



Introduction

Following on from the recently published report generated from the RV8 Modification Survey by Roger Aldridge, who suggested the original idea, it was thought a similar exercise would be both useful and interesting for the 'B GT V8. I have tried to maintain the same format as that used by Roger in order to make comparisons easier and endeavoured not to plagiarise too much. I hope members will find the results both interesting and useful.

During discussions the question of V8 Conversions was raised and it was decided, due to the very nature of the V8 Conversion, that this could be the subject of a third survey at a later date and the basis of that survey would be fundamentally different. Following the website 'open request' to members to suggest their favourite modifications, a list of the 40 most popular modifications was compiled. Much detailed work, encouragement and prompting by Victor Smith, then lead to the publishing of the 'On Line Survey'. We received 18 responses from enthusiasts ranging from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Germany and of course United Kingdom.

They are:

Gavin Bailey, Graham Cornford, Daniel Heyer, Peter Lackey, Julian Holmes, Bob Owen, Martin Ashby, Richard Wittington, Stephan Proepsting, Tim Edmonds, Michael Lloyd, Barrie Franklin, Richard Ashmore, Kai Knickmann, Terry Jennings, Tony Lake, David Heaton and Steve Bowley. To whom we extend our thanks. All are club members with more than 3 years V8 ownership. Levels of owner expertise covered the range from Limited Knowledge to Very Good, nobody claimed to have 'No Technical or Car Maintenance Knowledge'. So it maybe concluded that the general MGB GT V8 owner/driver has a good understanding of the car's working and is prepared to do most, or some, of the routine servicing themselves. In many cases the more technical work is trusted to the professionals. Clive Wheatley, Beech Hill Garage and the MGB Hive were mentioned in many comments.

Classic sports cars by their very nature, and the V8 in particular, will attract owners who will have a strong affinity to their chosen car and of course they are more than just a means of transport. Therefore the subject of modification can arouse strong reactions in most owners. We can derive from the comments received that some owners wish to keep their cars as standard as possible and will only sanction the most unobtrusive and simple reversible modification, often retaining the original parts 'in a safe place'. At the other end of the spectrum, other owners are quite prepared to modify extensively, partly I believe, because it can be done and it's technically interesting and partly to keep up with modern traffic conditions. Although, or course, here the V8 is not as vulnerable as is its 1800 cousin. We each derive pleasure of owning a classic sports car in our own way and long may it continue! The one regret I have is we didn't ask participants to give an indication of their annual mileage. I think it would have been interesting to see if there is any correlation between approach to modification and annual mileage. I have my own thoughts, but am prepared to stand corrected!

The Survey

We have already established a reasonable impression of the average V8 owner prepared to contribute to the survey and it is not too dissimilar to our friends within the RV8 camp.

Number of years of Ownership:

Only 2 members had owned their V8s for less than 3 years (11%). The first specifying Very Good Knowledge and did all his own servicing. The second Some Knowledge and did some routine servicing but not annual or major servicing work.

Technical Knowledge:

Of the 18 responses, 8 (44%) rated themselves as having Very Good Technical Knowledge, 5 (28%) as having Moderate Knowledge, 4 (22%) as Some Knowledge and 1 (5.6%) as Limited Knowledge. Nobody rated themselves with No Technical Knowledge. It follows, therefore, that MGB GT V8 owners have, at the very least, an understanding of the working of their motor car and would be familiar with the 'under bonnet' arrangements.

Annual Servicing:

9 (50%) stated they did all their own servicing, 3 (16.6%) All but the most technical, 3 (16.7%) Did some but not annual / major servicing and 3 (16.7%) Just did the routine basics. It follows, therefore, that about 50% of 'GT V8 owners have sufficient confidence and knowledge to conduct their own servicing. Of the 8, 6 do All Servicing and the remaining 2 did All but the Most Technical.

