

MATTERS OF TESTING

MOT



**Free for authorised examiners
and testers**

OCTOBER 2010

ISSUE 48



Fifty years old – what's next?

VOSA looks to the future of the MOT test

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cheque had
its day?
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From the editor

The question on everybody's lips at the moment is: 'Why is the Government conducting another review of the MOT test?' The simple fact is that this represents part of the Government's commitment to reducing the burden currently carried by UK motorists. The road safety minister, Mike Penning, has stated that there are no preconceptions about the outcome.

As an agency of the Department for Transport, VOSA's role in all of this is to provide relevant information to the Government (as we did during the last review) and await its findings.

Further details on the review should be available over the next few months. Needless to say, we will share with you any information we have by the time the 2011 MOT seminars come round – but please understand that our presenters can only give out the facts, not speculate about the process or the outcome.

Other topics under discussion during the 2011 round of seminars will include Directive 2009/40/EC (more on this on page 8), changes to the site assessment, and the plain paper and printer trials. See the back cover for how to book your place on next year's seminars and find out more about these important topics.

Jessie VanBeck

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You can view this magazine, along with previous issues, as a PDF on the VOSA website: **www.vosa.gov.uk/matters-of-testing**

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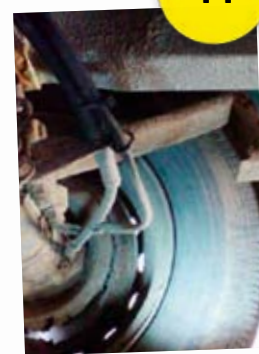
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Ask Stevo...

Spotting an impostor

You ask: Has VOSA moved into the market of endorsing and selling trade services? My VTS has been plagued by trade representatives claiming to be 'VOSA-approved', or even saying that they are VOSA employees. How am I supposed to tell the difference between a genuine VOSA representative and someone trying to make a sale?

Stevo says: This is a common problem that is becoming more and more of an issue for Authorised Examiners (AEs) across the country. The first thing to note is that, as a government agency, VOSA cannot endorse or actively promote any one trade or consultancy service over another.

So, how do you spot an impostor or recognise a genuine VOSA employee when they turn up? Just ask them for some identification – they won't be offended, honest! Because visits are often unannounced and may not be from your local examiner, it's best to be safe and check. All of our examiners carry an official warrant card that shows the VOSA logo along with the bearer's photograph and signature. If you have any doubts about whether the ID is legitimate, you can call the telephone number given on the card (Mon–Fri, 07.30–18.00) to check that your visitor is genuine.

The only representatives who might visit your VTS on VOSA's behalf are those from Siemens, whose contractors will have a prearranged appointment and

will also carry photo ID. You can confirm the validity of these IDs by calling the VOSA service desk on **0845 071 1973**.

Occasionally, VOSA commissions customer surveys by market research companies. VOSA only uses companies that are members of the Market Research Society and committed to an industry code of practice which guarantees confidentiality. If you have any queries about a customer survey call, you can check with the VOSA contact centre on **0300 123 9000**.

If you still have doubts about the authenticity of anyone claiming to be from VOSA or Siemens, refuse them access and report the incident to your local VOSA office or to the VOSA contact centre.

Of course, although VOSA does not endorse any specific trade services or codes of practice, we recognise that AEs may benefit from some of the services offered – but you should compare your own business needs with what is being offered before making a decision.



John Stephenson heads up the MOT Compliance team and has a wealth of knowledge and experience in all aspects of the MOT scheme.

Send your comments, queries and views on the MOT to mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk with 'Ask Stevo' as the subject.

MOT scheme review

The Government intends to conduct a fundamental review of the MOT test (covering cars and light goods vehicles). The aim of the review will be to strike the right

balance between vehicle safety and the burden imposed on motorists by MOT testing. There are no preconceptions about the outcome.

Ministers expect to make a detailed announcement about the timing and scope of the review later in the year, and there will be an opportunity for anyone with an interest to contribute to the debate.

MOT seminars 2011



It's that time of year again – AEs and testers are booking up spaces on the 2011 round of MOT seminars, wanting to know more about the impact of Directive 2009/40/EC, changes to the site assessment, and the plain paper trial, among other things.

