



RV8 wheel refurbishment

Wheel refurbishment has been a regular topic over for RV8 enthusiasts over the years and in a V8 Bulletin Board Al Barnett reported how he had his wheels refurbished by a specialist in Kent. (May 14)

I recently decided that I would investigate refurbishing the wheels on my RV8 as the lacquer was lifting in some places and scratched in others. I recalled that V8 Register member Ray Ellis (Nightfire Red auto RV8) had very strongly recommended Lepsons of Gillingham in Kent in RV8NOTE314. I spoke to 'Chris' at Lepsons who explained they were familiar with the RV8 and would be happy to carry out the work.

The last time I had wheels done I removed the tyres and tapped out the 30 dummy bolts in each wheel, but Lepsons explained that they could provide an all-in service. I could just drive the car to Gillingham, leave it for a few days and they would remove the tyres and the dummy bolts and then replace everything after the rims had been refurbished, including fitting new stainless valves and rebalancing the wheels. Call me idle if you wish but this sounded like a good option even if it was going to cost a little extra. A combination of advancing years and arthritic thumbs has decreased my enthusiasm for mechanical work these days.

Last week I drove to Gillingham and found the site without difficulty, the firm occupies no less than 9 units on the Railway Business Park. As I approached reception I was waved directly into a workshop and

greeted by Chris who welcomed me by name, quite impressive. The workshop was occupied by a couple of Bentleys, several BMWs and the odd Mercedes. Chris explained exactly what he proposed to do, which was to strip, repaint and polish the wheels, leaving the bright areas unlacquered. His view, shared by Clive Wheatley and Steve Newton, is that for cars that are not used much in Winter the lacquer is more of a problem than a protection. I think most of us have had problems with lifting lacquer so I was happy to accept his suggestion.

He then turned to the wheel centres which I had assumed they would not be able to do as I had understood they were difficult to deal with, but not a bit of it. He said the only risk was to the MG badge which might be damaged when they applied heat to soften the glue. I decided it was worth the risk and gave them the go ahead. I then walked 200 metres to the station and had an interesting trip back to Waterloo through parts of London I am not familiar with, including passing right by the Shard building, very impressive.

Chris contacted me the next day to say that they had removed the badges without damage, which was reassuring. Today I retraced my rail journey and had a pleasant trip from Dorking to Gillingham. The car was ready and the quality of the work really outstanding. As the centres had been done as well there was a perfect paint match and the badge surrounds were gleaming having been polished to the same standard of

brightness as the rims. Chris commented that they were not impressed with the original finish of the lozenge shaped casting holes in the wheels so they had smoothed every one of them! The total cost was £600 but it could have been £100 less if I had prepared the wheels myself. I was entirely happy that the cost represented good value.

Chris adjusted the tyre pressures to my requirements; I lowered the hood and had an enjoyable 50 mile drive home in the sunshine, with smooth progress showing that the wheel balancing had been correctly done.

I am therefore very happy to endorse Ray Ellis' view that this is a firm that is well worth using. I do of course have no connection with the firm, other than as a satisfied customer. You can find details at

www.lepsons.com



Top left: emphasises the excellent finish achieved on the refurbished wheel centre and cap. Above: before refurbishment showing lacquer lifting. (Photos: Al Barnett)

See full set of photos:

www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/140501-RV8-wheel-refurbishment-photos-AB.pdf

See our Information Gateway on RV8 wheel refurbishment for further notes and articles: www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewayrv8wheelrefurbishment.htm