



Retrofitting Daytime Running Lights to a classic car

Many classic cars built in the 60s, 70s and 80s, and even the 90s in the case of the RV8, have relatively modest lighting as the original equipment. So most owners of MGBs and MG V8s have binned the sealed beams fitted as original equipment and gone for a set of new lenses and halogen bulbs which has transformed the headlights from candle power to near modern standards of auto lighting. But often the original rear lights are woefully at a low level of illumination when compared with modern rear lights at night. So whilst a headlight upgrade is mainly to aid forward vision at night, the essential concern which is increasingly a matter classic car enthusiasts will have to consider is the **relative lighting standards** of the back of their car when compared with more modern vehicles. With increasingly brighter lighting on new and modern vehicles the **relative visibility** has become a major factor in safety for classic car enthusiasts and other road users like motorcyclists. So how can a classic car enthusiast improve the relative visibility of their car particularly at night and in adverse conditions but also during the daytime?

The first option is an **LED auto bulb upgrade** for your front sidelights, rear stop and sidelights and possibly the indicators too. The bulbs are brighter and as LEDs consumer considerably less power which is an advantage with a classic car, not least for an ageing wiring loom.

The next or parallel option is a **headlamp conversion to a new pair of reflectors and lenses with halogen bulbs**. The transformation can be truly stunning when compared with ageing sealed beams.

The third option is to **fit a set of Daytime Running Lights or DRLs** to the front of your car which provide bright lights which the promoters claim will increase the visibility of the car particularly when more new cars on our roads have them fitted as standard. So we are back to the relative visibility concern again.

DRLs are controversial - those in favour of daytime running lights claim they significantly reduce road deaths and serious injuries, while those against object to the constant glare of headlights during the daytime and have voiced concern that motorcycle riders may become less conspicuous, even with headlights on.

A European Commission study in 2006 suggested that a substantial number of

casualties could be prevented across the EU with a positive benefit-to-cost ratio when the costs of fitting lamps and the environmental cost of running them were taken into account. A later UK Department for Transport (DfT) study confirmed the Commission's findings that there would be a net reduction in accidents, but cast doubts about whether the benefit would outweigh the costs. The UK study also concluded that dedicated DRLs could improve the visibility of cars in dim light without reducing the conspicuity (an EU term) of motorcyclists.

European legislation adopted in 2008 required dedicated daytime running lights to be fitted to all new 'types' of passenger cars and small delivery vans since February 2011. Trucks and buses followed from August 2012. DRLs are designed to come on automatically when the engine is started - all other lights should remain off. There is no requirement to retro-fit DRLs to existing cars and no Europe-wide requirement for drivers of cars without DRLs to drive with headlights on during the day. If you're driving abroad, check for local rules. DRLs don't have to be separate lights - some car manufacturers combine them with the front position lamps (side lights) in which case the DRLs will dim when the headlights are turned on.

Are DRLs also becoming a fashion or car styling item?

Far from being considered primarily a 'safety feature', it is clear many car manufacturers and the motoring press are treating **DRLs as a 'stylish addition' to new cars**, concentrating on the look of DRLs as adding character to a car rather than simply contributing to its safety. So with brands like Audi and Land Rover the DRLs take on the form of "surprised eyebrows" in your rear view mirror conveying a degree of assertiveness which some drivers feel uncomfortable with, reminding them of the classic BMW advert from the early 70s with a BMW in the rear view mirror and the **classic strapline - "move over!"**.

Are DRLs too bright?

Some pressure groups like "Lightmare" are particularly worried that the European standards that have been introduced require lights that are too powerful for our normal use and the lights on current cars, particularly new cars, are now far too bright to be safe. The regulations (UN ECE Regulation 87, Revision 2: Daytime running lamps) are clear in terms of the **specification of the light** (brightness and angles, construction and approval) and the **use** (to make the vehicle more easily visible during daytime).

How can a set of DRLs be fitted to a classic MG?

Fellow member Vic Todman has fitted a set of DRLs at the outer edges of the grille on his MGBV8 Roadster, located next to the inside face of the grille. His decision to retrofit DRLs was after another vehicle had almost crashed into his V8 and he then felt his MG needed much more visibility at the front. So he investigated the use of LED DRLs but didn't want to add anything that would spoil the lines of the car, be too easily seen or involve gluing units to the bodywork. On eBay he found some miniature LEDs intended for fitting to motorcycles which were 35 mm long with 25 mm of 9mm screw thread and an 18mm diameter lens. He was able to fit them so they would shine between the vertical slats in the radiator grille. The LEDs were on offer at about £2.60 including postage by worldnet2012 listed as 2x DC 12V 3W LED DRL Eagle Eye Car Motorcycle Daytime Running Tail Backup Light. Although their wattage is lower than a standard sidelight, LEDs emit about 80 lumens/watt compared to about 16 lumens/watt for an incandescent lamp. So a 3 watt LED should yield about three times as much light as a traditional 5 watt sidelight.

