

MATTERS OF TESTING

MOT



For authorised examiners
and testers

APRIL 2008

ISSUE 39

Red, amber or green...

A look at how we assess risk

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across
Europe
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the
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From the editor

Welcome to my first issue of *Matters of Testing*! I'm very excited about what we have in store for you.

VOSA is always trying to improve the way garages fulfil the requirements of the MOT scheme, so our cover story looks at MOT Enforcement Transformation, what our site assessment visits mean to you, plus the colour indicators of your risk score (pages 6-7).

The Angel and the Demon (page 9) slug it out over the Best Practice Guide, while Alan explains the benefits of knowledge exchange across continents (page 3). It's Euro-time for your bikes too (page 8), and we have more to reveal in the conclusion of the Romanian trip (page 10).

All this and more, packed into this issue. Enjoy!

All the best,

Sudeshna

If you have comments on any of the articles in this issue of *Matters of Testing* you can send your letters to:

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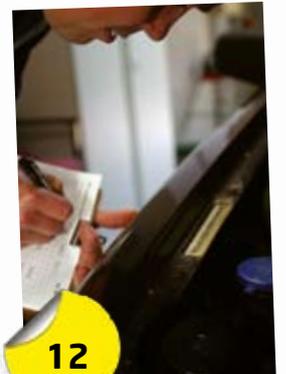
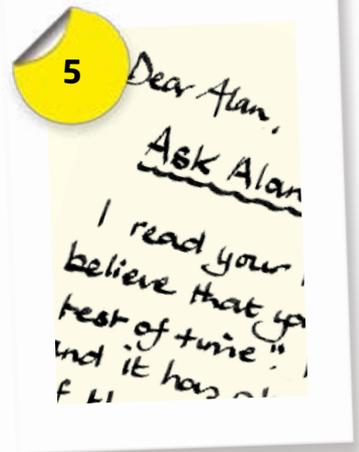
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Ask Alan...

Alan explains that trips to the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee are not pleasure jaunts. Honest!

You ask:

In the MOT seminars and *Matters of Testing* you often talk about CITA and your foreign trips abroad. What is CITA and is it good use of our MOT fee money for civil servants to globe trot?

Alan says:

Well that's a barbed question isn't it? Thanks for that! Let me explain:

CITA stands for Comite International de l'Inspection Technique Automobile. This translates as the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee.

CITA started out life in 1968 when a small group of nine heads of European testing organisations got together in Ostend, Belgium. Great Britain was represented by a guy called Cliff Toyne who was the head of the Vehicle Inspection Division that became VOSA many years later. CITA's objectives then, much as now, were to exchange information and jointly develop best practice for testing and inspection. There was a tremendous opportunity to learn from others' experiences, pool information and jointly develop best practices.

The main benefits of CITA are:

- reduced development risks, time and costs;
- increased efficiency and effectiveness from being able to tap into an expanded knowledge and expertise base; and
- shared intelligence on technical developments, international policy and standards, and the benefits of testing.

As for globe trotting, most of the travel is confined to nearby European cities just an hour or two away, and on budget airlines. Brussels in Belgium is the most often used venue because that's where CITA's HQ is located. Occasionally, other countries will host working group meetings because that can help reduce travel costs and spread the load a little for those furthest from Belgium.

It sounds exotic and to be honest it's not bad at first. But after a few trips, all you ever seem to remember is the airport lounges and the backs of taxi drivers' heads! It's not even that good for practising your language skills because all meetings are conducted in English!

CITA is also now a global power and stretches to all continents with members testing easily 200 million vehicles every year. We're not so big headed in VOSA that we can't learn from others. We get to hear many good ideas that we can adopt for ourselves and, more often than not, we are seen as a good source of best practice.

In recent years, VOSA has helped many countries to develop their own annual test systems. VOSA is also assisting (by correspondence alone unfortunately) the development of motorcycle testing in the Far East, because of our status as one of the few authorities in the world that's been testing bikes for more than 40 years.

So yes, it is good value for your money to have our MOT scheme at the forefront of European thinking and appreciated by the rest of the world. Something I am sure you'll agree with.

www.cita-vehicleinspection.org/en/Default.htm



Alan Wilson is the man in charge of VOSA's management of the MOT scheme. He has an in-depth understanding of VOSA and the garage industry. The views Alan expresses here are his own and he will make it clear where they deviate from the 'official' line.

The MOT seminar round-up

The VOSA team have just come back – sore footed and weary – from this year’s round of seminars. They visited 95 venues and this is how it went.

