

# V8



Roger Butler with their RV8s and Mike Russell with his MGBGT V8. The photograph shows Roger Butler (Woodcote Green 1655) from Devon at the Fishponds House Country Hotel at the finish of this year's ACE 2007 on May 13th giving the car yet another early bath!

## V8 events in August

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August there is another of the popular Sunday lunchtime **V8 gatherings at the Shoulder of Mutton** on Hazeley Heath in Hampshire, just north of Hook and south of Reading. From around noon with Sunday lunch or bar snacks available. The **Goodwood Revival** race meeting at the end of the month (Friday 31<sup>st</sup> to Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>) is a popular annual event for many classic car enthusiasts who enjoy the mouthwatering cars, breathtaking driving on the track and the wonderful period feel of a race meeting with a mid 1960s ambiance. That is from a combination of the pre mid-sixties cars on and off the track and also the willingness of most people attending to dress in a style and clothing of the period. In fact it is a good opportunity to chase out the moth from an old and much loved sports jacket! Well over the years a group of V8 enthusiasts have met up over the three days and shared a stroll around the circuit and paddock and watched practice and the racing. Full details on the V8 website and contacts.

## V8 gathering at Silverstone

After some five years of dry meetings at Silverstone, the Club's annual International MG Meeting 2007 at Silverstone was wet and very muddy underfoot. The ground was so waterlogged that parking on the grass adjacent to the marquee was banned and was switched to a section of the Club straight nearby. There was the usual V8 Marquee which fortunately was much larger than usual this year providing plenty of shelter from the elements! Inside V8 enthusiasts found a warm welcome and refreshments.

On Friday evening over thirty V8 members and their friends met up at the Star Inn at Sulgrave for an informal supper which followed a visit earlier in the day to the brewery at Hook Norton Brewery and lunch at the Pear Tree Inn nearby.

On Saturday many V8 members visited the V8 Marquee during the day to meet up with fellow enthusiasts, check up on spares offered by Bryan Ditchman and Clive Wheatley, get a fleece or polo shirt from the V8 Regalia stall, or buy a workshop notes CD. Despite a dire weather forecast on Radio 4 in the morning, the rain kept away until late afternoon when a short but very heavy downpour hit Silverstone. Then surprisingly the evening was bathed in sunshine for the V8BBQ so members and their friends were able to sit out and enjoy a social supper. Clive Wheatley's team worked throughout the afternoon and provided over 110 barbecued suppers - a major catering operation in "the field" with excellent cooking and salads.

The V8 AGM on Sunday saw the whole V8 Committee stand down when a temporary chairman, Gordon Hesketh-Jones, took over the meeting to manage the election of a new committee for 2007/08. Full details of the AGM are reported on the V8 website.

## V8s on the ACE Tour 2007

Another successful Atlantic Coast Express tour organised by the Devon and Cornwall Centre attracted many MG enthusiasts including Mike Lane and



## Solving a creak from an RV8 dashboard

In a V8BB posting Robert Crowson sought help solving a creak from the dashboard on his RV8. Michael O'Brien in Australia came up with a solution. Issued as RV8NOTE266 in June 2207.

Robert Crowson's query was "my dashboard creaks like a housemaid's knee when going over even minor bumps. If you push even lightly on the top roll it does the same. Does anyone have a cure for this?" Mike O'Brien responded saying "this was a problem that annoyed me. However when getting some work done on my RV8 by Gavin Brown in Tasmania, he fixed my problem by inserting some spacer washers onto the bolts holding the steering column to the dash. In my case, and I understand from Gavin, it is a common problem as the dashboard rubs on the top of the steering column causing severe creaks. Inserting the spacer washers completely eliminated the problem and he did the fix in a couple of minutes!"

## RV8 dashboard creaks like a housemaid's knee

Footnote: a copy of the diagram of the steering column (from page HO2 of the RV8 Parts Manual) is available on the V8 website to enable readers to identify the mounting bracket and fixing bolt.

## Reprogramming an RV8 alarm fob to the ECU

Jeff Swann (Woodcote Green 0519) from Leicestershire describes the do-it-yourself method for programming the RV8 alarm fob to the RV8's ECU. Issued as RV8NOTE260 in May 2007.

