

CARBURETTORS

The present invention relates to carburettors for two-stroke and, more particularly, four-stroke internal combustion engines and is concerned with that type of carburettor which includes a primary air passage, an adjustable throttle valve situated within the primary air passage and a fuel supply nozzle communicating with the primary air passage and connected to a fuel metering valve for varying the amount of fuel discharged through the nozzle.

Such carburettors are well known. Different types of metering valve are known but the most commonly used type of valve is a needle valve. Such valves include an elongate valve needle cooperating with an orifice which constitutes the fuel supply nozzle. The valve needle of a needle valve is inherently a relatively long, slender component, which is supported only at one end and it is the other unsupported end which cooperates with the orifice and controls the flow rate of the fuel. It is a requirement of carburettors that they provide a reliable, accurate and repeatable control of the fuel/air mixture at idle speed, full speed and intermediate speed settings of the engine and it is found that a needle valve is inherently incapable of this because even very small lateral movements in the unsupported end of the valve need can lead to quite large variations in the pattern and volume of the fuel flow, particularly at low engine speeds. This can result in variations in the air/fuel ratio and thus in an increase in fuel consumption and in pollutant emissions and in instability of engine operation, particularly when idling. It is also desirable in mass produced carburettors that the performance and characteristics of all of them is identical and it is found that this is in practice not the case, largely due to the difficulty in making the size and position of the valve needles precisely identical. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the supply of air and fuel are

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appropriately matched in the known carburettors, the throttle valve and needle valve are linked to move together by a complex mechanical linkage. This linkage is prone to variations in manufacturing tolerances and requires complex and expensive machining and assembly.

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It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a carburettor which enables the fuel supply to be controlled in a more accurate, reliable, reproducible and compact manner. It is a further object of the invention to provide a carburettor which will result in stable, economical and reproducible
10 operation, particularly at low and idling speeds of the engine. It is a still further object of the invention to provide a carburettor in which the fuel supply is adjustable in a manner which is directly related to the speed and/or load of the engine in a manner which is robust, reliable and compact and in which the adjustment mechanism is contained within the body of the carburettor. It is a
15 yet further object of the invention to provide a linkage between the fuel metering valve and the throttle valve which will ensure that the supply of air and fuel is appropriately matched but which is simple and reliable and economical to manufacture.

20 According to the present invention a carburettor of the type referred to above is characterised in that the fuel metering valve comprises an elongate sleeve movably accommodating an elongate valve member, that the sleeve and the valve member define a fuel inlet space, that a fuel inlet communicates with the fuel inlet space, that a fuel outlet passes through the wall of the sleeve and
25 communicates with the fuel supply nozzle and that a portion of the outer surface of the valve member is so profiled that the valve member is movable relative to the sleeve such that the area of communication between the fuel inlet space and the outlet varies progressively between a maximum and a minimum value.

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Thus in the carburettor in accordance with the present invention, the conventional fuel metering valve of needle valve type is replaced by a slide valve comprising an elongate valve member slidably received within an elongate sleeve or tube. The sleeve may be a separate component or it may be connected to or form an integral part of a larger component and may thus constitute a block or the like in which an elongate hole or aperture is bored or otherwise formed. The sleeve defines a fuel inlet space at one end of the valve member which communicates with a fuel inlet which may extend either through the end of the sleeve or through a side wall. A fuel outlet extends through the side wall of the sleeve. The valve member is profiled or relieved on one of its side surfaces opposed to the fuel outlet. In one embodiment, one of the side surfaces of the valve member is relieved or cut away from a point intermediate its ends and the amount of material removed progressively increases towards the end closest to the fuel inlet chamber. This means that as the valve member moves linearly within the sleeve, the area of communication between the fuel inlet space and the outlet will vary progressively, thereby varying the amount of fuel discharged through the outlet. The valve member may be relatively massive compared to a slender conventional valve needle and this fact coupled with the fact that the valve member will be supported over at least part of its length by engagement with the interior of the sleeve and/or with one or more sealing members provided within the sleeve means that lateral movement of the valve member relative to the sleeve is effectively prevented and thus that the quantity of fuel passing through the valve may be controlled very much more accurately than through conventional needle valves. Furthermore, the fact that the valve member is a relatively massive member means that it may be machined very accurately and repeatably, whereby the characteristics of a large number of mass produced carburettors may be substantially identical. The detailed shape of the profiled portion of the valve

member may be varied as desired to produce the precise variation of fuel flow rate with the position of the throttle valve that is required.

5 The elongate internal space within the sleeve and thus the external shape of the valve member may have a variety of different shapes and may thus be, for instance, rectangular or elliptical. It is, however, preferred that they are of circular cross-section.

10 It is preferred that the carburettor includes a non-return valve situated between the fuel inlet and the fuel inlet space. This valve will prevent any backflow of fuel and minimise the effect of pressure transients on the rate of fuel flow through the valve, thereby substantially alleviating or eliminating one of the problems which is common with carburettors of needle valve type.

15 As mentioned above, the valve member may be arranged to move linearly within the sleeve. Alternatively or additionally, it may be arranged to move in rotation within the sleeve and this will of course necessitate the profiling of the side surface of the valve member being of very different form in order to produce the desired variation in the fuel flow characteristics as the valve member is progressively rotated.

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If, as is preferred, the valve member is of circular cross-section, whereby it will be accommodated within a circular or at least part-circular section space within the sleeve, there is at least theoretically the risk that it could inadvertently be rotated within the sleeve and if this were to happen the relieved portion of the valve member would no longer be strictly in alignment with the fuel outlet and the flow characteristics of the valve would be materially altered. It is therefore preferred that the valve member carries locating means cooperating with locating means carried by the sleeve arranged to control the angular position of

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the valve member with respect to the sleeve. It is preferred that the locating means on the valve member constitutes a groove extending along at least part of its length and that the sleeve carries a projection extending into this groove. The cooperating groove and projection may be arranged to maintain the angular position of the valve member within the sleeve constant or they may be arranged to produce a predetermined relative rotational movement which will occur as the longitudinal movement occurs and in this event the groove will be not linear but somewhat helical.

