

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

better illumination under your Jaguar

by Doug Ingram

Over the years, I have spent an awful lot of time laying under various cars. Most often I'm on my back, frequently on one side or the other, and sometimes even on my front, as I perform one task or another that just begs my attention. I've put myself into positions and shapes that would make a contortionist proud, sometimes bracing one foot against a wheel, engine block, or other well placed and solid object in an effort to gain better leverage against an unruly or reluctant fastener. I often take a block of 4 x 4 timber with me, which serves as a cushion of sorts, relieving the neck strain from trying to hold my head in an awkward position.

As I write this, I realize that it all sounds a trifle odd, perhaps even really odd, but it's definitely something that any confirmed gearhead will identify with. I imagine there are some among us who have never crawled around under their Jaguar, and I'm not including those who are fortunate or astute enough to have a proper vehicle lift at their disposal. Now I'm not suggesting that it's for everyone, nor even that it's necessary to find fulfillment as a Jaguar owner, but I can't see being involved with these cars with-

out regular trips underneath.

In addition to cold floors, dripping fluids, flaking rust, and falling dirt, one constant is a decided lack of decent illumination. It's really important to be able to see properly under there. Trouble lights are fine, but it seems that nine out of ten times the light they provide is shining in the wrong place. They just don't want to cooperate, and in spite of valiant efforts to place them carefully, they usually take on a mind of their own, creating dark shadows over the component of interest or brilliant spotlights that bore mercilessly into the eyes of the eager mechanic.

I recently came up with a grand solution to the Dark Ages of Auto Mechanics and share it with you here. Feel free to make your own version of this useful device, but only if you promise to remember two important safety items: 1) be sure the car is firmly raised on sturdy and secure jack stands, not held up by a jack, or bricks, or rotting lumber, and 2) wear eye protection (see dripping fluids, flaking rust, and falling dirt above).

I started with a four foot, two tube fluorescent lamp fixture, surplus from a commercial renovation project. These are often available inexpensively from used building materials stores.