VOSA’s tenth anniversary of MOT seminars has just come to a close this month. The team attended a wide range of venues (95 in total) from Wick to Wembley and Kilmarnock to Cardiff! Once again, the seminars were presented by the trainers from VOSA Training Services and were supported by representatives from the head office in Bristol and local area office staff.

Below is a round-up of what we covered this year.

- Targeted enforcement – this is a new concept, brought in last year, which was viewed with some trepidation. However, the areas have now rolled this out and it is evident that many of you understand the reasons why we introduced this. More positively, you are also seeing the potential benefits (although a lot of you did state you would miss the Vehicle Examiner visits!).
- Test frequency and fees – a subject dear to your hearts. We kept you informed about the forthcoming consultation and a couple of possible options for you to think about.
- Flashback – this was a quick update on the changes that occurred in the scheme last year, including the introduction of SAT, motorcycle decelerometers and, of course, number plates!!
- Looking forward – we discussed some of the possible changes for the coming year, including a review of corrosion procedures.
- New technology – we took the opportunity to address a couple of issues about electronic park brakes (EPB) and what to look for when testing. We also took a look at total electronic braking or ‘braking-by-wire’ as it’s known.
- Training ideas – we asked for feedback on the training courses we deliver and how you think we could improve them. We also shared some of our thoughts for the future.
- The Q&A session – this was conducted by representatives from head office in Bristol and area offices. This is always a lively part of the evening, and gave us a chance to take note of your concerns. We also took the opportunity to record feedback from you on the evening’s presentation and any points that we may not have been able to answer on the night.

Well, that’s it for another year. Thank you for making the seminars so enjoyable and successful. We hope to see you next time. Let us know if you have any suggestions for next year’s seminars. Write to *Matters of Testing* at the address on the contents page.

All change at the top!

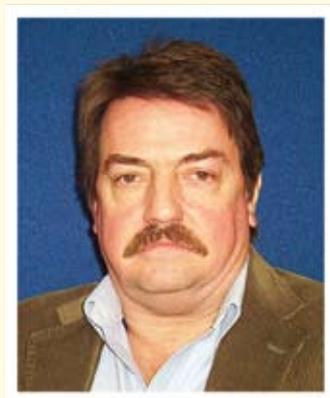


After 7 fruitful years at the helm of the MOT scheme, it’s time for Alan Wilson to move on to newer responsibilities. He left with this message:

“It has been a great privilege to manage VOSA’s MOT scheme over the past few years, but like many things in our modern world, we must move on. I hope that the changes my leadership brought about have had a beneficial effect on the MOT trade and, more importantly, that the scheme continues to develop over the coming years as I hand over the torch to my eminent replacement, Neil Cumming.”

Although Alan has moved to pastures new, the MOT team has been retained as a unit to continue the legacy and challenge of change and to

ensure a consistent approach to the MOT scheme.



Goodbye Alan (upper left), hello Neil (above)

Alan replies...

Dear Alan,

Ask Alan :- Matters of Testing

I read your letter with absolute disgust. I cannot believe that you are saying, "The fees have stood the test of time". I have been in the trade all my life and it has always been a bone of contention.

If there was a set fee for its MOT Test, the same as the road tax at the Post Office, there wouldn't be a problem. You don't see the Post Office discount road tax do you, so why should we.

To say we should be satisfied getting £1 per minute is nonsense, absolute nonsense. Just come back from the vet with my labrador — £60 — £11 worth of tablets, the rest the fee — 6 minutes.

looked at your photograph and thought should I work it out for him — bless.

Publish this if you dare!

Your remarks are insulting. We should be charging £100 per test and lift it out of the gutter where it's been all its life.

Yours sincerely Paul Barry.

NCS MOT CENTRE

Dear Paul

Thank you very much for your robust letter to me of 8 January 2008. I hope you don't mind an equally robust reply!

The purpose of 'Ask Alan' is to air trade issues and to be provocative. The trade has a tendency to keep far too quiet and I welcome your forthright views. That was my intention and you are the first to reply without wanting to stay anonymous. Fair play to you!

However, I think you missed my point. Nobody forces garages to discount on the fee. But over half do. In the past year, following computerisation of garages and in

the full knowledge that the Department for Transport (DfT) is looking at testing frequency for cars, we have been inundated with applications. There are now 600 more MOT stations than when we started our computer roll-out in April 2005. So, despite the opportunity to discount on the fee, it still obviously makes sound business sense to be an MOT station.