It is of course desirable that it is not possible for fuel to leak from the fuel inlet space between the opposed surfaces of the valve member and the sleeve or the sealing member within the sleeve to a position beyond the fuel outlet and such leakage may be prevented by constructing the valve member such that it forms a sliding seal with the internal surface of the sleeve over a proportion of its length. Alternatively, the internal surface of the sleeve may have a raised portion extending around the fuel outlet. This will tend to increase the contact pressure with which the valve member engages the surface of the sleeve in the vicinity of the fuel outlet and thus enhance the integrity of the seal. In a further alternative, the sleeve may contain a sealing member which defines a recess in which the valve member is partially accommodated and forms a seal with it and in which at least part of the outlet is formed.

In one embodiment, the sealing member contains magnetised particles and the valve member is of magnetic material, preferably ferro-magnetic material, whereby the seal between the valve member and the sealing member is enhanced by magnetic attraction. Alternatively, the sealing member may contain ferro-magnetic particles and the sleeve may contain a magnet which attracts the sealing member towards the valve member, thereby enhancing the seal between them. In a further alternative, the valve member is ferro-magnetic

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and the sleeve contains one or more magnets situated between the sealing member and the valve member, whereby the attractive force between the magnet(s) and the valve member acts on the sealing member to enhance the seal between it and the valve member.

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Carburettors are usually used to dispense conventional gasoline but other fuels are used for internal combustion engines, such as paraffin, which are combusted at a different fuel/air ratio. A carburettor in accordance with the invention could be converted to produce a different air/fuel ratio by removing
10 the valve member and replacing it with a different valve member whose profiling is different. However, it is also possible for the valve member to have two or more differently profiled regions on different areas of its side surface and all that is then required to convert the carburettor to be suitable for the different fuel is for the valve member to be removed and rotated through e.g.
15 180° and then replaced so that it is the other profiled region which now cooperates with the fuel outlet.

It may also be desirable for a carburettor to be able to dispense two or even more different liquids at the same time, e.g. two different fuels or conventional
20 gasoline and lubricating oil for a two-stroke engine or the same liquid at two different points. The carburettor in accordance with the invention may be readily converted to dispense two liquids simultaneously by providing the wall of the sleeve with two or even more outlets which cooperate with respective profiled regions of the valve member and providing two or even more inlets
25 which communicate with respective inlet spaces which communicate in turn with respective profiled regions of the valve member. The profiling of the different regions of the valve member will be different and thus different amounts of the different liquids will be dispensed simultaneously. The precise

amounts of the two liquids will of course be determined by the detail of the profiling of the valve member.

In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the carburettor includes a further
5 fuel metering valve, namely an idling fuel metering valve, for metering the
small amounts of fuel needed for idling operation of an engine in parallel with
the fuel metering valve or in series with it. This aspect of the present invention
is based on the recognition that many of the difficulties relating to precise
control of the metered fuel amount at idling speed in known carburettors is due
10 to the fact that it is very difficult to achieve precise calibration of a flow
metering valve which is intended to control the flow of a widely varying range
of flow rates. Thus the conventional needle valve in a carburettor will permit a
large flow rate of fuel when the engine is operating at full load but only a very
low flow rate when the engine is idling and this large difference in the flow
15 rates makes it in practice very difficult to calibrate the valve precisely when it
is only open very slightly, that is to say during idling operation of the engine.
This aspect of the present invention therefore includes two fuel metering
valves, one for idling and very slow speed operation and the other for higher
speed/load operation. If the two fuel metering valves are provided in parallel,
20 it is preferred that the main fuel metering valve is closed during idling
operation of the engine whereby all the necessary fuel is supplied by the idling
metering valve. In order to increase the engine load and speed, fuel flow
through the main fuel metering valve is commenced and it is in practice
immaterial if the small flow rate through the idling metering valve continues
25 since this is in practice only a very small fraction of the flow rate through the
main metering valve. If, however, the two fuel metering valves are in series, it
is of course necessary for the main metering valve to remain at least slightly
open at all times, that is to say even during idling operation, but it is preferred
that the profiling of the valve member of the main metering valve is such that

substantially all the control of the fuel flow rate is effected by the idling metering valve. In either case, the range of fuel flow rates through the idling metering valve is relatively small and it is therefore a relatively simple matter to calibrate this valve very precisely, whereby the problem referred to above of
5 varying fuel flow rates during idling may be substantially eliminated.

In the preferred embodiment, the idling metering valve is incorporated in the main fuel metering valve and in this event the fuel inlet of the fuel metering valve may communicate with the fuel inlet space via a valve seat and the valve
10 member of the fuel metering valve may carry a further valve member which cooperates with the valve seat and constitutes with it the further fuel metering valve. This is a series arrangement of the main fuel metering valve and the idling fuel metering valve and it will therefore be necessary for the main fuel metering valve to remain slightly open during idling operation of the engine.

15 In an alternative embodiment, the valve member carries a further valve member which cooperates with a valve seat within the valve member, the valve seat communicating with the inlet space and with a further space within the valve member, the further space communicating with an idling outlet in the side surface of the valve member, the idling outlet being so positioned that it
20 communicates with the outlet in the sleeve when the carburettor is in idling operation. This is a parallel arrangement of the two fuel metering valves and the main fuel metering valve is therefore likely to be fully closed during idling operation of the engine. It is preferred that the position of the further valve member is adjustable with respect to the main valve member so as to permit the
25 fuel flow rate in idling operation to be precisely adjusted.

