

Ambassadeur 5600C clean up and service

I love the old red thumb bar Ambassadeurs. The second Ambassadeur I ever bought was a 5600C. Although it has seen a lot of use in freshwater, it is in such nice condition I would feel a bit bad using it for saltwater fishing.

As such I was very happy to pick up a tatty looking 5600C for a bargain-certainly no collector item but with a bit of a clean a great fishing reel. It is amazing what a little clean and lube can do-the only parts that I replaced were the worm cover and the handle nut lock plate screw. Not strictly necessary but I had spares lying around. Collectors may disapprove but the Garcia sticker on the handle *had* to go and a new 'high speed' decal was replaced on the side plate.

Before



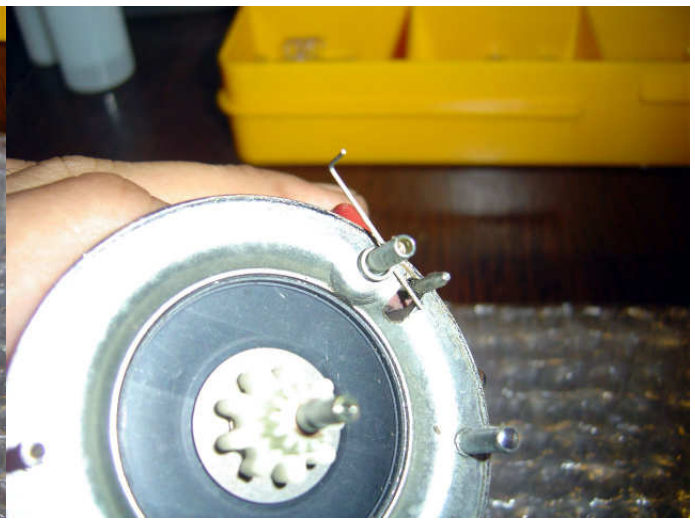
After



The reel showed salt-water damage on the outside but it didn't seem too major and would probably clean up ok. I was worried that the internals may be in poor shape if the previous owner had neglected cleaning the reel after fishing in salt water; time to take it apart and have a look.



First thing to go is the line. You can buy line strippers but I just use an electric drill with a pencil. Tape the line to the pencil and strip away (put reel in free spool!). The used line slides off the pencil when you're done. Nice to see that this spool still has the low capacity plastic arbor, though there must have only been about 20m line on the reel!



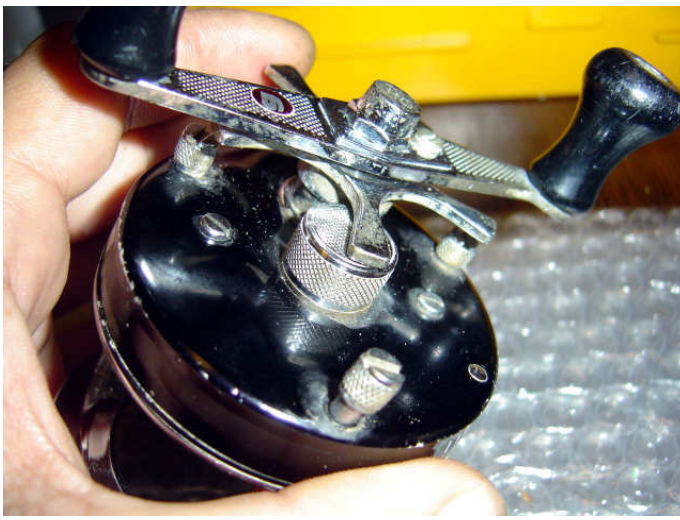
Undo the three pillar screws on the left hand plate and remove it. Note the return spring for the thumbbar.



Turn the plate over for access to the idler gear. I have no idea what kind of lube that is, I'd rather not guess! Undo the screw holding the idler gear on.



Remove the idler gear and then turn the plate over and remove the spool cap. There should be copper shims in the spool cap-these ones were bone dry and just dropped out. Note the spool-bearing cushion that sits under the spool cap. Remove this and then you have access to the bearing. Remove the bearing and give it a soak in a jar of lighter fluid, replacing the fluid as necessary until the bearing spins nice and freely. Leave it to dry on some kitchen towel while you do the rest of the service.

