

## **V8 Chairman's report to the V8 AGM held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at the V8 Marquee at Silverstone Circuit**

### **Introduction from David Waterton (immediate past V8 Chairman)**

Ladies and Gentlemen Good Afternoon and welcome to the V8 Register AGM. Now you may be a little surprised at seeing me here since many of you will recall that I stood down as V8 Chairman just a year ago. The reason is that Al Barnett, our current V8 Chairman, can't be here as he is in Italy fulfilling an engagement agreed two years ago. Al sends his sincere apologies for his absence and has asked me if I would give his statement and I of course agreed. It is rather nice to speak but not have to take responsibility for the content. So here we go.

### **V8 Chairman's report**

It has been an important year of change for our club and a year of consolidation for our Register. The Council meeting in October last year elected four new Directors and this Spring the Board appointed a new General Manager, Richard Jones. This means that virtually all the people running the Club are fairly new in post and there is hardly anyone left who was involved with the controversial plan to rebuild the Club headquarters. A rather more modest building programme has started with the aim of improving storage, freeing up space in Kimber House and improving working conditions for Club staff. The first phase, involving the construction of a five unit garage block, is complete and the good news is that we only used £62,000 of a £100,000 budget. The main reason for that was that two Club members (Ron Gammons and Maurice Standish) acted as the project management team giving their time and expertise free. The garages are modified inside to be suitable for storage purposes and should the site ever be sold then they would add to the value. Since the area is really only suitable for residential development, five garages would be an asset for any proposed block of flats on the site. I should emphasise that there are no current plans to sell the site and indeed the intention is improve the office layout and meeting facilities in the coming year.

For most of the year we have had two of our register committee members, Howard Gosling and Victor Smith, serving on the main board. Quite recently Victor decided to resign. Many of you will recall that it was Victor who first alerted us to the previous Board's plan for a grandiose headquarters. Indeed he was instrumental in producing the evidence that eventually convinced the Club council that a new headquarters was not affordable. Victor we all owe you a debt of gratitude for your efforts.

Probably the most controversial subject in the Club this year has been the future of the Club magazine. There was general dismay when Safety Fast! became little more than a supplement to MG Enthusiast. It has however to be said that MG Enthusiast magazine has improved a lot over the past year, to the point where a goodly proportion of members see it as a good membership benefit. What most members didn't know was that it was costing us just too much. In the last financial year the Club made a loss of £110,000

and the magazine costs were the greatest component of that loss. Something had to be done and so, as from next month, we will once again have our own 100 page Safety Fast! magazine. I am sure we all wish the editorial team of John Day, John James and Andy Knott every success. Don't think this means that you will now get a second rate magazine as I think there are good prospects of once again having a Club magazine to be proud of. I would also mention that John Dutton the Club treasurer aims for the finances to break even this year and to return to a healthy surplus next year.

Turning now to nearer home and to what has been happening in the V8 Register. Last September many of us enjoyed the annual V8 Tour over a long weekend. The Lincolnshire Tour event was splendidly organized by Mike and Maria Taylor and was enjoyed by all. The weather was generally good with just one downpour. Unfortunately it was at this point that one of our members found that his brand new hood shrank in the rain and wouldn't close. He and his wife missed the boat trip as they said they already had enough water in their roadster conversion to make it qualify as a canal boat. This year's event "A Saunter in the Shires" is being organized by Tony and Sylvia Lake and will be based on the Aviator Hotel at Sywell airfield near Northampton. If you haven't put your name down yet then I urge you to do so soon, as last year we were fully subscribed.

In February our annual V8 Curry Evening was at a new venue. Ian Quarrington organized a very successful evening in Cambridge for us, combining good food in a smart restaurant with the opportunity to visit the historic city. We also continue to enjoy our twice yearly meetings at The Shoulder of Mutton at Hazeley Heath where Bryan Ditchman always ensures reserved parking and a good lunch. The next meeting at the pub will be on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August when I hope to be bringing my recently imported, but not yet registered, RV8 to its first V8 Register meeting. Our final get together this year will be at a new venue. We are suggesting that the V8 Register supports the Club's race meeting at Castle Combe on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September. Details are on the ever popular website.

No report of the social side of register life would be complete without a mention of the newly formed MG V8 Burlblers. Based in Norfolk and organized by Stuart Middlemiss this informal grouping has brought together East Anglian V8 enthusiasts and already attracted an enthusiastic following. I for one have been delighted to see the success of this initiative. There are many people who contribute to the success of the V8 Register, quite a lot of them via contributions to the website, so it doesn't matter whether you live in Cornwall or Cologne you can still provide an active input to register matters.

Finally many of you will know that each year we present awards to those who have made a special contribution to making life with a V8 easier and more enjoyable. Usually there are two awards but this year there will be an additional one which Victor will talk about shortly.

**The first award is the Chris Dodds Award** which is presented to the V8 member who, in the view of the V8 Committee, has made a longstanding contribution to the V8 Register, particularly in technical matters. It is held for one year and then returned at the next V8 AGM, but for each recipient a silver shield records the award. Last year the award went to Clive Wheatley and this year it goes to Gordon Hesketh-Jones. Gordon is not only well known for his marathon trips in his faithful MGBGTV8 but also for his website and magazine contributions. I will now ask last year's winner to present the Chris Dodds Award to Gordon.

**The second award is the Ian Lloyd Memorial Cup.** This award is decided by the V8 Chairman and is presented to the member who has made an outstanding contribution to the general development and wellbeing of the V8 Register. This year it goes to a man who has given lots of members the chance to save money on RV8 parts by identifying Landrover equivalents and who has, with the help of Terry Starkey, set up the V8 Burlers. The Ian Lloyd Memorial Cup is awarded to Stuart Middlemiss.

Well I hope you have all had a good weekend, bought lots of regalia and spares and that you enjoyed last night's V8BBQ, provided once again provided by the V8 and sausage specialist – Clive Wheatley. Clive our thanks to you and your enthusiastic band of helpers – oh and can you make sure Gavin returns my corkscrew! I am very sorry that I could not be with you and I wish you happy V8 motoring for the next year.

Now over to Victor to talk about our new award.

**The third award is the Geoff Allen Cup** in memory of a longstanding member and close friend of many members here today who sadly passed away at this time last year. As many of you know Geoff was our V8 Historian and Archivist from the start of the V8 Register in 1978. He was very well placed for this role as he had been in Rectifications Department at the MG Factory for 27 years where in the final weeks before the plant closed he painstakingly made a hand written copy of the production control records for the MGBGTV8. Geoff was someone who brought a great sense of fun and humour to our lives and was a most helpful fellow member, so the new award is presented to a V8 member who has some of those qualities. The award is made this year to a longstanding V8 member who has come to Silverstone each year for the last 29 - and usually with a supply of German sausages for the V8BBQ. He has also attended many of the V8 Curry Evenings in February and is a most cheerful fellow member. [Jean Allen was present at the meeting and at this point in the proceedings stepped forward to present the award]. Jean said she had great pleasure presenting the first Geoff Allen Cup to Walter Kallenberg. She added she was pleased to be at Silverstone 2007 and share the good friendship of V8 members. Many V8 members felt sure Geoff would have been pleased that an award in his memory was a pewter tankard from which the recipient could down a few pints of Hook Norton. Each award is held by each recipient with a new award made each year.