

BSMGAC Mini Tech Session - original MGA hood

On October 11, 2021 several of us met at the home of John Gill to look over the hood (convertible top) of Mike Stockwell's 1960 MGA 1600. I did not want him to remove the hood until after I looked it over as he claimed it was original to his Dad's car. His father bought the car in 1960 just before being deployed to Germany. He brought his young family and the MGA to Germany and drove it there for about 3 years. I hope Mike will forgive me if I get some of the details wrong! When they returned to the US he eventually sold the car to a college friend around 1967. This friend kept the car for around 40 years and Mike looked him up and bought the car back from him a few years ago. The hood was the same as on the car in 1967. What I determined after looking it over is that it is an original factory hood, but it was a replacement and was not installed exactly as the factory would have installed it. It was great to find an original late 1600 style hood as it has the listing on the first bow to keep the hood from flapping. It also has the draft excluder around the rear cowl area (all reproduction hoods to not have this original feature - as far as I know). Please let me know if you have a reproduction hood and what supplier has it if you have the draft excluder and/or the listing in the hood.

ALL the original hoods came with a tan fabric on the inside and various colors on the outside. Mike's car is Alamo Beige with a tan hood and red interior. The reproduction hoods today all seem to have a black interior or a color that matches the outside vinyl (for vinyl hoods). NO MGAs had Stayfast fabric. We also determined that the weather flaps over the side curtains were correct in that they reached to the back of the windshield, but the screws to secure the weather flaps to the underside of the header rail were never installed. Also, the lift-a-dot fasteners should be installed with the dot toward the front of the car, but in this case they faced outwards toward the fenders.

After determining that this was an original factory hood but installed after the car was new, we removed the hood from the bows and examined the header rail. Mike's car is late enough in the MGA 1600 production to have the late 1600 and MKII header rail (after c78248). The header rails needed some repairs or replacement, so, we had to stop at this point in our project. Unfortunately the only available header rail that is near the right shape is not made of the proper wood (ash), so, we are in the process of reproducing one ourselves in the correct ash wood. I was given a piece of ash by Dana Booth and Roy Crane and I cut it out last week and then he finished it up later on. We used a header rail produced by Bob Shafto (you may recall his article in MGA! magazine (the NAMGAR publication) as a pattern along with the drawings that Bob produced.

Another club member besides Mike, John, and myself, who was there was Bill Yoder. He brought along an original MGA 1500 hood that we examined and I pointed out to those present some of the original details. A guest who came with his MGA was Jeff Gui. He just got his car back on the road and he had an interesting canvas hood that came from Moss Motors back in the '80s. We plan to have another mini tech session when we are ready to install the replacement header rail and install the new hood. We did pull the new hood (made of Stayfast) out of the box and stretch it over the hood sticks to make sure it would fit. It may be a bit difficult and we probably won't get it to fit like the original, but we are going to try. We will let everyone know when we are ready to install the hood, but it probably won't be until the weather warms up again!

Safety Fast,

Jack Horner
President, Bay State MGA Club
NAMGAR Chapter Representative

MGAs at the mini tech session

