

## *Spot the Invisible Rust*

**What part of your car do you never look at?**

Whilst you're thinking about that, let me say that I dragged my 3500S out of its comfortable hibernation, and set off for a pre-spring potter around the local countryside.

Unfortunately, after a while I noticed that there was an increasing creaking coming from behind me, and this, coupled with a most uneasy motion of the back of the car, as of an expectant cow, led me to the conclusion that the right-hand rear shock absorber was no longer performing its function. Having got the car home, removal of the suspect item also removed the creaking; QED. However, examination

of the suspension showed that something probably escaped from the X-Files appeared to have been gnawing at the lower link rear bushes. Apart from this, the whole of the suspension was looking the worse for wear, so I bowed to the inevitable, and bought the appropriate replacement parts, and dismantled it all. Now returning to my opening sentence, I guess that we very seldom look at the underside of the lower link, because it is only a few inches from the ground. And, in this case, I was very glad that I had finally done so, because the left-hand one had rusted through just in front of the ferrule where the rear bush resides. Easy enough to cut out and weld in, but the consequences of the link failing altogether whilst loping at speed amongst heavy traffic, hardly bears thinking about.

**Doug Johnston.**

## *From our Maltese Correspondent*

The contributions for "Oily Bits" in the April issue have provoked me into sharing my experience on such a vital part of a car as brakes, but before going into the subject I want to say that I find Tom Law's incident a bit odd. As far as I know, brake fluid is not inflammable and in any case, if it does spurt onto a hot rear brake disc, the quantity is hardly enough to set a car on fire. Having said that, I want to add quickly that I might of course be wrong.

I have had my P6 from new and it is the four cylinder twin carburettor version. Syphoning of brake fluid into the servo unit was experienced pretty early in its life and the unit overhaul was one of the very first repair operations I had to do on the car. It is very easy to find out whether brake fluid is entering the vacuum chamber: all you need is a syringe and a piece of plastic tubing to fit the nozzle and about eight inches long. Remove the vacuum connection and guide the tube to the lowest region of the vacuum shell. Try sucking up and if there is any fluid in there, you would quickly see it coming up the pipe as you pull the syringe handle. The Rover maintenance manual recommends a change of brake fluid every eighteen months and a change of caliper seals and flexible hoses every 40,000 miles. Although I am pretty keen on maintenance, I have skipped this bit; the reason being I was scared of the rear callipers. There were no leaks and were functioning properly and therefore I decided to leave well alone. But came a time, some twenty five years from new when I noticed that the level in the reservoir was falling. Two things baffled me: a) there was no sign as to where the fluid was going; b) the loss was occurring over night. I could drive all day and the level won't change. Suspecting the master cylinder leaking rear seal, a new master was fitted. The servo was tested and although not absolutely perfect, quantities of fluid in the shell not very significant. I wrote to Noel Howard of the technical advice team and he very kindly responded by letter explaining in superb clarity that there are three possible points where fluid can leak. One was through master cylinder which had already been renewed; two was at the servo unit, also checked; three was at the calipers. Front ones were OK but then by sheer coincidence, crimson brake fluid drips began to appear under the final drive at that time to the day. There was no more room for playing ostrich and the rear calipers had to be overhauled.