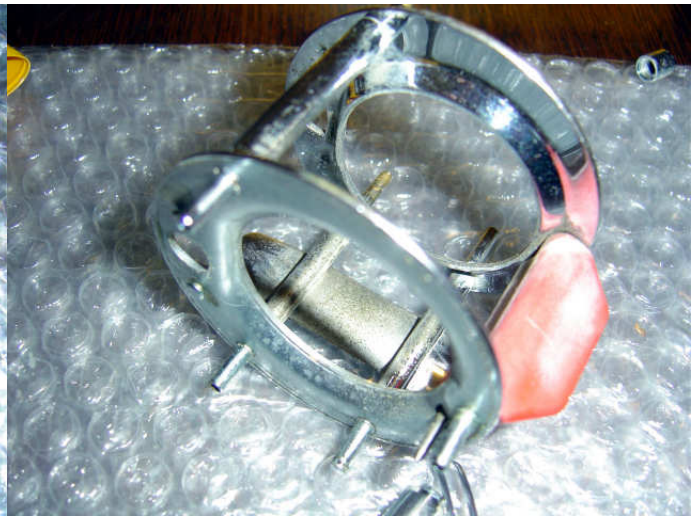


Unscrew the three thumbnuts holding on the right side plate, remove the plate and spool as one unit from the right hand side of the frame. It looks like the handle nut is cross-threaded here and someone has tried to tighten it with a pair of pliers.

The spool then pulls out of the right plate-be careful not to lose the centrifugal brakes-these fibre brakes will drop off their pins on the spool when the spool is removed. This spool is showing some salt-water damage but nothing major luckily.



On narrow frame reels you may find it easier to remove the line carriage nut and pawl after you have removed the carriage screw lock, especially if you have big fingers! The carriage screw and worm guard will then simply slide out of the left side of the frame.



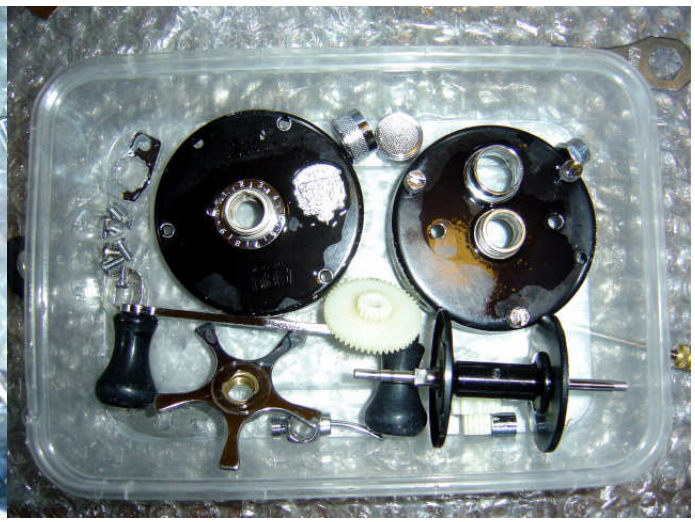
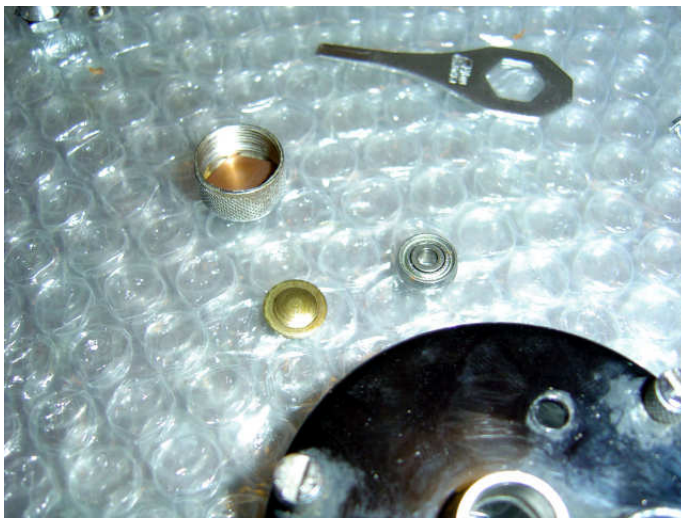
I'll replace the worm guard as it shows some wear but the pawl still looks good. The frame is showing some salt damage and this will need to be cleaned up.



