



### Early pre-production MGBGT V8 used for publicity and press reviews

One of the pre-production cars which featured in a number of press reviews in the months after the launch of the model in August 1973 and BL publicity was Black Tulip 0120. When you read the review in Motor Sport magazine in October 1973, the car clearly had a very hard time being driven frequently at high speeds. Former owner Richard Kelly and current owner Joe Bannister, provide information about the car over the years.

### Motor Sport magazine's road test

The frank verdict of the Motor Sport magazine's [review](#) of their road 1,900 mile road test of the new MGBGT V8 model in October 1973 was "six years too late, comfortable seating, poor ride, excessive wind noise and fast and economical". Rather than test the car immediately after its launch in August 1973, they had waited for a lengthy 1,700 mile continental trip to test the car in a demanding Grand Touring role. So quite a tough exercise for any car and particularly so when you read of the sustained speed the car endured during a trip of barely 141 hours - hardly "grand touring", more like a "pedal to the metal" thrash!

The test report mentions "this remarkable alloy V8 had succeeded in propelling the 110mph body design at cruising speeds of 120 to 130mph for miles on end, on one occasion at 121mph average being maintained for almost 100 miles at night"! Then the report adds "in spite of this hard usage the overall fuel consumption worked out at exactly 18mpg . . . more representative of what the normal driving customer can expect!" going on to suggest that might be "17 to 26mpg." Of course today most V8 enthusiasts would see at least 27mpg even driven in a moderately spirited way rather than at the very high speeds above, and often 30mpg can be seen at normal cruising and touring speeds. Joe Bannister reports achieving between 32 and 34mpg at a constant 65 to 70mph. **This supports received wisdom that in practice V8 fuel consumption is little different to the standard 1800 MGB engine.**

### Life after the publicity and road test role

After a tough period at the hands of magazine road testers and its use as a demonstrator, the car was beginning to show it was suffering from hard use – not least the body, suspension and engine. Richard Kelly says "I came across the V8 quite by accident and never realised its history until after I had bought it. Sadly it was then in a sorry state needing a great deal of work". The car was

then [extensively restored](#) in a series of sessions at the late Geoff Allen's workshop in Abingdon. That work included a full engine rebuild and a ground up nut and bolt **restoration**.

Richard enjoyed driving the V8 but in an article in Safety Fast! in 1990 he mentioned the dilemma he and so many V8 owners in the late 1980s and early 1990s faced with increasing family commitments of how to afford a sensible family car whilst keeping the V8? Well as Richard was writing his article he ended by saying he had bought his "third runabout - a 1978 Allegro 1300, the Austin Embarrassment - while we postpone yet again the decision on HOH 932L"! However Richard decided that he had to sell the V8 and entered it in the ADT auction held at Beaulieu in May 1990 with **the estimated sale price** shown as £9,000 to £11,000. It sold for £7,800 bought by **John Spencer** in East Anglia.

The V8 was later acquired by **Joe Bannister** in July 1997. **Joe also owns an MCGGT** but says the V8 is his favourite as it is "smooth, swift and utterly dependable". **Joe calls the V8 "HOH"** as its registration plate is HOH 932L.

### Enjoyable touring with the MGBGT V8

Joe has taken part in the annual Regency Run in the V8 and over nearly 20 years has driven "HOH" the length and breadth of the country including **a tour of the Scottish Highlands and Islands**. **Relaxing touring in stunning scenery is an ideal experience in the V8 especially in the fresh air provided through an open Webasto sun roof.**



Above: taking a rest in Harris on the Outer Hebrides and top, "oh for the open road" on the Isle of Skye.



Waiting for the Calmac ferry to Mull at the Railway Pier, Oban.