



The small control knob position with the main motor tucked up behind the dash

## First impressions with EZ EPAS on an RV8

Fitting power steering to an older MG is a topic often raised, particularly in relation to the RV8 which many people find heavy to steer. Hydraulic power assisted steering systems have been available for a while, and some RV8s reimported from Japan have been retrofitted there with the MGF system. Now a new electric conversion is available in the UK. Here Mike Lane gives his first impressions of the pleasure of driving his RV8 fitted with an EZ EPAS retrofit from Clive Wheatley mgv8parts.

I am conscious that as I am getting older I might not be able to haul the steering wheel about with such vigour in the future so I investigated the retrofitting of a suitable power steering system for my RV8. After a wait of well over 18 months, I have finally had the Clive Wheatley EZ power steering fitted to my car. And what a transformation too!

The system can generally be fitted in one day but, as I needed a few other items attended to by Steve at Clive Wheatley's, I stayed overnight and Clive booked me into a local 16<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed B&B beamed cottage. It is very inexpensive, expertly run by a lovely couple, is spotlessly clean with an excellent and comprehensive breakfast, so I can recommend it should you also need to stay overnight. See their website at: [www.oldhousehilton.co.uk](http://www.oldhousehilton.co.uk)

The Clive Wheatley EZ EPAS system is extremely compact, is silent, costs less than the hydraulic system and is very difficult for the purists to notice as very little is actually changed. However, the steering column is replaced with a new collapsible unit that incorporates the drive motor which is tucked up underneath the dash. The only obvious visual difference is a small control knob positioned near the driver's footwell light that enables the driver to vary the amount of power assistance required whilst on the move – you can see the control knob in the main picture above. I tend to keep it in the mid way position. The standard EZ EPAS is not speed sensitive and in my opinion that feature is not necessary. I found that when the control knob is set at mid way, it gave sufficient assistance whilst retaining an excellent road feel overall. However, it does allow for instant adjustment to accommodate any given circumstance encountered - for example, maximum power assistance can be activated should one encounter a very tight parking manoeuvre requirement, thus resulting in an extremely light steering wheel. Magic indeed! Another plus is the turning circle remains the same as no other modifications to the steering are necessary.

Alternative retrofit power steering systems available for RV8s include hydraulic actuation that requires a considerable amount of expensive

modification and installation work resulting in positioning some of the components within an already crowded engine compartment. In addition, I understand that the pump can be slightly noisy. Another similar EPAS system uses the MGF unit but, it is visually obvious in the cab as it does project into the footwell area immediately above the clutch pedal and also requires modification to the lower panel adjacent to the heater.

Before you have your car retrofitted with an EZ EPAS do remember to notify your insurer. I had notified Peter Best Insurance Services as it is an important modification, but all they did was to make a note on my file. After Steve Newton's initial road test it was my turn to take the wheel and at first I was over responding to the sensitivity of the system until quite a few miles later during my journey from Clive Wheatley's workshop in Shropshire back home to Hampshire.

As I became more accustomed to the EZ EPAS I was aware of a reduced need to concentrate on the different driving technique, resulting in a more relaxed and natural driving experience. No more pulling on the steering wheel whilst whizzing round fast bends; no more arm aching manoeuvring back and forth whilst trying to park in a space more than adequate for the length of the RV8 and which, one would just simply slot into with the day to day Euro box; and no more tiresome fighting with the steering wheel whilst negotiating those tight corners in narrow streets.

I now find myself able to negotiate those small tight mini roundabouts with ease, just twitching the wheel in a manner more akin to the highly responsive steering of an agile MG Midget. No more slowing down to a crawl and struggling with tired aching arms here!

Is it a worthwhile expense? I think very much so as my MG driving pleasure is definitely back!

Note: MG Car Club and the V8 Register make no recommendations on retrofit PAS systems.



Unobtrusive position of the EPAS