

My MGA and a 3" Bilge Blower

As the result of various forum 'threads' started by Lindsay Sampford's 'MGA Bilge Blower' article on one of Barney Gaylord's (MGA Guru) web pages a few months ago, where he described how he had fitted a 4" bilge blower in front of the intake to blow cool air on the carburetors when stationary in traffic. Here he had also made the suggestion that a smaller blower within the intake should be more unobtrusive. This then prompted the search for such a blower to fit inside my "A's" air inlet duct in an attempt to reduce temperatures and any further likelihood of vapour-lock in stationary traffic.

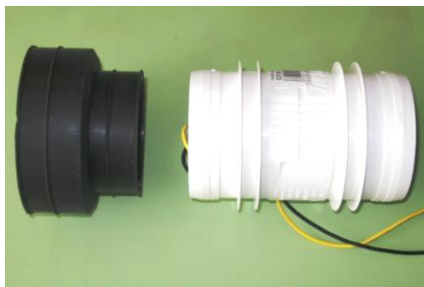
Eventually someone on the forum came up with a 3" Attwood blower which looked good to me and then, coincidentally Andy Hetherington turned up at our Solent "MG's in the Park" day at Stansted House with a very nice red MGA1500. MG-type chat soon discovered Andy had actually fitted this very blower. Well, it didn't take a second to open that bonnet (as you do) and there it was - hidden! He then kindly showed me how he had fitted the blower using the perfect rubber pipe reducer he had discovered at his local aquarium supplier. This turned out to be: Code No.NAC0752 from Evolution Aqua, which, once the hose clips were discarded, by a pure fluke happened to be a perfect tight push fit both inside the blower's outlet and into the MGA's steel duct under the bonnet with no fixings.



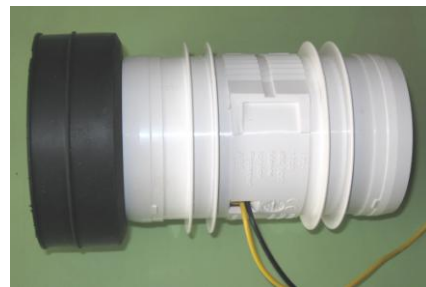
Pic.1

Within a matter of days my ordered blower and rubber reducer arrived. (Pic.1) Made of plastic, the blower's feet are easily sawn off.

Later I removed 12mm (not removed in Pics.2 & 3) from the outlet end where it pushes onto the reducer to subsequently clear the downward bend in the front 4" flexible duct behind the grille. The air flow would be from right to left in the pix below.



Pic.2



Pic.3

The following picture (Pic.4) shows this assembly simply pushed into the duct and that's all that shows under the bonnet. I particularly like the lack of any modifications to the bodywork with this idea. Oh – I will be tidying-up that wiring - at the time I just had to see it run... From the driving seat, with the engine running, I can't even hear the blower or the upfront Kenlowe. You're right, I probably am deaf...!

The one real concern I had was whether the restriction of the blower, in its 4" inlet duct, would cause any carburettor over-heating in normal running when the blower was off. At the time of writing we haven't had any really hot weather yet this summer to test it out, but so far any restriction of airflow by the stationary 3" fan has not yet appeared detrimental at normal driving speeds. I fitted a simple manual switch with an in-line fuse so I can play with my new toy properly when the 'vapours' hit!

Further discussion, again on that forum, prompted the idea of measuring the air temperatures around the carburettor intakes to see if this blower idea was any good or not. Well to cut a long story slightly; on-line,



Pic.4

I found a handy looking digital meat thermometer with a remote probe sensor and promptly ordered it. This would settle any arguments!

Once the thermometer turned up and the rain had stopped for a bit, it was straight down to the garage for a cook-up. In the meantime I had checked the thermometer in boiling water; it was spot on at 100°C (212°F). I noted the day's ambient temp as 21°C/69°F and the bonnet was down at its safety catch position (virtually shut) for all the steady readings taken.

The engine, with its standard mechanical fan, was warmed-up ticking over and as usual the A's perfectly good summer thermostat let the indicated coolant temp rise to 200°F and rising... The Kenlowe was now

switched on; as you might imagine, the tick-over was getting pretty lumpy by now. In practice, when the car is stationary; hot air is coming off the exhaust manifold and in through the radiator. The MGA's carbie 'ram air inlet' is now basically a hot air exhaust! Result - two very hot carbs and boiling fuel..!

Now it was time for the interesting bit, what was the thermometer going to tell us. On the day, the highest temperature recorded in front of No.1 carburettor was 163°F and in front of No.2 it got to 159°F. That's a bit on the hot side for petrol I believe. Once the blower was switched on these temps rapidly fell to 114°F & 145°F respectively.

Out of interest, the highest air temperature coming out of the MGA's N/S top bonnet vent was 145°F but soon dropped down to 123°F once the blower was running.

What mattered to me most was the improvement in the tick-over that could be heard within about 30secs of the blower being started-up. It will now be interesting to see if running-on is also reduced on shut-down. It might be useful to eventually rig up the thermometer to see what actually happens on the road.

Between all this rain we then had that glorious midweek run in July where we recorded an air temperature of around 32°C with incidentally 38°C in the MGA's footwell – as warm as it gets here really. I couldn't see any evidence on the run of any overheating from the stationary blower blocking off the carbie's air duct but during a couple of holdups at junctions the water temp shot up as usual and the tick-over was getting lumpy. Once the blower was started-up, the tick-over soon settled down again. Up to speed again and the blower could again be turned off. After 15-years of the MGA's ownership and overheating as a norm, this was just magic..!

So from all this, it looks like this little blower is going to do a grand job and should reduce any further possibility of "a touch of the vapours" in those all too frequent traffic hold-ups.

Peter Tipping