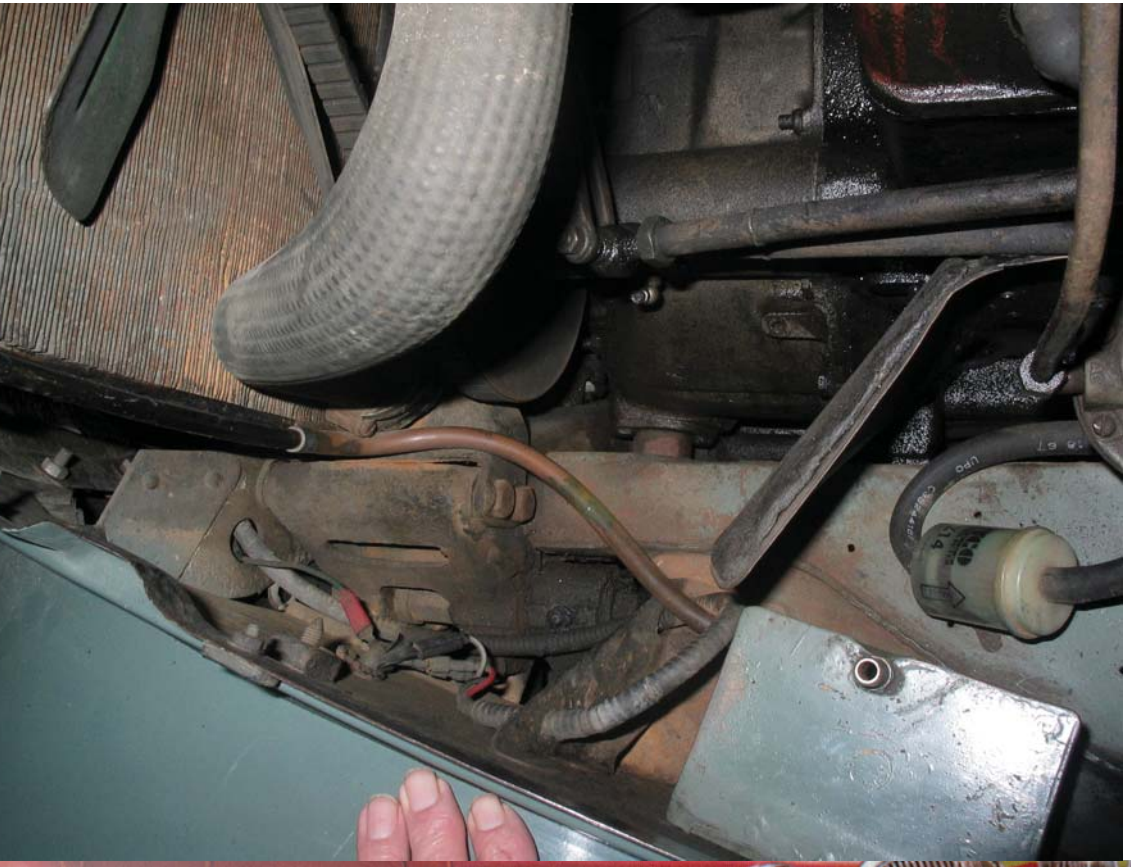
Water Works

How are your Water Works?

'Water and oil': this subject frequently comes up in the Hadaway household, due to the abundance of young, female car owners in our family: daughters and granddaughters, etc. If these two items are remembered then I stand a fair chance that I will not be called upon to fix one of those ultimate automotive catastrophes – which I can certainly do without.

I rarely greet my young, female kin with the normal pleasantries until I have got over. "How's your water and oil?'

Now there was a time, I must admit, when I had a boil-up in my Traction and it was not so long ago either. It occurred whilst we were driving home from a Club picnic at the Rob Roy Hill Climb. I had been well aware for sometime that I was losing water from the radiator via the overflow pipe, probably due to the malfunction of the pressure valve in the head of the radiator being kaput [probably a rusted out]. The leak was pretty obvious but I lived with this condition, as one does, and topped up regularly from the plastic bottle that had become the standard item to carry. It only took one too many glasses of red at the Rob Roy picnic and it happened!



Anyway, the Traction lived another day and I happened to be relating the tale to Club member George Tippett and, lo and behold, he took me under the bonnet of his Traction to see a simple solution. A length of plastic tube, a plastic bottle arranged with bottom and top entry and exits. The bottle served as a auxiliary reservoir for storing expanding hot water, from the radiator which entered the bottom connection of the bottle via the plastic hose. The top of the reservoir was vented to the atmosphere with another short length of plastic hose which directed any surplus overflow down to the road.

George explained that the radiator filler cap had to be modified to seal the radiator – and this makes it all work because when a system cools down after a run a partial vacuum is produced in the radiator which sucks the water back from the auxiliary reservoir [That sounds like a flash name for the plastic bottle, Bernie. Ed.]. This refills the radiator and brings the system back to normal ready for the next run.

And it works – I have had a system operating now for about 18months and I never have to top up.

This is a good thing because I know I am not losing water elsewhere and I do not have water leaking from the cylinder head gasket after all. My installation is a little different and I soldered up a brass box [5" x 4" x 3½" deep] instead of the plastic bottle which did not really 'click' with me, I fitted a nice fat 'O' ring in the radiator filler cap which does a good job of sealing. (See photo).

It is likely that others are aware of George's modification, and I am sure have or had the need, but I can recommend this one to those who still have!!

Bernard Hadaway