Many RV8s returning from Japan to the UK (including mine) were missing the elusive remote alarm fobs without which the multifunctional car alarm and engine immobiliser will not work unless a new fob is sourced and programmed to the vehicle's ECU.

It is debatable in fact whether RV8's exported to Japan were ever issued alarm fobs in the first place as it seems that the vehicle's alarm system may have contravened Japanese noise pollution laws and as such was 'outlawed'. In cases where the car is without the fob, it was necessary to take the vehicle to a specialist equipped with the Rover Testbook equipment to have a new one programmed to the car. However, after conducting extensive research into the operation of the RV8 alarm system it

became apparent that owners can perform this simple task themselves.

This sequence for programming the alarm fob is as follows and MUST be carried out within eight seconds.

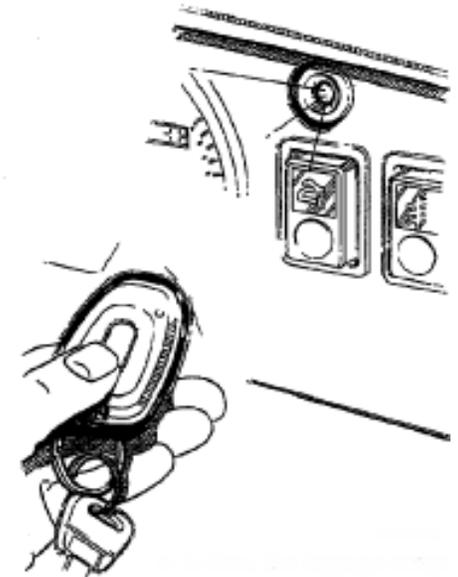
1. Switch ignition on
  2. Switch ignition off
  3. Open boot with key and leave open
  4. Switch ignition on
  5. Switch ignition off
- If the sequence is followed correctly and within the time limit, the horn will sound briefly and the red LED on the upper right of the dashboard will light and remain on for about 20-30 seconds indicating that the alarm ECU is in 'LEARN' mode. It is now possible to programme a maximum of two key fobs whilst the light is on. Continuing:
6. Press and hold down the button on the first key fob until the red LED on the dash flashes.
  7. Repeat instruction 6 for the second key fob if required.
  8. The red LED will extinguish if both key fobs have been installed correctly.

NOTE: If only one fob is programmed, after instruction 8 turn the ignition on and off to finalise programming the fob. It is better to have two keys and a helper to open the boot whilst the other person operates the ignition, but it is possible for one person to do it alone – but you do need to be nimble!

## it's possible for one person to do it – but you need to be nimble!

Both perimetric and volumetric alarms now function perfectly as does the immobiliser, but it is important to remember that for the volumetric side of the alarm to function correctly there must be no movement or displacement of air inside the car for 15 seconds after arming the alarm. Additionally, all Rover alarm immobilisers use a 'rolling code' system which means that if the remote button is pressed whilst you are away from the car, the vehicle will lose its code and the fob will not function. If this happens, press the remote fob three times next to the vehicle and on the third press the fob will re-synchronise and operate normally. This also applies if you change the battery in the fob.

## Replacement batteries for RV8 key fobs



Red LED on the upper right of the dashboard will light and remain on for about 20-30 seconds indicating that the alarm ECU is in 'LEARN' mode. (Diagram: RV8 Handbook AKM7144)

RV8 enthusiasts are strongly recommended to keep a spare set of fob batteries in the vehicle glove box. For the replacement rubber type fob currently available you need two CR 1220 (3 Volt) batteries and for the original issue plastic fob you need two DL 2016 (3 Volt) batteries. Both types of battery are freely available from advertisers on eBay and many other sources.

## Experience with Spax rear shock absorbers

Andy Torode was faced with replacing his worn out telescopic shock absorbers and in May posted a message on the V8BB for some help. This note sweeps up the helpful V8BB postings and a later email from Gordon Hesketh-Jones. He has experience of maintaining his hard working V8 as it has covered approaching 400,000 miles. The note was released as V8NOTE366 in June 2007.

