



Introduction

The idea of carrying out this survey was borne out of a discussion of V8 Register members attending a visit to the British Motor Heritage site in Witney. As is often the case when a group of car enthusiasts get together the discussion is around the pros and cons of their cars and their experience. I have had this conversation countless times at MG events, it is part of the pleasure associated with the whole classic car ownership experience. I suggested to Victor Smith that we should survey these thoughts more widely to get RV8 members' views on their experience of what modifications seemed to improve the RV8 as I thought the information gained would benefit both existing and potential owners.

From that discussion has grown our web based survey and this, the report on the initial findings. I say "initial" as I think it may be improved and revisited over time as more experience is gained and new mods are developed. This is also far from a comprehensive list of mods that owners have completed. For example one of the mods on my car that I found most rewarding was to stop the dashboard "creaking" (caused by the steering column rubbing against the dash and simply fixed by some spacer washers), a fix shared via the V8 Register's Bulletin Board by Michael O'Brien in Australia! So I am sure there are other mods not mentioned here that could be added. Anyway these are the top 40 gathered through suggestions posted on the V8BB in late 2012.

As the author of the report I don't claim to be an RV8 expert. I have actually owned two RV8s over the last ten years or so. In fact I have owned my current RV8 twice (1722 Oxford Blue above). When I first owned her I was "seduced" by an MGC Roadster and sold her to Mike, an enthusiast from Essex. Eighteen months later the MGC magic had worn off and I wanted to return to RV8 ownership. I looked at a couple of cars for sale, then by sheer luck saw Mike advertise 1722 on the V8 website. We agreed a sale the same day. I have stayed in touch with Mike and with Simon from Yorkshire who I purchased the car from originally, and both of them have done the same thing - regretted selling and bought another RV8 afterwards! How weird is that? My theory on this is that in many cases "classic" sports cars aren't always as great to drive as they look, and that the reverse is also true. I have owned two stunning

looking MGCs but they were a pain to live with, broke down etc. and eventually had to go. The RV8, whilst looking at times “plug ugly”, is always such a brilliant car to drive, totally reliable and actually very rare. And for me it is the driving experience which is the most important part of sports car ownership, if I don’t get a great smile every time I take her out something is wrong, and it is in achieving that driving experience that leads me to mods.

Originality vs mods

Anyone who has been around the classic car scene for a while will know that this subject raises great discussion and (sometimes) emotion. For many the whole point is to own a car in its original state for an original driving experience. I don’t subscribe to that! For me modifying the car to make it better is a positive benefit and if it adds to my enjoyment then job done. You will see from the picture of my own car that it sports nonstandard three part 16” alloys. They were put on by the first owner in Japan. I have only ever seen them here on Lotus and similar breeds, so I like them. I wasn’t sure at first, and they can be a pain (I had them refurbished which involves breaking them apart and then rebuilding, and they leaked air for months after requiring several reseals), but on balance worth the effort. It is a personal thing. Cosmetic. However I think some mods are simply essential. Power steering! I said I had owned two RV8s, the first car (M307 XWS Oxford Blue where are you now?) I bought from Chris at HS Imports about ten years ago, before the power steering mod was available. I found the car just too heavy and annoying. I kept it for a year, sold it and within 12 months saw the new MGOC kit come on the market! So I returned to RV8 ownership and had this fitted immediately. I think it transforms the car, absolutely worth the money (about £2,300). But that’s just me.

What I hope you have here is a slightly less subjective view of the current mods available as at 1 February 2013. There are 40 rated by the survey participants in total (full list at the end). We received 25 members’ surveys completed and I am indebted (again) to Victor for the design and operation of the actual survey. All I have tried to do is pull together the results into a readable report which I hope you will both enjoy and find useful.

Roger Aldridge
(Oxford Blue 1722)
1 February 2013

The Survey

The survey was published on the V8 Register website on 19 December 2012 and ran until the 15 January 2013. Members were asked to give some indication of their technical knowledge, their length of time owning an RV8 and whether they carry out mechanical work such as servicing themselves. We felt this would give a useful assessment of the degree of experience and knowledge of the cars from the respondents.

