

Number Rubbing Sheet

When a stamping will not photograph and will not read, take a rubbing. It works when your eyes and your phone both fail.

Print this on ordinary thin paper — thick stock will not take the impression. Then work through the technique below before using the areas overleaf.

WHAT YOU NEED

- ☐ A soft pencil
A B or 2B. An HB will do; anything harder cuts the paper
- ☐ This sheet, printed on ordinary paper rather than card
- ☐ A rag and something to clean with
- ☐ Masking tape, if you can, to hold the paper still

THE TECHNIQUE

1. Clean the stamping thoroughly and dry it. A rubbing records whatever is on the surface, so dirt becomes part of the result.
2. Hold or tape the paper flat over the stamping. It must not move once you start — a shifted rubbing produces a doubled, unreadable mess.
3. Lay the pencil on its side, not its point, and shade steadily across the whole area in one direction.
4. Do not press hard. Light, repeated strokes build contrast; heavy pressure tears the paper into the deepest characters.
5. Lift a corner and check before you take the paper off, so you can carry on if it is faint.
6. Write immediately where on the machine it came from. In an hour you will not be sure.

WHY THIS BEATS A PHOTOGRAPH

A stamping is a depth difference, and both your eye and a camera read depth badly in poor light — which is why raking a torch across it helps. A rubbing converts that depth into a light-and-dark contrast on flat paper, which both read very well. It also works in a recess a lens cannot get into or focus on.

RUBBING AREA ONE

WHERE ON THE MACHINE

Paper over the stamping, side of the pencil, one direction

RUBBING AREA TWO

WHERE ON THE MACHINE

RUBBING AREA THREE

WHERE ON THE MACHINE

WHAT YOU READ FROM THEM

NUMBER ONE, AS READ

NUMBER TWO, AS READ

NUMBER THREE, AS READ

DATE TAKEN

IF EVEN A RUBBING WILL NOT READ

Two possibilities. Either the stamping is genuinely too shallow, in which case try again with lighter pressure and more passes — heavy pressure flattens the contrast you are trying to build. Or the surface has been ground or filed, which is a different and more serious finding. Uneven character spacing, varying depths and a filed area around the stamping all point that way. If you are buying, walk away.

Need to work out what you actually own?

The Scooter Parts Registry is a free public record of the Chinese factories behind US-market scooters, ATVs and go-karts — brand, engine family, VIN prefix, factory and related machines. No account, no email.

thescooterparts.com/identify