

Eddie Loader writes in with this helpful tip.

Petrol Tank Overflow pipe

I was recently asked by one of our club members the reason why his Austin 7 petrol tank is fitted with an overflow pipe, the car in question is a post 1934 Austin 7.

To answer the query I checked all my A7 reference books but without a definitive answer to account for this design feature, then I found the answer in the different positioning of the petrol tank to suit the new range of Sevens introduced in mid-1934.

After the last of the Chummy type saloons the RM, RN, and RP saloons and tourers were designed with the petrol tank and filler pipe at the rear and clear of the main body tub, these petrol tanks did not contain an overflow pipe.

Now move on to the post mid 1934 Austin 7 models, the positioning of the petrol tank has now changed, it is fitted further under the rear bodywork with the filler pipe partially in the spare wheel compartment, with this new design feature, there is danger of petrol fumes entering the car interior if the tank was over filled and fuel run down the outside of the fill pipe that was positioned inside the spare wheel compartment,

To prevent this happening the petrol tank was fitted with an overflow, so if you over-filled the tank the surplus petrol finished on the forecourt floor.

It was a brilliant safety feature but could be very wasteful on fuel spillage, if you filled the tank to just below the overflow outlet, on the next corner you navigated would result in petrol leaking from the overflow pipe due to fluid surging inside the tank.

After putting up with this for several years, I eventually cured the leakage by sealing off the overflow pipe with a hardwood plug, but care must be taken when refuelling because it is possible to over fill the tank.