

Always Quote This Number

Car Number

On the early cars, up to about A4-4000 (April 1927), the service plate was a numbered zinc disc screwed to the trim panel on the passenger door pillar. Next it was changed to two plates mounted vertically near the petrol tap on the bulkhead; these were then moved to the inclined lip on the near-side scuttle. Sometimes these plates have been painted over or deliberately transposed to re-register a fraudulently acquired number or car, or simply to assemble a road-going vehicle from a collection of spare parts.

The Car Number was a Works ledger number by which the Works or a garage could identify all assembled cars after engines had been fitted, tested and passed (some cars had up to five replacement engines fitted before despatch). The approximate date sequence is: A1 - 1922; A2 - May 1925; A3 - May 1926; A4 - Feb 1927; A5 - Oct 1927; A6 - April 1928; A7 - Dec 1928; A8 - Feb 1929; A9 - July 1929; B - Oct 1929; B1 - April 1930; B2 - Oct 1930; B3 - Jan 1931; B4 - July 1931; B5 - Jan 1932; B6 - June 1932; B7 - Jan 1933; B8 - June 1933; B9 - Jan 1934; C - June 1934; ARQ etc jewel series July 1934 at 249701; July 1936, separate Car Numbers came into line with Chassis Numbers at the introduction of the New Ruby etc.

Chassis Number

At first, this was stamped on the nearside chassis rail, forward of the front engine mounting. Sometime in the late '20s the Works moved the number along this rail to the rear engine mounting, then in the early '30s it was moved a bit further to behind this mounting. Finally, a plate was attached by rivets to the offside rail below the starter.

Engine Number

Always easily found. It was stamped into the crankcase at the front nearside (to be read conveniently with the early chassis number) and later duplicated near the rear offside oil-pipe union. Always prefixed M (for Motor) except possibly on marine or stationary adaptations.

Body Number

Always stamped on the top of the propshaft tunnel between the front seats. As saloons and other bodies progressed after early tourers, a simple alphabetical prefix was added. Basically, tourers were A . . . , Coupes were B . . . , Sports were E . . . , 2-seaters were P . . . , Saloons were R . . . ; but with at least 50 derivatives.

At first (up to late 1926), the chassis rear cross member carried all three chassis, engine and body numbers, stamped into the nearside web, facing rearwards. Occasionally a number has been found stencilled on a cross-rail (e.g. Austin Seven Source Book p.118).

Rear Axle

All axles had their exact date, foundry number and ratio, but rust may have eroded these (e.g. 13/11/25 A512A 9/44).

Electrical

Many starters and dynamos are month dated but of course are likely to be exchange units. One item that rarely failed was the cut-out/fuse box. Early ones had the bases stamped, then the smaller upper cover (e.g. 6V. ER. 11/31).

Various

Cylinder heads and blocks sometimes had raised dates cast at the foundry, and on early engines all moving components, i.e. crank, rods, flywheel, block, etc., were given the crankcase number. Some old pistons and gearboxes were also numbered or dated but of course all these various components are not necessarily original to the car.

Finally, never assume the log book was correctly or completely filled out by the garage or council clerk; or that the sequence of production matched the registered number sequence.