

internet interaction

Dear Traction Owners

Yesterday my wife and I took our '56 11B Normale out for a spin, and after a bit of stop and go traffic, my wife claimed to smell something burning. I cheerily dismissed this as somebody in the neighborhood incinerating trash. Then it seemed like there was someone in every neighborhood burning trash, and my theory soon became untenable, especially as I was noticing a concomitant loss of power and, at stops, some blue smoke drifting forward from the back end of the car.

Fortunately we weren't far from home. In the driveway, I popped the bonnet and was checking the dipstick when my wife shouted from the rear of the car, "The tires are on fire!" She tends to hyperbole, and in fact there were only substantial plumes of smoke coming off each rear wheel and a bit of oily fluid dripping down from one of the hubs.

It took 45 minutes for things to cool down. Then, with handbrake off and car in neutral, I tried pushing it, usually quite easy to do. No motion, brakes locked. Another hour went by and I pushed again: easy motion.

The loss of power during the drive, and the smoke, were at least initially intermittent. The handbrake was off.

Diagnosis? Ease of remedy?

It seems that the pressure in the rear part of the brake system does go down very slow.

Cheap solution: dirt in the brake system: drain it thoroughly

More expensive: worn brake pipes (the flexible parts): replace them (preferably ALL of them also at the front part of the car) the flexibles tend to swell with age. It works to brake, as you apply big pressure, but the way back for the brake fluid is blocked.

Possibility (but no good chance as car moved after some time): brake pistons at the rear wheel worn so that the piston gets stuck in it's bearing: replace
Andreas

Dear Andeas,

It seems that you have had rear brake cylinders that had got stuck due to rust/corrosion.

With that kind of heat you probably need to change all rubber parts in the brake cylinders or replace the cylinders altogether. The brake shoe linings may have suffered badly so you better renew them as well.

Clean out the hub in the brake drum from all grease and put some new grease in it.

Check the wheel bearings for unusual wear or discoloring and also check the oil seals.

Its a straight forward job and you don't need any special tools except perhaps the special tool 2103-T used for centering the brake shoes. If you don't have that tool available you can center them as best you can by just trying out the best position (a bit of ingenuity helps here)

Since there has been a problem with sticking brake cylinders I suggest you change all the old brake fluid for fresh new fluid of appropriate type. Dot 4 or even better Dot 5 silicon brake fluid.
good luck...

Peter L CTA-s

Good point from Andreas about the brake hoses, that's very common.

The rubber hoses get old and swell up inside.

Easy to check this, just open one brake bleed screw at a time and press down the pedal.

You should be able to press the pedal without great force and brake fluid should spurt out quite freely.

If it doesn't go down easily you have a corked up brake hose there.

Check them all up and if they appear suspicious at all replace them.

Good and dependable brakes are a matter of your and others safety.

Peter L