I never said you should be 'satisfied' with a £1 a minute. I said it was a reasonable amount. It is also the result of formal consultation between your own trade representatives and the DfT, when all running costs of providing the MOT system are considered.

My point about hidden discounts also escaped your comprehension. Do you really think that your trade would stop offering monetary incentives to have MOTs done at their sites? A fixed fee would merely drive discounting underground and it would be futile to try policing it.

If you think there would be a benefit to society from fixing the MOT fee or raising it to £100, you must make the case to the DfT.

The bottom line is that nobody forces garages to become MOT stations. Application is purely voluntary. All the terms and conditions are published in the Testing Guide and nothing is hidden. If any MOT station is unhappy about any aspect of the scheme, including the fees, they are free to leave it whenever they wish. But I suspect that there is just too much money to be made from MOTs to risk voluntary withdrawal.

The Great Britain MOT scheme is not, never has been and never will be in the gutter. It is one of the best in the world and the envy of many. It is a significant contributor to one of the best road safety records in Europe, where we are in the top three of member states.

Thank you for taking the time to write. I'm sorry if my article left you feeling disgusted and insulted. I wasn't too happy about your comment about my photograph, but I expect I'll get over it.

Yours sincerely

Alan Wilson

VOSA's Head of Private Vehicles Scheme Management

Continuing to transform the way we work



In this issue, we look at an update on the progress of the MOT Enforcement Transformation project – our strategy for improving testing standards.

Following on from Alan Wilson's article (Transforming the way we work, *Matters of Testing* 37, November 2007), a lot of progress has been made.

Most of the 19,000 Vehicle Testing Stations across the country have now had a site assessment visit and the results of these are being analysed by VOSA. Many thanks for your co-operation with this important exercise. We have ensured that the results of the site assessments are as accurate as they can be. We have done this by carrying out extensive quality checks on both our site assessors and the site assessments. If there has been any doubt, we have ensured that the site assessments have been repeated.

Building our knowledge

We haven't yet incorporated disciplinary history as a part of the risk score. This is being worked on with the intention of building this in over the coming year. In the meantime, we will revisit garages with previous disciplinary history, in an effort to build our knowledge. As we do so, risk scores will become even more accurate.

Keeping you in the picture

You will be informed, by post, of your garage's current risk score during May 2008. From this score, you will be able to see whether your garage has been allocated to the 'red', 'amber' or 'green' segment. We have analysed the nationwide distribution of risk scores and have

intentionally set the red threshold wide enough to ensure that our resources are focused at the highest risk garages.

Remember that this new way of working is aimed at improving testing standards and getting the best out of our resources; this will ensure that compliant garages are not targeted unnecessarily. This reduces our burden on you, the MOT trade.

New authorisations

If your garage is newly authorised or has been reauthorised since your last site assessment, you may not receive a letter from us; however, you will receive a visit from a Vehicle Examiner (VE) in

the next few months. During next year, MOT Computerisation will be updated so that your risk score will be accessible to appropriately authorised users via your VTS device.

Continuous improvement

You are encouraged to read the VOSA Best Practice Guide which suggests basic measures and procedures that could improve standards at your garage. This could be something as simple as implementing a diary system for general equipment maintenance.

Here to help

VOSA encourages our VEs to help and advise garages wherever possible. Our aim is to improve testing standards and road safety by paying more attention to high-risk garages.

What the colours mean

Red segment

If your garage falls into the red segment, you will receive regular visits from our VE over the next year or so. We anticipate that, when you are next site assessed, many of you will have moved out of the red segment by demonstrating that your testing standards are good and that you've put into place the recommendations from the last site assessment. Additionally, we will have refined the targeting thresholds and that could move your segment.

Amber segment

If your garage is in the amber segment, you will typically receive more visits than you previously had; some of these will be vehicle re-examinations or mystery shoppers.

Green segment

Well done! But it does not mean that you can relax and take it easy – or that you will lose touch with VOSA! We will still visit around a third of you in the coming year with most of the rest receiving a desk-based assessment (see box below) by telephone.

We expect every vehicle to be tested properly. Not testing properly puts lives at risk

If garages are found to be testing improperly, we will take stringent action when needed

Garages will be monitored at least once a year, maybe much more often if we think they are high risk

If garages are evasive, we will pay them more attention

We can all improve our standards; our VEs are being monitored as well to improve consistency and effectiveness

Computerisation allows us to look more closely at all garages to assess whether they are more likely to be testing improperly

What is a desk-based assessment?

