

Battery Maintenance Tips

Moggie Mechanic

One of the most important parts of your car and at times one of the most neglected is the battery. As long as everything is working we tend not to bother with it until that dreaded time when we try to start it and it either turns over very slowly or just clicks. Then is a time for panic!

A little bit of maintenance and TLC can make sure that the times this happens are rare. For those of you with a four seater Morgan it is hard to forget the battery but those of you with two seaters rarely see your battery and this can lead to trouble. The terminals, supports and leads to the battery need to be checked regularly to make sure that they are not growing white furry stuff. Make sure that you check the leads as well as the terminals, as the corrosion has been known to travel down the battery leads and is virtually invisible until your car will not start. Check also the supports and the shelf to make sure that neither is slowly disappearing. To do this, take the battery out yearly and check that the supports are still intact. Clean up any battery corrosion (which is white) with a solution of baking soda in water and treat any rust or bare metal on the supports with a wire brush, then rust destroyer similar to "Rust Mort" and finally give it a good coat of paint. This will stop the battery ending up on the pavement the garage floor or even the road when you go over a bump. In the four seater it is wise to check that there is no rust under the battery as it has been known to rot through the firewall with little damage visible from the top. Clean it as indicated earlier. A thin coat of Vaseline or Fluid Film on the terminals will help impede the reoccurrence of the white fuzzies but still allow for good electrical contact.

Most of you, I am sure, know how to jumpstart a car using someone else's battery, but I have frequently heard discussions and questions when a group is trying to use a set of jumper cables. If in doubt, cut out these instructions and keep them with your jumper cables. You also never know when someone else is going to have to use your jumper cables.

1. Inspect the battery and make sure that it is not leaking or cracked. (If it is don't even try to boost it.)
2. Connect one end of the positive red cable to the positive post of the dead battery. Then connect the other end of the positive cable to the positive post of the healthy battery.
3. Connect one end of the negative (black) cable to the negative post of the healthy battery. Connect the other end of the negative cable to a metal part of the dead car's engine—a shiny piece of metal on the engine block for instance (avoid greasy-oily parts). Be sure that the cable will clear anything moving when the car starts. It is not recommended to attach the negative cable to the dead battery (although that is what I have usually seen done) as doing so could explode the battery if sparks ignite hydrogen gas emitting from the battery.
4. Next start the engine of the good car, and then start the dead car. Disconnect the cables in the reverse order taking care not to touch the positive and negative clips together.

Happy Motoring MM

Mounting A Coolant Overflow Bottle

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A Cuthbert Epistle to the Mognoscenti

Friends,

Recently it occurred to me that my '61 Plus 4 needed a coolant recovery bottle. In Moss Motor's TR parts catalog there is a bottle for a TR 4 engine. This seemed close enough for my TR 3 engine. I ordered a Coolant Recovery Bottle, Moss #850-320 and a Bottle Cap, Moss #850-330. With postage this was a tad over US\$30.

When all this got here I began to figure how to fit the bottle to the car. I made a wooden saddle for the bottle, intending to place it close to the radiator on the inner left wing (valance). The only reasonable place was just where the inner wing bends, so my saddle wasn't gonna work. I then briefly considered fastening the bottle with bungee cords around the inner wing tie bar, but that was too tacky even for an old codger bodger like me.

For a few days I'd open the bonnet and stare at the engine room, looking for a likely place to hang the bottle. Then all the way from Dear Old Blighty came an EMOG message from Tim Harris on how he hung his recovery bottle on the inner wing's tie bar using "jubilee clips." Now just what are jubilee clips? It turns out they are what we in the Colonies call hose clamps.

Tim wrapped one jubilee clip around the inner wing's tie bar, and a larger jubilee clip at a right angle through the first jubilee clip. The second clip is big enough to go 'round the bottle, and then the bottle can sit on the upper cross tube of the front suspension's sub-frame. I wrapped the bottle with a rubber ring to prevent the clip from abrading the bottle.

The overflow hose can be shortened so it will tuck right into the bottle cap on the left side of the engine room, up close to the radiator. The hose needs to go all the way to the bottom of the bottle, so overflow coolant will drain back into the radiator as it cools.

I give you that Jim Dietz could do a better drawing. But this drawing does illustrate a simple strong solution to hanging a coolant recovery bottle. I should also say my car does NOT have a stock metal fan in front of the engine. If your car has a Triumph engine with a stock fan there may not be room enough to hang the bottle as shown in my drawing. I believe Tim Harris said his car is a 4/4, and he is hanging a bottle from the tie bar.

I just love simple solutions, even from Dear Old Blighty.

