

Unleaded Residue

With the introduction of unleaded fuel a number of new challenges were introduced to classic vehicle users. Typical problems relate to over heating, running weak, hot starting issues and many others.

One particular problem I've constantly come across on both cars and bikes is a varnish type residue that intermittently blocks jets, and particularly the blind galleries in the Amal mk1 concentric carburettor. Initially I thought it was muck in the fuel feed but the problem still appeared after fitting a fuel filter. The problem seems to arise when the vehicle is left standing and the fuel slowly evaporates leaving the harmful varnish behind.

The solution turned out to be fairly straightforward. On the bikes when arriving back home I leave the engine running with the fuel turned off until the float bowl is drained. On the old car an isolation switch on the fuel pump allows the fuel lines and carburettor to empty preventing the residue from forming. The heat from the engine makes any remaining fuel evaporate away.

Since doing this I no longer have to keep stripping and cleaning carburettors which was one of the objectives. Rebuild the Holley carburettor every couple of years was expensive and time consuming not to mention having to endure the rough running and other issues.

A very useful device for cleaning carburettors is an 'Ultrasonic Cleaner', I was given one as a birthday present and can't praise them enough. The dirtiest carburettor will come out clean using just water, and really sparkling if you use some Ultrasonic carb cleaner. The cleaner will also work on anything else you put in it, mine gets used for everything from spectacles to the parts of mechanical clocks, every workshop should have one.