In an alternative embodiment, the carburettor includes a further fuel metering valve in series with the fuel metering valve which, in use, is of value not only when the engine is idling but also at other speeds. Thus this further fuel

metering valve, which is preferably situated upstream of the fuel metering space and is electrically operable, may be used to adjust the air fuel ratio at any speed and may be used to compensate, for instance, for changes in the engine operation which occur over time or in the exhaust gases having an oxygen content which indicates that the mixture is in fact too lean.

It is of course necessary for the carburettor to include some mechanism which will move the valve member of the fuel metering valve in synchronism with the movement of the throttling valve so that the rates of supply of fuel and air are appropriately matched to one another. In one embodiment, the carburettor includes a rotary input shaft which is adapted to be connected to an engine speed control member, typically the governor of a stationary engine, and is connected to the throttle valve to move it between open and closed positions and is connected also to a carriage to move it, the carriage carrying at least one elongate inclined ramp, which extends in the direction of movement of the carriage and which is engaged by a follower connected to the valve member, whereby rotation of the input shaft results in movement of the throttle valve and in movement of the carriage and thus of the elongate ramp, whereby the follower is moved transverse to the length of the ramp and the valve member of the fuel metering valve is thus moved also.

It is believed that this aspect of the present invention is novel in its own right and will find application without the other features of the invention referred to above. Thus in accordance with a further aspect of the present invention, a carburettor including a primary air passage, an adjustable throttle valve situated within the primary air passage, a fuel supply nozzle communicating with the primary air passage and connected to a fuel metering valve for varying the amount of fuel discharged through the nozzle and a rotary input shaft which is adapted to be connected to an engine speed control member and is connected to

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the throttle valve to move it between open and closed positions is characterised in that the rotary input shaft is also connected to a carriage to move it, the carriage carrying at least one elongate inclined ramp, which extends in the direction of movement of the carriage and which is engaged by a follower
5 connected to the valve member, whereby rotation of the input shaft results in movement of the throttle valve and in movement of the carriage and thus of the elongate ramp, whereby the follower is moved transverse to the length of the ramp and the fuel metering valve is thus moved also.

10 It is preferred that the carriage carries one or more parallel tracks, the carriage being connected to one or more support members which bear against respective tracks, whereby the carriage is guided to move linearly. It is therefore necessary that the input shaft is connected to the carriage by a linkage which will convert rotary motion of the shaft into linear motion of the carriage and it
15 is preferred that this linkage is of lost motion type. Conveniently, the shaft carries a lever bearing a projection, which is received in an elongate slot in the carriage.

The input shaft must also be coupled to the throttle valve to move it in
20 synchronism with the valve member of the fuel metering valve and it is preferred that this connection is via the carriage and that the throttle valve is connected to the carriage by a further lost motion linkage, which converts the linear motion of the carriage into rotational motion of the throttling valve.

25 In one embodiment, the carriage includes one or more parallel inclined ramps and a valve carrier which is connected to the valve member and carries one or more rollers which are supported on respective inclined ramps.

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In an alternative embodiment, the carriage is connected to the rotary input shaft to rotate with it and the elongate ramp is of part-circular shape. This embodiment has the advantage of simplicity in that the lost motion linkages are no longer necessary. As the carriage moves in rotation in synchronism with the rotary input shaft, the part-circular ramp will move also and the follower connected to the valve member will be caused to move in the direction of the length of the valve member, thereby moving the valve member axially.

As described above, the invention relates to many different types of carburettor including those with only a single air passage. It is, however, particularly applicable to carburettors of the type including a secondary air passage with an inlet and with an outlet to the primary air passage between the throttling valve and its outlet, the arrangement being such that, in use, the fuel mixes with the air flowing through the secondary air passage before mixing with the air flowing in the primary air passage. In practice this means that the outlet from the fuel metering valve is into the secondary air passage. Carburettors of this type are disclosed in WO 97/48897. The fact that the fuel supply nozzle communicates with the primary air passage downstream of the throttle valve rather than upstream of it, as is conventional, means that the fuel is forcibly pulled out from the fuel nozzle by the strongly sub-atmospheric pressure that prevails downstream of the throttle valve, particularly at small throttle openings, i.e. when the engine is running at low speed or idling. This is in distinction to the pressure which prevails upstream of the throttle valve, which is very much closer to atmospheric. This substantial pressure differential results in very much more efficient vaporisation of the fuel, particularly at low engine speed. This improved vaporisation is further promoted by the flow of air through the secondary air passage which mixes with the fuel before it enters the primary air passage, thereby beginning the vaporisation process earlier than normal. The result of the more rapid and efficient vaporisation of the fuel is

more efficient combustion and thus reduced fuel consumption and also reduced emissions of pollutants.

5 In the preferred embodiment, the fuel supply nozzle includes a fuel inlet passage communicating with the outlet of the fuel metering valve, a mixture outlet passage communicating with the primary air passage and at least one air inlet passage which communicates with the secondary air passage and the mixture outlet passage.

10 The fuel supply nozzle preferably includes a bore of constant cross-sectional area whose upstream end communicates with the secondary air passage and whose downstream end communicates with a divergent bore. The provision of the bore of constant cross-sectional area means that minor variations in the depth to which the divergent bore is formed will have no effect on the cross-
15 sectional area of the communication between the secondary air passage and the primary air passage.

In an alternative embodiment, a nozzle unit defining a jet or nozzle orifice is secured within the mixture outlet passage. In practice, this will necessitate the
20 mixture outlet passage being larger than in the previous embodiment and once this passage has been formed a nozzle unit or block defining an orifice is inserted into it and retained in position. This will again result in the cross-sectional area of the communication between the secondary air passage and the primary air passage being precisely predetermined and thus not subject to
25 tolerances or minor variations in the manufacturing procedure.

In order to prevent an excessively low sub-atmospheric pressure being formed in the secondary air passage when the engine is idling, it is preferred that the minimum cross-sectional area of the secondary air passage over its entire

length is greater than the cross-sectional area of the bore of constant cross-sectional area. This will result in a substantial proportion of the pressure gradient between the fuel outlet of the fuel metering valve and the primary air passage occurring between the secondary and primary air passages, whereby
5 excessive amounts of fuel are not drawn into the secondary air passage from the fuel outlet when the engine is idling.