Remove the lock plate screw and lock plate, then the handle nut. Remove the c-clip and the handle will lift off. Remove the friction washer on top of the star drag and then unscrew the star drag.



Remove the two bridge screws and the side plate will lift off. Not a spot of grease anywhere yet minimal corrosion-not so bad after all!



Unscrew the right spool cap. There will be a spool centering shim (brass colour) on top of the bearing. Remove this and then remove the bearing. The bearing can be soaked in a jar of lighter fluid while you work on the rest of the reel. Note the copper shims in the spool cap.

Takeaway containers are great for cleaning parts-washing up liquid and a toothbrush in warm water should remove most salt deposits. Make sure to rinse thoroughly as washing up liquid actually contains salt!

There is no need to completely disassemble the brake plate. It should be enough to remove the gears and drive shaft for cleaning. Lighter fluid is useful for stubborn grease deposits but be careful for the fumes.

Reassembly

It is good practice to apply a thin coat of grease to all screw threads. Oil and grease should be used sparingly-excess just attracts dirt and can end up where it shouldn't be.



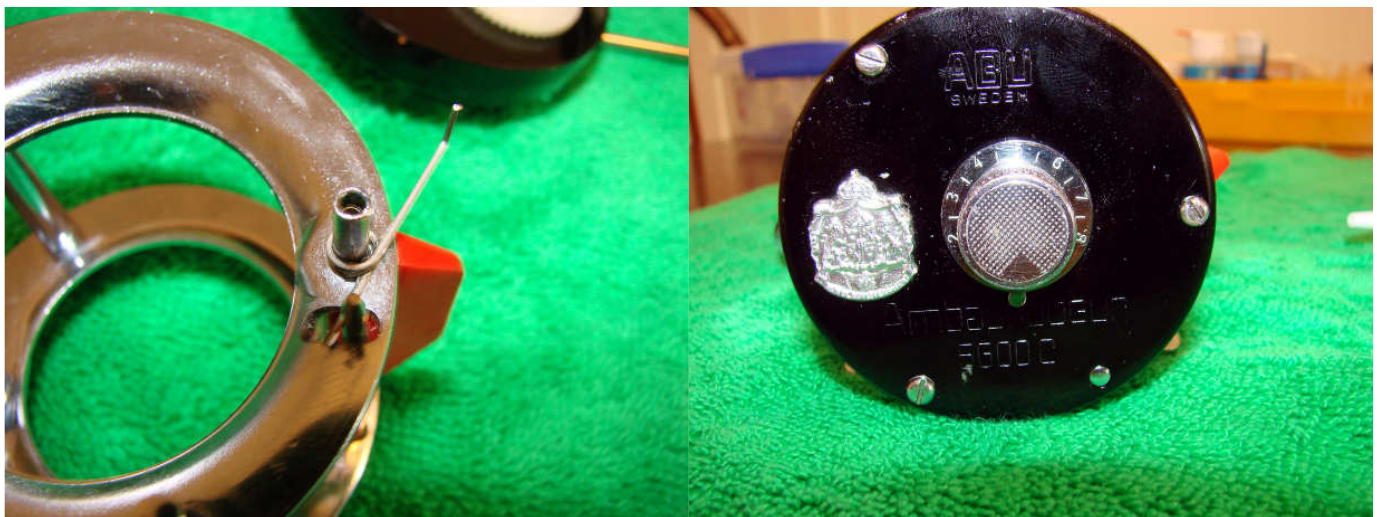
Apply a drop of oil to the plastic bushing making sure it soaks in. Apply another drop to the other end of the worm gear where it contacts the plastic bushing in the worm cover. Reinstall the level wind assembly back in the frame (opposite of removal). Apply a drop of oil either side of the worm gear (in the threads where the pawl contacts).