How does that reflect in their attitude to modification? I decided to 'block' the Very Good and Moderate knowledge together, making 13 and that represented 72% of the contributions. Assuming they were to make all suggested modifications, that would total 520. Their total modifications were: - 181. Expressing their attitude to modifications in percentage terms, equates to 34.8%. Of the remaining 5 contributing members, 55 modifications were made of a possible 200. Equating to 27.5%. If we were to factor in the size of the survey, I would suggest: - *'A very close attitude, with a slight bias to modifications appealing to members with greater technical knowledge'*. So overall, the average MGB GT V8 owner will have owned his car for more than 3 years and have a 32.8% attitude to modification. i.e. (55+181 divided by 520+200 expressed as a %)

Modification Rating

For each modification, we asked members to rate their experience for:-

- Technical Improvement
- Cosmetic Improvement
- Safety Improvement
- Driving experience
- Value for Money

All but the Value for Money were given a five point improvement scale, of Large, Modest, Medium, Small, or None. The Value for Money we asked for, Very Good, Good, Medium, Poor, Very Poor. Each scale would then be awarded a value from 5 to 1. For example a Large Improvement or Very Good Value for Money would be awarded a 5 and a 'None' Improvement or Very Poor Value for Money would be awarded a 1. From these scales we were able to place a numeric value to all ratings. We then followed the example used for the RV8 survey and applied a 'weighting' for each assessment as follows:-

- Technical Improvement 15%
- Cosmetic Improvement 5%
- Safety Improvement 25%
- Driving experience 35%
- Value for Money 20%

Similarly, we believed the rating for Driving Experience was likely to be the major factor for most V8 owners, therefore, we gave it the highest rating.

Reporting

I am grateful to Victor for maintaining a ceiling of 40 modifications, for it becomes increasingly confusing when attempting to cross reference values in an attempt to deliver meaningful results. As stated at the beginning, the objective of this exercise was to produce a useful and interesting report. I have analysed the data using a similar format to Roger Aldridge and only summarised the key findings. I started with the 'Top Ten Most Adopted Modifications' **Chart A**, then applied the weightings above for **Chart B**. Applying the weighting did, of course, swing the score for any one modification placing it higher or lower in the rating chart. The final thirty modifications I have listed according to their position on the survey form. I have also included the four modifications answered NO by all of the members, but highlight them below for clarification. They are listed according to their position on the survey form.

- No 10. Installing Cruise Control (A particular favourite of mine).
- No 12. Installing a Hoyle IRS and disc brake upgrade.
- No 16. Fitting power steering (Hydraulic, electro-hydraulic or electronic).
- No 31. Restoring Overdrive on third gear.

In some cases the survey question was answered NO but 'Comments' revealed the modification was fitted to the car. The conclusion being the car was modified by a previous owner. I have categorised the answer, resulting in the list above and included score and comments as appropriate.

Top Ten Modifications to the MGB GT V8

For each of the top ten modifications I include the total number of members who have fitted it to their car.

Chart A: - Number most adopted

	Modification	No members	Total score
1	Replacing 'Top Hat' battery terminals with clamp type	16	228
2	Upgrade Headlights & fitting Halogen bulbs	15	284
3	Fitting a 12v battery upgrade, replacing twin 6v	15	243
4	Petronix or Luminition electronic ignition	12	202
5	Fitting brass or stainless steel replacement coolant filler	12	171
6	Fitting chrome or stainless steel fresh air intake mesh	12	149
7	Fitting uprated suspension bushes	11	173
8	Adjust standard tyre pressures for improved ride & handling	11	162
9	Fitting alternative carburettor needles	11	156
10	Replace tyres for improved ride & handling	9	162

Chart B: - Based on Weighted score

	Modification	Weighted Score
1	Upgrade Headlights & fitting Halogen bulbs	62.40
2	Replacing 'Top Hat' battery terminals with clamp type	47.30
3	Petronix or Luminition electronic ignition	44.60
4	Fitting uprated suspension bushes	38.65
5	Fitting a 12v battery upgrade, replacing twin 6v	36.45
6	Adjust standard tyre pressures for improved ride & handling	36.20
7	Fitting alternative carburettor needles	34.50
8	Replace tyres for improved ride & handling	34.25
9	Fitting brass or stainless steel replacement coolant filler	33.50
10	Fitting chrome or stainless steel fresh air intake mesh	26.65

Therefore we can conclude, based on our estimated weighting that the most popular modification is. Replacing 'Top Hat' battery terminals with clamp type. But the most valued modification is Upgrade Headlights and fitting Halogen bulbs.

Analysis of the Top Ten most adopted Modifications.