I have a Spax tubular shock absorber conversion on my MGBGTV8 fitted some time ago and they are on their way out. I obtained a set of Gaz shocks to change them over, but they do not appear to be long enough. The Gaz shockers are 17.125" from centre to centre of the holes fully extended, but the existing Spax must be an inch longer measured on the car - good job I checked before getting them off! My car was a 1973 car

but was re-shelled into a rubber bumper body at some point and the ride height is quite high. Can you get replacement shock absorbers in different lengths to cover the different heights? Moss and MGOC seem to have a "one size fits all" approach according to their catalogues.

**Gordon Hesketh-Jones** responded: "Some five to six years ago I carried out development testing for Spax and fitted seven or eight different pairs of prototypes to my chrome bumper MGBGT V8, then reported the results to Spax each time after approximately 500 miles. I still have a few pairs in my garage and they measure from 13.75" up to 15.75" centre to centre. How were you measuring the Spax – were they compressed/static or was your car jacked up?"

The old Spax which I first fitted 15 or 18 years ago were indeed very long and could be seen to be sticking out below the bottom of the rear springs. For all modern telescopic you need to take off the plates under the springs and reverse them side to side. This is a complicated procedure but I can send you step by step instructions if you let me have your email address. Pretty well all after-market shock absorber manufacturers produce upper mounting plates with the stud boss off centre, so that reversing the plate will usually cope with 1" to 1.5" of different shock absorber length. On the Bilstein, Koni and Spax fitting instructions, the MGB/MGC require the longer operation, but on the rubber bumper MGB and all MGBGT V8s they require the shorter operation.

Recently I fitted a pair of Spax to my wife's rubber bumper MGBGT to replace the Bilsteins and the improvement in ride is unbelievable. The chief engineer at Spax is very helpful."

**Andy Torode** replied "my shock absorbers do indeed extend below the springs when viewed from the rear. I do not know how long ago the kit was fitted. The measurements of the existing setup mentioned earlier were taken with the car up on stands placed under the front spring hanger, and the rear axle hanging against the straps."

**Gordon Hesketh-Jones** provided more information on his experiences with Spax shock absorbers as a follow up to the information requested by Andy Torode: "the original "long" Spax were purely based on oil and its movement between the various chambers under compression. They worked fine but the problem – for me at least – was the protrusion below the rear springs which regularly became damaged in rough-road driving in rallies and tours. At that time Spax

did not make shorter versions, so I first tried Bilsteins and then Konis – but when combined with our 550lb rear springs both of these induced an incredibly harsh ride even on motorways, together with equally strong complaints from my wife. Spax then produced their early "shorter" versions and I bought a pair – the ride was greatly improved compared to the Konis and others but there was a serious "chattering" noise from the Spax. I complained to the supplier and was sent replacements FOC but the same noise was present. This is when I contacted Spax and then the series of testing started with Tony Shakeshaft sending down all sorts of variations.

Eventually it transpired that the new units, which work on a combination of oil and gas, were setting up a harmonic vibration with reference to the MGB bodyshell; I witnessed equivalent tests at their factory where there was no "rattle" but as soon as we popped the same pair onto my V8 at the factory, the rattle returned. Note however on the later versions I have here, the rattle is only audible when driving at low speeds; at higher speeds the rattle is drowned out by general V8 engine and wind noise. I understand that the harmonic vibrations are smoothed out – but then I am not really a mechanical engineer. The measurements of the units I have here were all taken "static" in my garage – that is not extended as per your V8BB posting.

To fit the new shorter Spax you have to take off the spring retaining plates from below the springs then swap them side to side, mounting them "upside down" with the hole for the old lever shock absorber drop arm now at the front, and pointing down. What can happen when you do this is that the whole spring assemblies can come apart and then getting these hefty items together and back into place again is a pretty frustrating and time-consuming task. To avoid this I have evolved the following process from fairly bitter experience:

1. Jack the rear end up with your jack under the differential, then use axle stands to keep the axle up as high as possible.
2. Next, use two more axle stands (or substantial blocks of wood) to support the spring on the side you are starting first, say 3" either side of the link (retaining) plate – these

stop the spring on the side you are working on from coming apart.

3. One more support – use yet another axle stand/set of wooden blocks under the brake drum of the side you are not working on – if you do not do this then as soon as you undo the last bolt on the side you are working on, then the whole axle will tip over with your side going up in the air and the U-bolts will come out of the assembly giving you much grief.

