

DipStick Blues.

On the way back from Tasmania recently, we were cruising towards Eden when there was this cascade of noise from the engine compartment followed by the sound of something metallic passing under our feet by alternately bouncing from the road to the underbody like a frantic bell.

Of course on such occasions one pulls up to see what on earth we could have run over. Inspection of the section of road turned up a much bruised metal cleat lying on the edge of the road, whereupon said driver and expert in such things declared that everything was alright and we had just run over something so should continue without heeding the navigator's recommendation that we also have a look under the bonnet.

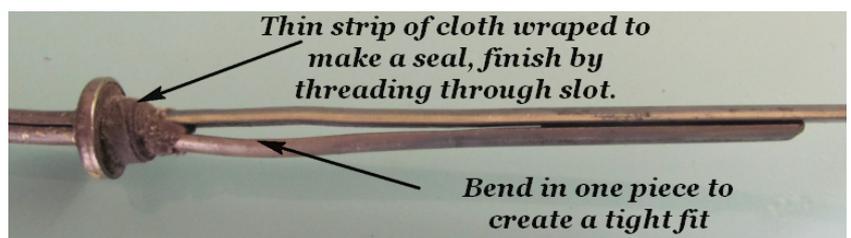
On arriving in Eden for an overnight stay, said driver noticed a larger than usual pool of oil seeping from under the TR which warranted immediate inspection both under the car and under the bonnet. There was a litre of oil missing from the sump, which was everywhere under the car and the driveway but none under the bonnet. By now I was convinced that the rear main seal had failed, however half of the breather was also missing, having sheared off just above a weld line made when I extended the breather 6" upward. I did this to help condense the vapours and make clearance for the oil filter canister when changing the filters. I had used a gasless MIG and failed to provide sufficient bracing, both leading to inevitable metal fatigue.

Being in the vicinity of Rick Fletcher I was able to discuss my dilemma and be enlightened as to the design of the breather and consequence of not having the benefits of same. The breather is extended down into the airstream in such a way that it creates a negative pressure in the crank case. Without this negative pressure the rear oil seal is unable to prevent oil from being pressured past it. Rick just happened to have a couple of spares which he offered to bring to lunch the following day.

Now during my enlightenment it was also pointed out that most apparent rear oil seal leaks are actually caused by incorrectly fitting DIP Sticks. Apart from interfering with the delicate negative pressure the

oil exits from the dip stick, travels along the sump flange and then onto the ring gear shield, thus making it look like the oil came from the main seal.

Rick enlightened me as to how important it is to have the dip stick both sealed and a tight fit.



Lunch at Tathra beach café was great, the new breather fitted perfectly and was the correct TR3A one this time rather than a TR2 one I must have had originally which was the cause of the interference with filter casing. The 3A one has a cranked down pipe and the TR2 one is straight.

The massive oil leak vanished and we were now back to the normal TR oil osmosis for our journey home.

Thank you Rick for showing me the way out of the Dip Stick Blues.