1. Modification No 6: Replacing 'Top Hat' battery terminals with clamp type.

It's not surprising replacing the old fashioned and troublesome top hat type battery terminals with the far superior modern clamp-on type is a popular modification. For a small financial outlay and simple DIY job, the benefits in reliability; especially when considering the difficulty of access we all enjoy to the battery, are considerable. Many members confirmed that this modification was completed at the same time as a conversion to a single 12 volt battery. Improvements on all fronts, the effect on originality is not visible. 16 (88.9%) members adopted this modification.

2. Modification No 1: Upgrading the headlight reflectors and fitting halogen bulbs.

This was the most 'valued' modification and carried out by 15 (83.3%) of the 18 members. It is seen as a worthwhile modification by all those having it, on the basis of night driving safety. Combating the effect of 'on-coming' very bright modern lighting systems and enabling 'older eyes' to accommodate more quickly. One member, Tim Edmunds from Australia, commented 'I can see the road at night, Aussie country roads do not have many street lights'. A dilemma shared by most of us of course, however, we do enjoy the benefits of higher ambient light reflecting off our towns and cities on our little island. If not already fitted to the car on purchase, members purchased from MGO, SVC and B&G. Cibi seem to be the most popular, with Hella and WIPAC Quadoptics mentioned. Gavin Bailey has upgraded using Lucas H4 units without side lamps. He reports 'Good performance with appearance very similar to stock'. All members confirmed upgrading the headlamps was worthwhile, scoring not less than 4 for VFM.

3. Modification No 5: Fitting a 12v battery upgrade, replacing twin 6v.

Another high scoring modification having 15 (83.3%) members modifying their cars in this way and Daniel Heyer from Hamburg asks 'Who on earth would still like to drive with 2 x 6 es? Try and get a 6v battery on a Saturday afternoon in Hamburg and write a paper on it'. 'Please not more than 10 pages'. Clearly, Daniel has suffered a very frustrating Saturday in the recent past! Two members Bob Owen and David Heaton, stated they had fitted two batteries in parallel for increased reliability. Julian Holmes, 'limited knowledge' fitted the 12 volt battery himself after reading the V8 Workshop Note. However, it was not all acceptance as Richard Ashmore advises standard batteries are fine if you look

after them. Most members confirm that when it comes time to replace the batteries, the cost, availability and reliability of a modern battery, outweigh the option of the standard of 2 x 6 volt batteries. However, for some owners, originality is important.

4. Modification No 25: Petronix or Luminition electronic ignition.

12 (66.7%) members replaced their points distributors for a system utilising modern electronics, the main reasons for improved reliability and economy. Ease of maintenance was another major factor for some members. All members using a modified distributor appear to be satisfied with the modification. Daniel Heyer tells us he 'fried' his Luminition in France he thinks due to those high under bonnet temperatures. He is now using the 123 unit and 'would like a programmable one'. Both Gavin Bailey and Graham Cornford have had a system fitted for many years without problems, declaring it a 'good mod'. Michael Lloyd says his timing was all over the place and now it could not be more consistent.

It's not all acceptance, however, Bob Owen advises 'Original equipment in good condition is fine. Points require little maintenance, but are easier to repair if you have a roadside failure'. Bob is an Electronics Engineer, *does he know something we don't?*

5. Modification No 27: Fitting Brass or Stainless Steel replacement Coolant Filler.

A low cost, easily executed modification adopted by 12 (66.7%) members, interestingly a lower ratio to that achieved by the RV8 (21 over 25 – 84%). The coolant filler has a different location to the fuel injected RV8, but it remains a weak link as the glass reinforced plastic plug becomes old and brittle. Members reported purchasing new plugs from B & G and Bob Owen had his given to him! Kai Knickmann has a modified plug to accept a domestic heating bleed valve. Having measured the thread in my own radiator and found it to be ½" BSP, replacements are readily available at most plumbers' merchants as Daniel Heyer confirmed, he bought his in a plumbers' shop on the Lake Garda after his plastic one broke. David Heaton has it on his 'Must Do' list.

