

# Sixes & Sevens - Will the real 8843 AR please stand up?

In this issue Tony Weale looks at some interesting aspects of the early Series I's and II's.

The Hertfordshire registration 8843 AR first appears to have been used on a yellow, cycle-winged series 2 Seven in 1960. This factory demonstrator is believed to have been a BMC engined car and was much photographed for Lotus publicity by Derek Jolly. At about the same time, or a little later, a yellow, flared-winged 8843 AR seems to have existed - whether this was the same car is not clear. Still later, the number appeared on a 1340cc Cosworth engined Seven, this time a green car with flared wings and still with the early "spot lamp" head lights.

Soon the 1500 engine superseded the 1340 in both Ford and Lotus production, and the Seven demonstrator was suitably updated. This car is remembered as being red in colour: it retained the number 8843 AR. Both 1500 and 1340 versions were widely road tested by magazines of the period: eagle-eyed researchers may be able to determine by comparison of the various photographs whether the 1500 was a different car, or the 1340 rebuilt.



8843 AR, probably in 1340 Cosworth form in 1961

By this time "suffix" year-letter registrations had arrived, and since the demonstration car had to look "new" whatever its actual age, the next Seven demonstrator - still a green 1500 Cosworth so possibly the same car - bore a current registration - KAR 120 C, of course! That is another story, but it is worth remembering that ex-demonstrators may have been disposed of with different registrations to conceal their origins .... it is rumoured that the 8843 AR log book and chassis plate are in the possession of a well known motoring personality.

## HISTORIC TECHNICALITIES: SEVEN SERIES 1 FRONT SUSPENSION

Front suspension of the series 1 Seven appears similar to that of the series 2 and 3. The obvious difference is the position of the steering rack - behind the axle rather than in front - but in fact almost all the parts are different from the post 1960 designs. Wishbones are shorter and accept self-threading bushes for the horizontal trunnion pins (horrible to fit, and to remove when siezed). The uprights are, at least on early cars, of Standard 10 type, not Triumph Herald which have subtle differences, and the bronze trunnions are also from the Standard, having a different offset from the Herald type.

Some interchange ability is possible with the more readily available series 2/3 suspension, but because of the different dimensions of the parts and the slightly narrower front chassis of the series 1, care must be taken. The top links remain the same as do the various bushes, but the S2 anti-roll bar is longer than the S1. The S2 wishbones and uprights can be fitted, but the S1 trunnions must be retained to preserve a reasonable camber angle. Sleeves and spacers (known as "fudging rings" in early Chapmanese) will be needed when assembling the early trunnion to the later wishbone. This must be done properly since these parts are safety-related.

Both Herald and Standard 10 type steering arms are encountered on surviving series 1's and both types are workable (in pairs) although their geometry is not identical. The steering rack may need extensions according to the rack/arm combination in use - but does not usually need extra lock stops like a S2/S3. The S2 mounting blocks can be used - the rack height on the chassis is set correctly unlike later cars, and its fore and aft alignment is not very critical. The rack itself is nominally Morris Minor/Lotus Elite but there is considerable variation between cars. The layout of the rack and universally jointed column allows the use of

other types of steering rack, but it should be obvious that S2/3/4 and Caterham steering racks are not suitable for mounting behind the axle.

Original Lotus front hubs were Standard Atlas or Triumph Mayflower parts modified by plugging and redrilling to 4" PCD. These seldom appear in early Lotus technical photographs, presumably because of their rather home-made appearance! Herald hubs can be fitted, or if converting to disc brakes and later wheels, Spitfire or Caterham type. Brake back plates and drums on many early series 1 cars have been modified quite extensively, and it is difficult to know exactly what the original equipment was. Nominally they are "Girling 2LS" but it isn't always that simple. Can some expert among our members unravel further?

Returning to the subject of the steering, and becoming now a little more theoretical, the S1 Seven does NOT have "negative Ackermann" steering, as is sometimes claimed - unless all the cars seen by the writer have been assembled wrongly, which is of course quite possible. How did this myth arise? Hopefully one of the many experts now reading this and shouting angrily "HE'S WRONG! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL!" will write and explain.

**A SEVEN REGISTER?** We would like to hear from owners regarding the possibility of setting up a Lotus Seven Register. Moves are afoot to do this in the USA, and with the lack of official factory records for the early cars, perhaps it time that something was organised in Britain. Is it worth doing, would it serve a useful purpose, and what form should it take?



Suspension on the first Series I production Seven