



### Caring for your batteries when laying up your car for winter

Nic Houslip is often asked what is the best way to care for a car battery when laying up a car for the forthcoming winter. He suggests the simplest solution is to follow his list of measures below:

1. **Disconnect the battery positive lead**  
This will prevent any small drains like the radio, clock and alarm system that must have a continuous supply to keep them functioning. This prevents you from the consequences of inadvertently discharging the battery by leaving a door open and the interior light on.
2. **Charge the battery at least once a month**  
Charging the battery with the aid of a simple charger at least once a month is a prudent measure because the lead acid battery used in cars self-discharges by an internal chemical reaction and surface leakage between terminals. You need to replace this loss of charge.
3. **Using a battery conditioner or maintenance charger**  
If you must keep the alarm active, then obtain a maintenance charger (Nic uses an Accumate) that is plugged in constantly and replaces any capacity lost by self-discharge or drain from the radio, clock and alarm. These devices are not expensive, in fact about half the cost of new battery, and ensure that when you go to start up in the New Year, or on Boxing Day if it is unexpectedly fine

weather for your first run, the car will start.

**Warning** - if you must keep the car outside be sure that any mains cables are safe and that the socket on the end is inside the car so it is protected from the elements and that the charger itself is not resting on anything flammable like seats and carpets. They do produce some heat, but in the unlikely event of a fault may produce much more and possibly risk a fire. A sensible solution is to use an old baking tin, upturned in the passenger foot well, that way it can't burn the carpet.

If the cigar lighter is always on when the ignition is off – as is the case with an MGBGTV8 - it is possible to charge the battery through that socket. Simply obtain a plug from your motor accessory shop that you can connect to the charger but when wiring up that plug do observe polarity!

Before you lay up for

the winter remove the battery cover – the panel above the battery compartment under the carpet behind the seats on an MGA, MGB, and RV8 or just access the battery in other models and top up the battery with distilled water.

### Dealing with battery terminal corrosion

If there is any sign of corrosion on battery terminals, brackets or nearby any metalwork nearby fix it now; it will only get worse with the battery connected. Nic uses a large jug of very hot water – around +75 deg C - and pour it all over the top of the battery. This not only removes the corrosion, but also leaves the top of the battery nice and clean so that there are no possible current leakage paths across the top between the terminals. The water dries off by evaporation quickly.

To prevent further corrosion simply nip into the bathroom, raid the bathroom cabinet for a teaspoonful of Vaseline and as you pass the pantry on the way out to the car find enough bicarbonate of soda to cover the handle end of a teaspoon and mix thoroughly with Vaseline. Smear this thinly over the terminals and on any exposed metalwork to prevent any corrosion recurring over the winter. If you can, remove both terminals and smear on the internal faces too. Alternatively you can go to the motor accessory shop and purchase a tube of No Crode by Holts.

**Warning!** Take your outside shoes or boots off before venturing upstairs to the bathroom to avoid incurring the wrath of the boss!