6. Modification No 35: Fitting Chrome or Stainless Steel Fresh Air Intake Mesh.

Another low cost modification which improves appearance and has an added benefit of preventing leaves and other objects from entering the fresh air duct and blocking it. Dead leaves and other small debris can also block the water 'drain bulb' which in turn lead to water ingress to the foot wells and corrosion. Martin Ashby made his own from a piece of mesh he found, others bought from B & G, Clive Wheatley and MGOC. 12 (66.7%) members fitted this modification, but Richard Ashmore dislikes the look, so he is going to remove his.

7. Modification No 15: Fitting Uprated Suspension Bushes.

This refers, of course, to fitting new suspension bushes made from polyurethane in various grades of hardness, defined by their colour. 11 (61%) members have adopted this modification in one form or another. David Heaton has it on his 'might do' list. Bob Owen reported better handling, but questioned the value for money especially if you 'don't fit them yourself'. Kai Knickmann concluded 'On the comfort side, there is some harshness as was to be expected but not too bad'. Members seemed to have them fitted or fit themselves during a suspension repair and generally report an improvement in handling and control. We can again draw a direct comparison with the RV8 survey here. 11 members from 18 – **61%** have fitted polyurethane bushes to their cars against 9 of 25 - **36%** of RV8 owners.

Bush kits are readily available from Moss, David Manners, MGOC, Clive Wheatley, or direct from Poly Bush, or similar.

8. Modification No 20: Adjust Standard Tyre Pressures for Improved Ride & Handling.

Again 11(61%) members reported making adjustments to their tyre pressures, for various reasons from lightening the steering to improving handling. Pressures advised, F/R ranged from: 28/25; 26/30; 30/30; 24/24; 2.2/2.4 bar (32/34 psi); 28/26. Stephan Proepsting said he takes guidance from Ron Gammon's technical service notes. From the remaining 7 (39%) members who reported keeping to the standard tyre pressures, Richard Ashmore considered 'The ride is fine on standard pressures'. It remains, therefore, a very individual preference.

9. Modification No 24: Fitting Alternative Carburettor Needles.

Another score of 11. Members found it necessary to change the needles in their carburettors, in all cases as part of an engine upgrade or change to K & N filters. Tony Lake gave a good report on advice he received from Clive Wheatley. Having fitted K & N filters he suffered a 'monumental acceleration flat spot', Clive advised changing the needles - 'Problem solved'! Martin Ashby replaced his needles as part of a filter upgrade to K & N and set up his carburation with the help of Peter Burgess's rolling road. Other suppliers mentioned are, Beech Hill Garage and Joe Curto Inc. New York. All members who changed their needles, for one reason or another considered it to be good value for money, probably as a result of the improved performance and fuel economy.

10. Modification No 19: Replacing tyres for improved ride & handling.

The final of our top ten, 9 (50%) members had answered Yes, with a score of 162, to Replacing Tyres for Improved Ride and Handling. I believe the wording of this question may have caused confusion for some members. Were the tyres changed because of age or wear, for the same size as fitted by the factory? Were they changed for a tyre of different

size? Considering the age of the cars, the tyres should by now have been changed, probably more than once. So we are left with the dilemma, 'What Tyre' and 'What Size'? As anyone will confirm replacing an old and worn tyre with the same make and size, will transform the car, especially when fitted to the front wheels. So when changing to a different make or tread pattern and a different size it's almost impossible to establish a quantifiable result. All views are subjective.

Here are the comments: - 'Always fit good quality Michelin tyres'. 'I have 195/65 15 Vredesteins on KN Minilites now, very pleased with the ride'. 'Originally had fitted 185 section tyres. This made the steering very heavy indeed. Recently fitted 175 section tyres as recommended by Victor Smith'. 'I don't think anyone would still be on original tyres! Currently have Firestone Multihawk 185/60 15 on Minilites'. 'I have 185/65 15 Pirelli tires on 5.5 X 15 Minator wheels fitted'. 'Advan semi slicks great for track days'. 'Like to keep it original'. 'When I bought the car, it was on 185/70s and I reverted to the standard 175. For the past years I have been running Continentals which suit the car well'. 'Previous owner fitted 5.5 X 15 Minilite- type wheels so I have 185/65 X 15 tyres. 'Tyres were over 10 years old. Mileage was 35,000. Michelin tyres supplied and fitted by Costco. Price approx. £85 each'. We received useful comment from members even when they answered 'No' to the question. It appears to me the tyres and tyre sizes are very much a personal choice. One common concern seems to be heavy steering, we are now so used to driving modern cars with power assisted steering the MG starts to feel very heavy and 'wooden', so tyre width and tyre pressures become a topic of interest. Other solutions are discussed under modifications 14 and 16.