The benefits of the secondary air passage are particularly pronounced at low and mid speed of the engine because of the substantially improved vaporisation
10 of the fuel. However, at high engine speeds, there is a substantial air flow through the primary air passage and a not insignificant air flow through the secondary air passage also. This may result in the air/fuel ratio falling to an undesirably low level under high engine loads. This potential problem may be eliminated if the secondary air passage includes a controllable valve, which
15 may be operated by a separate actuator. This will enable the flow of air through the secondary air passage to be controlled independently of the air flow through the primary air passage. In one embodiment, the controllable valve is connected to the throttle valve and arranged to close progressively as the throttle valve opens. This means that as the engine load increases the air flow
20 rate through the secondary air passage will not increase at the same rate and may indeed even decrease or go to zero when the throttle valve is fully open.

This feature is believed to be applicable to carburettors which do not include a fuel metering valve of the specific type referred to above and thus according to
25 a further aspect of the present invention, a carburettor including a primary air passage, an adjustable throttle valve situated within the primary air passage, a secondary air passage with an inlet and with an outlet to the primary air passage between the throttle valve and its outlet, the arrangement being such that, in use, the fuel mixes with the air flowing through the secondary air

passage before mixing with the air flowing in the primary air passage is characterised in that the secondary air passage includes a controllable valve. This valve may be connected to the throttle valve and arranged to close progressively as the throttle valve opens.

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In the preferred embodiment, the throttle valve is mounted on a rotary shaft through which a radial passage passes, the radial passage constituting a contiguous part of the secondary air passage, when the throttle valve is substantially closed, whereby as the throttle valve is opened the radial passage becomes progressively misaligned with the adjacent portions of the secondary air passage and thus progressively throttles the air flow through the second air passage. This arrangement is particularly simple and space-saving because it uses the shaft of the throttle valve itself to act as a throttle valve for the secondary air passage.

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Further features and details of the invention will be apparent from the following description of certain specific embodiments, which is given by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

20 Figure 1 is a front perspective view of a carburettor in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 is a rear perspective view of the carburettor of Figure 1;

25 Figure 3A is a scrap diagrammatic cross-sectional view of the carburettor of Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 3B is a view similar to Figure 3A showing an optional feature;

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Figures 4A and 4B are sectional views of the fuel metering valve in the closed and partially open positions, respectively;

5 Figures 5A and 5B are longitudinal and transverse sectional views respectively of a modified fuel metering valve;

Figure 5C is a view similar to Figure 5B of yet a further modified fuel metering valve;

10 Figures 6A, 6B and 6C are views of the top of the carburettor of Figures 1 and 2 showing the positions of the various components at high load, medium load and when the engine is idling, respectively;

15 Figures 7A, 7B and 7C are axial sectional views of yet a further modified fuel metering valve;

Figure 8 is a vertical axial sectional view of the carburettor of Figures 1 and 2;

20 Figures 9A and 9B are axial sectional views of a still further modified fuel metering valve;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of a further embodiment of carburettor in accordance with the invention with the upper cover removed;

25 Figure 11 is an axial sectional view of the carburettor of Figure 10; and

Figure 12 is a perspective view of the rotary carriage seen in Figure 10.

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Referring firstly to Figures 1 to 3A, the carburettor 1 includes a body 2 defining a primary air passage 19 with an inlet 6 and an outlet 11. The body 2 is adapted to be connected to an air cleaner housing (not shown) via a flange 3 and to an engine inlet manifold (again not shown) via a flange 4. A throttle valve 8 of butterfly type is arranged in the primary air passage 19. The body 2 also defines a secondary air passage 13, which communicates with a secondary inlet 10 and whose downstream end 24 communicates with a chamber 22. The chamber 22 accommodates a fuel metering valve 23, which will be described in detail below, and communicates via two passages 25 with the inlet of a fuel supply nozzle 28, the outlet of which is directed into the primary air passage 19.

As shown in Figures 4A and 4B, the fuel metering valve consists of an outer sleeve or tube 32, longitudinally slidably accommodated within which is a valve rod 33, which is arranged to be moved in a vertical direction by a plate 16, as will be described below. The sleeve 32 defines a fuel inlet space 35 at its lower end which communicates with a fuel inlet 37 at its lower end via a non-return valve 30. This valve will prevent any backflow of fuel and will thus reduce the transient pressure changes and backflow of fuel that can occur and impairs the operation and efficiency of the engine. Provided in the side wall of the sleeve 32 is an outlet port 39. The valve rod 33 is of circular cross-section over the upper portion of its length and is in sliding and substantially sealed contact with the internal surface of the sleeve. However, at the lower end of the valve rod its surface directed towards the outlet port 39 is relieved or cut away progressively in the downwardly direction. Accordingly, when the valve rod is in the position shown in Figures 4A, the outlet 39 is completely obscured by the surface of the rod and there is no communication between the fuel space and the outlet port. No fuel may therefore flow through the valve. However, as the valve rod is progressively raised, the progressively decreasing cross-

sectional area of the rod will mean that the fuel space will communicate with the outlet port 39 via a space of progressively increasing area and the rate of fuel flow through the outlet 39 towards the fuel nozzle 28 will progressively increase. The detailed shape of the cut-away portion of the valve rod may be contoured to achieve any desired relationship between the position of the valve rod and the instantaneous fuel flow rate.

In the preferred embodiment, the valve member 33 moves linearly within the sleeve 32, though it will be appreciated that it could also move in rotation or both linearly and in rotation. The valve member 33 is also of circular section in this preferred embodiment and this opens up the possibility, at least theoretically, of the valve member rotating within the sleeve and the cut-away portion becoming angularly misaligned with the outlet 39. This risk is eliminated in the modified embodiment shown in Figure 5A in which the valve member is provided with an elongate groove 44 in its surface opposite to the outlet 39. A projection 46 integral with a plug 48 passing through the wall of the sleeve 32 extends into the groove 44 and engages its two side walls. Rotation of the valve member relative to the sleeve is therefore prevented by the guide 46, 48.