He had to move the horns to improve airflow to the radiator and was able to make small brackets in 0.7 mm stainless steel for the LEDs, picking up the redundant mounting holes. The mount could be sandwiched between the inner wing and the horn bracket; with space for the LED to be clear of the horn and to align between the first and second grille slats. He was not sure that one LED would be bright enough to show up much at 50 yards, so he went for two LEDs on each side on revised mounts. In terms of aesthetics less of the bracket is visible. The LEDs need a separate earth connection to a relay to switch off as the main lights are turned on. In terms of daylight visibility he could see a single 3 watt LED is significantly brighter than the standard 5 watt sidelight and the quality of the light is definitely more concentrated.

Vic Todman's MGV8 is certainly more visible now both for day and night driving.



Marshal of the Year – Marion Quarrington

RV8 member Marion Quarrington was on marshal duty at Silverstone on Saturday 25th October and had a surprise later in the day when she received the "Marshal of the Year" award for her hard work as a marshal at motor racing events. The award was made at the Annual General Meeting of the South Midlands Region of the British Motor Racing Marshals Club held at the Saracens Head in Towcester.

Seasonal offers for V8 enthusiasts

We have a range of special offers for the run up to Christmas including two books - a limited reprint of "**RV8 – the Manufacturing Story**" by Chris Allan and George Wilder and a few rare signed copies of "**MG V8**", a book by David Knowles who tells the fascinating stories of some of the most powerful and exciting cars ever to wear the evocative MG octagon badge. It was published in early 2013 by Crowood Press. There are links to reviews of both books and how to buy these special offers via links at www.v8register.net/sf/more.htm

Clive Wheatley mgv8parts has a selection of parts on special offer as has **Brown & Gammons**. A popular present for a V8 enthusiast is a **set of workshop notes** and they are now available on a USB Twister memory stick which is proving very popular with members as a convenient way of having a great number of useful service and parts tips and advice to hand. For members with an open top MGV8 we have a **V8 Register cap** in a heavy cotton fabric with a golden tan suede covered pre-curved peak and a Velcro strap at the back plus a sweatband and breather eyelets for ultimate comfort. The cap is fully adjustable and comes in bottle green and gold. A **V8 Register key ring** is our most popular item

with a metal tag bearing the V8 Register logo attached to a real leather fob.

Major MGV8 restoration

Dr Chris Ward at Applecross in the Highlands is close to finishing a major restoration of his MGV. He recalls "November 2013 saw a convergence occur, **nostalgia** in the desire to own a white BGT as I had in 1975 and **ambition** in that I had always coveted a V8. I was fortunate enough to trip over an original one owner chrome bumper white V8 with 59,000 miles on the clock just needing some TLC. With the car came a remarkably comprehensive history including a log of all fuel purchased. I am also fortunate to have a good friend who recently retired from his business as a coach builder. We soon decided to carry out a nut and bolt rebuild with some minor modifications. The car was stripped down to the monocoque: sills and wings replaced and minor repairs carried out to the floor. The Autumn Leaf cloth interior was removed and replaced with black leather/vinyl. The engine and gearbox were removed and serviced, not rebuilt but all ancillaries were either replaced or refurbished. A complete rewire was carried out. All suspension and brakes were replaced.

The whole shell was repainted in the original Glacier White. I have retained the original wheels but am currently running on 15 inch anthracite Minilite copies. At the end of October the car was about to be presented for an MOT test. My intention is to use her and not just retain her as a museum piece. The whole process has been expensive but very rewarding given the outcome, an attractive practical and useable car. I am very grateful to Dave Bush (master coachbuilder), Vincent Norton (vast mechanical experience) and Steve at Moss Bradford for his parts knowledge and service."



Checking the breather pipes on an SU fuel pump

Peter Cook highlights the need to ensure the breather pipes are connected to the vents on an SU fuel pump to avoid the ingress of water. Here he explains.

