

V8 out of Africa

John Upton has recently retired and moved to France, along with his much travelled Factory MGBGV8 (Bracken 1322). Having purchased the car in the UK in 1992, John took it back with him to Malawi, Central Africa, where he had worked since 1985. John reports that Malawi is a "no rust" country with better than expected roads, limited rain and temperatures around 25°C throughout the year – in many ways ideal for classic cars.

John had the car shipped to Durban, South Africa and flew from Malawi to collect it. He then drove it back via Zimbabwe and Zambia. He reports that the V8 behaved perfectly on this 2,000 mile trip, which included a 600 mile detour through Zambia due to the civil war at that time in Mozambique. "However allow at least 1 hour for each border!"

On arrival in Malawi the car duly passed its "Certificate of Fitness" (CoF). At the registration office John remembers the lady assistant looking out of her window and asking "is that your car?" When he replied that it was the lady said "it looks nice, I will give it a special number." It was then registered as BT 400 – the BT is for Blantyre.

John says "I enjoyed having the V8 in Malawi with sunny weather and surprisingly good roads with little traffic. The only slight problem with the V8 was that the petrol (only one grade) was, even in 1985, at least 15% ethanol produced by a large local sugar estate. The "O" rings in the HIFs didn't like it and once a year or so the car would start to run very rich. I became quite apt at changing them. Incidentally I had a TR3 and a Jaguar S type as well and neither of these suffered, perhaps due to their older SU designs. Also, as the two major towns in the country, Blantyre and Lilongwe, are both almost 3,500 feet above sea level, a slightly leaner fuel mix was required."

He adds "the photo alongside is just after the V8 arrived back in the UK after nine

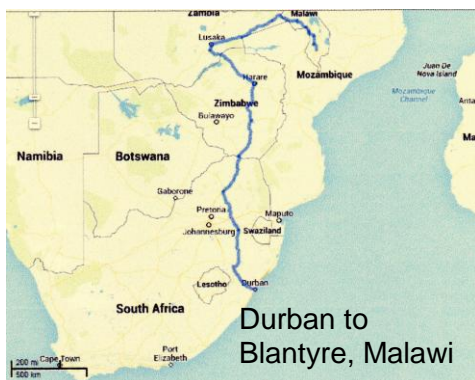


Safely back in Blighty

years in Africa. It was still sporting its yellow Malawi front number plate. Note the two small white reflective strips on the front bumper – a requirement for the Malawi "CoF." There is also a Malawi tax disk on the

windscreen."

John hopes to travel over to MG90 at Silverstone in 2014 with other members of his local MG club and is looking forward to meeting up with fellow V8 members.



Durban to
Blantyre, Malawi



Filling up in Zimbabwe