We expect a lot of interest in the Government's forthcoming review of the MOT scheme. We will update

you when we get any new details, but remember: as an agency of the Department for Transport, our role is to carry out the Government's wishes – and we can only pass on the information we have, not speculate about the results.

Seminars will kick off on 10 January in Kendal, the final whistle blowing after 24 March's Gatwick engagement. The price has been

set at £25 plus VAT – so bookings made before the end of the year will have the advantage of a lower VAT rate. If you pay by cheque, make sure you include the appropriate level of VAT.

The list of venues will be sent out over the VTS Device and will be posted on www.vosa.gov.uk/events-diary.

Nominated Tester Training Assessment

The Nominated Tester Training Assessment (NTTA) was originally set up during an era when candidates with the necessary vocational qualifications to become a tester were almost as rare as hen's teeth. This was to allow 'experienced' mechanics with the know-how but without professional qualifications to apply to become an MOT tester.

While this was ideal as an interim measure, it appears that it is now becoming the norm. Since the NTTA was introduced, the number of candidates has increased tenfold, so VOSA is evaluating whether this entry route is still 'fit for purpose'.

If you have any particular views or comments on this matter, please email them to mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk. Write '**Becoming an MOT tester**' in the subject line.



Class 5L tester approval process

Because it is so easy for Class 7 sites to expand to cover Class 5L, VOSA is trialling a new method for approving Class 7 testers for 5L. Class 7 sites that have applied for or already have approval to test 5L vehicles will be offered a date for a VOSA trainer to visit their site and provide a short course on the differences between testing Class 7 and Class 5L vehicles. Testers must then undertake a written assessment and complete a demonstration test. The whole

process should take no more than three hours for each tester. Your VOSA trainer will let you know the outcome of these tests, and our training services section will amend the system ID of successful testers to include the new category.

This trial does not include testers applying to become full Class 5 testers or where any additional class is applied for. A three-day training course is already in place for Class 3 and 4 testers.

This trial is expected to last between 6 and 12 months, after which a full evaluation will be conducted to decide whether to continue this provision. If you are involved in this trial, please email your feedback to mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk with the subject 'Class 5L approval'.

There's more on Class 5 testing on the free DVD inside this issue!

Has the cheque had its day?

More and more AEs are choosing to make hassle-free purchases electronically by debit or credit card. Every AE has either a VTS- or an AE-type MOT account that can be run at nil balance with payments being made at the point of order, or pre-funded by direct debit or top-up payments via the VTS Device. Pre-funding has the added benefit of allowing AEs to delegate the ordering process to other test station staff while staying in control of their funds.

You can also fund your account and place and pay for orders using a debit or credit card



via the VOSA service desk on **0845 071 1973**.

There's more information on using the VTS Device for orders and payments in Section N10

of the *VTS Device User Guide* and Section L of the *MOT Testing Guide*.

Security seals

Following the replacement of the VTS Device base units, VOSA has received queries regarding the lack of security seals on the new units. We can confirm that none of the replacements was supplied with security seals.



The March 2009 update to the *MOT Testing Guide* (sixth edition) removed the disciplinary points from appendix 8.4 concerning damage to or removal of a security seal.

Fifty years of motorcycle testing

How far we've come since the days when the motorcycle test cost less than £1 and took up four pages of the manual! Here we look back over the history of the British motorcycle test.

Although we are now living in the 21st century, the age of the internet, satnav and Wi-Fi, of automated test lanes, laser printers and the VTS Device, with dongles and gadgets and gizmos galore, it is strange but true that many European countries still do not test motorcycles, as European law does not cover periodic roadworthiness tests for these vehicles.

However, in Great Britain we have been testing motorcycles since the MOT scheme began way back in 1960, when the test applied only to vehicles over 10 years old and covered only lights, brakes and steering. By 1967 the test was applicable to vehicles three years from the date of their first use, and by 1974 the test also included tyres.

The original manual not only covered all classes of vehicle, but also doubled as an MOT testing guide and made extensive reference to the relevant regulations. The section covering the inspection of motorcycles

stretched to four whole pages! In 1974, the test fee for a solo machine was £1 for a test pass, or 94p if the test was failed – to take account of the 6p charge for each test certificate (VT20).

The brake efficiency test was usually carried out using a floor tester (Salter meter) or a gradient tester, although there was mention of a 'machine test' – which referred to a roller or plate brake tester – as far back as 1963.



