

Corrections to 'The Companion' and 'The Source Book'

More than 25 years ago the Light Shaft (newsletter of the Austin Seven Club in Melbourne, Australia) published an article of mine on springs. It was complete with illustrations of the various types of leaf shapes, thicknesses etc. I had obtained this info from an old spring maker who used to measure up every car over the years that came new onto showrooms, no matter from where. His records started with early De Dions up to the then present day and I persuaded him to allow me to copy the Austin 7 details.

In 1977 the 750 Motor Club asked if it was okay to re-print some of my technical articles and I agreed, provided they let me know which articles so I could amend any details if necessary. This they did not do and what was printed was only a resume of the spring details - including an original typographical error showing rear spring camber to be 8". If the rear is set to that dimension ...

- The car looks ridiculous cocked up at the rear (unlike our Chairman's Box Saloon!)
- The occupants would feel they were going to be tipped on their noses
- The handling and over-steer of the car on corners would be dangerous
- And most importantly it would alter the front end castor to the point of giving unsafe steering

Apparently the 750 Club has been requested a few times to publish some form of amendment over the years, and this has only very recently been done. Unfortunately also, the author of the Source book did not have the courtesy to request my permission to republish the details from the Companion, so the wrong dimension has been perpetuated.

Over the years certain spring makers have been given angst for not complying with what A7 owners consider their "Bible" (the Companion), others have done what the Companion says and have subsequently had to re-set the springs (lower), at further cost. Now that litigation rears its ugly head so frequently - there's concern that either the springmakers (or me) might be sued.

So here's a summary of suggested (safer) spring camber settings ...

- Rear - short w/b high frame (max 6 inches)
- Rear - long w/b high frame (max 6 1/2 inches)
- Rear - low frame (max 3 1/2 inches)
- Rear - sports - not flat (this would soon settle into reverse camber, upsetting handling) but 2 1/2" (will soon flatten further)
- Front springs - up to 1928 (five leaves) 3 inches, after 1928 = 8 leaves which are the most desirable these days as some original thicknesses are no longer available.

The above information kindly provided by Bill Sheean in Australia.

Editor's note ... Readers almost certainly know this but just in case it turns-up as a question in one of Eddie's quizzes - spring camber is the vertical distance between the spring pin horizontal centreline and the underside of the bottom leaf at the chassis fixing point.