- It is targeted at garages in the green segment.
- It consists of a telephone call lasting approximately 10 minutes.
- It includes discussion based on previous site assessment information plus MOT data and recent/current disciplinary history.

Results of the telephone call will be passed to the local VOSA area office which may follow up with a visit and/or further analysis.

Up close and personal with foreign testing

Who tests motorbikes in Europe, and do they do it any differently from us? We take a closer look.



All European Union (EU) countries are required by Directive 96/96/EC to have a periodic testing regime in place, with a minimum frequency for light vehicles of a first test when the vehicle is four years old and a test every two years thereafter.

It would be reasonable to assume that this requirement applied equally to bikes as well as cars and vans, but surprisingly it doesn't. There is actually no legal obligation on EU member states to conduct statutory periodic testing of motorbikes.

As a result, there is no statutory motorcycle MOT in Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands or Portugal. Some

of these countries point to statistics which 'prove' that so few motorcycle accidents are caused by the bike being defective that a statutory test regime is unnecessary.

No mopeds allowed

Additionally, several other EU member states that do have a statutory test for motorcycles don't apply the test to mopeds. This is because these countries have no requirement for mopeds to be registered.

In France you can take your bike along for a voluntary MOT test, and this amazingly includes a check of safety helmet condition. The testing station also takes an engine oil sample for laboratory analysis to check for contaminants, and then contacts the owner later if there is a problem.

How the other half lives

The Swedish motorcycle test includes checks on the windshield (if fitted) and the operation of the

speedometer (a road test is always conducted). Testers also use a device to spin the front wheel to facilitate checks on the wheel and tyre (pictured). The country's overall motorcycle failure rate is much lower than for cars, with the most common failure items being lights and tyres, so no surprises there.

In Germany and Spain, exhaust emissions are included as part of their bike test, but you'll be pleased to know that we currently have no plans to introduce motorcycle emissions testing in Great Britain.

CITA (the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee) has had a Recommendation for Best Practice on motorcycle testing since 1978, and VOSA recently assisted in redrafting this to bring it up to date. Once it has been circulated to all CITA members for comment, it will be voted upon for adoption as a worldwide CITA Recommendation.

I'm not testing that!

'Sorry we don't test quads' or 'It won't fit on the ramp' are some of the reasons quad owners tell us they are given when explaining why they can't get their vehicles tested by a Vehicle Testing Station (VTS). Well, quads are Class 4 vehicles and therefore must be tested at an approved Class 4 VTS. 'We don't test quads' is not a valid reason to decline to test though 'It won't fit on the ramp' might be depending on where your beam setter is positioned.

SN 2/2003 explains about narrow track vehicles and how to test them. Don't forget quads do not have an emissions test (2/2003 explains this and defines a quad) so the test can be a bit quicker but the maximum fee is still the same.





The Devil's Advocate



Against

Why are you now looking at non-MOT things? If it's not in the Guide you can't force us to do anything anyway.

If you don't have a customer coffee machine or use super-soft toilet paper in the toilet, the VE marks the garage down on the report form. However, all that doesn't mean the customer gets a bad test!

So what if the reception area is untidy and dusty? In a busy garage trying to make a living you can't have air-conditioned luxury for customers with a cleaner running around every half hour. What's the difference?

Scoring garages on things that are not part of the MOT scheme and not listed in the MOT Testing Guide is unfair because garages are being judged and criticised on things that aren't relevant.

If garages are to be disciplined or targeted for non-MOT stuff, the standards and specifications that VOSA is operating to should be published. The MOT Manuals and Guide are what garages should be judged by, not by unpublished rules.

Garages should have been involved in the development of this new approach long before it was brought out as it came as a massive surprise.



The Best Practice Guide gives good ideas for improvement which affect MOTs and customers. Rather than introduce a raft of new rules and regulations, there are some ideas in the Guide that aren't obviously MOT related. So why are they there?

For

The first thing to point out is that checking non-MOT aspects isn't really that new. Every time a Vehicle Examiner (VE) entered a garage, he or she always made some sort of judgement about what they saw and were able to use the information to list that garage for a targeted visit. This new system allows VEs to capture all that information and make it accountable, as it is recorded.

Even the scruffiest of garages can do excellent MOT tests – we know that. And having a dirty reception would not in itself cause us to think a garage was riskier. But garages that do make a point of looking after their customers' environment do display a more responsible approach to them, and this should be reflected in the scores we allocate.

Pristine-looking garages are perfectly capable of doing an awful test – we know that too. Having scented soap, Danish pastries, filter coffee and a marble-tiled floor will never outweigh a poorly controlled workshop with testers who haven't a clue.

