

SCIMITAR FRONT SUSPENSION TIPS

I have just given my front suspension it's twice yearly grease and check over and thought perhaps my tips and methods might be of use to members new to the mysteries of scimitars.

When checking and greasing the front suspension it is best to raise the front of the car and remove both front wheels, this makes the job a lot simpler as I will explain later. Note here slacken off the wheel nuts before you raise the wheels off the ground this avoids asking a passing stranger to put his foot on the brake while you undo the nuts! Also at this stage grab each wheel at the top and the bottom and see if it is possible to rock it on the bearing at all. A very small amount is ok anything more and you will need to adjust the bearing. More later.

When jacking up both front wheels with a trolley jack it is usually very difficult to get the jack under the front spoiler on the later model scimitars. The method I have found best avoids calling on the gods for help and worse scene scenario squashing yourself. Jack up one side of the car with the standard scissor jack slide this under the chassis behind the wheel or if you fell lucky at the corner of the outrigger where it is supposed to go. This raises the front spoiler enough to slide the trolley in under the spoiler. Place a wood block on the jack and locate it right at the back of the chassis tray guiding it carefully in place so as not to, (a) buckle the tray or (b) go so far back as to tilt under on the lift. Once a good height is obtained take the scissor jack out from the side and put a axle stand at each side on the chassis. Always keep the comment on squashing firmly in the front of your mind at all times!

Greasing the trunnions. This is where both wheels off the ground is good, it enables the wheel hubs to be turned easily to give you access to the trunnion grease nipples, near side faces back off side faces forward.. Whether one or both wheels are lifted off the ground it is very important to relieve the car body weight off the trunnion when it is being greased to allow the grease to get on to all the pressure surfaces. Use a good quality moly grease for this. A tip here is when the cornflakes box is empty don't throw it away cut it up into quarters and keep the pieces handy in the garage. Apart from reducing you carbon footprint the pieces are very handy for jotting notes on, mixing filler or araldite or most important to get back to the matter in hand to slide down behind the trunnion and the back plate and catch the grease that should, if you are doing it right, squeeze itself out of the top of the trunnion, and if said card was not there get onto the inside of the brake disc. I must admit the brakes last longer but you will not be around to get the benefit! What if the grease does not want to come out of the top but comes out of the bottom? Oh dear coming out of the bottom is not good as the grease must fill up all the space in the trunnion to get on all the pressure surfaces. If you have loads of time remove the trunnion from the car and solder the plate into the bottom. It is my practise to always solder the plate into new trunnions when I fit them. If you are looking for a quick fix then place a piece of soft wood under the bottom of the trunnion and carefully jack it up with the discarded scissors jack. This effectively closes the leaking plate and now when you apply the Wanner the grease comes out of the top of the trunnion.

Front brakes. While the front hubs are in the air and can be easily moved from side to side is a good time to check out the disc pads. If the car has been experiencing brake squeal, a common thing since asbestos stopped being used, then remove the pads, clean the backs and coat with copper grease and replace.(Just the backs!) While the pads are out spin the hub and listen for any roughness or rumble.

Wheel bearings. If there is slack in the bearing or you suspect that the outer bearing may need attention this is what you do. Tap off the bearing cap withdraw the split pin and remove the castle nut. Remove the bearing from the hub. Once the nut is off it will pop out. Give it a through clean in petrol. I keep a brush and old baking tray especially for this purpose. If you have a compressor give it a good blast of air to dry it if not then use a lint free rag. This next tip I owe to 'ED' Terry and it rates the best one since he said Tesco were selling packs of 4 Pedegry for a knock down price. How to pack a bearing properly. Apart from a good quality lithium based grease you will need a pair of poly gloves from your local petrol station, the type you put on to fill up with diesel. Cleanliness is essential and we all know what our little fingers can be like when working on the Scimitar. The tip is to push the grease into the bearing from one side only, the largest holed side. Push with the ball of the thumb bit by bit and slowly the grease is forced through the bearing until it finally comes out the other side. This can take a bit of time but the end result is a completely filled bearing. Fit the bearing back into the hub after cleaning the end of the stub axle and the inside of the bearing. There should be no grease on these surfaces. Reliant's instructions in the workshop manual for tightening the castle nut are as follows. "Tighten nut until slight resistance is felt whilst rotating hub. Turn back nut one twelfth turn (half hexagon flat or 30 deg).To obtain the specified end float". Now I find that a wee bit subjective, trying to define when resistance is felt if the brake pads are in position and rubbing on the brake disc is a tricky business.....'Was that it?...have another go....mmm now I think I have got it this time.'etc. etc. Consequently I follow the advice that I read in a caravan manual for a caravan with identical tapered roller bearings which involves the use of a torque wrench."Tighten nut with a torque wrench to between 30-35 Nm (22-26 lbs/ft) Rotate the hub as you do this. Back off the nut 180 deg (half a turn) retighten 90 deg (quarter of a turn) fit new split pin". The inner bearing is the same routine except that the calliper has to be removed before you can remove the brake disc and get access to it. As this is a much larger bearing it appears to need less attention than the outer...thank goodness. On the 5's and early 5a's the outer bearing was considerably smaller than the later ones and was really marginal for the job.

While you are sitting comfortably with the wheel arch in front of you it is not a bad tip to remove the two thin fibreglass inner wings. Drill out the rivets holding them in place and refit using large self tapping screws. Once this is done it makes excellent accessibility to, the starter motor wiring, give the electrical connections a dose of WD40 while you are there, and those really cunning manifold bolts. On the 6b's access to that oily fuel pump! Another tip while you are peering into the new found access hole on the off side is to give the bottom universal on the steering column a good dose of motorcycle chain spray grease, and get the satisfaction of seeing it fizzle it's way into the needle bearings. Don't forget to do the one further up the column but be sure to cover the exhaust manifold while you do it to avoid any grease spilling on to it. Some folks advocate leaving the inner wings off altogether to aid cooling but I compromise by replacing them but fitted with louvers (facing backwards) that way cooling but no muck on the starter motor. That's all folks except to say don't forget to keep a jam jar with some clear waxoil handy when you are working on the Scimitar and put a dab here and there with a paintbrush. Oh yes just remembered another top tip from 'Ed' Terry, when cutting a piece of dowel, steel or wood, carefully wind a bit of insulating tape around it and then cut to the edge of the tape, gives a perfectly square cut.

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