Remaining Modifications - Listed according to their position on the survey form.

Modification No 2: Adding an in-line fuse to the overdrive unit.

This modification was adopted by 1 member (5.6%) who rated it very highly technically and for safety. Another member adding 'Best reason Safety'. Others have 5 speed boxes fitted. This modification is new to the discussion forum and I don't believe it has come to the attention of many members.

Modification No 3: Fitting 'Lights – On' alarm.

Another single adoption (5.6%), Graham Cornford confirms 'Saves getting a flat battery' Michael Lloyd says 'Objective to prevent flat battery due to being stupid! Got the bits but not done it yet'. Bob Owen is also getting round to it. Others have commented, with the battery cut-off switch most of us have fitted to our cars now, this modification is not so necessary, providing of course you remember to isolate the battery!

Modification No 4: Fitting a Revotec cooling fan upgrade kit.

2 Members (11.1%) fitted this modification. Stephan Proepsting fitted the Revotec kit but found it 'at least twice as noisy as the original fans'. So he converted back to the originals. He added a new water pump and alloy radiator would be a better investment. Daniel Heyer confirmed they were very noisy – VERY noisy and expensive. Generally cooling problems didn't figure high in this survey.

Modification No 7: Cooling fan override switch.

9 Members (50.0%), with a total score of 138. A relatively simple modification and most members adopting it reported using it if they thought they were likely to be held up in a jam and a useful standby if either the 'Otter' switch or relay fails. By comparison 4 (16%) of RV8 members have an override switch fitted, one of whom had never had to use it.

Modification No 8: Central Locking.

Only 1 (5.6%) member, Martin Ashby, has this modification fitted, he used a universal kit linked to an alarm for remote operation. Those that made comments considered it unnecessary and over complicated. I fitted it to my own car, roadster conversion, as an interesting technical exercise and it comes in useful when rushing to the car on a rainy day.

Modification No 9: Fitting simple anti-theft device.

9 (50.0%) members responded yes to this modification awarding it a score of 126. Devices ranged from battery isolator switch (although I suspect more members have this device but didn't include it as a simple anti-theft device), to basic alarm / immobilisers and steering wheel clamps. Some considered it too complicated and unreliable. (I assume electronic devices).

Modification No 10: Installing Cruise Control.

Oh dear! Zero rating and as I've said, a particular favourite of mine. I sense from the comments, not a good idea for a factory GT and considered unnecessary on a classic car.

Modification No 11: Installing Hoyle Front Suspension.

2 (11.1%) members have installed a modified form of front suspension, but not from John Hoyle. One is from Frontline the other from Hopkins. The Hoyle assembly is much admired by most who have visited John at Stoneleigh and Silverstone. Those that commented despite not having a system fitted, admired the standard of engineering. At least one member is thinking it's something for the future. High cost is a factor, but Quality Engineering doesn't come cheap!

Modification No 12: Installing Hoyle Independent Rear Suspension and Disc Brakes.

Zero rated, due primarily to cost, complicated installation and a major detraction from originality. Same emotions as listed above for Hoyle front suspension. It's generally thought that John Hoyle is a first class Engineer and that's reflected in his products. Interestingly 2 RV8 owners taking part in their survey have fitted IRS with impressive results. Roger Aldridge's report makes very interesting reading (Mod 8). It's worth remembering the modification can be reversed.

Modification No 13: Parabolic Rear Springs.

3 (16.7%) members have Parabolic Springs fitted. Steve Bowley acquired his from MGOC, the primary source as far as I know, then fitted them himself. Tony Lake stated they were a good match for his Hopkins front. Others commented on the superior ride but warned damping is critical for the best results. Reasons for not fitting parabolic springs were concern about spring 'wind-up' with the V8 torque.

Modification No 14: Castor Reduction Kit.