No garage is marked down for non-MOT features but it is true that those who 'go the extra mile' will be marked up. If any garage is operating within the scheme rules then we won't and can't take disciplinary action.

Every garage is in control of its own approach to customers and much of what VOSA looks at is just common sense. Our Best Practice Guide and DVD (DV46) make all this clear.

VOSA discussed its plans for targeting with the MOT Trade User Group (TUG) early on in the process. The TUG is made up of key MOT trade representatives. We've already acknowledged that wider trade involvement would have been helpful and we're hosting a joint workshop to review the system in spring this year.





Spotlight on foreign testing (part 2)

In the last issue of *Matters of Testing*, we looked at the EU-funded twinning project with Romania, undertaken by experts from VOSA. In the conclusion of this feature, John Stephenson and Ian Bartlett pick up where they left off.

Following our previous pre-arranged visits, we thought it better to see what was going on further afield. So we arranged a further visit to a couple of Provinces outside of Bucharest, at a time when they had just introduced their new random re-inspection process. This uses SMS to alert a Romanian Automotive Register (RAR) inspector once the test result had been entered. We hoped this would work to our advantage and surely it did, although there was a little waiting about, neither we nor the RAR inspectors knew what was in store for us until we got there.

Checking standards

Of the six reinspections we observed, one was a minor partial reinspection so was excluded. Of the other five, one was really an eye-opener!

A six-year-old Renault Mégane, which had already been through the service department, failed on the exhaust system, so no emissions check had been carried out. We found nothing wrong with the exhaust, but interestingly, the emissions failed miserably. The big talking point though, concerned a very fine perish mark on a rear tyre, barely detectable by the naked eye, which RAR considered a fail. You can imagine what we thought especially when we pointed out an undetected bulge in a front tyre which everyone else missed!



Next was a light trailer where it was clear – even from a distance – that the tyres were defective. In fact, they were so worn out, the tread had separated. We were astounded to find that the result was a pass!

Tiresome issue?

Another vehicle we suspected had not been inspected was a two-year-old Renault Mégane. Even approaching the vehicle, it was clear both rear tyres were below the legal limit but again the vehicle was a ‘pass’.

Following a reinspection of a fairly old Dacia, failed on many defects, we were surprised that the headlamp aim was not checked due to a very small hole in the lens. When questioned, it was claimed the headlamp would further deteriorate in use. RAR agreed with this!

Another issue was the front tyres; the section width was wider than approved, at 175 as opposed to 165. RAR applies type approval standards to tyre size.

Getting it right

Finally, a Dacia over 20 years old with lots of defects was about the only vehicle we thought had been properly inspected. While the standards applied were, in our opinion, quite strict, the main issue of discussion surrounded a headlamp. Although it was the correct shape and – to the uninitiated – appeared to be part of a matched pair, what was not so apparent was that the headlamp was of a type approved from a later vehicle and not approved for a vehicle of that age. So no headlamp aim check was carried out.

If the headlamp meets the requirements of shape, image etc., why should it fail?

In conclusion

In conclusion, the visit was extremely useful for both RAR and us. We left RAR with a number of recommendations for improving their testing scheme.



Horror Story

A frightening tale about friction.



Talk about rubbing one up the wrong way – this family takes the concept of abrasion a little too lightly! Eagle-eyed Bob Hunter of Bob's Vehicle Service Repair and MOT spotted this issue's horror while testing an Audi A2. Bob noticed that the heat shield had been pushed up and was touching the unions for the rear flexible brake hoses.

As you know, we are not allowed to dismantle during the test but that doesn't prevent us from looking behind any freely moveable panelling. In this instance, the heat shield was very flexible and could be eased down slightly to give a better view of the hoses. Just as

well really because closer inspection revealed some quite serious damage to the hoses. The picture isn't that clear but Bob reports that the outer protection had rubbed through and he failed the vehicle for excessively chafed hoses (IM 3.6. 4d). Bob doesn't say, but it might not have been practical to do a brake performance test in case one (or both) of the hoses burst.

Being inquisitive (like most Nominated Testers), Bob asked the owners if they had any idea as to how the heat shield had been hit. Sure enough they did. Flag stones on the driveway! Apparently if you drive over one side of them they tip and scrape the underside of the car. Even

though the noise had been heard on several occasions, it obviously didn't occur to them to get someone to have a look underneath the car (or presumably to reset the flagstones). Doesn't surprise us, does it?