In the embodiment of Figure 4, the upper portion of the internal surface of the sleeve 32 is in sliding sealed contact with the opposed surface of the valve member around its entire periphery so as to prevent leakage of fuel in the upward direction. It is, however, not necessary that the valve member be sealed around its entire periphery but merely that it be sealed around the outlet 39. In the modified embodiment of Figure 5B, the valve sleeve 32 accommodates a sealing member 50 affording the outlet 39 and a semi-cylindrical recess in which the valve, rod, member 33 is received. The valve member 33 again has an elongate recess 44 formed in its side surface remote

from the outlet 39 and this recess receives a projection 46 connected to a block 48. The projection 46 has a width equal to that of the recess 44 and is made of resilient material and thus urges the valve member to the right, as seen in Figure 5. The valve member 33 is thus not only restrained from rotating but is urged into sealing contact with the seal 50 by the resilient projection 46.

In the further modified embodiment of Figure 5C, the valve member 33 is again provided with a guide 48, 46 extending into a longitudinal groove formed in it and is in sliding engagement with a seal 50 in which the outlet 39 is formed. The seal 50 is made of a hard polymeric material such as that sold by Victrex under the trade Mark PEEK. Situated behind the seal 50 is one or more magnets 52 which are attracted to the ferromagnetic valve member 33 and thus urge the seal 50 into contact with the valve member 33, thereby enhancing the integrity of the seal. Alternatively, the material of the seal 50 may contain magnetised particles which draw the seal into contact with the valve member.

Figure 3A shows that the secondary air passage 13 includes a valve arranged to close progressively as the throttle valve 8 opens. In this case, the throttle valve includes a central rotary shaft 40, through which an air passage 42 passes. When the valve 8 is close to the closed position, the passage 42 constitutes part of the secondary air passage. However, as the valve 8 opens, the passage 42 becomes increasingly misaligned with the adjacent portions of the passage 13 and thus progressively throttles the flow of secondary air through the passage 13. When the valve 8 is in or near to the fully open position, the passage 13 will be closed and no secondary air will flow through the passage 13 to the nozzle 28. This will result in an increase in the richness of the fuel/air mixture at high engine loads but will not impair the efficiency of fuel injection and vaporisation because at high load the air flow through the main passage 11 is

sufficiently rapid to ensure rapid entrainment and vaporisation of the fuel discharged through the nozzle 28.

5 However, it is desirable for there to be a small flow of secondary air even under high load conditions and this is achieved in the construction of Figure 3A by the provision of a further secondary air passage 13' in parallel with the upstream portion of the secondary passage 13 and bypassing the valve constituted by the shaft 40 of the throttle valve 8.

10 As referred to above, the fuel flow rate may be varied between desired maximum and minimum rates. The maximum rate will correspond to maximum load of the engine. The minimum rate may be a very low rate corresponding to idling speed of the engine. However, it is as a practical matter difficult to reliably and precisely control a low rate of fuel flow through
 15 a valve which is adapted also to permit flow rates suitable for high speed engine operation. It is therefore preferred that the carburettor includes a further fuel metering valve, an idling metering valve, which also communicates with the primary air passage and is adapted to supply the small amount of fuel that is required for idling operation. Such a construction is shown in Figure 3B, from
 20 which the secondary air passage has been omitted for the sake of clarity. As may be seen, an idling air passage 13'' communicates with the air outlet 11 at a position which is downstream of the adjacent edge of the throttle valve 8, when it is substantially closed but is upstream of the throttle valve when it is open to an appreciable extent. The idling air passage communicates with a fuel supply
 25 orifice 41. The idling air passage 13'' is controllable by means of an adjustable needle valve 45. The main fuel metering valve is arranged to be substantially closed when the engine is idling. At this time the throttle valve 8 will be in the position shown in solid lines in Figure 3B and the downstream end of the idling air passage 13'' will be subjected to a substantial sub-atmospheric pressure. Air

and fuel are thus drawn into the air passage in an amount sufficient for idling operation of the engine. The precise amount of fuel that is admitted may be controlled very precisely by adjusting the needle valve 45, which is only required to permit a relatively small range of flow rates. When the throttle is
5 opened, the main fuel metering valve 28 will again begin to permit the flow of fuel. As the adjacent edge of the throttle 8 moves downstream of the downstream end of the idling air passage 13", the reduced pressure applied to the downstream end of the passage 13" decreases and the flow of fuel and air through the passage 13" drops to a very low value which is insignificant
10 compared to the flow through the nozzle 28.

In the modified embodiment shown in Figures 7A-C, the idling metering valve is incorporated in the valve member of the main fuel metering valve. In this case, the valve member 33 is hollow and accommodates within it a valve
15 needle 54, a portion of whose external surface carries a screw thread in engagement with a corresponding screw thread on the interior of the valve member so that the relative axial positions of the valve member 33 and valve needle 54 are readily adjustable. The inlet to the fuel inlet space 35 constitutes a valve seat 56 with which the valve needle 54 cooperates. The valve member
20 33 is again profiled on its external surface directed towards the outlet 39 so as to produce the desired varying fuel flow rate as the valve member 33 is moved axially within the sleeve 32 and it is again restrained from rotation by engagement of a guide 48 in a longitudinal groove formed in the opposite surface. When the engine is operating at full speed, the valve member 33 will
25 be in the position shown in Figure 7C in which a significant volume of fuel is permitted to flow through the outlet 39 and the valve needle 54 is spaced well away from the valve seat 56. When the engine is not operating, the valve member 33 will be in the position shown in Figure 7B in which the outlet 39 is closed by the valve member 33, though this is not necessarily so, and the valve seat 56 is