Use chocks of some form to make sure that items (2) and (3) above are really tight up against the spring or brake drum.

With the five supports in place you are ready to start, however note that if the long U-bolts which secure the spring assemblies are worn on the inside, then torque-steer will result so it might be a good idea to buy a set of these before you start, and to change them one by one as you work on each side. I am assuming that the existing Spax brackets at the top will suit the new Spax units – in my experience the brackets for the modern Spax, Koni and Bilstein are very similar and can be interchanged. I do not have any spare top brackets. I do have a spare set of link plates which I could lend to you but it would be essential to have your own pair back in exchange – with a spare set it means that you can finish one side totally before rearranging all of the supports.

## Where can I get a V8 speedo repaired?

Bob Grieves (Black 2788) from Kent posted a query on the V8BB in May and a helpful response from Richard Carrey enabled him to have his V8 speedo serviced and refitted in only 15 days. This note was released as V8NOTE367 in June 2007.

Bob's initial plea was "Has anyone got a spare speedo SN5230/11S for an MGBGT V8 that I can borrow or buy whilst I get mine serviced. They want three weeks to turn it around and I need my car running for Borde Hill, Le Mans and then Silverstone?" **Gordon Hesketh-Jones** in Cornwall responded saying his speedo has had to be rebuilt three or four times but each time Tim Kelly our local MG specialist has just fitted an MGB speedo to keep me mobile and legal - but of course you then have to measure your speed by the gear lever and rev-counter.

# V8



*Black 2788 in Faversham at a classic car rally. (Photo: Bob Grieves)*

**Richard Carrey** then came up with just the information Bob needed, suggesting he should contact John Ostick at JDO Instrument Engrs in Keighley. Richard related a heartening tale: "John turned round my busted speedo in record time. I posted it to him by Special Delivery late on a Thursday. He contacted me noon the next day to say that he had fixed it but that I had not sent the nut from the back so he could not reassemble it until he had it otherwise he would have posted it back that day. I sent the nut that afternoon and he posted my speedo back by lunchtime Saturday and I received the parcel on the Monday morning. The total cost was £42.50 plus my costs for sending the stuff to him. He also offers a faster service for 50% extra though I cannot imagine how since the bulk of the time taken was for transit of the speedo. I cannot recommend him enough! His contacts are JDO Instrument Engrs, 34 Spring Avenue, Keighly, West Yorkshire BD21 4UG with their contacts on their website at: [www.jdo1.com/page8.html](http://www.jdo1.com/page8.html)

**Bob Grieves** responded saying "Thanks for the response to my question; I've called JDO but they are on holiday until the 30th May. In response to Geoff King; the only

other number is 960, which is after the SN number, thanks for your offer but if JDO can repair mine in a week, then I should be OK for Le Mans". A posting a week later confirmed all was well: "Excellent service from JDO Instruments, sent it on Monday, came back repaired first post Wednesday – it



looks like new and is a very professional job. It is now fitted, tested and the V8 is ready for Le Mans. Thanks Richard for the information – JDO is highly recommended".

## RV8 cooling hoses remanufactured again

Good news for RV8 enthusiasts is Clive Wheatley mgv8parts has found a source for producing good quality top and bottom cooling water hoses for the RV8. Top hose GRH1324 is £12.75, top section of the bottom hose ZKC5002 is £7.95 and bottom section of the bottom hose GRH1322 is £10.95, all inclusive of VAT but excluding post and packaging. See their advert in this issue of Safety Fast! for the contacts.

## Improved nuts for the exhaust flange

Exhaust manifold nuts for the MGBGV8 downpipe flange to replace part number GHF261 first mentioned in V8NOTE354 issued in 2006 are now available. They are produced to a high strength and are made from a corrosion resisting copper alloy. They are £4.50 for a set of six. Contact Richard Martin (Teal Blue 0704) on 07921 588060.

## Kai Knickmann moves to the UK

Kai, a regular visitor from Germany to the Club's annual Silverstone weekend meeting, has moved to the UK in the

# V8

Shrewsbury area so we should see much more of him and his Damask coloured MGBGTV8.

Copy for the four page V8 Newsletter due to be published in the August 2007 issue of Safety Fast!