushrod is set to bring the brake pedal even with the clutch. Then clamp a bar across the brake and clutch pedal arms so it projects over the gas pedal. Referring to the pieces labeled in Fig. 1, slacken the pinch bolt on yoke lever B and remove lower linkage piece C. In the footwell, fix the gas pedal at the desired height off the floor, making sure it is even with or below the other pedals. Prop, clamp, or otherwise hold the gas pedal so it can't move, then rotate yoke lever B so it's pointing up and leaning towards the rear of the car at an angle of about 30° from straight upright. Snug the pinch bolt just enough to clamp the yoke without locking it, so the yoke holds the setting but can still be shifted on the pedal shaft.

Next, remove firewall linkage piece E and use a rubber band on cross shaft lever D to hold it firmly up against the bottom of the firewall (Fig. 3). With the gas pedal held in place at the fully up position, set the length of linkage piece C so the yoke lever and cross shaft are exactly connected, with the gas pedal remaining at the desired height, lever D in contact with the firewall, and yoke lever B maintaining the 30° angle. That takes care of the bottom part now on to the middle.

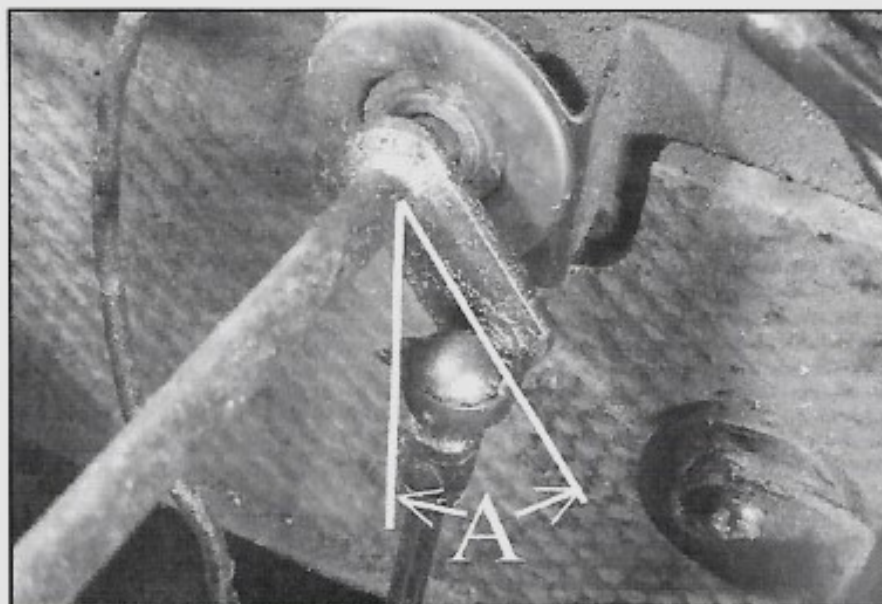


Fig. 4 Lever F at full throttle
Angle "A" can be no
less than 20 degrees

Remove front linkage piece I connecting the spindle front lever to the carb throttle shafts. Adjust the length of linkage piece E so that when it is connected to lever D (resting against the firewall in the OFF position) rear lever F is at an angle of 30°–40°. Refit linkage piece E. Now for the home stretch. Slacken the pinch bolt on front lever G and stand it straight up, then re-tighten the pinch bolt. Set lever H parallel to lever G and adjust linkage piece I to hold that setting. Lastly, slacken the pinch bolts for the two levers that open the butterflies, located on each end of the shaft between the two carbs (not shown). Swing the two levers around till they are firmly against the fully OFF side of the "lost motion" forks on the carb shafts and tighten them in place. Blip the throttle at lever G and make sure the butterflies return

to fully closed when the throttle springs back to the off/idle position.

Now to check everything, and there are two factors to bear in mind. First, you want to be sure nothing can bind or change configuration, and second, you want to have the proper .025" stop clearance at the carbs. In addition, it's desirable to maintain the proper angle on the throttle switch lever. The position of lever D and length of linkage piece E are critical for this. Use a pole, a brick, or a relative to hold the gas pedal buried in the carpet. Check the angle of lever F in this full-on position. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD LEVER F BE LESS THAN 20° FROM VERTICAL** (Fig. 4). If the lever can travel down any further, as in beyond 5 o'clock, it can flip around and underneath, binding linkage piece E and locking the throttle open. This is not

desirable. Lengthen link E as necessary to keep the minimum angle. Then, with the pedal still floored, check for proper .025" clearance at the carbs between the shaft stops and the carb bodies. If the clearance is more than .025" you can decrease by lengthening link I. If, on the other hand, the stop tabs are hitting the bodies you need to adjust for gap. Bear in mind that the angle of it must remain the same and D should stay as high as possible, and that when released to full off the gas pedal should line up at the height you wanted. Therefore it is best to keep E set and shorten link I or, alternatively, shorten C while increasing the angle of B. Sometimes it's necessary to reset the position of the butterfly levers. You may have to play around a bit before things are entirely to your satisfaction, and if your floors have ever been redone you could be seriously challenged. Should all your efforts to set the proper clearance for the pedal height that you want to use be in vain, don't lose heart, there is a simple solution. You can always "flat rate" the job by gluing a chunk of paneling or the like to the toe board under the carpet at the point where the pedal comes down, raising the floor to the requisite height for stopping the pedal where it gives the correct clearance at the carbs. Once you have everything where you want it, final torque the pinch bolt for lever B and check the adjustment of the overdrive throttle switch. I find an ohmmeter best for that job.

Acknowledgments: the author would like to express his gratitude to Magnus Karlsson and Mike Salter for reviewing and commenting on this article prior to publication. ☐