completely blocked by the valve needle 54. However, when the engine is idling, as shown in Figure 7A, the flow rate of the fuel is controlled not by the valve member 33 but by the valve needle 54. Thus the profiled portion of the exterior of the valve member 33 is so shaped that as the valve member 33 moves downwardly, the area of communication between the space 35 and the outlet 39 progressively decreases and whilst this occurs the valve needle 54 initially has no influence on the fuel flow rate. However, as the idling speed range is approached, the shape of the relevant portion of the surface of the valve member is such that the area of communication between the space 35 and the outlet 39 stays substantially constant and does not decrease yet further. However, as this point is reached, the valve needle 54 begins to influence the flow rate through the valve seat 56. Further movement in the downward direction of the valve member 33, and thus also the valve needle 54, will result in a reduction in the fuel flow rate but this reduction is all caused by the valve needle 54. The rate of fuel flow whilst idling may be adjusted very precisely by adjusting the position of the valve needle 54 within the valve member 33.

A further modified embodiment in which the idling metering valve is incorporated in the valve member of the main fuel metering valve is shown in Figures 9A and 9B. The valve member 33 is again hollow and again accommodates within it a valve member or needle 54 and the position of this valve needle within the valve member 33 is again adjustable by means of cooperating screw threads. In this case, however, the valve seat 56 with which the idling valve member 54 cooperates is defined within the valve member 33. Situated above the valve seat 56 within the valve member 33 is a liquid space communicating with an outlet 66 in the side wall of the valve member 33. In normal operation of the engine, as shown in Figure 9A, the outlet 66 is closed by the opposed internal side wall of the sleeve 32 and no fuel can therefore flow through the valve constituted by the seat 56 and valve member 54.

However, when the valve member 33 moves downwardly into the idling position, as shown in Figure 9B, the outlet 66 comes into registry with the outlet 39 in the sleeve. Fuel can then flow through the idling metering valve 54, 56 and thence through the outlets 66 and 39. The two metering valves are effectively in parallel in this embodiment and the main fuel metering valve is therefore arranged to be fully closed during idling operation which means that all the fuel required for idling operation passes through the idling fuel metering valve. Since both the valve member 54 and the valve seat 56 move with the valve member 33, movement of the valve member 33 does not result in relative movement of the valve member 54 and valve seat 56 and this means that the flow rate through the idling metering valve is constant, though it may of course be adjusted to a desired value by adjusting the longitudinal position of the valve member 54 within the valve member 33 by rotating it.

The mechanism by which the fuel metering valve is actuated and controlled will now be described with reference to Figures 1, 2, 6 and 8. The upper surface of the carburettor carries two parallel elongate slide rails 60, slidably supported on which is a slide carriage 18. In use, the rails and carriage are within a removable cover, but this has been omitted from the drawings for the sake of clarity. Rotatably carried by the cover is a mechanical input shaft 12. Rigidly connected to the shaft 12 is a lever arm 61, depending from the free end of which is a peg 62, which is received in a slot 64 in the carriage 18. It will be appreciated that the peg 62 and slot 64 act as a lost motion linkage and that rotation of the shaft 12 will result in linear sliding motion of the carriage 18 along the rails 60. The rotary shaft 40 of the throttle valve 8 extends through the upper wall of the carburettor and is non-rotatably connected to one end of a lever 14. Formed in the upper surface of the lever 14 is a longitudinal slot 66 in which an elongate slider 68 is slidably received. The end of the slider 68 remote from the throttle shaft 40 is pivotally connected to the carriage

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18 by means of a pivot pin 70. The slot 67 and slider 68 constitute a further lost motion linkage such that linear movement of the carriage 18 along the rails 60 will result in rotation of the shaft 40 and thus in opening or closing movement of the throttle valve 8.

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Upstanding from the carriage 18 are two spaced parallel webs 72, the upper surface 74 of one of which is profiled and has a somewhat curved inclined ramp shape. Situated above the profiled ramp 74 is an elongate valve holder 76, projecting from one side of which is a roller 78 resting on the profiled ramp 74. At the centre of the valve holder 76 is a support plate 16, through which the valve member 33 of the fuel metering valve extends. The valve member 33 and support plate 16 are connected together such that relative vertical movement is prevented. The side of the valve holder 76 is a planar surface in sliding engagement with the opposed parallel surface of the other web 72. This flat engagement prevents tilting or skewing of the valve holder as it moves along the webs.

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In use, the top of the carburettor is covered by a cover or lid (not shown) and springs (also not shown) are provided between the underside of the cover and the valve holder 76 to urge the latter downwardly such that the roller 78 is maintained in contact with the ramp 74. The input shaft 12 is connected to the engine speed control member, typically the speed governor of a stationary engine or the accelerator pedal of an automotive engine, such that movement of the speed control member will result in rotation of the shaft 12. When the engine is operating at idling speed, the position of the carriage 18 is as shown in Figures 2 and 6A. As will be seen, the roller 78 is in contact with the lowest portion of the ramp 74 and the valve member 35 is at its lowest position, as shown in Figures 4A and 7A, whereby the fuel metering valve is substantially closed and fuel metering is performed by the idling metering valve. In this

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condition, the throttle valve 8 is substantially closed. If the speed control member is now moved to an intermediate position, the input shaft 12 is rotated and this causes the carriage 18 to move along the slide rails 60. This in turn causes the throttle valve 8 to be rotated by the lost motion linkage 67, 68 to the intermediate position shown in Figure 6B. The roller 78 moves to an intermediate position on the ramp 74 and the valve member 33 is moved up to an intermediate position, thereby permitting a larger amount of fuel to be admitted into the primary air passage of the carburettor. If the speed control member is now moved further to the full load/speed position, the input member 12 is rotated further and the carriage 18 is moved further to the position shown in Figures 1 and 6C. This movement is transmitted to the throttle valve 8, which is moved to the full open position, as also seen in Figure 8. The roller 78 moves to the top of the ramp 74 which results in the valve member 35 being moved upwardly to its highest position, as seen in Figures 4B and 7C.