There was no headlamp aim equipment, so the tester had to assess whether the headlamp would dazzle a person whose eye level was not less than 3 feet 6 inches above the ground and who was standing 25 feet away.

However, this only applied if the headlamps produced light from an acetylene burner or from an electric bulb (or bulbs) with a total output of more than 7 watts!



It was not until 1985 that a dedicated motorcycle inspection manual was produced, by which time the test was considerably more like it is today, and the test fee for a solo machine had increased to £6. Happy days!

The future of the MOT test

The car/light goods vehicle MOT test is about to change – the European Commission has changed the Directive that covers it. We take a look at when these changes are likely to come into effect and what they mean for MOT testers.

Britain has been testing vehicles under the MOT scheme for 50 years now. Last year, the European Directive covering the MOT test was updated and revised by a modern version called 2009/40/EC. This was then updated by 2010/48/EU, which was ratified on 5 July this year.

The new Directive keeps the EU minimum 4-2-2 test frequency but adds a number of new elements to the British MOT test. The Directive anticipates all test changes being in place by 1 January 2012, and a common European approach to test certificates in place by 1 January 2014. So what is VOSA doing to introduce the changes?

In terms of test frequency, in mid-July the coalition government confirmed that it intends 'to look at the issue of MOT test frequencies later this year'. VOSA contributed statistical data to inform the last review in 2008, and we expect that our computer system and the data you have entered will be utilised again in much the same way.

We expect to hear more details of the government's review proposals later in the year.

As far as changes to the test content are concerned, VOSA has already been analysing the requirements of the new Directive and working out how to implement them. We started this earlier in the year by talking with representatives of the MOT trade at our regular Trade User Group and VTS Council meetings. Both VOSA and the Department for Transport (DfT) are keen to ensure that any changes to the test are introduced in as practical a way as possible, keeping the burden on the trade to a minimum and ideally keeping the changes cost neutral.



In many cases, the changes shouldn't necessarily lead to an increase in average test times. A good example is the malfunction indicator lamps on the dashboard that indicate defective electronic power steering, electronic stability control and secondary restraint systems. Testers already check the dashboard for other lamps, so no extra time would be required for this addition to the test.

Electrical wiring and batteries are now included in the test's scope, but testers already check the vehicle structure where wiring is secured – often along the same routes as other testable items, such as brake pipes in the engine compartment. So again, this doesn't look like an additional burden on the tester. In the pre-computerisation days, testers often (wrongly) failed vehicles for insecure batteries, so they must have been looking at them then! Now, it means that when we implement the new Directive, vehicles can legitimately fail for battery insecurity, for no extra tester effort.



Other items – such as headlamp bulb and unit incompatibility, headlamp levelling devices and illegal engine ‘chipping’ – will need further thought before we can get a workable solution for MOT stations.

Some of the new items may require extra effort on the part of the tester – when we know for sure what that is we’ll be talking again with our trade and DfT colleagues to work out what the impact will be.

The common EU test certificate should be relatively easy to achieve – the only data that the Directive expects and that we don’t currently provide is the symbol for the vehicle’s country of origin. Probably 99% of vehicles tested will have

‘UK’ entered here, but if you do test vehicles with a foreign plate, you will need to enter the correct country symbol. We may even be able to make this change earlier if there is a convenient opportunity.

The MOT trade can rest assured that VOSA is working closely with you to introduce any new elements as efficiently and effectively as possible, with the minimum of fuss. Just as importantly, we are also working closely with Siemens to ensure that any system changes due on New Year’s Eve 2011 go smoothly! We should know more by the time the MOT seminars take place – come along and ask the experts. We’ll also be sure to keep you posted on developments through *Matters of Testing*.



Big boy’s toys?

2009/40/EC also applies to buses and trucks tested only by VOSA. These tests are also going to change as a result.

The same team that is developing changes to the car test is also working on the ‘heavy’ side. We hope that by doing it this way, we ensure a more consistent approach to the testing of all vehicle types.

So if you’re with a garage that deals with ‘heavies’ as well as cars, you will hopefully find your job becomes more simple and easier to understand.



Esmond Kielty – an AE who owns his own VTS – shares his experience of being a VTS Council member.