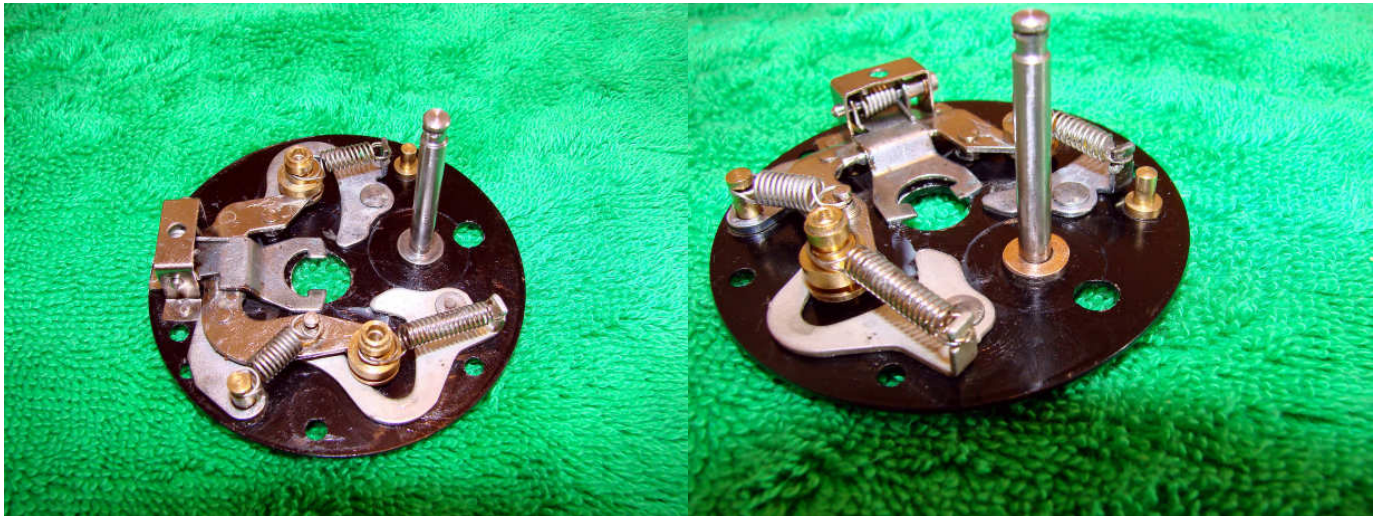
Apply a drop of oil of your choice to the bearing making sure that it penetrates fully. Replace the bearing in the left side plate and place the spool bearing cushion on top. Grease the o-ring and threads with a rubber friendly grease and then replace the spool cap (just a turn or two at this stage). Don't forget to place a drop of oil on the copper shims in the spool cap.



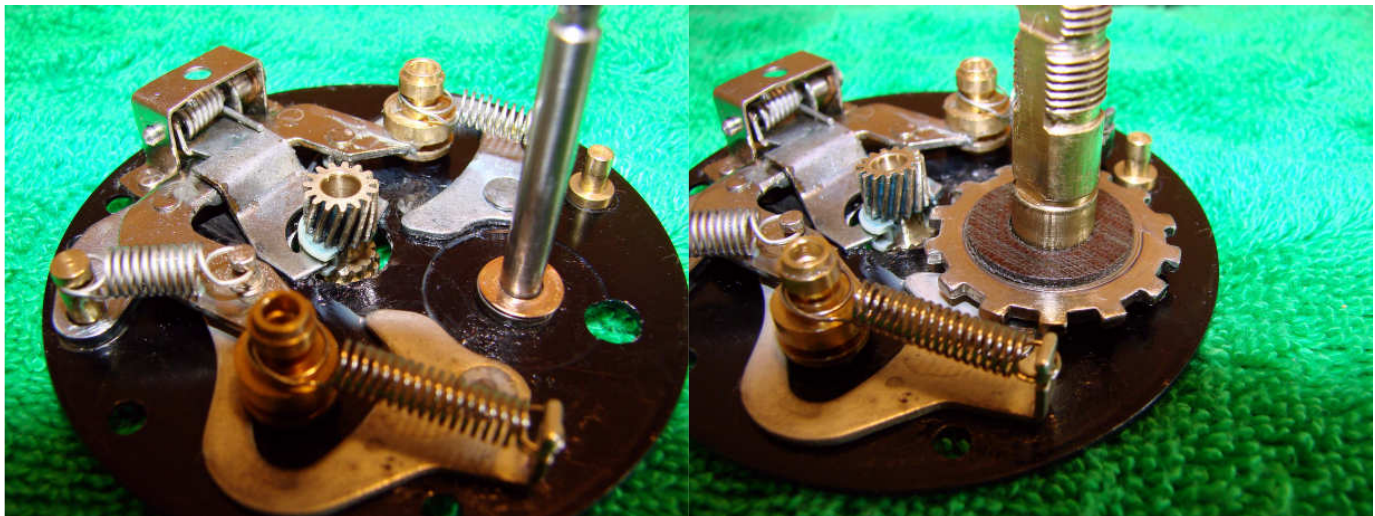
Turn the left side plate over and place a drop of oil on the idler gear post. Reattach the idler gear and retaining screw. I am happy to run the idler gear with no grease but if this is too noisy for you then use a light grease and apply it sparingly to the teeth.



