

Some like it hot



The idea of using something hot to fix your cooling system may sound a bit odd if you aren't in the know. But I can remember my dear old Dad doing just that many years ago, as he roamed the countryside in his unintentionally "hotted-up" 1934 Chevrolet truck, seeking land onto which to settle his family. Jack Weaver brought those childhood memories back to me recently when he described his experiences in the Philippines a few years ago.

Jack had a need to travel from Manila round to Baguio in the mountains of Central Luzon, a distance of perhaps 300 km by road. For the purpose, Jack had borrowed an ID 19, almost certainly by then the only one still on the road in the Philippines, and somewhat down at heel. Now before you protest at the improbability of the tale so far, you don't seriously expect Jack to be involved in something as pedestrian as driving a Kingswood down to Rosebud do you?

Anyhow, on checking the sump level before departing, Jack noticed that the oil had a decidedly mayonaise-like look about it - obviously cooling water was leaking through somewhere. Not really the time for a thorough investigation and professional-type fix-up since that would have involved removing the head and possibly the cylinder barrels. What to do?

Hopping into the first native market he came across, Jack obtained a paper twist of fine-ground pepper and added a teaspoon or so into the radiator and drove off. Stopping and re-dipping the oil after 50 km or so showed the oil had returned to its proper colour and consistency. And so, full steam ahead for Baguio (well, not full steam, let's say full speed ahead!).

The answer? The finely ground pepper was carried round by the circulating cooling water, lodging in particular in those small gaps where the cooling water was escaping. The pepper thus effectively stopped the loss of water into the sump, and as the engine reached operating temperature, the unwanted water was boiled off via the sump breather, leaving "l'huile pur" (slight exaggeration) behind.

The remaining pepper won't harm your cooling system (unless it is so badly clogged that it should be overhauled anyway). Of course the pepper won't stop major leaks such as burst hoses, but it may make the difference between getting home and not. Certainly, it should stop or slow down slow leaks and weeps in the system, and of course, it is available anywhere (almost!).

Bill Graham.

HOW TO FILL YOUR SUMP WITH WATER

Following the recent replacement of a dirty radiator in my Traction with a spare while I had the original one out for cleaning I discovered a few interesting facts.

The replacement radiator I fitted was thought to be relatively clean as it would take a hose at full bore in the top filler, emptying out through the bottom hole without overflowing. It wasn't until I had fitted the radiator that I discovered the drain tap leaked.

Not wanting to pull the whole thing apart again I decided simply, to block the end of the overflow pipe temporarily. This was when the problems commenced.

The Traction is fitted as we all know with an extremely efficient water pump and a non-pressure relief radiator cap. What I found out when driving the car to the club's camping week-end was that the radiator boiled

within a few kms. It obviously wasn't clean after all. The expanding steam from the boiling water had no-where to go due to the blocked overflow tap so the pressure built up to such an extent that it blew the top radiator hose off the water pump.

The penny hadn't dropped yet so I simply tightened all the clamps, filled the radiator again and away we went. This time everything was done up good and tight and when it boiled again the pressure had to go somewhere. It found the head gasket was the weakest point so it blew that apart just for good measure.

The result - a sump full of water and another engine extraction and rebuild. The cause - a blocked radiator combined with a blocked overflow tap.

The cure - make sure the radiator is really clean and NEVER block off the radiator overflow pipe.

John Couche.