

## FITTING A BMC MINI HEATER INTO AN NG 3-03-25

This short article is suited to the NG owner who is rebuilding an older car rather than one that is up and running with an MGB heater already installed, it is intended as a concept rather than full instruction. I have included some further thoughts about using this heater from things learned since fitting and using the unit in my own TA over the past thirty years. I should also mention that the key feature with the installation is that it draws some fresh air in through the near side bonnet louvers that are sealed to prevent fumes entering the car, although I now consider that there is a better way of achieving this which I will describe later.

When I rebuilt my TA, I decided to use a BMC Mini heater unit mounted inside of the car rather than the standard MGB found on the scuttle.

This has a number of benefits!

1. It is a self-contained unit that includes the controls that can be located just out of sight under the dashboard, but within reach of driver.
2. The control panel includes the fan switch and direction controls, although you will require a side bracket to mount the push / pull heater knob and cable to the heater valve.
3. The heater has easy connections for screen de-mister vent hoses.
4. The two standard Mini heater hoses have a convenient ninety-degree elbow to the matrix which should be long enough to pass through the bulkhead to be connected to the engine.
5. The installation will not suffer from possible water ingress into the car due to the glass fibre scuttle being cut as required to fit the MGB unit.
6. Like MGB, replacement parts are readily available through Mini specialists.
7. Although you will have to fabricate some very simple brackets, it is easy to install.

Conveniently, the Mini heater has two long studs at the rear of the casing for mounting to the bulkhead. Two angle brackets can be fabricated and bolted to accommodate these studs when bolt to the inside of the vertical face of the bulkhead. A good way to do this is to cut two downward angled slots to slot the heater studs into, enabling the heater unit to be hooked over the brackets once they are fitted, giving you a free hand to lift the heater unit to attach a front bracket. This front bracket locates the front of the heater to the underside of the scuttle as the third fixing point, this bracket can be riveted to the heater box. The heater unit can then be rotated up and bolted to the underside of the scuttle top by using the retaining stud for the rear-view mirror (if fitted) or individually bolted up using a polished stainless steel M8 roofing bolt. You will also require a small, fabricated angle bracket riveted to the box to accept the heat control push / pull control, locate this to be within reach but avoiding the left knee.

Without doubt it is worth stripping and refurbishing the heater unit before installation as you are most likely to be fitting a used part. On the later heater matrix that use plastic end caps, there is a rubber gasket between this and the inlet and outlet pipes which can leak coolant. Therefore, it is worth replacing this gasket before fitting the refurbished heater unit.

Where I would make an improvement to this system is in the ability to pull in fresh air from the outside. Now you may ask why this important? The answer is that some of us use our NG's in the winter and in rain with the hood up, so having the ability to effectively clear misting from the screen is a good thing. The Mini heater has a round inlet stub that connects to the fresh inlet

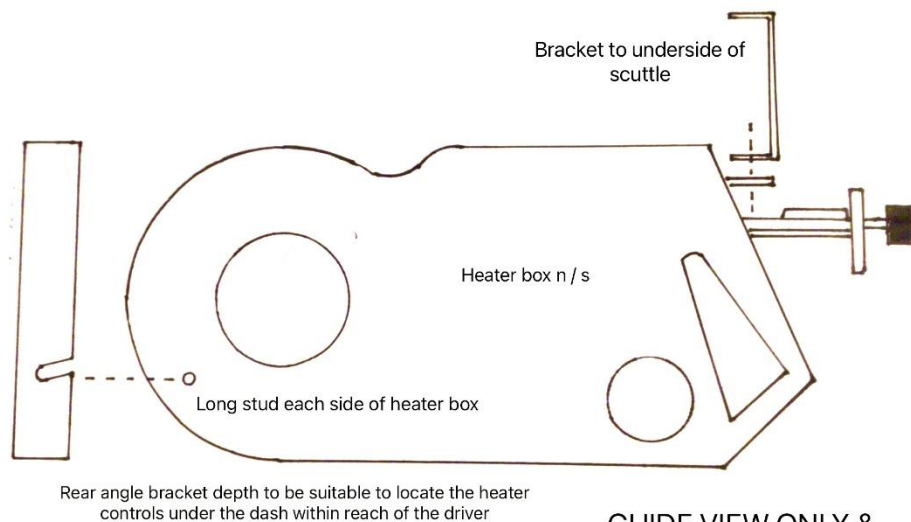
hose on the original vehicle, this could be connected to a vent in the scuttle side such as the chrome opening flaps as found on T Series MG's. These days, my preference would be to create glass fibre box bonded to the inside of the scuttle connected to the heater intake to draw in air from the top of the scuttle via a vent or grille. This box would require a water drain tube in the bottom, with a fume flap as found on MGB's, not open to the engine bay. The air entry vent flap would also have to be removable to enable the box to be cleared of any debris that may have accumulated within it using a vacuum cleaner.

As an afterthought, you could also create a glass fibre fresh air entry box if your NG has an existing MGB heater using the same principle of fitting a vent or opening to the top of the scuttle. This would be more practical with the TC, TD and TF models as the shape of the upper surface of the scuttle is better suited to creating an opening forward of the screen. In the case of the TA, the two humps in the scuttle tend to create a dip in the centre of the scuttle which would make fitting a vent in this location difficult. This depression in the scuttle is particularly noticeable in later TA body tubs.

So, there you have a few ideas on how you could improve the heating and ventilation in your NG.

David Woolgar - January 2025

I have included a rough sketch for guidance.



GUIDE VIEW ONLY &  
NOT TO SCALE.

