

SAVVA Technical Tip 164 – Radiator overflow tanks

A year or so ago we sang the praises of pressurising the radiators of early cars by fitting over-flow tanks fitted with (preferably) a low- pressure radiator cap. The problem was where to find suitable tanks that fit in with the décor of older vehicles. Here is a possible solution:

Having previously owned many early Fords and knowing by experience their reputation for getting hot I decided to fit an overflow tank to a 1933 Ford B bakkie. The problem was to find a nice flat tank that could be tucked away somewhere under the bonnet. I recall fitting a brass tank from an early Mini to a Buick 8. It has proved to be very successful as in many years I've never had to top up the Buicks radiator. The problem was where to find one of these brass tanks from an early Mini.

Scratching around on Facebook I found an advert for Mini spares. A phone call determined the gentleman still had a few brass ones on the shelf. He had had them for the last 30 years and was just too glad to dispose of them. So, I purchased the lot.

Fitting is a fairly simple operation. In the case of the bakkie the overflow tank was attached to the firewall and an 8mm rubber pipe fitted from the radiator overflow pipe to the tank. Then the rubber seal was removed from the radiator cap allowing the water to free flow freely from radiator to the overflow tank and back - like a modern car.

The bakkie now has a Mini overflow tank and after a month of running about hasn't needed the usual daily topping-up.

Attached is a picture of a typical brass Mini overflow tank.

