

Guide to applying for a tax class change and a NIL value road tax disc for a car built in 1973

Since the Budget in March 2013 we have known a car built in 1973 would become road tax exempt from 1st April 2014. From a number of reports from fellow members on their experience of getting the taxation class changed from PLG to "Historic Vehicle" for an eligible car and their applying for a NIL value disc, the procedure has gradually become clearer. So far we have seen no clear information from DVLA setting out where and how an application should be made so this guide is based on our current understanding of how to make an application and reports from fellow members on how their applications have been handled by either the Post Office or DVLA. [See our updated flowchart.](#)

Free tax disc but you will need to apply

The first point to note is that unless you take action to apply for "Historic Vehicle" status for an eligible car, an application for a road tax disc will not automatically result in your receiving a free disc - or "NIL value" disc as it is known. That application would have been made with a visit to your local DVLA office but those offices closed at the end of 2013, so now you will need to send your application to DVLA Swansea. However in some cases you will be able to make the application in person at a local Post Office but, so far as we can tell from fellow members' reports of their experience with applications at a Post Office, that will only be possible for a car **first registered in 1973 or in 1974 up to and including 7th January.**

For a car built in 1973 but first registered in 1974 on or after 8th January it appears from fellow members' reports that the application needs to be sent to DVLA Swansea and include a BMHIT Heritage certificate which shows the build date of the car was in 1973. The DVLA department handling these cases is called the Central Capture Unit - I just hope their remit doesn't go as far as capturing either the car or the applicant!

Cars built in 1973 and first registered in 1973

We believe that because the DVLA vehicle database records the **date of first registration** and shows that in line B of section 4 of the V5C, DVLA accepts that if the V5C for the car shows a date of first registration in 1973 or in 1974 up to and including 7th January, then the car must



have been built in 1973 or earlier – it's a useful concession noted on form INF34.

Some fellow members with a car first registered in 1973 report they have taken their application to a local Post Office where the counter staff have been able to handle their application using their computer link to the DVLA systems. During the process the applicant has been required to enter "Historic Vehicle" in section 7 of the original V5C and sign and date the declaration in section 8, then the counter staff take the V5C and issue a NIL value disc for the car to the applicant. The local Post Office counter staff will then send the original V5C off to DVLA so a new red V5C can be issued by DVLA showing "Historic Vehicle" in the tax class in section 4. That V5C will be sent by mail directly to the registered keeper.

Footnote confusion

You will see in the footnote to section 7 of most **existing red V5Cs** that "the tax class shown in section 4 can only be changed when taxing. Please apply to your **DVLA local office**". As the DVLA local offices closed at the end of 2013 applications now have to go to DVLA Swansea. An interesting detail spotted when examining one of the **new red V5Cs** is the footnote to section 7 has now been amended to read "the tax class shown in section 4 can only be changed when taxing. Please apply at your **nearest Post Office**". You will see later in this article that with tax class changes to Historic Vehicle the success rate at local Post Offices is variable – some counter staff at local Post Offices have declined to process an application saying they have not had any information from DVLA on whether they can handle these cases or how to process this process them.

Despite this uncertainty, if you have a car first registered in 1973 or on or before 7th January 1974 it is worth trying as a first step

to have an application for a tax class change processed by a local Post Office. If the counter staff decline to process the application then the next option described below - sending an application to DVLA Swansea - will be necessary.

Cars built in 1973 but first registered in 1974 or later

We understand the existing DVLA vehicle database does not have the build dates for cars built in 1973 only the date of first registration, so if your car was not first registered in 1973 but in 1974 after 7th January then you will need to submit an application for a tax class change to "Historic Vehicle" to DVLA Swansea enclosing evidence of the build date in 1973.

Applications to DVLA Swansea

To prepare your application to change the taxation class to "Historic Vehicle" you will need to obtain a DVLA road tax application form **V10** and complete the details ensuring you state the car is a "Historic Vehicle" in the section for the tax class. You will also need your existing **red V5C** (UK Registration Certificate) and in section 7 - Changes to Current Vehicle you need to enter "Historic Vehicle" in the taxation class box (see above). You will also need to enclose your Heritage certificate, current MOT certificate and certificate of motor insurance. The DVLA forms are available online from the DVLA website or from a local Post Office. www.gov.uk/dvlaforms

What evidence can I provide as proof of the build date?

Our recommended document is a Heritage certificate issued by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust (BMIHT) at Gaydon which holds the MG production archives. In an earlier contact with the archivist at the BMHIT Gaydon he indicated that the date

accepted by DVLA as the "built" date for a Factory MGBGV8 is the "Date through paint finishing". This date is shown on the Heritage certificates that BMIHT produces with the production numbers and data for individual cars. Those Heritage certificates bear the BMIHT seal to authenticate them. Details of how you can purchase a Heritage certificate online are available in the Archive Services section of the BMIHT website. www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk

Postal record of your application

As your tax class change and NIL value disc application will contain important documents - V5C, MOT and insurance certificates and a Heritage certificate - we strongly advise using a Royal Mail recorded delivery service or even the registered post option to be certain you have evidence of your posting those documents to DVLA. It will also be prudent to take good quality photocopies of each document so you can retain them.

