



FRONT SUSPENSION... AN INTERESTING WAY!

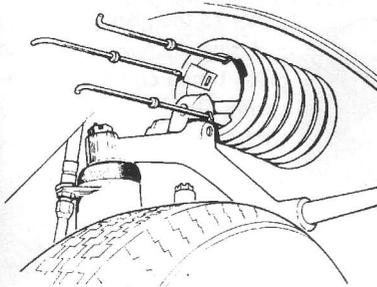
RON BATES

Before you read this can I remind those of you who are new of the little bit on the inside front cover about advice in the magazine. This is a novel way of doing the front springs on P6, not exactly by the book but it worked for Ron. If you can try to find some spring retainers! The Editor.

Recently I had noticed that the suspension of my car was getting low. The situation came to a head when I ran over a pothole with four up, the result was one broken and one bent bump stop! Time to rebuild the suspension!

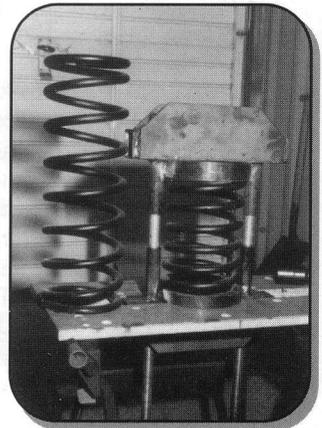
Asking around fellow local club members the decision was made to go with SuperFlex bushes all round, I have heard nothing but good reports about them. The rear suspension was the easy part and replacement went very well...I like the sound of this but what's the bet I hit problems! Ed. The real fun started with the front springs.

The main problem was the spring retainer rods (part no. PT 600304) used to hold the spring to get the old ones out and the new ones in. After many 'phone calls I decided that they really were rarer than rocking horse manure, I could not locate any anywhere. Chewing the fat with a mate who used to work in a scrapyard I discovered that it was possible to remove the springs by flame cutting with care. Not exactly convinced



Spring Retainer official Rover style

and with visions of springs under tension flying in all directions I consulted a mate who used to work at a Rover Dealers. He confirmed that it was possible to flame cut the springs with care and told me that it was also done at the Dealership he worked at as the rods were a little fiddly to say the least! The lads at South Yorks. P6 Spares (Ian and Steve) came up with their own refinement. They told me to weld M8 nuts on the bump stop plate where the rods go in and use M8 threaded rod with M8 nuts. As the springs are 17 1/2 inch free length and need to be compressed to approx. 10 1/2 inch a press is needed as well...didn't have one! However I made a press up as shown in the photograph. So then that takes care of the hardware, here is how I did the front springs.



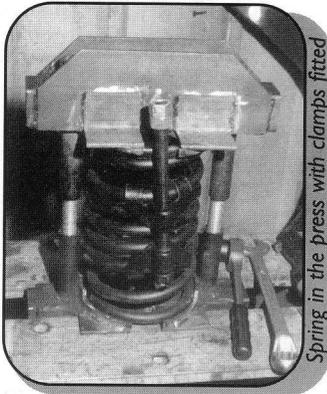
General view of the press

DISMANTLING

Flame cutting the front springs looks a bit a bit dodgy at first, but if you have a good look you will see that the gap between the outer cap and the bump stop is quite small so in reality there is nowhere the spring can go.

Jack up the car, suspension hanging free and remove the wheel and the wing. With the flame cutting gear first cut the coil nearest the front, it will go with quite a bang! Keep cutting one coil at a time until four have been cut, at this point the coil will be free hanging. Now go away for a cup of tea or two while it all cools down. When it is cool the four coils and the remainder of the spring will easily pass through the gap between the front cup and the bump stop. In my own case apart from a couple of stubborn nuts the rest of the front suspension came apart easily.

The old rubber bushes were removed by heating with a blowlamp until the vulcanising melted, driving the bushes out with a hammer and drift. The outer steel sleeves were then removed with a chisel after cutting with a hacksaw. I then cleaned everything up and painted the suspension components. SuperFlex bushes are very easy to fit. Warm them for a few minutes in hot water then press them in using a piece of screwed rod with large washers on each end, the flanged ends to the bushes can be knocked over with a soft faced mallet. The complete suspension was then refitted to the car with the exception of the top ball joint and the shocker.