The modified embodiment of carburettor shown in Figures 10 to 12 is similar to the preceding embodiments but differs from it in a number of important respects.

In the preceding embodiments, the air fuel ratio at any particular position of the valve rod 33 is fixed by the manufacturer by precisely determining the profile of the valve rod. However, as a result of manufacturing tolerances and progressive wear of the carburettor and the associated engine it may be desirable for the carburettor to have an additional means of adjusting the air fuel ratio. This embodiment includes a composite control valve 80 situated between the carburettor float chamber 82 and the inlet to the fuel metering valve, which is both a non-return valve and an electrically operated flow control valve which, in use, is connected to a controller. This controller may be connected to a so-called λ sensor, which measures the oxygen concentration

in the exhaust gases. The controller may be programmed to adjust the control valve 80 so that the oxygen concentration in the exhaust gases is zero, thereby indicating that the mixture is not too lean. The controller may also be responsive to signals indicative of the oil level in the engine sump, the engine temperature, the exhaust gas temperature and any other desired parameters. The control valve may be of any of a number of known types, e.g. with a valve member of oscillating, pulsating or rotary type. The control valve may also be used for the accurate control of the fuel flow when the engine is idling.

The valve sleeve 32 in this case is accommodated within a bore within the body 2. The outlet port 39 in the sleeve 32 communicates with a bore 84 in the body 2, which in turn communicates with the nozzle 28. In the embodiment of Figure 3, for example, the nozzle 28 is made by drilling from the primary air passage 19 into the secondary air passage 25. This means that the area of communication between the two passages, i.e. the size of the nozzle aperture, is crucially dependent on the depth of the drilling and it is in practice very difficult to predetermine this size. This potential problem is overcome in this embodiment by using two drillings, the first of which is relatively small and of constant diameter, namely the bore 84 which communicates with the outlet port 39, and the second of which is relatively large and communicates with the primary air passage 19 and with the downstream end of the bore 84 and is of generally conical shape. This means that the minimum area of the communication between the primary and secondary passages is precisely predetermined and is equal to the area of the bore 84.

When the engine is idling, the throttle valve 8 is substantially closed. This means that a very low sub-atmospheric pressure prevails at the downstream end of the bore 84. The resulting large pressure differential tends to draw more fuel through the fuel metering valve than is required for idling operation. In the

preceding embodiments, this is dealt with by very precisely machining the profile of the valve rod to ensure that the available flow area, when the engine is idling, permits precisely the required small volume of fuel to be drawn through the valve. However, this potential problem is mitigated in the present embodiment by dimensioning the secondary air passage such that its area is greater than the area of communication (bore 84) between the primary and secondary air passages. This results in the pressure in the secondary air passage not falling to a particularly low level, which means that the pressure drop between the fuel valve and the primary air passage occurs to a large extent between the primary and secondary air passage and not between the fuel valve and the secondary air passage. This enables the accuracy with which the profile of the valve rod 33 must be machined to be relaxed somewhat. It will be appreciated that the increased area of the secondary air passage must be present over its entire length because if there were a constriction anywhere along its length, there would be a pressure drop at that point and this would increase the pressure differential between the fuel valve and the secondary air passage. This increased area of the secondary air passage may be provided by simply making the entire passage larger or by providing two or even more passages in parallel over at least a part of the length of the secondary air passage.

As may be seen in Figure 11, the internal surface of the fuel valve sleeve 32 is provided with a raised portion 86 which extends around the outlet port and projects beyond the surrounding portions of the internal surface by a small distance, which may be only 1mm or so. The valve rod 33 is again provided with means which bias it towards the outlet port 39. In this case, the biasing means comprises a plug 48, which is received in a bore in the body 2 and defines a central bore 8 in which the stem of a generally mushroom-shaped biasing member is slidably received. Situated between the head of the biasing member and the plug 48 is a compression spring 92 which urges the head of the

biasing against the valve rod 33 and thus urges the valve rod 33 against the
 raised portion 86. The valve rod 33 is also slidably received in a bearing 126,
 below which is a seal 127. At other points along its length the valve rod 33 is
 spaced from the internal surface of the sleeve 32. The combination of the
 5 raised portion 86 and the biasing device 48, 90, 92 means that the valve rod 33
 engages the internal surface of the sleeve 32 with an increased contact pressure
 and this improves the integrity of the seal around the outlet port 39.

In the preceding embodiment, the rotary throttle input connection is connected
 10 to a linearly slidable carriage via which the rotary input motion is converted
 into linear motion of the valve rod. However, in this embodiment, the rotary
 input shaft 12 is connected to a rotary carriage 127 which thus rotates with the
 shaft 12. As best seen in Figure 12, the rotary carriage is of circular segmental
 shape with a non-circular hole 100 adjacent its apex by means of which it is
 15 rotationally keyed to the shaft 12. Adjacent its outer arcuate peripheral edge is
 an elongate arcuate opening 102, through which the valve rod 33 extends.
 Extending adjacent to and outside the opening 102 is a part-circular wall 104 of
 progressively increasing height, the upper surface 116 of which constitutes an
 arcuate ramp surface. This ramp surface 106 is engaged by a roller 78, which
 20 is rotatably connected to move vertically with the valve rod 33. The upper end
 of the valve rod 33 is engaged by the stem of an inner mushroom-shaped
 engagement member 116, which is accommodated within an outer mushroom-
 shaped engagement member 108, which acts as a stop in the downward
 direction. The stem of the outer engagement member 108 is hollow and
 25 receives both the lower end of the inner engagement member 116 and the upper
 end of the valve rod 33, which are in contact with one another. The external
 surface of the stem of the outer engagement member 108 is threaded and the
 thread is in engagement with a corresponding internal thread on the body 2.
 The datum position of the valve rod 33 may thus be altered by rotating the

engagement member 108 with respect to the body, thereby moving the inner engagement member 116 and thus also the valve rod 33 axially. The upper surface of the inner engagement member 116 is engaged by one end of a compression spring 110, the other end of which is engaged by an outer cover 112. The two engagement members are therefore biased into engagement with one another, when the cover 112 is in position.