I have been a member of VOSA's VTS Council in Leeds for several years now and have found my involvement with the Council to be very rewarding. The VOSA representatives I have met have all been sincere and open to discussing anything and everything about the MOT scheme – and I have never felt that what I've said might have repercussions on my testing station.

There are approximately 100 Council members in the various regions – and they get no remuneration or expenses from VOSA. Each regional Council meets twice a year and is also invited to join discussions or workshops when major changes come along.

As Council members, we have been involved in all of the changes to testing you have seen over the past few years. We were invited to Bristol to see the new one-man testing lane before it was brought in and asked for our opinion. We have had various discussions about MOT computerisation – some of the changes in this area have been down to VTS Council members – and we have also been asked to look at the next stage of computerisation and give our input to ensure a robust system for our VTSs in the future.



Council members were invited to Nottingham to discuss all aspects of the risk rating system with VOSA staff, and all our ideas and suggestions were taken on board. More recently, we have looked at how VOSA carries out the three-yearly visits – if what we discussed is implemented, these visits could be carried out more efficiently for both the VTS and VOSA.

The following are just some of the recent changes to the testing scheme suggested by the Councils and implemented by VOSA:

- taking tapping of the lights out of the test
- for re-tests, charging half the full fee to check failed items
- a less draconian disciplinary action system
- changes to Requirements for Authorisation.

At the very first meeting with the Councils, VOSA said that it needed us as much as we need VOSA in order to make the MOT scheme more efficient and professional, to keep cars safe for the general public – which is, after all, why the MOT scheme was set up in the first place.

If you have any views or ideas for the scheme, then we are your voice. You should get in touch with your region's Council member – it is **your** Council and **your** scheme – to put **your** views forward.

Horror Story

A tale of torment

Ignorance isn't bliss

This issue's contribution is from Rob Cruickshank at Melton MOT Centre, Melton Mowbray. We've all seen broken springs before, both in pictures and in real life, but usually these are coil springs and the break is not always that obvious, especially on front struts.

Well, these breaks are blindingly obvious and, just for good measure, the van – a Sprinter – had not one but **both** rear leaf springs broken when presented to test.

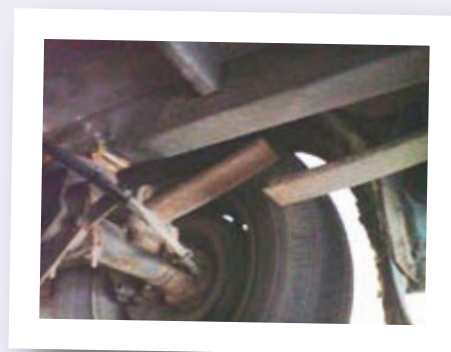


There is no doubt that this van failed the test – I'm not even going to cite the Inspection Manual – but you would think that the driver would have noticed the tell-tale signs, such as the rear end dropping quite a bit. Judging by the way in which the leaf springs in these pictures have dug into the floor of the van, they have been broken for some time and would

probably have made a bit of noise. Rob says that the driver was 'blissfully unaware' of the fact that there wasn't much holding the axle in place. The van probably had a nice low load deck for loading, though.

So, once again the MOT test has removed a dangerous vehicle from the road, and this story highlights just how poorly some vehicles are maintained. It is sad to see that many drivers treat the MOT test as a substitute for regular

maintenance, and ignore the warning signs in the meantime – they'll be found out when it's time for the test!



Have you got a horror story to tell? Send your photos and ghastly tales to the postal address at the front of the magazine or by email to mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk with the subject 'Horror Story'.

The knowledge

Feeling deflated?

VOSA's Vehicle Safety Branch has recently highlighted a problem with certain types of tyre pressure monitoring systems, in particular with the valve stems breaking if care is not taken when they're being checked.

Tyre pressure monitoring systems are now fitted to several types of vehicle – so they're more common than you might think. The main difference between these and the older valve stems is that the new valve is inflexible, normally being made from a metal alloy instead of rubber. Care must be taken with any maintenance to these valves, as damage – and consequently tyre deflation – can occur.

As testers, you know to check for 'a seriously damaged or misaligned valve stem which could cause sudden deflation of the tyre' as part of the MOT inspection. But with these particular valves, it is important not to attempt to pull or flex them during your inspection, as this could well cause damage.