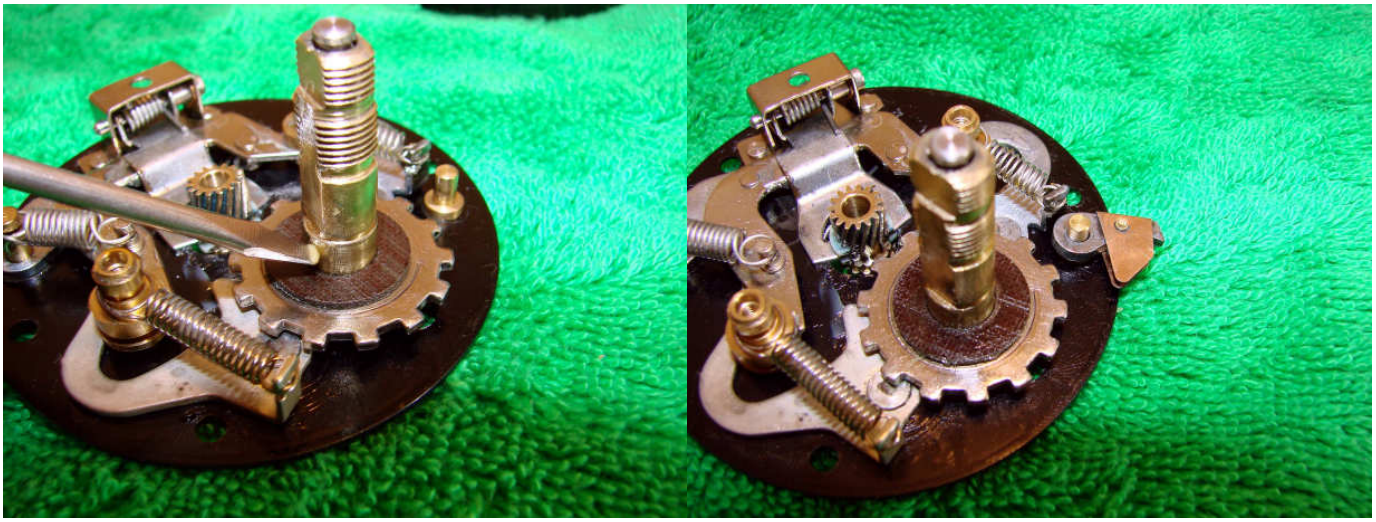
Note the orientation of the return spring for the thumb bar. Replace the left side plate and snug up the three screws holding it on.



