

“Always Quote This Number”

The ‘Car No.’ was an Austin **Works Ledger** number by which the factory or garage could identify all assembled cars after engines had been fitted, tested and passed. Some cars had replacement engines in the Works. One saloon of 1929, was recorded to have had five engines in it before leaving the Works. The "Heritage" records known to survive are for just four sequences of cars:

March-June 1929	A8 series	Ch. 77535 - 87433
June-Dec 1929	A9 series	Ch. 87434 - 97332
April-Oct 1930	B1 series	Ch. 107228 - 117126
Jan-June 1931	B3 series	Ch. 127026 - 136924

A search for information and the issue of a ‘Heritage Certificate’ for a **specific** ‘Car No.’ is available on request from (and cheques to): BMIHT Ltd, Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road, Warks., CV35 0BJ or telephone 01926 645 075 (Head Archivist is Gillian Bardsley in April 2013). Cost is approximately £40.

The approximate date sequence for all the ‘Car Nos.’ is:- **A1** — 1922; **A2** - May 1925; **A3** — May 1926; **A4** - Feb 1927; **A5** - Oct 1927; **A6** - April 1928; **A7** - Dec 1928; **A8** - Feb 1929; **A9** - July 1929; **B** - Oct 1929; **B1** - April 1930; **B2** - Oct 1930; **B3** - Jan 1931; **B4** - July 1931; **B5** - Jan 1932; **B6** - June 1932; **B7** - Jan 1933; **B8** - June 1933; **B9** - Jan 1934; **C** - June 1934; **ARQ etc** jewel series July 1934 at 249701, from July 1936 separate Car and Chassis Nos’. dropped, the ‘Chassis No.’ was the only reference number from the introduction of New Ruby etc.

The service plate was screwed to the early cars, as a numbered zinc disc, up to about A4-4000, April 1927. **Fig 1**. It continued next as two plates vertically near the petrol tap on the bulkhead **Fig 2**, then the two plates moved to the inclined lip on the nearside scuttle. **Fig 3**. Sometimes these have been painted over or deliberately transposed to re-register a fraudulently acquired number or car, or simply to re-assemble a road-going vehicle from two or three basic elements. **Fig 4** shows original and reproduction plates and the difference in style of letters and numbers, then **Fig 4a** a Ruby saloon.



Fig 1

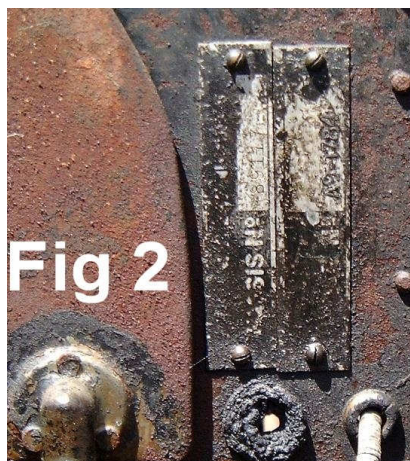


Fig 2

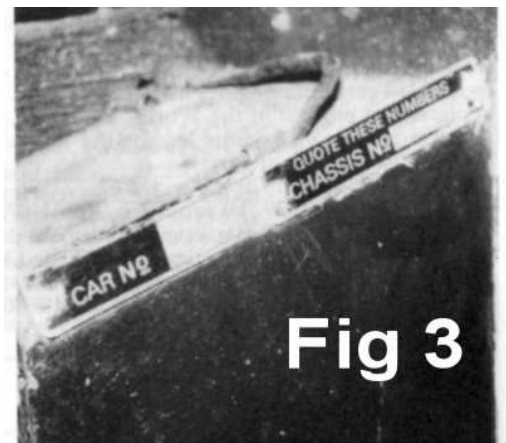


Fig 3



Fig 4

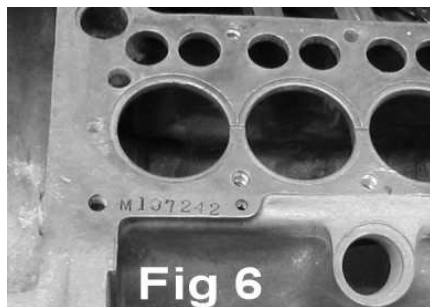


Fig. 4a

From 1983 up to now, we have had to bow and scrape to the DVLA to re-license genuine dormant cars, so to help identify and date your vehicle, try removing paint and looking for:

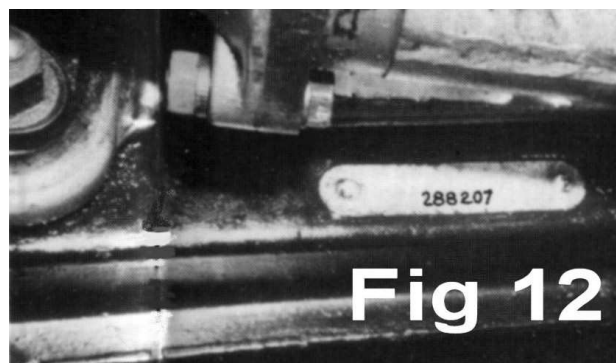
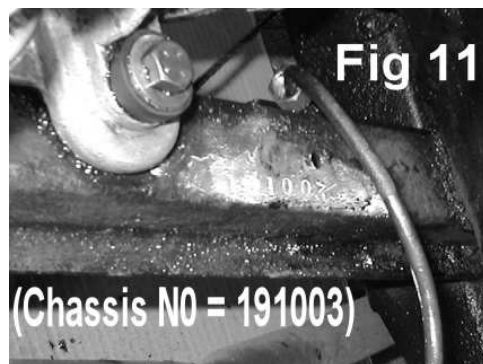
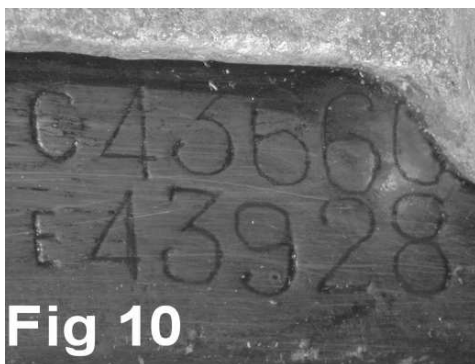
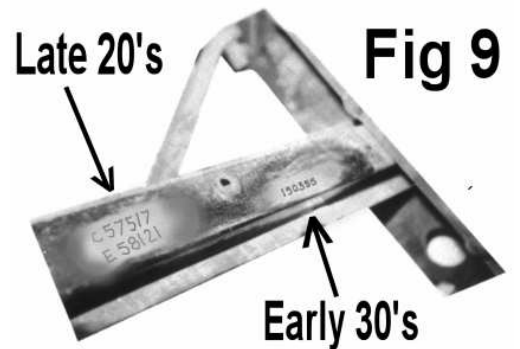
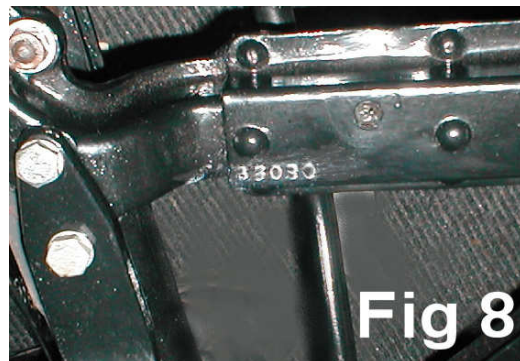
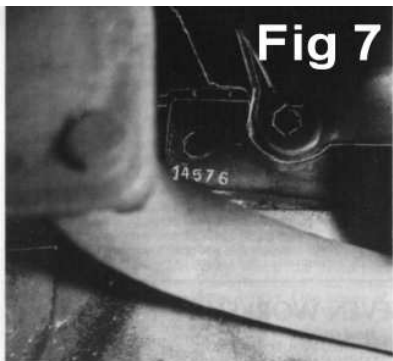
Engine No.

Always easily found. Stamped into the crankcase at the front nearside (to read conveniently with the early chassis) and later duplicated near the rear offside oil pipe union. Always prefixed M (for Motor) except possibly on marine or stationary adaptations **Figs 5, 6 & 6a** or blank replacement if ex. works.



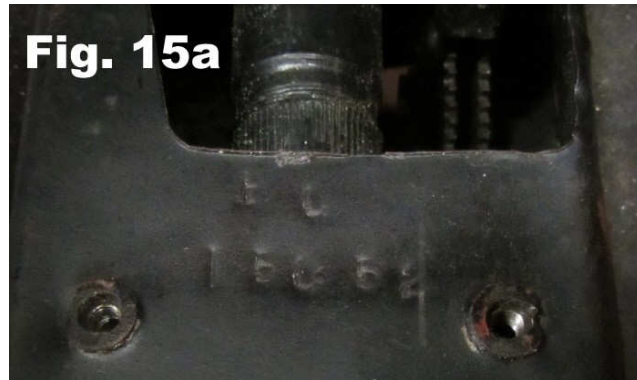
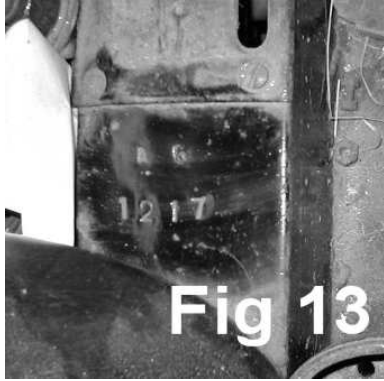
Chassis No.