Three common damage areas have been highlighted already:

1. The valve has been wrenched during the removal of the tyre inflation tool, fracturing the upper section of the valve stem.
2. The valve core has been over-tightened, cracking the stem and losing pressure in the tyre.
3. When fitting the valve, the securing nut has been over-tightened, resulting in fracture of the securing nut and leading to deflation of the tyre.

Remember that tyre pressure monitoring systems also have a warning lamp inside the vehicle. Always advise the presenter of the lamp's presence and function.

Please continue to inspect the valves as instructed in the Inspection Manual – contact VOSA on **0300 123 9000** if you come across any issues.



Know your marque

What do you enter in the VTS Device when a vehicle comes into your VTS with no number plates fitted?



Testers are finding problems when they type 'NOTDISPLAYED' (or similar) in the Registration Mark box. This is all to do with how the system searches for vehicle matches. If you type anything in the Registration Mark box, the system will search for a registration and vehicle identification number (VIN) that match your entry. So far, over 2,000 vehicles have been entered as having the registration 'NOTDISPLAYED', meaning that the computer has to search through a lot of information!

If the vehicle has no registration mark, the proper procedure is not to type anything in the box at all – you'll also find this much quicker!

The VTS Device user guide – appendix 10F3 – advises you

to go to the Registration Mark Descriptor box below and use the drop-down menu to choose the best description:

- UK Registration Mark
- Foreign VRM [vehicle registration mark]
- Not found (missing) [e.g. no number plates fitted at time of test]
- Not required.

Select one of these, then (in the next box) enter the full VIN. When you print out the VT20 or VT30, the VTS Device will automatically show 'NOT DISPLAYED' on the certificate.

If no VIN is displayed, you can use the same process: don't

type anything in the box but use the drop-down menu in the box below to select the best description instead.

By the way, registration mark variants already typed into the system range from 'NOTDISPLAID' to 'NotREGistered', with every possible spelling in between. If you test the same vehicle next year, or need to issue a replacement certificate, you'd have to type in exactly the same wording you used the first time or the system wouldn't be able to find the vehicle record.

If you enter the details as shown in the VTS Device user guide, the system will be much quicker at locating the vehicle record.

Don't type anything here

Select descriptor from drop-down menu here

The VTS Device user guide is included as appendix 10 to the *MOT Testing Guide*. It can be accessed by inserting your Smart Card in the Device; then, at the top left-hand corner, choose 'Index' to find the *MOT Testing Guide*. It can also be found at www.vosa.gov.uk/manuals-and-guides, or you can call the VOSA service desk on **0845 071 1973**.



60-second INTERVIEW

Sandra Brandon is the VOSA events manager and is in charge of organising the annual round of MOT seminars. Sandra works out of the VOSA Head Office in Bristol.

So, organising the MOT seminars – that must take some time out of your day?

We start organising the next batch of seminars in early spring – so it takes a year from setting the first list of dates to actually holding the last seminar. Once the dates have been agreed with the MOT team, I start to negotiate contracts for the venues to get best value for money. Once that's done and dusted, I finalise the details, including organising presenters and publishing the dates in ***Matters of Testing***, the e-bulletin *Latest VOSA News*, on www.vosa.gov.uk and in a Special Notice.

How do you decide what to charge for the tickets?

The MOT seminars have to be self-funding. Each year we have to adjust for inflation, hotel costs,

refreshments etc. Obviously I try to haggle down the price – usually quite successfully – but it still costs a lot to hold a seminar for, on average, 80 people. This year we've decided to list the price before VAT and ask delegates to add the appropriate VAT amount to their payments. This means that people booking early will get a better deal, so I'm hoping that most AEs and testers are able to take advantage of this.

Sounds stressful – what do you do to relax?

I'm learning how to play golf, which I find refreshing.

What makes it all worthwhile?

Seeing the AEs and testers meet with and chat to VOSA's MOT team about the issues that concern them. This, more than anything, shows me that the seminars are a success.

Class Of Its Own

This issue's free DVD explains the differences between Class 5s and other vehicles and gives advice on how to identify and test them.

VOSA Technical Trainer Brian Gray takes us through the different items that have to be inspected on Class 5 vehicles, including:

- what additional lights are needed to those on a Class 4
- which vehicles need seatbelt installation
- emergency exits
- glass markings.