5 (27.8%) members have castor reduction fitted, either from Brown & Gammons or Frontline. The Brown & Gammons kit comes with full instructions and requires the front cross member to be lowered completely. The Frontline version is simply a pair of aluminium wedges which are slotted in place between the cross member and shell, the cross member only requires loosening. Many members commented that the need for power steering is eliminated because the reduced castor lightens the steering, especially when combined with needle roller thrust bearings in the king pins. Tony Lake wasn't too impressed, observing that 'tipping' the cross member, miss-aligned the through bolts. (It also has a similar effect on the steering rack, which has to be shimmed). Neither did he notice a major improvement and is not impressed.

Modification No 16: Power Steering.

Another zero take up as compared to 3 (12%) RV8 owners. Most comments centred on the improvements derived by the castor reduction modification. Others thought it un-necessary and the steering is fine as it is.

Modification No 17: Fitting Replacement Telescopic Shock Absorbers.

9 (50.0%) of members have fitted telescopic shock absorbers (dampers) awarding a total score of 140. In some cases they were fitted as part of other suspension modification. For example, they are essential when fitting parabolic rear springs. They are preferred to the original design by those that fitted them. Tony Lake advises Bilsteins are recommended by heavy users, they were the only dampers that would last through a rough rally, and all others were prone to early failure. Bob Owen summed it up well for us. 'The lever arms should be as good as a standard telescopic damper, but high-tech dampers benefit from modern developments not present in the lever arms'. However, he prefers the originality and original driving experience of the lever arm.

Modification No18 Steering Rack Mounting Strengthening Kit from Brown & Gammons.

Only 1 (5.6%) member, Kai Knickmann had his mounts strengthened, he believes before Brown & Gammonds had a kit available. Bob Owen has not strengthened his rack mountings, but checks on a routine basis. Some members were not aware of the modification or the implications on safety. If this survey has raised the awareness among members to, at least, check their rack mounts; then time is well spent. Interestingly the RV8 survey did not include this modification. Is it that the RV8 rack mounts are better engineered and are not so susceptible to cracking?

Modification No 21: Installing a Low Brake Fluid Level, Sensor. (TE Electronics).

4 (22.2%) members have a brake fluid level sensor fitted. It's considered a sensible safety modification, especially for cars with remote brake servo's. One member built his own using modern car components and a warning lamp.

Modification No 22: Changing Brake Servo as a precaution.

7 (38.9%) members have taken the precaution to change their brake servo. This is aimed at the remote system. The majority of these modifications/replacements were done as part of a rebuild or precautionary maintenance. Only one member reports experiencing a failure; Good job he had a Level Sensor fitted!

Modification No 23: Change Brake Fluid from Mineral to Silicon.

3 (16.7%) members have taken the step to change their brake fluid to silicon. Most owners are aware the two fluids are incompatible, so a change to silicon can only be done after the hydraulic system has been completely purged a reason, I think, the modification has had a low uptake. The others because of reports of sticky seals and satisfactory reliability with mineral, providing maintenance routines are followed. Those that made the change did so because of good experience with other cars and to reduce the risk of paint damage.

Modification No 26: Installing an Upgraded Radiator.

5 (27.8%) members have upgraded their radiator, suppliers range from Clive Wheatly, MGOC and Radtech Racing Radiators. Various reasons were given for upgrading, some saying it's a sensible modification whilst rebuilding the car or as a replacement because the original was leaking. Graham Cornford upgraded his radiator to aluminium because he lives in a hot part of the U S A. Bob Owen confirmed his new radiator, along with other measures eliminated the car's overheating problems.

Modification No 28: Removing a section of Rubber Bonnet Seal.

A very cheap and easy modification, a simple 'snip' and repositioning of the bonnet seal to give a gap at the rear edge of the bonnet thus allowing a larger gap for hot air to escape from under the bonnet. This modification is only effective whilst stationary, relying on 'thermals' or forced air when the fans are running to allow the hot air an easier escape route. When road speed increases to 20 to 25 MPH the area directly in front of the screen becomes high pressure, possibly at some stage forcing cold air under the bonnet. Increasing under bonnet pressure and competing with 'ram air' through the radiator?? Without the luxury of a wind tunnel and scientific instruments, it's impossible to say. 6 (33.3%) members have tried this zero cost modification, 2 having removed the seal completely. Bob Owen reports a small cooling improvement at the carburettor intakes with lower a temperature in traffic conditions. He warns, however, if your engine is worn and 'smoggy', this modification might result in fumes entering the cab when the fresh (?) air blower is switched on. A very important point and should be taken into consideration, especially if there is any doubt about exhaust gas escaping from the manifolds. A timely and very important warning from Bob Owen.