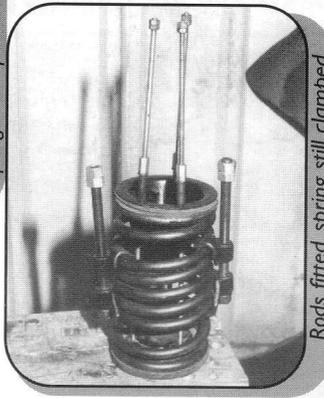


Spring in the press with clamps fitted

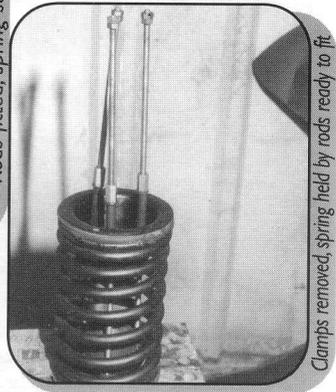
RE-FITTING

The next job was to braze 3 M8 nuts to the back of the bump stop plate over the slots used by the tension rods. When I did this the glue holding the bump stop melted! No problem, I Araldited a stud into the rubber and Araldited the rubber to the plate.

Using my new home made press I then compressed the spring, fitted the clamps and took it out of the press (see



Rods fitted, spring still clamped



Clamps removed, spring held by rods ready to fit

photos). I then screwed the rods into the bump stop plate and lowered the spring over the rods onto the plate. The rods were then located through the holes in the front cup. Three pieces of pipe were then fitted as spacers, washers and nuts tightened up. The clamps were removed. Two M8 nuts were fitted to each of the rods at the outer ends. The reason is so the rods can be held while the inner nuts are slackened and so the rods came be removed.

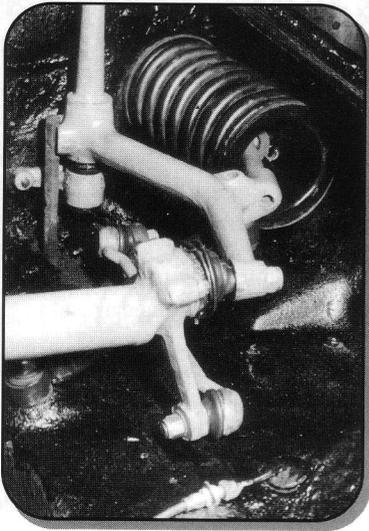
The spring was fitted to the car. The top link was placed in the cup. The upper ball joint was fitted along with the shocker. The wheel was replaced and the car lowered to the ground. At this point you must check that the top link ball in correctly located in the cup. The rods were removed by first slackening the nuts nearest the spring and then, using the nuts at the ends, removing them completely. Do the other side and the job was complete! It does take a few miles for everything to settle and the car does ride a little bit nose high for a while until this occurs.

PARTING SHOTS

With new springs and bushes all round the car definitely feels tighter and consequently steers and handles much better.

I strongly recommend to any one doing this job that all the bolts are renewed with high tensile ones. On my car the long bolts through the bulkhead were 'waisting' due to corrosion, in fact one of them was down to 1/4 inch at one point. Also use copper grease and new nylock nuts.

Whilst undertaking the job I noticed that the track rod ends were shot. A day or two after completing the work I was in a local old style motor factors and asked out of curiosity more than anything else if he had any track rod ends for a P6. After a rummage around he produced a dusty box, best part was he let he have them for the marked price...£9.47 inc. vat for the pair! Just goes to show what is still lurking about



Spring fitted in the car

out there in the older shops, next time your in one ask you never know your luck!

Acknowledgements

Patrick, Terry and Jim. All local lads. The flame cutting idea and help with the work. Ian and Steve at South Yorkshire P6 spares. For the drawing and instructions for the 8mm rods.



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