

BASIC DISTRIBUTOR SETTING MORRIS EIGHT 1934-38
Suggestions from previous experience!

After an overhaul which includes removing and dismantling the distributor, I have found that it is very easy to get the basic ignition timing 180 degrees out, resulting at best with the engine not running correctly and backfiring etc. and at worst it just will not start.

To avoid this problem can I suggest:-

- a) Align dog (it is offset) and loose fit distributor body into head, with clamp left loose.
- b) Turn distributor body so that oiler is on the carb. side of the engine.
- c) Note that viewed from the rotor end (top), the distributor turns anticlockwise.
- d) Note that the firing order is 1-3-4-2.
- e) With an assistant turning the engine over on the starting handle with the plugs removed, establish that No1 piston (nearest the radiator) is at TDC ON THE COMPRESSION STROKE. If you put your thumb over plug hole No1 you will feel the compressed air as the piston rises with valves closed. TDC alone is not enough, it must be TDC on the compression stroke.
- f) Turn engine slightly as required until the arrow cast on the block, and the hole in the inner flange of the pulley flange near the rim, are in alignment.
- g) **If e) and f) are not done correctly you have a 50-50 chance of having the ignition timing 180 degrees out as 1 and 4 pistons (also 2 and 3) are at TDC in pairs.**
- h) Having established that No1 piston is at TDC, check that the rotor arm is in the sector of the distributor cap terminal/contact for plug lead to No1 cylinder. Re-position plug leads as required to achieve this, and re-fit them as required in 1-3-4-2 order on the distributor cap.
- i) Nip up clamp bolts until just tight, fit all leads in the correct order, and reassemble.
- j) Then adjust timing by rotating the distributor body slightly in the usual manner, and set using a stroboscope or traditional methods.
- k) Tighten the clamp onto the distributor with the marked sector central on the cylinder head setscrew.

It is surprisingly common for the owner who is not experienced in this sort of job to get the timing 180 degrees out, with much head-scratching and suspect language! And then someone comes along and solves it in 10 minutes! Hopefully this will be of help.

BOB BRYAN 2008

bobbryan@waitrose.com