Of the 25 responses, 20 (84%) rated themselves as having a very good or moderate technical knowledge, 10 members did all their annual servicing, 7 did “most” servicing and 4 did “some routine but not annual servicing”. The responses all showed 17 (71%) respondents had owned an RV8 for more than 3 years, 7 less than 3 years and one was a former owner. I think this means a reasonable sample of the (probably) more technically minded owners who have been prepared to invest some time and money in improving their cars.

For each mod we asked members to rate their experience for technical improvement, cosmetic, safety and driving experience improvement. We then asked for an assessment of their view on “value for money”. Each assessment was rated on a five point scale of large, modest, medium, small or no improvement. The VFM scale wording was different from very good, good, medium, poor to very poor.

In order to then produce an overall score for each mod we used weightings for each assessment. These were;
Technical Improvement 15%

Cosmetic Improvement	5%
Safety Improvement	25%
Driving Experience	35%
Value for money	20%

We felt the rating for driving experience was likely to be the major factor for most enthusiasts so we gave it the higher rating.

Reporting

The data can be analysed in various ways, and in this report I have only tried to summarise the key findings. I have started with the “Top ten mods” using the weighted scoring. As it happens these were also the ten most popular in terms of number of members who had actually fitted them, although the order of rating is different. After that I go through the other 30 mods giving their scoring. Three mods were not fitted by anyone who completed an online survey from! They were Mod 28 “Creating a bag for the rear window”, Mod 11 “Fitting a cooling fan run on”, and Mod 9 “Converting to LPG” so didn’t get a score.

To assess the “Top ten” using the weightings I excluded one off mods undertaken by only that member. The reason being that if a member modified their car for a particular reason they then tended to rate it highly which would mean a high scoring and skew the results. I am really looking for mods completed by at least 3 or 4 members who can then give an objective assessment.

For each of the mods I give the number of members undertaking it and some members’ comments from the free text. Where possible I have included pictures and the relevant links to the RV8 Workshop Notes which give greater detail. Victor holds all the data and is happy to make further analysis if members are interested in a particular mod result.

Top ten mods to the RV8

The top ten mods based on our weighted scoring are as follows;

Modifications - top ten by rating	No	Rating	
Fitting new tyres	22	4.305	86%
Fitting bespoke Spax shockers	19	4.153	83%
Fitting poly suspension bushes	9	3.972	79%
Adjusting tyre pressures	17	3.829	77%
Fitting a windstopper	14	3.142	63%
Replacing coolant plug	21	3.065	61%
Rechipping engine	9	2.959	59%
Fitting a performance exhaust	12	2.868	57%
Replacing gearknob	12	2.715	54%
Fitting replacement clear lenses	9	2.222	44%

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1. Mod 6 - Fitting new tyres

Fitting new tyres came in as the best rated mod as well as being the most popular mod undertaken (86%). In this commentary I will try and cover the vast differences in experience! I think most people know that manufacturers recommend tyres should be replaced after about five years. (They would say that wouldn’t they!). Well it’s true, but because so many RV8s have low use it is not uncommon to find cars with their original Michelin Pilots still on them many years past the prudent replacement period. The prize for the highest number of years goes to Roy Miller, whose car had the original tyres on some 16 years later! However he was not alone as several others reported 6 and 10 year old tyres still in use by previous owners. So what to replace them with?

Well if it's out there we seem to have tried it! Members quoted using Michelin (Primacy), Continental Sport Contact 2, Pirelli P6000, Firestone Firehawk, Vredstein Sportrac3, Toyo Proxes, Goodyear Efficient Grip and Dunlop Direzza Sport Z1 (In Australia). The most popular were the Michelin Primacy, partly I guess as the OE tyres were Michelin Pilots but reports on their performance were good. Derek Matthews had tried Pirelli P6000 and switched to Michelin Energy tyres which are available as 205x65 (Pirellis are 215x60). He found them lighter on steering and generally better. Prices for all tyres vary but were from around £65 to £90 per tyre (270 Australian Dollars thanks Peter). No one felt they had any particular problems with any of the tyres fitted, although many said their new tyres improved the ride as well as the obvious grip and safety benefits, so a "no brainer" really. I think it is a case of "you pays your money...."