Just for good measure, they also told Bob that the vehicle's MOT was nearly six months out of date and they only noticed this fact because the road tax was due. Something else which doesn't surprise us!

Send your horror story photos to the editor at the address in the front of the magazine and share your ghoulish experiences with us!

The knowledge



All cracked up

We all know that cracks, damage and obstructions only fail if they are in the swept area. However, what about those that are in the swept area, but are hidden, for example behind the rear-view mirror or a raised part of the dashboard?

Well, the first thing to look at is the wording in the Inspection Manual – ‘examine the swept area of the windscreen and the driver’s

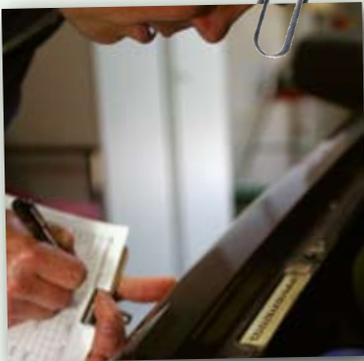
view through it’ (IM 8.3 1). The important bit is ‘and the driver’s view through it’. So, logically, this inspection should be done from the driver’s seat, though this doesn’t mean that a closer inspection – such as measuring any damage – can’t be made from elsewhere.

Original design characteristics are not subject to this part of the test (IM 8.3, page 2). We all

know this includes a rear-view mirror. If you think about it logically, it would be ridiculous to fail any damage or obstruction which is already obscured by the mirror or any other design characteristic.

Admittedly, a crack is likely to spread and could stretch beyond the extremities of the mirror – so a ‘pass and advise’ should prepare the driver ‘for next time’.

Mismatch?



When writing down a chassis number it’s very easy to misread characters but even though you are given several opportunities to check the details entered into it, some NTs still manage to enter the wrong VIN/ Chassis number – but do not notice this until after the VT20 has been issued. They then register another test, with the correct details, issuing the presenter with further documentation which means that

there is an incorrect record on the system and may still result in the DVLA contacting the registered keeper even though there is now a correct record on the system. If you know you have registered the vehicle details incorrectly, contact your Local Area Office who will be able to issue a replacement (and it’ll save you the cost of a certificate). Special Notices 4 and 5/2005 cover mismatches like this.

What’s the catch?



We’ve had a couple of queries about Renault Clio bonnet catches. In fact, some of you may remember that the BBC programme, *Watchdog*, raised concerns about bonnets suddenly opening while motorists were driving along.

As far as we are concerned, we check that the bonnet can be safely secured in the closed position and that the retaining

device is not excessively deteriorated, ineffective or insecure. However, these catches may be prone to malfunction if not regularly maintained and lubricated, so testers are advised to pay particular attention to the retaining devices and advise presenters, using the VT32, of any malfunction or stiffness that has not yet reached the point of MOT failure.

The vital statistics

Now that MOT Computerisation has been live for almost three years, we have amassed a large amount of data covering all aspects of MOT testing. While VOSA used to collect statistics in respect of the MOT scheme, these were usually taken from the old VT12s and therefore did not provide anything close to the quantity and quality of data that we now have at our fingertips.

We thought you might be interested in what we found out,* so we'd like to share it with you. Read on...



* These figures are correct as at 31 January 2008.



60-second INTERVIEW

Name: Colin Allen

Workplace: North End Garage, Bridgend

Job title: Authorised Examiner; Nominated Tester; Certified Automobile Engineer; Fellow of Institute of Motor Industry; Chairman, Independent Garage Association, Wales.

You seem to have a lot of feathers in your cap. How do you manage so much?

I believe in the three Ls - look, listen and learn - and as long as you are willing to learn, you always evolve into newer roles in life.

List five qualities that best describe you.

Practical, patient, outspoken, humorous bordering on the sarcastic, and religious.

What was your previous job?

I began as an Army Apprentice at 16 and was there for five years in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

How long have you been doing this?

I started at the inauguration of MOT testing in the 1960s when a full service for a standard car was 15 shillings (75p), petrol was 5 shillings (25p) a gallon, wages for a 'fitter' were £12 for a 50-hour week, a standard Bentley was £1,000 and a three-bedroom house cost £2,000.

What was the first car that you tested?

A Ford 100E.

What would improve your work life?

The one thing that instantly comes to mind is finesse in customer skills. Both the customer and the testers need to

be educated on the standard of patience, tolerance and respect that they need to show each other in the trade.

Any funny incident at work?