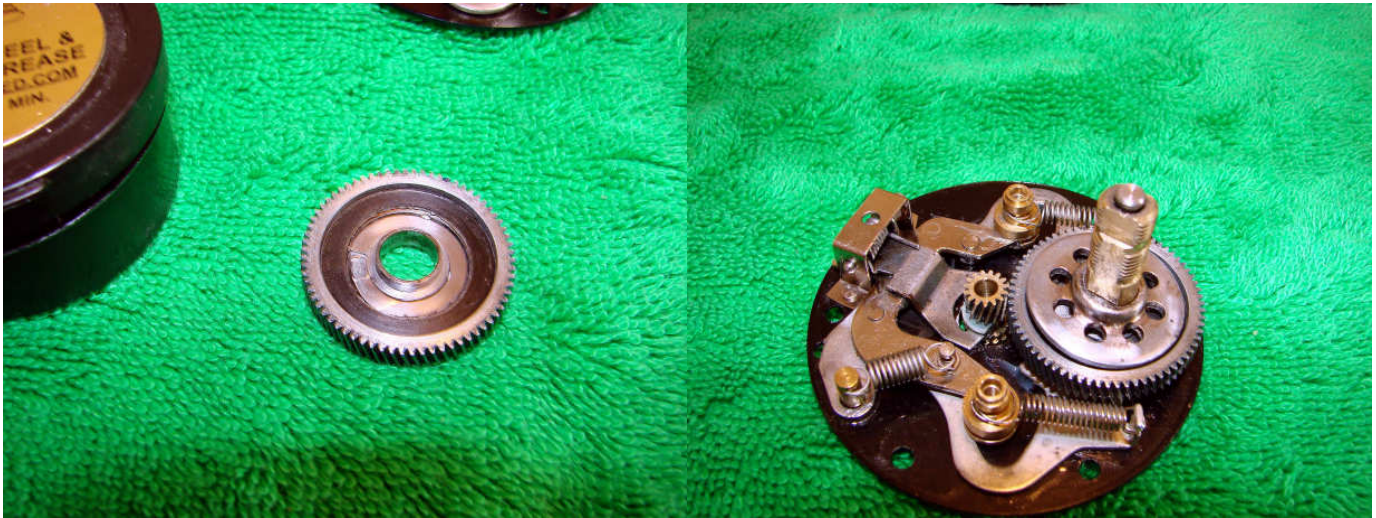
Carefully note where moving parts contact each other. You need to apply a *thin* smear of grease on these surfaces. An old toothbrush or small paintbrush is useful for this. Apply a drop of liquid grease (or mixture of oil and grease) to the base of the drive shaft post and then add the copper shim.



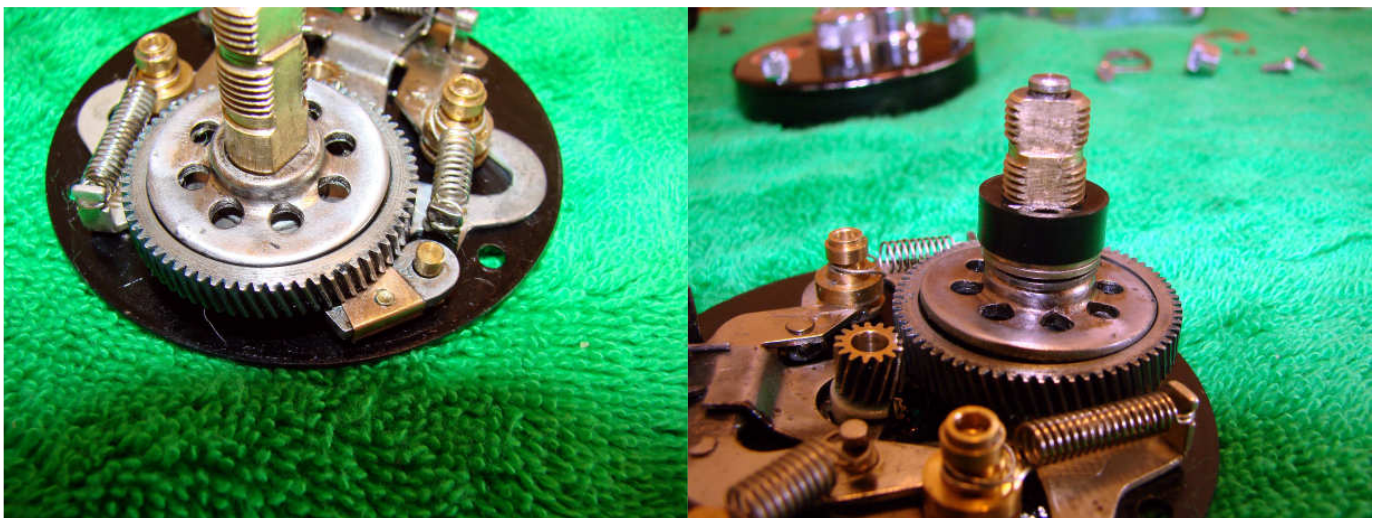
Replace the pinion gear adding a drop of liquid grease to where it sits in its' plastic collar. Smear some liquid grease on the drive shaft post and then replace the drive shaft. Apply a thin smear of drag grease to the base drag washer and place on the drive shaft.



