The majority of these tips have appeared in club newsletters over the years. Please note that you use them at your own risk as neither the Bristol Austin 7 Club nor the authors can be responsible for the results of trying to follow the instructions given.

## Steering - Wandering Car - Richard Rowe

For those of us who learned to drive round a field in an old Landrover the steering of an Austin 7 can appear quite normal.

However, the situation changes when we venture out onto the king's highway and find other vehicles driving towards us as we tack along trying to keep to our side of the road.

Those who are up to date will know that the highway code has been updated to allow more space when passing cyclists. Unfortunately, this did not include giving more space for the wandering Austin 7.

Having decided that this was not ideal when driving my Chummy along the tarmac that remains between the potholes on our roads, I decided to do something about it. Reading the Austin 7 bible by Woodrow D Esq revealed that by moving the gear in the steering box towards the worm gear on the column should remove some of the slack. This does indeed work but it then requires the strength of a mountain gorilla, Gorilla beringei beringei, to turn the wheel so the adjustment had to be reset to the wandering position.

There is an excellent article on restoring the steering box by Malcolm Watts on the Cornwall A7 website but neither of these explained how the steering tightens up so much even in the straight-ahead position.

Steering Box Overhaul - Malcolm Watts
https://www.austin7.org/Technical%20Articles/Steering%20Box%20Overhaul/

Adjusting the play in the Steering Drag Link - Malcolm Watts
https://www.austin7.org/Technical%20Articles/Adj%20Steering%20Drag%20Link/

Conversation with Ian at Oxfordshire Sevens revealed the cause, wear in the button which abuts the axle of the steering gear. As the gear is raised the axle bears on a less worn part of the button and tightens up.

Solution, strip box and flatten the bearing surface of the button to remove the central dip. I did this by hand with fine wet and dry on a flat surface but I guess that a proper job, as we say in Bristol, would involve a grinding machine and a “man who knows”.

I also moved the gear around by 120 degrees to use a fresher part and lapped it in as instructed in Malcolm’s article.

Steering box side

On reassembly it could be seen that the slots in the ally side cover of the steering box had become worn and were not touching both sides of the studs holding

the cover on. This would allow the cover to move as steering effort was applied because the friction from tightening the nuts was weaker than the steering force.

Small strips of shim steel were cut to fill the gaps and this solved the problem.

Shim around stud

It may well be that others have found and resolved these problems and I am trying to teach Grandma to suck eggs so if this is the case, I apologise for wasting your time.