At first, this was stamped on the nearside rail, forward of the front engine mounting. **Figs 7 & 8**; then sometime in the late '20s the works moved the numbering along the rail to just forward of the rear engine mounting, adding the Engine Number. **Figs 9 & 10**. In the early 30's only the Chassis number was marked and located behind the rear engine mounting (this position is normally covered by the side/splash plate). **Figs 9, 11 & 11a**. Finally, from the mid. 30's, a plate was attached by rivets to the offside rail below the starter. **Fig 12**.



Body No.

Always stamped on the top of the propshaft tunnel between the front seats. **Figs 13, 14, 15 & 15a.** As saloons and other bodies progressed after early tourers, a simple alphabetical prefix was added. Basically, Tourers were A .. , Coupes were B ..., Sports were E, 2-seaters were P ..., Saloons were R ...; but with at least 50 derivatives.



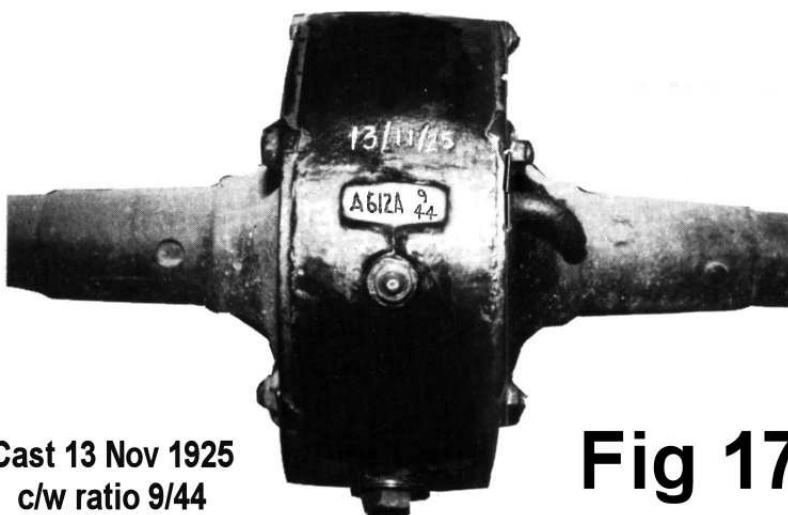
At first, the chassis rear cross member carried all three chassis, engine and body Nos, stamped into the nearside web, facing rearwards (**Fig 16**), but these numbers were discontinued about 1926.

Very occasionally, a number has been found stencilled on the offside, e.g. Ch. No. 107577 of April 1930 (Mill's book, 'Original Austin 7', p17 and also Purves' Source Book, p118).



Rear Axle

All axles had their exact date, a foundry number and a ratio, but rust may have eroded these. **Figs 17 & 18.**



Electrical

Many starters and dynamos are month dated but of course are likely to be exchange units. One item that rarely failed was the cut-out/fuse box. Early ones had the bases stamped, then the smaller upper cover eg 6V ER 10 32 (October 1932). **Fig 19** shows the base of an original coil – my cut-out covers were too corroded to provide a clear illustration.



Various

Cylinder heads and blocks sometimes had raised dates cast at the foundry, and on early engines all moving components, i.e. crank, rods, flywheel, block etc. were given the crankcase number. Some old pistons and gearboxes were also numbered or dated but of course all these various components are not necessarily original to the car. The prefix CH A1 appears to have been added to bare chassis for a few coach built models in the 20's. CH A1-4189 on a 1927 Van; CH A1-6664 and 9273 are on 1927 Mulliners (A7CA Register) – This seems to have been a bright idea by someone for chassis supplied to specific Coachbuilders, the idea was soon dropped.

Finally, **never** assume the log book was correctly or completely filled out by the LVLO Council clerk; **or** that the sequence of production matched the Registration Number sequence. Cars could sit unsold – and thus unregistered – in showrooms for months! (Mine did.).

Notes:

It will often be found on current V5 / V5C's that the 'Engine Capacity' is quoted as 858cc, this refers to the Mk 1 Mini (Austin 7) and was an error introduced by DVLA when the Registration documentation was centralised in the early 1970's, local Registration Authorities were also instructed to destroy their old records.

From January 2006, the implementation of on-line checking of the MOT Garage's test information with data held on the DVLA's V5C's records system will mean it is essential that all the relevant numbers on your car match those on the V5C, otherwise it's 'likely to be'/'will be' an instant MOT failure. From November 2012 the MOT is not required but voluntary inspections may be paid for.



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Additional notes and photographs, etc. E & O.E., by Sandy Croall in 2005,
then Jim Blacklock, Registrar, in 2013.

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