

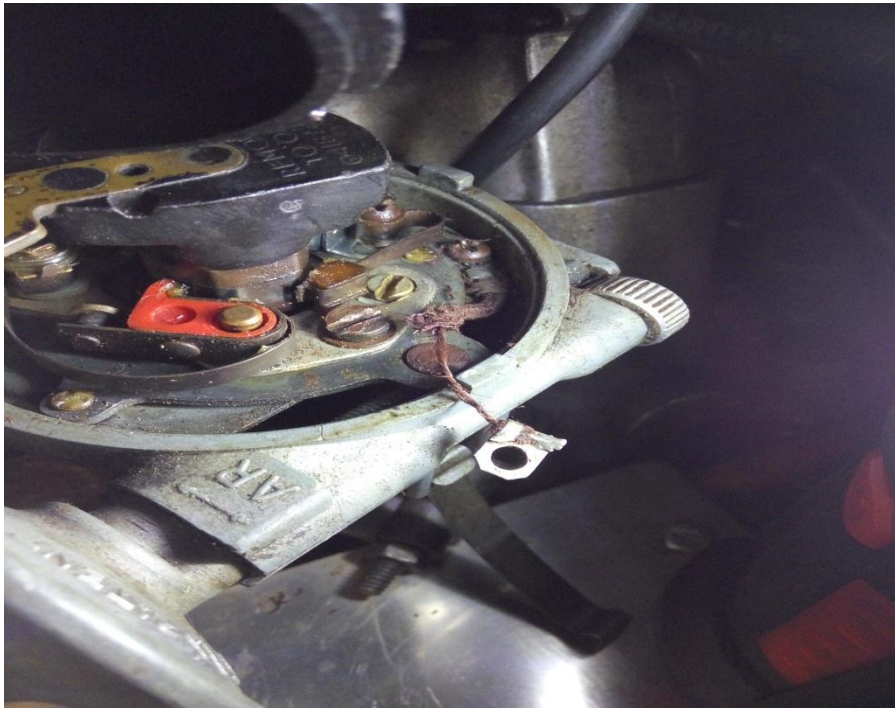
## The Dreaded Back Fire - Rover P4 100

By John Booth

On Friday night I drove my friend's son and partner to their Matric dance at Kearsney College. This was stop start traffic for about an hour and all went well until it was time to come home. As I pulled out of the school gates all was fine, but about a kilometre down the road my Rover started to backfire and had no power. I managed to drive it the 10km home with it missing and back firing. So what had I done to anger the Gods.

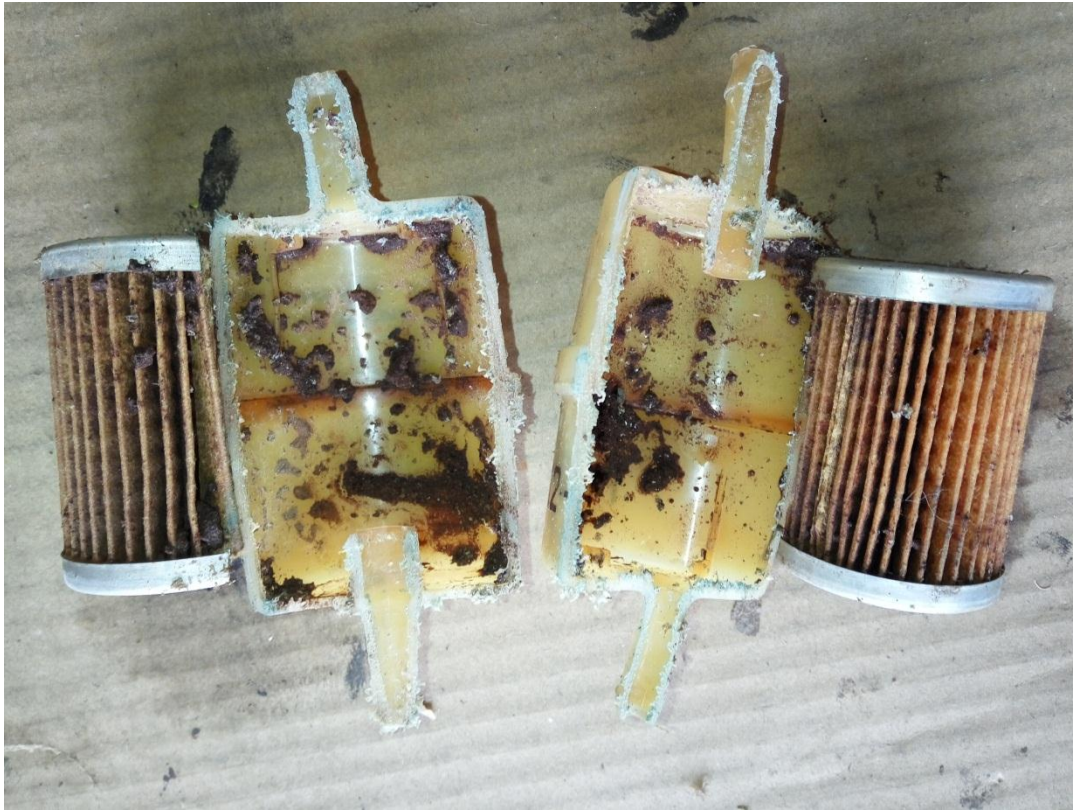
I phoned Clyde and he reckoned the problem lay with Squirrels. He said if the car was not used much then the squirrels use the exhaust pipe to store their nuts. If the stored nuts got hot then they would pop making the back firing sound. Thinking this was a very reasonable assumption I looked for squirrel nuts in the exhaust. I did not find any so concluded this was not the reason. Hang on do we even have squirrels in this province?

Then I checked the points and after fiddling around I came across this loose wire. This is an earth wire and fits under the condenser. Thinking I had solved the problem I re-attached the wire but the car still misfired.



Thinking that the condenser might have shorted it's self out because it did not have an earth wire I went off to the spares shop and bought a new condenser. This did not work. So I looked at the petrol side of the car.

I replace the inline filter which was really quite clogged up as this photo shows.



So I fired up the engine, still a misfire. The Gods do try us sometimes. Next I cleaned out the fuel sight glass. This was also quite dirty. I cleaned it and flat mesh filter. Then I cleaned the carburettor filter below. This was also dirty.





I fired up the engine, still a misfire. However there was an improvement to the running of the engine despite the misfire. At this point I was debating whether to slaughter a goat or a chicken on Durban beach. This way I may be able to get the Gods to help me out. While contemplating all this I remembered I had replaced all the spark plugs a few months ago. The one in the car was the protruding electrode type. The manual specifies the flush type. So I decided to pull a plug out and see what it looked like. It was black and totally covered in carbon. The long period of idling at the school had obviously caused the plugs to foul up. So I replace the plugs and went for the protruding type which I believe runs slightly hotter and will not be prone to a build up of carbon.



Problem solved!! The Rover fired up and is now going like a rocket. So all the small improvements along the way did help. Now the big question is should I keep a chicken in the boot of the car just in case? Still confused about the squirrels though.