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewaytyresindex1.htm>

2. Mod 24 - Fitting bespoke SPAX shock absorbers developed by SPAX for the RV8 and supplied by Clive Wheatley (RV8NOTE278)



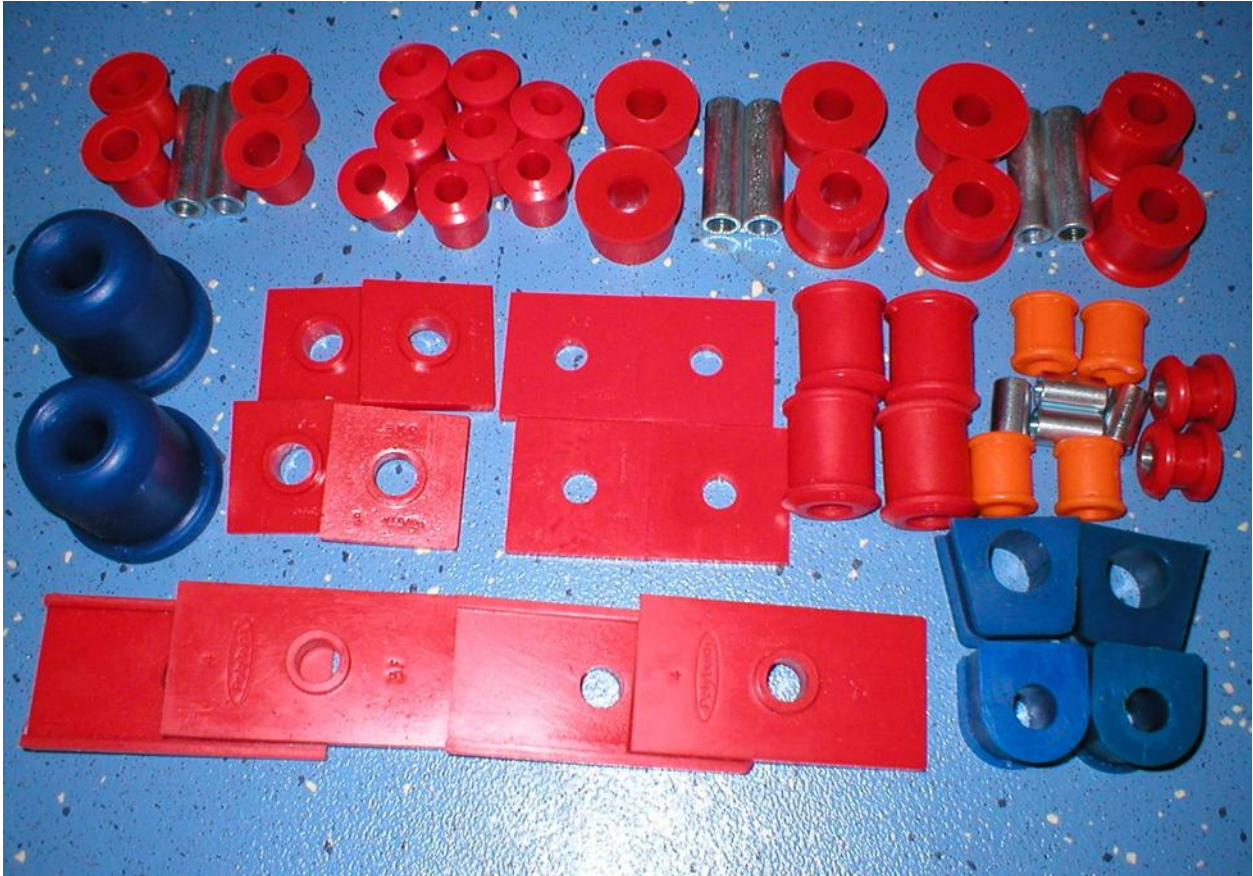
The second best rated mod was the fitting of SPAX shocks. 19 of the 25 respondents had fitted these. They are available from Clive Wheatley at £522 for a full set of four. The shocks were developed by SPAX specifically for the RV8 and offer complete flexibility with easy to change settings from 1 to 22. The settings can be changed without removing wheels by turning on full lock on the front or reaching around the tyre on the back. Very useful for track days.