My V8 seemed to be suffering from fuel starvation problems in that anything over quarter throttle created an induction noise but no additional power. Releasing the accelerator resulted in a minor, very fleeting surge in power. To find the cause and a remedy I started with the cheap possibilities by changing the under-bonnet fuel filter and the spark plugs. This didn't solve the problem so heeding Barrie Jones' advice I removed the petrol pump and took it over to his workshop for inspection.

The fuel pump is the modern SU type, that is, the traditional SU pump but electronically controlled rather than with the original points under the cap. The electronics end seemed fine on inspection, but when it was subjected to a 12 volt charge the pump sounded quite unwell.

Further dismantling revealed the cause. Inside the main body the diaphragm assembly seemed fine until it was removed when a large amount of rust was discovered inside the main body of the pump, the coil housing. It was apparent that the armature spring, the spindle and the diaphragm backing plate were all seriously corroded. The accumulation of rust and the rust on the spindle meant that the spindle's up and down movement was seriously constricted. Eventually the spring would have been the first to disintegrate completely such was the severity of the rust. Most of the components have to be pure steel given steel's magnetic properties so a stainless steel or brass solution is not possible.

So what had caused the rust? The answer is that whenever the pump had been fitted, although the plastic vent pipe was correctly fitted to the vent on the pump, the rest of the plastic pipe was loosely wrapped around the adjacent battery cage. Therefore as the vent operated, especially in heavy rain and on sodden roads, it had been drawing in moisture from the outside

which was then rusting the pump's innards. The correct destination of the vent pipe should be through a grommet in the spare wheel area about six inches to the left of where the wiring loom enters that area. The plastic pipe should be topped with a 'T' piece as is used on the windscreen washer assembly. This way the pump can breathe but does not ingest water.

Interestingly, my version of the MGB Haynes manual mentions the removal of the vent pipe when removing the fuel pump, but says nothing about the importance of the vent pipe and its whereabouts on replacement.

Fuel pump on a chrome bumper V8 needs the two breather pipes

Roger Williams mentions this in his book (Expert guide to MGB problems and how to fix them, published by Veloce) saying "the fuel pump on chrome bumper cars needs the two breather pipes. The top breather pipe (arrowed) was omitted from rubber bumper cars since the top vent was protected by the boot. Failure to use the airtight breather pipes applicable to your car will result in an ingress of water". That can then damage the fuel pump resulting in poor fuel supply.

200th RV8 Elm Burr gearknob

Unbelievably, more than 200 MG RV8s worldwide now sport a Starkey gearknob. Having acquired his Le Mans Green RV8 in 2004, Terry Starkey thought the scruffy beige leather gearknob marred the superb finish of the burr elm dash and door cappings. After a fruitless search for a replacement burr elm gearknob there was no choice but to have one made. Together with friend and fellow RV8 enthusiast, John Cumming, a design was created from which two gearknobs were made by a highly skilled local woodturner from his small stock of precious burr elm. An engineer friend developed the specially shaped insert that holds the leather gearlever gaiter in place. The first two gearknobs soon attracted attention from fellow enthusiasts and the rest, as they say, is history!

Gearknob Number 200 is a fine piece of craftsmanship. The laser cut, stainless steel RV8 logo, held in an Octagon, is carefully inlaid into the wood and sealed with a hard, durable finish. You can win this superb gearknob and raise much needed funds for MacMillan Cancer Support by entering a draw. Each ticket is £10 - maximum of three tickets per person. For details of how to get a ticket please contact Terry Starkey at terry@starkey.uk.com. Everyone involved in making this special 200th gearknob has given their time and effort free.



Preparing a classic car battery for winter

As you think about preparing your car for the winter layover in the garage, **Nic Houslip** feels we need to spare a thought for the battery. Here he sets out his tips.

The humble lead acid battery has served the motor industry for nigh on one hundred years in many shapes and sizes and as far as I can see there is nothing on the horizon that will replace it for vehicle starting and lighting applications. Modern batteries are now so good that on our new cars they are a hidden component that rarely fails, rarely needs attention but in our older cars, even a modern battery can benefit from a little care and attention.

Open the inspection hatch on the platform behind the seats in an MGB and look at the battery - is it dirty and is there corrosion around the terminals or on the battery carrier? A dirty battery will hold moisture and this can lead to a small current flowing between the terminals which, when added to the self-discharge that occurs inside the battery and the drain of the clock, will lead to a flat battery when you need it most.