How can I get a preliminary indication of whether my car was built in 1973?

The V8 Register can provide an indication of the "build date" for your car from a handmade copy of the Factory production control records made by the late Geoff Allen in the last weeks before the MG Plant finally closed as he was concerned the original records might be binned and lost for ever. As it was a handwritten copy we cannot guarantee the accuracy of the data in every case but so far, from the checks made comparing that data with the information on several Heritage certificates from BMHIT Gaydon, there were no signs of serious variances in key dates like the "Date through paint finishing". So for the modest charge of only £5 you can buy a Factory records search for your V8 online on our V8 Grapevine website. www.v8grapevine.net

How have members' applications gone?

Paul Batho posted an update on the V8 Bulletin Board saying "I am pleased to report that I was able to submit the tax class change to Historic at my local Post Office and be issued with a 'free' tax disc yesterday. My car (with an October 1973 date of manufacture on the V5C) had previously been on SORN for a month; this did not appear to make a difference and the Post Office did not ask to see the MOT certificate, insurance etc. I was particularly anxious to get this done yesterday morning as I needed the car to go to the airport for a business trip in the afternoon. With the new disc installed on the screen of the V8, I fired her up . . . and could not get the car into

gear! With no time to investigate, the elderly Magnette was pressed into service and now sits forlornly at the airport as I write - I hope!

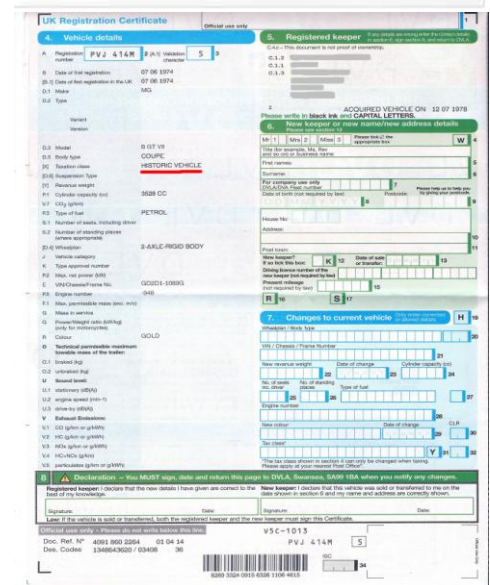
Victor Smith reports "I have just received in the post a letter from DVLA enclosing the NIL value tax disc (copy alongside) for my MGBGV8 built in December 1973 and first registered in June 1974. The DVLA covering letter dated 1st April 2014 says "Please find enclosed your new tax disc. I am also returning any original documents that you sent with your application. If you sent a Registration Certificate (V5C) for changes or an "Application for a vehicle registration certificate" (V62), a new V5C will follow shortly". This is clearly a standard letter because the original documents with my application (including the valuable Heritage certificate) were returned over a week ago and I am not quite sure how the V62 might come into this process, but nonetheless what a relief! Two days later he reported "I received a new red V5C in the post this morning with the taxation class shown as "Historic Vehicle" – see alongside. So that completes the tax class change and NIL value disc application".

Mike Dunlop reports "the postman has just been and I am now the proud owner of a new red V5C document with HOH 901 L given a new taxation class of "Historic Vehicle". I'm just waiting now for the tax exempt tax disc to arrive, which possibly comes from a different department. I must say I'm pretty impressed with the service I have received from DVLA. I was expecting a fight but they have been as good as gold". Mike has an early pre-production MGBGV8 which was used for public relations and magazine test work. Our copy of the Factory production show his car was commissioned on 8th March 1973 and went through paint finishing on 6th June 1973, plus of course it was first registered in 1973 ahead of the launch. That made his tax class change application relatively straightforward.

John Fry reported "the tax disc on my V8 (an early 1973 car) expired on 31st March 2014 and today I went to my local Post Office armed with V5C, MOT, insurance certificate and a licence renewal. It could not have been simpler, they scanned in the V5C and their computer told them the vehicle could be amended to Historic tax class (which they were not able to do last week) and they changed the V5C to show this, I signed the declaration and voila a free tax disc was handed to me They did not want a completed V10. All that remains is for DVLA to send me a fresh V5C".

Brian Western in Cornwall reports "my recent attempts to apply for a tax exemption

disc from my local Post Office didn't work, they had never issued one before so I had

to bundle all my relevant information up and consign it to the tender mercy of the DVLA in Swansea. So goodness knows when I'll see it returned?"

Graham Smith sought advice with his car which was commissioned on 6th September and went through paint finishing on 27th September 1973 and then was first registered on 1st January 1974. Hoping to avoid the expense and delay of getting a Heritage certificate, he took his application to his local Post Office and was disappointed to find they knew nothing of how to process his case. So as his car was clearly built in 1973 he is now getting a Heritage certificate and will send his application to DVLA Swansea. Unfortunately he wanted to attend a classic car meeting with his V8 in mid-April so he has the dilemma of whether to pay for six months road tax and then later claim a refund for the unused months when his tax free application is processed or simply keep his V8 off the road until his Heritage certificate arrives and his DVLA application is processed.