Excellent feedback from nearly all members using these shocks, great improvements on the OE and even on the (yellow) Koni shocks previously available. "In my opinion the single best mod", "Great improvement". However John Cumming reported three members whose rear shocks developed a knocking sound when travelling over large bumps.

The interesting feedback is on settings. SPAX recommends 12 front and 6 back and some members use this. Others have played around with softer settings, 4 and 6, 6 and 6, 3 and 8, however most recently people are trying the softer settings of 3 front and 3 rear, which is quite a lot softer than most. Reports are that it works well. Worth trying. Ian Haynes has his car lowered (by 25 mm) and found 12 and 7 was the lowest he could get without bottoming and Peter Varley found 3 at the front bottomed on his car, so it is worth taking care with the experimenting.

<http://www.v8register.net/gateway/rv8suspension.htm>

3. Mod 18 - Fitting replacement polyurethane front suspension bushes



9 members had fitted replacement poly bushes on their front suspension. They are also available for the rear suspension and anti-roll bars. The photo shows the full kit available from Clive Wheatley. Some members have fitted “the full monty” others just the suspension or just the anti-roll bars. One member felt that the anti-roll bar poly bushes but didn’t see any real improvement, however nearly everyone rated these highly as improving their driving experience and “Well worth the money”, particularly on the front suspension.

<http://www.v8register.net/rv8partsnotes/rv8partsnotesindex10frontsuspension.htm>

4. Mod 5 - Adjusting tyre pressures

17 members reporting adjusting their tyre pressures, however as with tyre choice tyre pressures are another source of great variance. We range from 24 front and rear through to 28 front and rear, with every variation between them. 22 and 24, 26 and 28, 24 and 28, 26 and 27, 28 and 32, 1.7 bar and 1.8 bar! Members whose cars do not have power steering tended towards the higher numbers, and I understand Brown and Gammons recommend 28 and 28 on the basis that it helps lighten the steering. (I used to do the same on an MGC). I think it can depend on the actual tyre size also and perhaps the most helpful comment is to ask when you get them

replaced. Having said that my local tyre fitter had no idea! I have used Pirelli P6000 on 24 and 26 for years with no problems, but I do have EPAS and 16 inch wheels! There is a V8 Register advice note on tyre pressures.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/news291210tyrepressures.htm>

5. Mod 3 - Fitting a windstopper/wind deflector (Most recent RV8NOTE345 and RV8NOTE328)

14 members had fitted a windstopper. There are various makes available, Clive Wheatley has a Perspex bespoke version (£234) which three members had fitted and were happy with.

ClassicAdditions.com also produce a mesh version for the RV8 at £186 and similarly members reported good experience with this but tricky to fit. Some members have fitted MGB or MGF versions (and in one case an MX5 sacrilege!), however these need to be altered to fit. Also some taller drivers alter them to move the top of the screen out of the rear view mirror and to give more protection. (Newton Commercial, Leiston in Suffolk can supply suitable brackets).