Apply drag grease where the main gear contacts the drive shaft and replace the anti reverse pawl. Add a drop of oil on the post for the AR pawl and a very light smear of grease on the main shaft (where the pawl's ears grip).



Lightly grease the top drag washer with drag grease and then place it in the main gear. Put the main gear on the drive shaft and replace the click wheel.



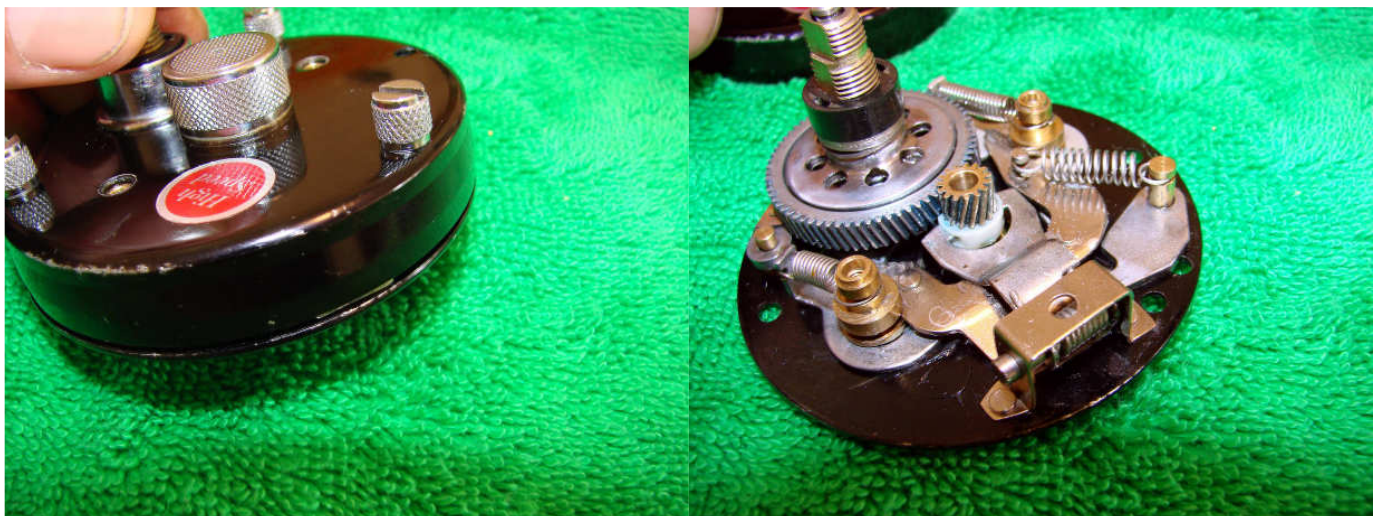
Make sure that the anti reverse pawl is properly engaged. Replace the metal washers and drive shaft bearing- note the orientation of the washers from your reels' schematic diagram.



Apply grease sparingly to the gear teeth. Apply a drop of oil to the bearing and replace it in the right side plate.



Replace the spool centering shim, add some grease to the threads and replace the right side spool cap making sure that it is screwed in FULLY. Don't forget to add a drop of oil to the copper shims in the spool cap.