There are circumstances in which a carburettor can be required to supply metered amounts of one of two different fuels, such as gasoline and paraffin. This can readily be catered for by providing the valve member with a different profiled shape on two opposite sides, one of which is appropriate for one of the fuels and the other of which is appropriate for the other fuel. The carburettor can then readily be converted from being suitable for one fuel to being suitable for the other fuel by removing the valve member from a position in the sleeve in which one of the profiled shapes is opposed to the outlet and replacing it in a position in which the other is opposed to the outlet.

It may also be desirable for the carburettor to be able to supply precisely metered amounts of two different liquids simultaneously, e.g. gasoline and lubricating oil to a two-stroke engine. This may be readily achieved by providing the sleeve with two separate outlets, each of which cooperates with a respective profiled portion of the valve member and by dividing the fuel inlet space into two separate inlet spaces, each of which communicates with a respective inlet and with a respective profiled portion of the valve member.

CLAIMS

1. A carburettor including a primary air passage (19) having an upstream inlet (6) and a downstream outlet (11), an adjustable throttle valve (8) situated within the primary air passage, a fuel supply nozzle (28) communicating with the primary air passage and connected to a fuel metering valve (23) for varying the amount of fuel discharged through the nozzle, said fuel metering valve comprising an elongate sleeve (32) movably accommodating an elongate valve member (33), the sleeve and the valve member defining a fuel inlet space (35), a fuel inlet (37) communicating with the fuel inlet space, a fuel outlet (39) passing through the wall of the sleeve and communicating with the fuel supply nozzle, and a portion of the outer surface of the valve member being so profiled that the valve member is movable relative to the sleeve such that the area of communication between the fuel inlet space and the outlet varies progressively between a maximum and a minimum value, characterised by a secondary air passage (13) with an inlet (10) and with an outlet (24) to the primary air passage between the throttle valve and its outlet (11), the fuel outlet (39) of the fuel metering valve (23) communicating with the secondary air passage (13), the fuel supply nozzle (28) communicating with the secondary (13) and primary (19) air passages such that the fuel is arranged to mix with the air flowing through the secondary air passage before flowing through the nozzle and mixing with the air flowing in the primary air passage downstream of the throttle valve.

2. A carburettor as claimed in claim 1 in which the fuel supply nozzle includes a fuel inlet passage (35) communicating with the outlet (39) of the fuel metering valve, a mixture outlet passage (84) communicating with the primary air passage (19) and at least one air inlet passage (25) which communicates with the secondary air passage and the mixture outlet passage.

3. A carburettor as claimed in claim 1 or 2 in which the fuel supply nozzle includes a bore (84) of constant cross-sectional area whose upstream end communicates with the secondary air passage and whose downstream end communicates with a divergent bore (28).

4. A carburettor as claimed in claim 3 in which the minimum cross-sectional area of the secondary air passage (13) over its entire length is greater than the cross-sectional area of the bore (84) of constant cross-sectional area.

5. A carburettor as claimed in any preceding claim in which the secondary air passage (13) includes a controllable valve (42).

6. A carburettor as claimed in claim 5 in which the controllable valve is connected to the throttling valve (8) and arranged to close progressively as the throttle valve opens.

7. A carburettor as claimed in claim 6 in which the throttle valve (8) is mounted on a rotary shaft (40) through which a radial passage passes, the radial passage constituting a contiguous part of the secondary air passage when the throttle valve is substantially closed, whereby as the throttle valve is opened the radial passage becomes progressively misaligned with the adjacent portions of the secondary air passage and thus progressively throttles the air flow through the secondary air passage.

8. A carburettor as claimed in claim 7 in which the secondary air passage comprises two branches, a first branch (13) which includes the radial passage and a second branch (13') which is connected to the first branch downstream of the radial passage and thus bypasses it.

9. A carburettor as claimed in any preceding claim, including a non-return valve (30) situated between the fuel inlet (37) and the fuel inlet space (35).

10. A carburettor as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 in which the valve member is arranged to move either linearly within the sleeve or to move in rotation within the sleeve.

11. A carburettor as claimed in any preceding claim in which the sleeve contains a sealing member (50) which defines a recess in which the valve member is

partially accommodated and forms a seal with it and in which at least part of the outlet (39) is formed.

12. A carburettor as claimed in any preceding claim in which the wall of the sleeve defines two outlets which cooperate with respective profiled regions of the valve member and that two inlets are provided which communicate with respective inlet spaces which communicate with respective profiled regions of the valve member.

13. A carburettor as claimed in any one of the preceding claims which includes a further fuel metering valve (54) for metering the small amounts of fuel needed for idling operation of an engine in parallel with the fuel metering valve.

14. A carburettor as claimed in claim 13 in which the valve member carries a further valve member which cooperates with a valve seat (56) within the valve member, the valve seat communicating with the inlet space and with a further space within the valve member, the further space communicating with an idling outlet (66) in the side surface of the valve member, the idling outlet being so positioned that it communicates with the outlet (39) in the sleeve when the carburettor is in idling operation.

15. A carburettor as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12 which includes a further fuel control valve (80) in series with the fuel metering valve (23), wherein the fuel inlet communicates with the fuel inlet space via a valve seat and the valve member of the fuel metering valve carries a further valve member which cooperates with the valve seat and constitutes with it the further fuel metering valve.

16. A carburettor as claimed in claim 15 in which the position of the further valve member is adjustable with respect to the valve member.

17. A carburettor as claimed in claim 15 or 16 in which the further fuel metering valve is situated upstream of the fuel metering space and is electrically operable.