Just see for yourself how straightforward it is.

Don't forget, if you already test Class 7 vehicles then it could be simpler than you think to add Class 5L to your authorisation. Watch this DVD and you can be ready for the trainer's visit. What are you waiting for? There may be customers waiting!

If you'd like to suggest a topic for future films, email mattersoftesting@vosa.gov.uk with the subject 'MOT Matters DVD', or send a postcard to the Editor at the address at the front of this magazine.



On the job



Back in the days when you could take your car into pretty much any garage to get it fixed, a driver took his Hillman Hunter into the workshop of a bus depot and asked if one of the mechanics could take a look at his clutch. 'It's very heavy and hard to press,' he complained. 'I think it may need adjusting – could anyone do it?'

One of the mechanics stepped up with a slight smile. 'I'll do it,' he said. 'It won't take long – come back in 10 minutes.'

The driver duly returned for his vehicle and jumped in. 'Ah! That's much better!' he exclaimed, and drove off happily.

The mechanic returned to find puzzled looks from the rest of the staff in the workshop.

'How did you do that?' asked one. 'The clutches on those things don't have any adjustment.'

'Simple,' he replied. 'I *adjusted* the seat closer to the pedals!'

Competition

Can you find the 20 MOT test-related words on this grid? Send your answers, along with your name, address and VTS number, to us by 12 November 2010 at **Competition, Matters of Testing, VOSA, Berkeley House, Croydon Street, Bristol BS5 0DA.**

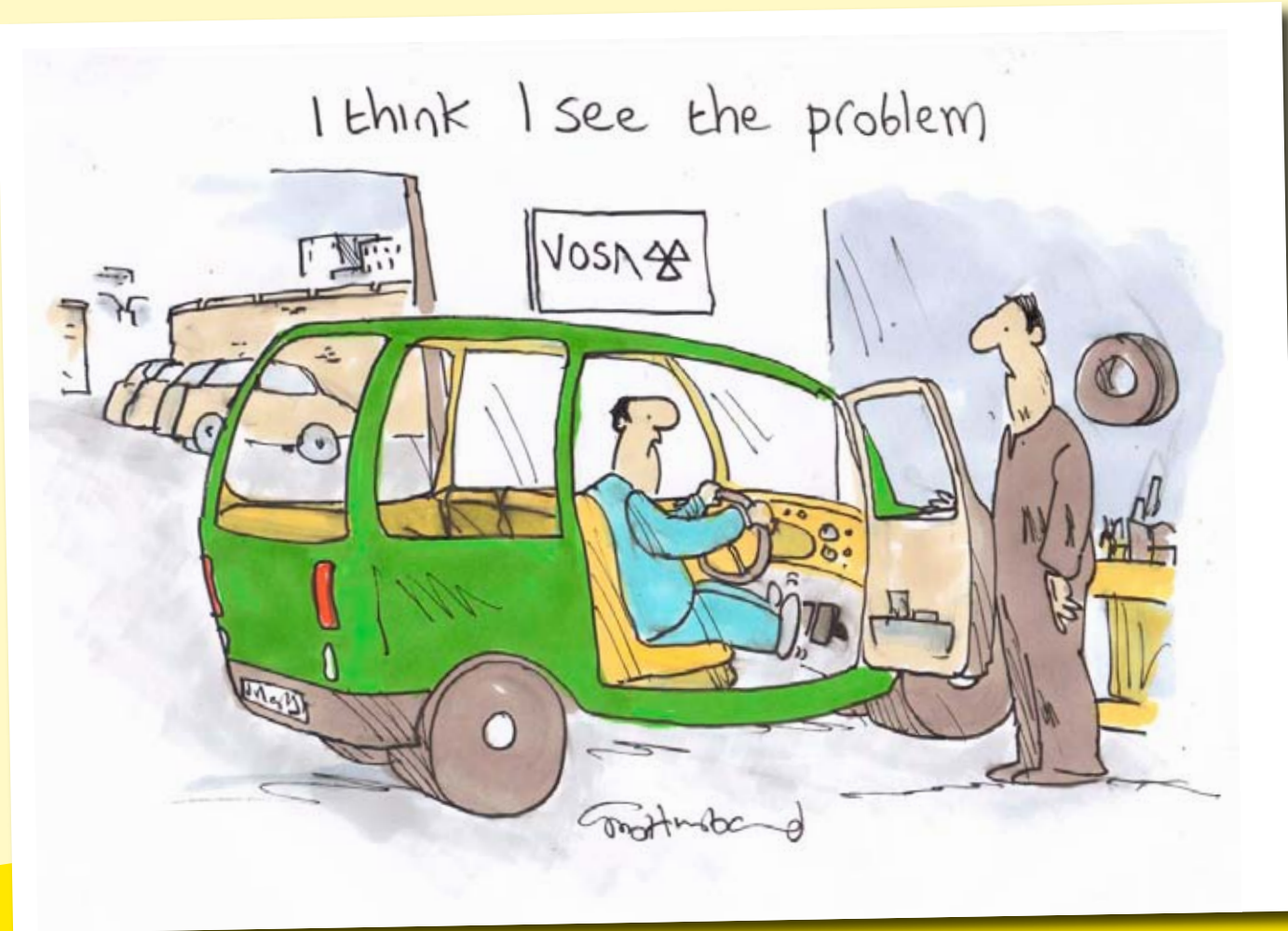
- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| BRAKES | MANUAL |
| CAR | MOTORCYCLE |
| CLUTCH | PASS |
| DRIVER | REGISTRATION |
| EMISSIONS | SAFETY |
| EXAMINER | STEERING |
| FAIL | TESTER |
| GARAGE | TYRES |
| GREASE | VTS COUNCIL |
| LIGHTS | VTS DEVICE |