I use a very simple method of cleaning the battery and it works for the battery carrier as well. Pour a recently boiled kettle of water over the terminals and the battery top and the carrier and that will remove all the grime and the corrosion instantly; in a few moments the top will dry off and if it doesn't then a wipe with paper towel will complete it. To prevent further corrosion occurring on the terminals Halfords have a useful aid called "No Crode", a reddish coloured jelly that you smear liberally over the terminals. If you do not have any, or cannot find it, you can easily make your own. Use half a teaspoon of Vaseline mixed with some Bicarbonate of Soda. I use the other end of the teaspoon as a measure for the soda. It will stop any corrosion just as well.

A **battery maintenance charger or conditioner** connected permanently to the battery over the winter period will do a good job of monitoring the battery and topping it up when its terminal voltage falls. Leaving a battery in a discharged state shortens its life, so is best avoided. There are a number of

maintenance chargers on the market but I have found the AccuMate particularly good over the past three years.

The **AccuMate battery conditioner** is designed to charge and monitor batteries automatically with no danger of over-charging regardless of time connected to the battery. AccuMate is suitable for all 6V and 12V lead acid batteries from 4Ah to 75Ah, making it perfect for owners of vehicles which are not used on a daily basis like classic and sports cars.

The operation of an AccuMate is completely automatic. It uses a 1.2A constant current charge as the main stage, while monitoring the battery voltage. When this reaches a pre-set cut off point, it then switches to an intermediate constant voltage 'float charge' and an orange LED lights up. Only when the AccuMate has detected that the battery is properly charged will it switch to the final stage for correct long-term battery maintenance and indicate a green LED. If at any time the AccuMate detects the battery has discharged, it will automatically revert to the constant current stage.

I fitted a cable to a convenient live point; on the RV8 - I used the alternator terminal - and then it is a matter of simply lifting the bonnet and connecting the AccuMate lead to the socket on a short lead from the alternator. The plug and socket supplied are quite robust and the one connected to the alternator has a rubber cap to prevent shorting. Alternatively the crocodile clips supplied can be used. With the GTV8 the cigar lighter socket is live so you can pop the leads on a plug and leave it connected in the lighter socket over the winter.

For more information on winter layups see: www.v8register.net/sf/more.htm

Paying road tax by Direct Debit

As part of the end of paper tax disc changes, DVLA has offered a Direct Debit as an additional way to pay for vehicle tax. This will be available for customers who need to tax their vehicle from 1st November 2014. The DD payment can be annually, 6 monthly or monthly (12 months tax paid for on a monthly basis). With a DD arrangement in place, the renewal of vehicle road tax will be automatic and the DD payments will continue to be taken providing an MOT is in place at the point when tax renewal is due.

Payments will continue automatically until you tell DVLA to stop taking them from your account or you cancel the DD with your bank. Valid insurance should also be in place and this will be noted on the askMID database. The DD will be cancelled and

payments automatically stopped when you tell DVLA that you no longer have the vehicle, or the vehicle has been taken off the road and a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) has been made. The DD will also be cancelled if a vehicle is scrapped by an Authorised Treatment Facility (ATF), exported or if the tax class of the vehicle is changed to an exempt duty tax class. The DD scheme can't be used for the first registration vehicles and some other cases.

For more information on how to check road tax, insurance and MOT status for a vehicle see: www.v8register.net/sf/more.htm

Buying a vehicle?

From 1 October 2014 the tax is no longer transferable so you must tax it before you use it.

Simpler | Better | Safer
www.gov.uk/dvla/nomoretaxdisc

Road tax refunds

Following the end of paper tax discs at the beginning of October the unexpired road tax is no longer transferable when you sell or buy a car. On selling the car the existing road tax ends and the seller is able to obtain a refund for the unused complete months and the **buyer has to tax the car before using it on the road** using the New Keeper Supplement (V5C/2), part of the vehicle registration certificate (V5C), online or by using the DVLA automated phone service - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0300 123 4321. Alternatively, you may wish to visit a Post Office® branch.

DVLA will automatically issue a refund when they received a notification from the person named on DVLA vehicle register that the vehicle has been sold or transferred, has been removed from the road and the person on the vehicle register has made a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN), the vehicle register has changed the tax class on the vehicle to an exempt duty tax class, scrapped at an ATF, or has been exported.

Replica tax discs

Some MG enthusiasts may wish to continue to display a paper tax disc, either the last disc issued for the vehicle before the ending of paper tax discs or a replica paper tax disc, probably the one that was issued when the vehicle was first registered. Creative Tax Discs do a very good replica service for less than £10 at www.creativetaxdiscs.co.uk