Modification No 29: Installing a 5 Speed Gearbox.

2 (11%) members have converted to a 5 speed gearbox but Stephan Proepsting is planning to convert to a Toyota Supra gearbox because his 4 speed is 'making noises'. He says he already has the Toyota gearbox and has ordered the bell housing and other conversion parts from Australia, where this type of modification is more popular. He lists the advantages as: - Very smooth gear change. High torque capacity. No modification required to the transmission tunnel. 15 Kg weight saving. Kai Knickmann has ruined his original gearbox with his 4.0 litre engine, so he says the 5 speed is the best way out. But he says he always liked the overdrive feature, a sentiment echoed by some that haven't done the conversion. Julian Holmes, however, has a Cosworth T5 conversion, his final comment LOVE IT !!!

Modification No 30: Restoring the Differential using a 'Bronze' Shim Kit.

From my own experience, the original differential shims, thrust bearings, were manufactured from a resin bonded material, trade named – 'Paxolin' or 'Tufno'. They were reasonably hard wearing but resulted in a reddish-brown dyeing of the gear oil as they wore. Excessive wear in the thrust bearings resulted in the characteristic 'clunk' when driving forward after going in reverse. Those with steel or alloy wheels need not worry about other expensive noises such as worn splines! A reasonably priced shim kit has been available for some years, the expensive part is fitting as the differential has to be partially dismantled, and the good news is it can be completed with the axle still on the car. 4 (22.2%) members have converted to bronze shims. Some at the suggestion of their MG specialist, others directly due to eliminate 'clunking'. Gavin Bailey confirms it's an essential modification (with a worn axle) and made a big difference. Other members commented it's on the to-do list. Or, as in Daniel Heyer's case, may convert to a Quaife when the time comes.

Modification No 31: Restoring Overdrive to Third Gear.

A zero take up on this one, most believing it's unnecessary with the V8 torque and if used 'over enthusiastically' will lead to a damaged overdrive because it's just not made for the V8 torque. Steve Bowley stated he already has overdrive on third gear. Therefore not considered a modification.

Modification No 32: Improving the Standard Seat Cushions.

Just 6 (33.3%) members have, in one way or another improved their standard seat cushions from suppliers a varied as 'Dunlopillo', 'PJM' and 'MGB Hive'. A mixed response. Some, having modified their seat cushions found no improvement, others were delighted. From those that have not modified their seat cushions explained that they were 'comfy as standard' and 'after 16 years they are now moulded very nicely to my shape'. Whilst two others were thinking it may be a good idea for the future.

Modification No 33: Upgrading Cloth Covered Seats to Leather.

This modification caused a little confusion with No 32 above. 9 (50%) members have upgraded their seats to leather by various means. Coincidentally 4 members included this modification as part of No 32, the seat cushions being improved by either new leather seats or rebuilt with leather seat kits from PJM. 2 members purchased cars with leathers seats already fitted, others used suppliers such as Moss, Club (MGOCP?) and MBG Hive. Most appear to be pleased with the modification, supported by comments for example. 'Still the best look I can imagine', 'Expensive but worth their money' and 'Looks and feels nice'. However from those who prefer not to have leather seats we hear they don't like nonstandard seats, they look awful and are unpleasant in hot weather. Peter Lackey has it on his project list for next year. Finally one member included comments in No 32 that he fitted MX 5 cloth seats, he and his passenger are both 'delighted'. Your secret's OK with me Tony!

Modification No 34: Installing Air Conditioning.

Another zero take-up although it came up in the initial survey. Those that commented suggested opening a window or the sun roof and enjoy the car. Daniel Heyer, suggested I look out of the window! But Bob Owen mused it would be nice at times, for example in Italian traffic. Kai Knickmann explained 'Some Like It Hot'.

Modification No 36: Fitting an Upgraded Heater Matrix and Fan.

Because most owners consider the original equipment is inefficient, 7 (39%) members upgraded their cars during an overhaul of the ventilation system or rebuild of the car. The most popular supplier being MGOC. Those that haven't modified their car, two thought their system worked well and others saw no need to modify because the car gets hot and they do not use the car during the winter months.