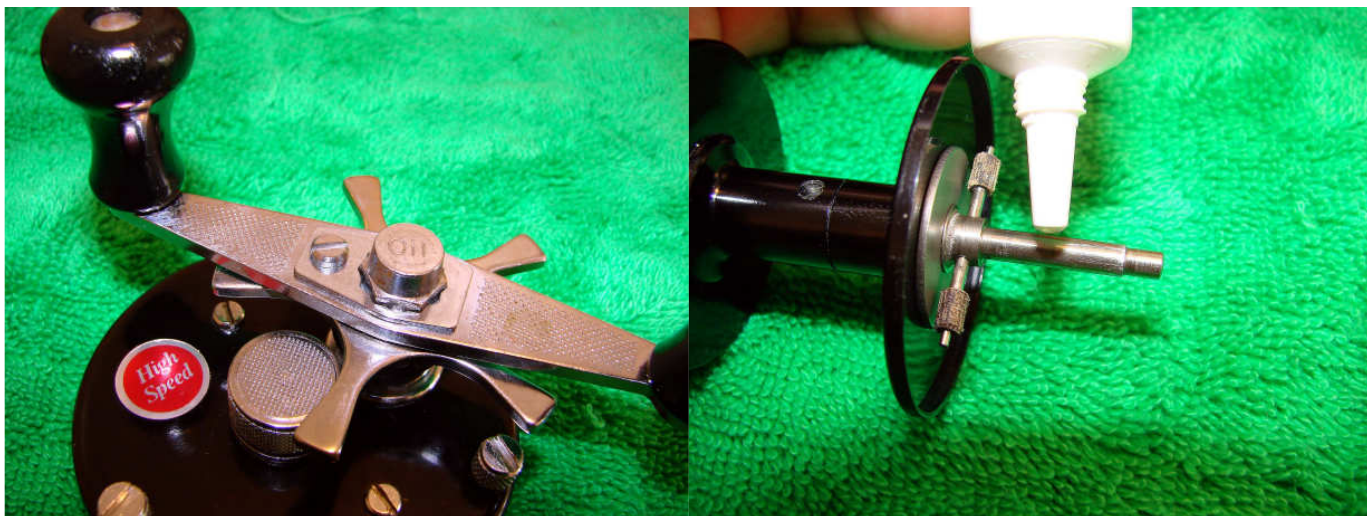


You may find it difficult trying to replace the right side plate to the brake plate because the press arm stops the side plate seating fully. An easy fix is to put the reel (i.e. the brake plate) in free spool. You can do this by

placing the brake plate on the frame and pressing the thumb bar. Remove the brake plate from the frame and the side plate will easily fit on to the brake plate.

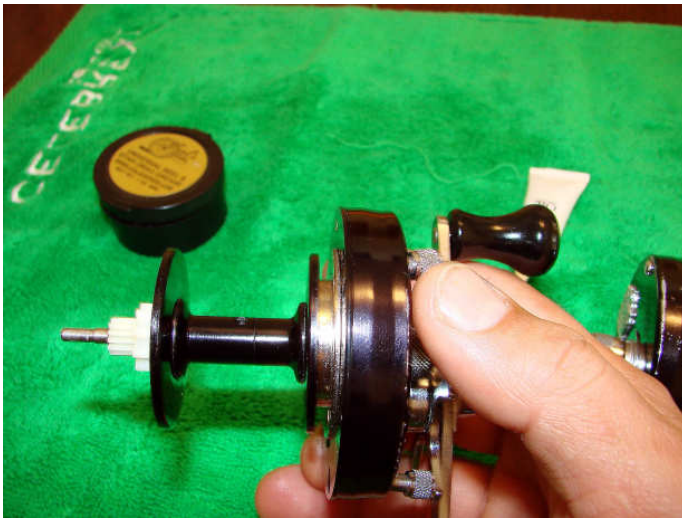


Replace the two screws holding on the side plate and then replace the star drag. Note the washer that sits on top of the star drag. Remember to add a thin smear of grease to the friction surfaces. Replace the handle and the circlip.



Replace the handle nut, locking plate and screw.

Add a drop of oil to the spool shaft where it contacts the pinion gear and replace the brake blocks. I like them dry but if this is too noisy then a very thin smear of oil to the braking ring on the inner brake plate will quiet things down-a cotton bud is ideal for this.



Place the spool in the right side plate making sure that the centrifugal brakes are fully pushed in. Note that inserting the spool fully is much easier because the reel is in free spool. Slide the whole assembly in from the right side of the frame.



Tighten up the three thumb nuts on the right side plate. Place the reel in free spool and adjust the left spool cap until the spool just starts to rotate. Move the numbered ring until the zero corresponds with the mark on the spool cap.



This reel is over thirty years old-with a little service it is in perfect operating condition. With continued care and maintenance there is no reason why it won't last another thirty years-you've got to love those old Ambassadeurs!