

# Talking Technical

SPARE PARTS OFFICER — MEL CAREY

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Dear Mechanical Mel,  
Since purchasing my British Light 15 from the proceeds of my pro-rata long service leave it has been languishing in my garage over the last twelve months with my sons' Mini and the Alfa 105. The main problem is a leaking water pump which is the type that requires gland packing (a complaint not uncommon to the odd geriatric male). I require your advise on the options available.

To the water pump that is!!!

Leon

Dear Leon with the Languishing Light 15,

Those old style Water Pumps really are a pain aren't they, would you believe, they were designed to leak!. [The idea was to lubricate the gland packing seal.] I not the first Traction engines didn't have a waterpump at all, just a jackshaft driven fan. Presumably the standard "Thermosyphon" style of engine cooling of the period was inadequate for this new "High Compression" engine.

Its a pity the clutch is directly under the waterpump however the designers did try to accommodate this problem as I have found on a few 4cyl. Traction's, an overcentre lever at the base of the clutch pedal, its function is to hold the clutch pedal in the fully depressed position while the vehicle is stored or not used for a period. The point

being, when the water gets down into the clutch when the vehicle is stationary, the clutch plate is inclined to stick to the flywheel, the first you know about it is you can't get the gear lever into any gear position without terrible crunching sounds.

There are methods of freeing the clutch plate without dismantling but they are very hard on the transmission and if they don't work there is no alternative but to remove the gearbox and unbolt the clutch pressure plate to release the clutch plate [I have experienced this problem on rear wheel drive cars that have not been used for a long period] So, its not just the cooling system that can suffer.

The gland packing material is available, but unless you are lucky to find some old style stock, it is now only available in a synthetic material that is not as efficient as the old style as it requires more leakage to protect it from overheating, this is fine in an agricultural pump situation but is unacceptable in your Traction.

The later style of waterpump has a conventional seal similar to what is used in the modern motor car but unfortunately this seal is not interchangeable in the old style pump.

So the advice is to procure a later style pump and have it reconditioned, [parts are available through Club Spare Parts except the actual body of the pump] The method of reconditioning is to replace the shaft or have it built up and hard chromed, replace the bearing & bushes, clean up the

carbon bush that the seal runs on, replace the impeller and of course the magic seal!

While your at it, have the radiator professionally checked and at least cleaned, reverse flush the block and check very carefully the Fan for hairline cracks around the area of the bolt holes.

And a last bit of advice, talk to one of the old hands about the best use of the good lady's old stocking's! [alternatively, refer an early edition of Front Drive for details]

Enjoy your Citroen!  
Mel.

(This suggestion of a good lady's stocking seems a little suggestive. Mind you they do look awfully nice with my stilleto's. Ed)



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