

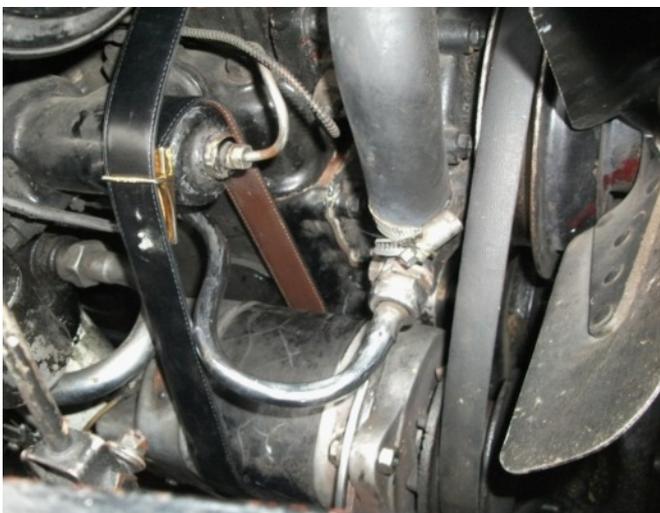
A trouser belt saves the day - By George Milburn



Colleen and car at Lake Iseo Rally

a slight discharge and so, when I stopped at a service area for petrol and tea, I lifted the bonnet. It was obvious that the back of the dynamo had fallen down, making the dynamo pulley skew and, although the belt was still on the pulley, it would be slipping somewhat. The dynamo rear support bracket had broken or come loose somehow but it was supported on the front bracket and the top front, slotted, adjusting, drive belt tightening link.

Colleen and I motored to join the Italian Section, this year at Lake Iseo, near Lake Garda and organised by Davide Bassoli. After the usual few days of feasting at both lunchtime & dinner, we set off back home to Derby in our Bentley MK VI Lightweight. We stopped the first night at the Hotel Roggerli in Hergiswil, which has a magnificent view over Lake Lucerne and easy train travel into the Lucerne shopping itself. The next day we drove towards Troyes in France, via Basle and Mulhouse. This is a driving time of about 5.5 hrs. After about 2.5 hrs I noticed that the ammeter was showing



Italian belt holding dynamo for 800 kms



George holding up trousers



Broken Bracket on disassembly

The options were considered. We were in the excellent RH Club insurance scheme, which includes breakdown cover. This is quite effective, but for a garage to repair the problem they would have to send for a spare part and this would mean that we would miss our series of hotels and the channel crossing that we had booked. This would be all very expensive and inconvenient. I, therefore, removed my leather trouser belt, fed it behind & beneath the dynamo and lashed up the back of the dynamo to the engine inlet manifold. Mine is the later, 5 inch unit, which is very heavy and this rear support kept it approximately in the right position.

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The front slotted link was adjusted to tighten the drive belt again and off we went as normal! There was sufficient charge from the dynamo for the ignition and wipers or fog lamps but a slight discharge was shown when the headlamps were on. Thus we were able to proceed through France to our hotel, Relais St John, in Troyes. The next day we travelled to St Omer, which is near Calais. In deference to the probable slight slackness of the belt we limited our cruising speed to about 70mph. Water temperature was as normal during this stage of the journey, but remember that our car has the radiator slats opened up as recommended in RROC (Australia) MK VI articles and thus air flow through the core is improved.

We then carried on to Calais and through the tunnel and into Kent. Here, after some 800 kms and 8.5 hrs driving since the repair, it was noticed that the water temperature was on maximum and the ammeter was showing a discharge even with only the ignition taking current. Again we stopped for petrol and tea to let the engine compartment cool and allow hands and arms around the equipment! On opening the bonnet it was discovered that the dynamo had fallen lower down the side of the engine but, miraculously, the pulley was still hanging in the drive belt, the latter undamaged. An advantage of the MK VI design is that the various rods, etc on the right side of the engine serve to limit the fall of the dynamo itself. The belt buckle was of ingenious Italian design and could be swivelled on the belt itself to allow brown or black facings to suit the colour of one's trousers. I had found this belt to be quite useful on my travels over the years. The rivet, on which the buckle swivelled, had sheared to allow the rear of the dynamo to drop. The front lower support bracket bolt had also vibrated out and the unit was only held by the front top adjusting link and this had split! A visit to the shop in the service area allowed the purchase of a wide, leather, belt with a conventional buckle and this was again used to support the rear of the dynamo. Supporting the front of the unit was more tricky as we only had the top slotted link and the angularity support from the drive belt around the pulley itself. However, we managed to support the unit in a fairly stable position. As the slotted link was split, a short clamping link from the "holiday" toolbox was brought into play. There was a lower pressure on the drive belt after this repair and we had to keep below 60 mph to avoid the belt slipping. If this speed was exceeded a burning smell was soon apparent in the car! Even so the water temperature was above normal but still on scale and the ammeter showed a slight discharge, even just with the ignition current. However, the battery voltage was checked & it would be easily possible to drive for over 4 hours with no charge at all from the dynamo. This was known from previous experience with the car. As it happened I checked that the battery lost about 0.25 v per hour on this occasion, when there may have been some charging as the ignition light was not on. As an aside, it is possible to cruise at 50 mph on this car without any fan belt, but with its opened radiator slats and just rely on the thermosyphon circulation as long as the battery is kept regularly charged, of course. The water temperature does go to the top of the scale but hardly any, if any, water is lost.

Thus we successfully reached Derby. Each of the two stops caused us about 2 hours delay on the journey.



Once home it was discovered that the rear support on the bracket had sheared completely and this was re welded with an additional strengthening web along the support. Several years ago the front of this same bracket had bent and the author had had to add a strengthening web in the centre of the backplate. This can be seen in the photo. It is probable that this bracket was designed for the smaller 4.5 inch dynamo, which was fitted to earlier cars and just is not strong enough for the heavier unit. As mentioned, the adjusting slotted link had split and it was not easy to find a new one from the suppliers approached. A similar link for a Triumph TR2 / Morgan +4 was acquired and a new hole drilled in the shortened end to make it fit. This was at least twice as strong as the original, adjusting, link on the car, although it was not chromed. The original, chromed item did look rather flimsy. Several engine fittings on the car are chromed as, originally, it was to be used on the Mulliner stand at Earl's Court. Eventually it was used for so many trials, messing about, that they decided not to use it.

And so we are back in action, being very thankful to those looking after us.