Modification No 37: Fitting a 'Timber' Dashboard.

By 'Timber' of course we mean 'Burr Walnut', 'Burr Elm' and variants or even 'Carbon Fibre'. 4 (22.2%) members have modified their cars, liked by those who thought it enhanced the interior and gave the car a 'more upmarket' look in keeping with the V8. Definitely not one for the member who likes his car to be original. I say no more – you either love it or hate it!

Modification No 38: Fitting an aftermarket Sunroof.

9 + 2 (61%) members have a sunroof fitted to their cars, 6 were fitted by previous owners, or were a factory optional extra. Generally those members who have them fitted like them very much, confirming the open roof is a very pleasant experience up to 60 MPH in good weather. Those that don't, are either concerned about cutting the roof or find them unacceptable.

Modification No 39: Fitting a new Front Spoiler or Air Dam.

8 (44.4%) members have a front spoiler or air dam fitted to their car. The primary reason is to improve engine cooling and reduce front-end lift at speed. Richard Ashmore had one fitted when the car was in daily use and found it reduced lift at 100+ MPH. He no longer drives that fast, so has removed it as he prefers the look without it. Steve Bowley's car came with one fitted and he replaced it with a new one which he painted and fitted himself. Suppliers mentioned were Moss, MGOC, and Frontline. Tony Lake saved 40 Kg from his rubber bumper car by converting the car to the 'Sebring' look by using a kit from MGB Hive. He says he likes the looks, but opinions are divided. Those that do not have this modification consider it to be ugly. Nobody mentioned the danger of low kerbs.

Modification No 40: Fitting High Security Locks to Doors and Tailgate.

Surprisingly this modification didn't arouse much interest, perhaps because it was at the end of the survey, I'm sure there must be an expert somewhere who can explain. 7 (39%) members have high security locks fitted, some as part of a restoration project others as an upgrade for enhanced security. As Bob Owen explains, 'Car was broken into in Italy by a crook simply using a screwdriver and existing lock damaged'. 'All locks subsequently changed by Beech Hill Garage'. Gavin Bailey has used this type of lock for years, primarily for a better fit into the door skin. Finally Kai Knickmann thought maybe he should fit some.

'Is there a modification you wish was available for the MGB GT V8?'

Here I will list the modifications suggested by members. I assume by the enthusiasm emanating from the text, most of the modifications were fitted by the suggesters. Listed in order as received: Tubular Manifolds & Stainless Steel Exhausts: Fuel Tanks: Wheels (& Tyres): DAB Radio: Engine Modifications including Camshaft Upgrades: Daytime Running Lights: Smart Screen Wiper Delay: Interior Light Dimmer: Panhard Rod: Larger Diameter Front Anti-roll Bar: Engine Torque Stay: Rubber Strips in Guttering: Window Surrounds to fit Doors – (Made from window channels inside a door?). *I must ask Julian to explain that one to me!* Stainless Steel Exhaust (Very good value for money): Oil Pump Upgrades: Relocation of Earth Points for Front Lamps and Indicators, to a dry location. A 'sobering' thought from Richard Ashmore, 'I much prefer to keep my car original'. 'There are not many left'.

Conclusion

An underlying thought I had whilst compiling this report was, as we review the many modifications suggested, it will occur to many, 'that's a good idea – perhaps I'll try it'. The type of people we are and the type of car we drive and enjoy, naturally leads us to discussion and sharing of ideas and, of course, opinions. I believe if you are joining a group of enthusiasts as a new boy, you only have to ask someone 'Is that your car?' and you won't be able to stop them talking! This is how I have found these survey results, so many people are passionate about their car and modifications they have made. For any given modification, one man will applaud it stating it has transformed his car; whilst others will condemn it because it's not to their liking.

Many modifications we have discussed are reversible, therefore the concern some have regarding originality are relieved. Those based on safety cannot be ignored and even the most originality conscious owner should take note.

We have learnt many things, of modifications available to us by discussion with fellow members and I hope those all who read this report will find it both interesting and useful. My thanks to all who took the time to complete the on-line survey, to Victor Smith for his drive and enthusiasm and finally to Roger Aldridge for the idea and initial report on the RV8.

Ralph Coulson.
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