The first correct entry drawn will win £20 of vouchers which can be used at most high street stores.

Z	T	E	S	T	E	R	B	J	T	Y	Z	P
I	N	U	C	V	E	X	A	M	I	N	E	R
Q	M	O	T	O	R	C	Y	C	L	E	B	Q
S	T	R	I	F	L	A	U	N	A	M	H	Y
H	E	K	V	T	S	C	O	U	N	C	I	L
A	F	R	S	S	A	P	A	N	G	E	C	I
D	U	A	Y	R	B	R	A	K	E	S	L	G
R	G	N	I	T	S	E	T	L	F	A	U	H
I	G	N	I	R	E	E	T	S	A	E	T	T
V	A	U	L	I	A	F	M	K	I	R	C	S
E	G	V	K	F	E	G	A	R	A	G	H	B
R	J	T	S	N	O	I	S	S	I	M	E	U
P	T	G	E	C	I	V	E	D	S	T	V	R

You've won!

The winner of last issue's competition is the sharp-eyed Ellie Louise Brown of Central Garage Ltd in South Yorkshire - who managed to spot two additional differences between the pictures. Congratulations, Ellie - the vouchers are winging their way to you!





VOSA ANNUAL MOT SEMINARS 2011

Autumn can mean only one thing – it's time to book your place on one of next year's VOSA seminars. Seminars kick off on 10 January in Kendal, with the final whistle set to blow after the Gatwick event on 24 March.

Tickets are £25 (plus VAT) – book early to take advantage of the lower VAT rate.

Topics to be discussed will include:

- Directive 2009/40/EC – the future of the MOT test
- Changes to the site assessment
- Printers and plain paper.

First pick your venue

The list of venues will be sent out to all test stations as a special notice over the VTS Device, posted on www.vosa.gov.uk/events-diary.

Then book your place

Once you've found a venue that suits you, call the VOSA contact centre on 0300 123 9000 after 27 October to book your place. Or you can complete the booking form below and send it, along with your cheque, to the address at the bottom of the form.

Booking Form

Contact name.....	1st choice seminar location.....
Company name.....	Date of seminar.....
VTS Number.....	Number of delegates
Company address.....	2nd choice seminar location.....
.....	Date of seminar.....
.....	Number of delegates
.....	Total amount enclosed by cheque: £
Postcode	(Note: Please ensure you add the correct amount of VAT to your £25 booking fee)
Company tel. (inc. area code).....	Make cheques payable to 'VOSA'

Return this booking form, with payment, to:
VOSA, MOT Seminar Bookings, Ellipse, Padley Road, Swansea, SA1 8AN

Information hotline / credit card bookings 0300 123 9000