Oh, plenty. Here's a short one. An elderly lady driving a Vauxhall Viva drove straight into the workshop and slammed into the back of a car in the MOT bay. We all jumped and rushed to her; she sat back into the seat and said 'Thank God, I'm here. The brakes packed up on my way from the bank and I couldn't stop, so I drove straight here!' Then she topped it all by saying, 'Don't tell my husband, I'll pay!'

How have you contributed to the industry?

I think it's time to repay the trade that has given me so much. I have taught the first-year apprentices at the local college in the 60s and I still train day-release pupils. I want to pass the legacy of experience to the next generation.

What would you be if not a tester?

('Mad!', Works Manager, Owen Jenkins, adds with a chortle.) I am almost 70. I have given my life to this industry. But, given an option, I'd rather be a comedian because you need to bear life out with laughter even in the face of hurdles.

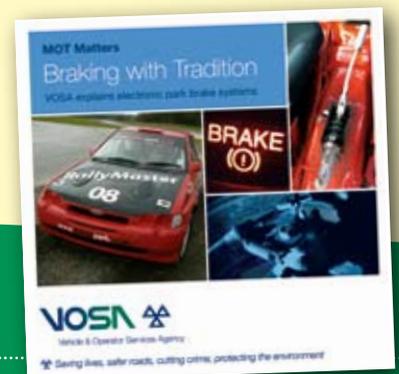
Our latest DVD

We are all familiar with the traditional type of parking brake fitted to cars and other light vehicles. However, the electro-mechanical parking brake, often referred to as an electronic parking brake or EPB, is now becoming widely used by vehicle manufacturers.

EPBs are usually part of a fully integrated braking system with onboard computer systems that allow a number of design features, such as 'hill hold' and 'drive away assist', to be incorporated. An important safety feature of EPBs is that they will apply the hydraulic brakes to all four wheels if activated when the vehicle is in motion, making use of the vehicle's ABS and ESP systems.

This is good for the driver, but can be problematic when it comes to MOT testing some of these vehicles. This DVD looks at a range of vehicles fitted with EPBs, how they work, how they affect the interior checks, and how to test their braking efficiency.

For more information on EPBs see *Matters of Testing* 38, January 2008.



On the job

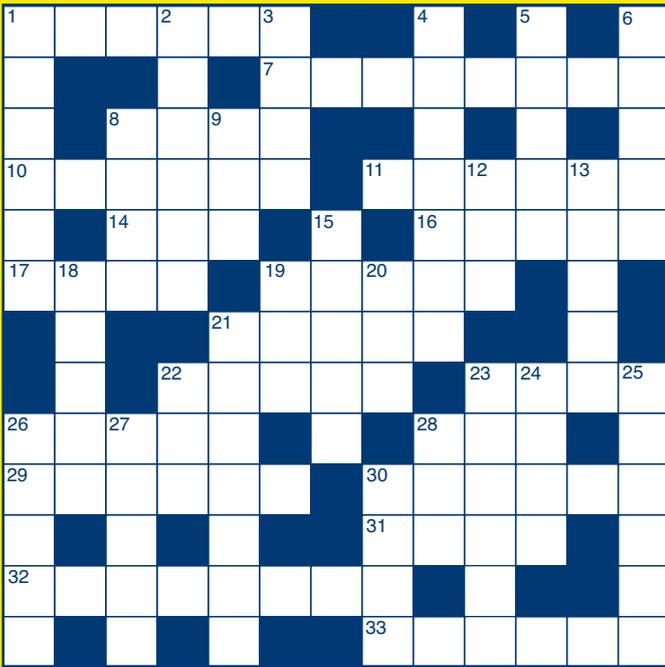


'Why are all testers old?', asked a lad at a seminar. A fair question but I don't really know the answer. I suppose it depends on what you call old. Of the 50,610 Nominated Testers currently testing, 55.56% (that's 28,154 testers) are over 40 (like me!). Let's hope they

don't all retire at the same time. Most would probably like to retire now but are aiming for 60, which made me wonder about the age of the 'oldest tester in town'. Colin (above) is nearing 70 but, believe it or not, our records show that the oldest NT is nearing is 85 years

old and still keeps his 'hand in' as well as being a quality controller. No doubt he's seen a few changes over the years and has a wealth of knowledge to pass on to the younger generation... if the trade can attract them.

