

RUNNING OUT OF PUFF BY RAY TOLLEY

The low mileage Naylor I bought in March '96 to my mind had to be run in after I purchased it....the improvement in performance was slow and steady and was ultimately (or so I thought) improved by fitting a K & N aports pancake air filter.

I had driven the car quite spiritedly, but rarely exceeded 75 m.p.h.

So it came to pass on a quiet January day, I hit a suitable long stretch of dual carriageway and thought I'd give it a flat out run. After several two way runs down this dual carriageway, I was dismayed to find the car wouldn't pull more than 4,400 revs or 80 m.p.h. a few 0 - 60 m.p.h. runs (timed by junior) showed approximately 21 secs - all this was way down on the specification for the car. I reckon I was 12 - 14 m.p.h. off the top speed, and also much too slow on the 0 - 60 m.p.h. time.

I knew fuel flow was O.K. (new pump fitted) and the fuel tank outlet had recently been unblocked ! The compression on all four cylinders was high and equal. Ignition timing had recently been re-set, cam timing was checked and found to be spot on. I poured over loads of car service and repair books but nothing seemed to indicate what might be wrong - the car ran sweetly enough but it was a little gut-less !

A business associate had recently graduated from racing Rover GTi's, then on to Rover 220 turbos, but previous to that for several seasons had raced MG Maestro championships (2.0 litre "O" series engine). After hearing my comments regarding my "underpowered" Naylor, he suggested I contact a guy who had tuned his MG.

So off I trotted to R.A.M.Motorsport in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire for a chat with Nigel. We discussed what I had done to my car and he suggested I bring it to his "shop" and put it on the rolling road. This I duly did.

Later that week I had a phone call to say he had sussed the problem. He was convinced it was a fuel starvation problem and also from experience he knew that the standard "O" series distributor was "slow" i.e. the advance curve regulated by the springs and weights within the distributor body did little to enhance the performance. The recommendations therefore, were to strip and rebuild the carburettor, fit a dramatically different needle and rebuild the distributor modifying the weights and springs therein.

The car was duly booked in, as the special SU needle was not ex-stock, and only usually available to special order (I had to wait almost three weeks). The needle chosen has a totally different taper from the standard, giving dramatically increased fuel flow at mid-range. Because of the nature of the car it was suggested that carb and needle be modified to give mainly mid-range punch. This sounded fine to me. (The original needle in the carb was discarded and subsequently lost, so I'm not sure if it was the standard BEK needle or one from a Sherpa van) - although we suspect, because the power delivery was as flat as a f**t and no top end - we suspected it was a van HIF6 carburettor fitted to my car !

The carburettor was duly stripped and the jet was found to be off its true seating position by some 4mm. This meant a very lean mixture throughout the range and meant the engine was sucking too much air at full throttle and just would not go

any faster !

After re-assembly of the carb and fitting the "hot" new needle (S.U. needle BFC), Nigel turned his attention to the distributor and duly worked his magic. The advance curve is now more in keeping with sports car performance.

The cam timing was again checked and found to be spot-on. The ignition timing was adjusted 'under load' on the dyno. The prior fitting of a K & N sports turbo-flow pancake together with the carb and distributor changes have resulted in 81 BHP at the rear wheels and a mid range urge from the engine that would not disgrace a modern saloon car.

The brisk acceleration after the modification has turned many heads when being overtaken by "an old 50's style sports car". The first run out after collecting the car was a 60 mile journey. The next day I was forced to do a 120 mile "run" just for the hell of it. Fuel consumption, however, does not appear to be dramatically changed.

Two trips to RAM Motorsport, stripping the carb, replacing the needle, re-building the dizzy and two sessions on the dyno cost £135 including the V.A.T., probably the best £135 I have ever spent.

ON REGISTRARS

The following appeared in Simon Taylor's (and before you ask he's not related) Classic Diary in a recent edition of "Classic and Sportscar". The article expresses our philosophy exactly and is reproduced with kind permission.

"Toasting the registrars"

"It goes without saying that you won't enjoy your classic car to the full unless you belong to the relevant owner's club whether it's an expensive and highly professional operation with worldwide membership, premises and full time staff, or a cheerful handful of dedicated and like-minded enthusiasts meeting monthly in a pub. I have four beloved beasts of varying age, value and health, and I belong to five clubs. Apart from the obvious advantages...events, magazines, social gatherings, spares availability....I know it's the best way for my car's history to be maintained.

Every good club will keep a register of the cars it caters for....including, for the rarer marques, details of those that aren't in the club and clues to those that are lost. Usually the registrars are unpaid, dedicated and unselfish people who pound their computers far into the night to complete historical jigsaws and maintain the lineage of the cars they love. There are fewer greater joys than buying a car without history and then, with the help of club records, gradually piecing together the mystery of where it's been and who it's been with.

So lets raise a glass to all registrars. Let's answer their pleas for information and reply to their letters. In these days when a dealer can invent plausible provenance to boost a car's value, and bare faced forgeries abound, we need them all the more."