



MOT TEST & WELDING

Few of us are able to throw money at our cars with total lack of concern, we all like to think we are getting good value for every pound we spend, be it on something really important like our P6 or something trivial like food or bills.

I am fortunate enough to be able to do my own repairs and only visit the local garage when my car is ready for tyres, tracking and MOT (and usually it's retest!). Tyres and tracking are things that you just can't sort out without the proper tools.

I find it totally bewildering that people will risk life and limb to scrimp on car repairs to fool the MOT tester. The results of this can occasionally filter through into our circles when a car is sold to a new owner who does not know enough to spot problems and who does not seek advice from the people in the know. I recently helped scrap a car with the sills made out of metal pie wrappers skinned over with filler and the hockey sticks made from hardboard! No names, you know who you are! In an accident this vehicle would have been absolutely lethal. Do not try to fool the MOT tester, if somebody is injured as a result of your poor repair even after you have sold the car, you can be prosecuted.

Corrosion kills most vehicles. Most P6's by now will have been welded and many will need past repairs to be done again. Welding itself can be quite a pleasant and rewarding way of spending your time. However cutting away rusty metal, cleaning off underseal and old paint is very unpleasant. Which explains why so many cars will get welded to pass their MOT and last only a short time before they have rotted through again. If a job is unpleasant to you at home then there's no reason to expect it to be pleasant for the professional to do at work. When you shop around for quotes for welding endure that the welder knows exactly what standard you require of him and also that he knows a little about how the P6 is put together before you take any notice of his prices.

If you ask for MOT standard welding you will get a plate welded over the rusty offending area with a dollop of underseal over the visible areas. This is not acceptable for a car that you expect to last for any length of time. If you want a lasting repair then all rusty metal must be cut away then the resultant hole plated over. This should be seam welded either with a butt joint, where new and old metal butt up to each other or with a small overlap. Opinions vary as to the merits of butt welding, bearing in mind that welding will inevitably weaken any metal in its immediate vicinity. I prefer to butt weld but I am only an amateur!

Once the welding is complete you must carry out some sort of corrosion protection to it in the form of an anti rust primer and underseal or paint, as appropriate. The inside of any weld should have a layer of anti corrosion wax on it or even old engine oil will do the trick if you are prepared to get absolutely filthy. Bear in mind the well-documented health risks associated with used engine oil (Cancer).

In summary make sure your welder knows what standard you expect of him, that he knows the P6 (that some things like the carpets are tremendously expensive if burnt) and also that you want to see his work before its covered in even a layer of primer. Cost is only a general indication of the standard of the workmanship on offer. Bear in mind that some jobs will inevitably cost more than your estimate as cutting away the rust you can see is often only the tip of the iceberg. In general don't ask the welder to do corrosion protection for you, it's not his job and he more than likely will not have



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the correct equipment to do it properly. Do not apply any form of corrosion protection if there is any moisture about as this may allow your rust inhibitor to trap moisture against the bare metal defeating the whole object!

Some dirty tricks of the trade to watch out for are:

Doing a stitch weld or a tack weld (i.e. welding only a few strips along a join that should be welded along its entire length) and then putting a layer of filler over it to make it look like a continuous weld.

Welding a plate in that is not of the correct thickness.

Not bothering to weld bits you can't see.

Not priming metal before painting on the underseal.

Covering poor quality welds with a thick layer of underseal then telling you the underseal is there to make it last a lifetime!

Not removing any wiring in the vicinity of the work, burning the insulation and then leaving it to fail some time in the future.

Metal plates riveted over holes and then undersealed.

Getting a MOT by post! Yes, it still happens in certain circles.

If you are about to buy a car, let somebody else look over it for you, even if you are an expert, a friend will look at the vehicle with less of a rosy hue than you will. If you take it to a friendly testing station and have the sellers permission you can get a good look underneath and least see if any work has been done or is needed.

You might get chance to spot the layer of filler hiding the poorly welded sill or the paper thin patch that didn't see any anti corrosion treatment when it was done to pass the last MOT. In particular, be extra suspicious of new underseal!

Do not get your car just welded, get it done to a good standard and then get it rust proofed to a good standard. Do not try to fool the MOT tester, he is not there to pick on your pride and joy but to help ensure that your thirty year old ton of metal and rubber is safe and therefore enjoyable to drive.

Remember its rust that kills most cars so keep it at bay using a good rust inhibitor properly and regularly applied.

Get out the rust inhibitor, get spraying and smirk when the tester keeps passing it!

Steve Wyles

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