John Corcoran



ACROSS

- 1 Nicknamed (6)
- 7 Indian or African mammal (8)
- 8 Furniture item (4)
- 10 Subsided (6)
- 11 Mythical creature (6)
- 14 Not existing before, fresh (3)
- 16 English river (5)
- 17 Method, manner (4)
- 19 Weasel-like animal (5)
- 21 Sacred book of Islam (5)
- 22 Snake (5)
- 23 Outdoor event (4)
- 26 Call on (5)
- 28 Hearing organ (3)
- 29 Facet (6)
- 30 Recess (6)
- 31 Mines (4)
- 32 Proof (8)
- 33 Threaded fasteners (6)

DOWN

- 1 Remove weapons from (6)
- 2 Baby's soft shoe (6)
- 3 No longer alive (4)
- 4 Austere (7)
- 5 Big (5)
- 6 Feat of daring (5)
- 8 Beach material (4)
- 9 Hardly any (3)
- 12 Skill (3)
- 13 Beginning (5)
- 15 Scatter (5)
- 18 Fertile area in a desert (5)
- 19 Concession, bribe (3)
- 20 Rowing blade (3)
- 21 Cooking room (7)
- 22 Contend (3)
- 23 Agent, dealer (6)
- 24 Cupid (4)
- 25 Happenings (6)
- 26 Manservant (5)
- 27 Cleave (5)
- 28 Biblical priest (3)
- 30 Imitators, mimics (4)

Quiz

Q1. Which car part features ceramic insulation, a terminal and an electrode gap?

- a) The flux capacitor
- b) A spark plug
- c) The reverse transmissionator
- d) The exhaust

Q2. What was the company that became Jaguar known as before World War 2?

- a) Lagonda
- b) Coventry Climax
- c) English Automobiles
- d) Swallow Sidecars

Q3. What car is this?

- a) Ford Focus ST
- b) Ford Fiesta ST
- c) Ford S-MAX
- d) Vauxhall Astra VXR



Q4. What was the model of the first Saab car?

- a) 84
- b) 92
- c) 77
- d) Mr Beppie

Q5. Which star of MEN BEHAVING BADLY first came to fame in the Brit bike film, QUADROPHENIA?

- a) Neil Morrissey
- b) Martin Clunes
- c) Leslie Ash
- d) Caroline Quentin

Send your answers to us at: Matters of Testing, VOSA, Berkeley House, Croydon Street, Bristol BS5 ODA or you can email: mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk The first correct entry drawn will win a £20 Argos voucher.



You've won!

The winner of last issue's competition is Velinda Grunsell of Southbourne Park Garage and the winner of our readers' survey is Robert Hallam from Aero Motors, Macclesfield. Congratulations to both of you!

Answers

ACROSS: 1. Dubbed; 7. Elephant; 8. Sofa; 10. Abated; 11. Dragon; 14. New; 16. Trent; 17. Mode; 19. Stolt; 21. Koran; 22. Vipery; 23. Fete; 26. Visit; 28. Ear; 29. Aspect; 30. Alcove; 31. Pits; 32. Evidence; 33. Screws.
 DOWN: 1. Disarm; 2. Bootee; 3. Dead; 4. Spartan; 5. Large; 6. Stunt; 8. Sand; 9. Few; 12. Art; 13. Onset; 15. Stream; 18. Oasis; 19. Sop; 20. Oary; 21. Kitchen; 22. Vie; 23. Factor; 24. Eros; 25. Events; 26. Valet; 27. Split; 28. Ell; 30. Apes.



Want to book a refresher course?

Here's what you need to do:

Log onto the VTS Device. Then select:
Other Functions>Training>Book Course
(Free of Charge).

On the next screen, enter/select the relevant details:

- 1) The User ID of the Nominated Tester (NT) to be booked onto the course.
- 2) From the drop-down menu asking which course is required, select the first 'Nominated Tester Training' option of the two listed.
- 3) Enter a start date in the appropriate field – the start date should be the date you want to start looking at attending the course.
- 4) Scroll through the list of available spaces at all our training centres to find an appropriate date and venue.
- 5) Select the preferred option.
- 6) Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on 'Book Course'.

A confirmation screen will then appear, listing the details of the course booking.

The NT will also be sent an electronic message via the VTS Device. This message contains all the booking details and can be found in their mailbox.

Print off the first part of the message that contains the start and end date, the start and finish times and the venue. Also remember to 'save message'.

Print off and read carefully the second part of the message which has a link to the details of the course and the training centre.

If, at any time, the message is lost or deleted, to access the training centre details again:

- 1) Log onto the VTS Device.
- 2) Press F5.
- 3) Select Option 7.

A list of all our training centres will appear – select the appropriate one.