On balance most users would recommend them, “essential for driving at high speeds”, and several commented that they had fitted for the benefit of their partner who found their driving experience improved. However not all were so keen, one member would not recommend them feeling it made no difference, and another that having bought one it was too fiddly to fit and store so he didn’t use it.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewaywindstoppersindex1.htm>

6. Mod 4 - Replacing the plastic coolant filler plug with a brass or stainless steel plug (RV8NOTE158)

21 of 25 respondents had done this. It is a “no brainer”. The plastic plug disintegrates and is straight forward to replace before that happens. Above picture is my own car 1722 with a brass fitting supplied by Clive Wheatley. One member bought his off eBay for £5. (Land Rover part)



<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE158updated.htm>

7. Mod 1 - Rechipping an RV8 Engine (RV8NOTES226, 230 and 360)

As most will know the Rover V8 engine we have fitted in our cars is the 3.9 unit fitted to Land Rovers, with the LR engine management unit. As a result it is possible to improve the engine management by fitting a different chip more suited to sports car use. 9 members had fitted a replacement chip. The main chip used is supplied and fitted by RPI Engineering in Norwich, although there are others (Supachip for example). There are also two types of RPI chip available, the “Optimax” and the “Tornado” which offer slightly different levels of enhancement. Most members have opted for the Optimax and report significant benefits. Improved drivability, smoothness, better fuel consumption (improved by about 5/6 mpg). Costs are around £345 for the Optimax and £425 for the Tornado (see RPI eBay shop). In most cases RPI fit uprated Magnecor leads and sometimes a vacuum advance unit, making the total cost with fitting and the supply of all parts nearer to £700 (£625 in 2005).

One or two members have fitted the chip themselves, or used a more local mechanic. The RV8 Workshop Note gives sufficient detail to do it yourself I think, however if your car's ignition is not running spot on you may be left with issues to resolve.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewayrechipping1.htm>

8. Mod 17 - Fitting a replacement performance exhaust system



12 members had fitted a different performance exhaust but there is some variance here on members' feelings. Three members found the single box system (as picture) too noisy and had reverted to the OE twin box. Derek Matthews had a new double box system made by Torque Technique Ltd, Wilton near Salisbury an exhaust specialist at £350 (Stainless steel), John Cumming had the middle box removed by Power and Performance, Honingham Norfolk. Peter Varley in Australia had a 2.3 inch bespoke system made with high flow cats. Most others have bought from either Clive Wheatley or Brown and Gammons and declare themselves happy with them. Cost is around £300/£350 for single or double respectively plus fittings. One final note, if you fit the Hoyle IRS you need to remove the centre box.

9. Mod 27 - Replacing the original leather gearknob with an Elm burr "Starkey" gearknob (RV8NOTE256)

12 members had fitted one of Terry Starkey's replacement gearknobs. It costs £45 plus £2.50 UK postage. There are two designs, one slimmer and one rounded. At the time of the survey Terry told me he had sold 152! Members universally praised this mod, "Very pleased with it", "Looks fantastic on the car", "Really enhances the look of the car, especially compared to a worn leather one", "A quality product which looks good, feels good just a little luxury". Photo is of my own car 1722.



<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE256.htm>

10. Mod 14 - Fitting replacement clear indicator lenses (RV8NOTE253)

9 members had fitted these feeling they make the car look "more modern". They are available from Clive Wheatley at £16.95 however I am told you can use Land Rover Defender reversing light lenses which are cheaper at around £7 each. (Mansfield 4x4 Bury St Edmonds) You also need to replace the bulbs with amber coloured bulbs.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE253.htm>



Other mods considered

Mod 2 - Fitting a PAS or EPAS system (RV8NOTE235)

There are three options. Firstly fitting an electro-hydraulic system, requiring a new steering rack, oil reservoir and pipework. (The picture shows pump fitting on my own car) The MG Owners Club fit this system at around £2,400, and it takes a couple of days. Alternatively you can opt for an electric motor system as fitted to the MGF. Some members have fitted an MGF system, however there is now a commercial kit available from EZ Electric systems which Clive Wheatley can supply and fit. Cost is about the same as the hydraulic system.



Two members have fitted the MGF electronic system and report that it works well. It has the advantage of being speed sensitive and effectively switches off at about 35 mph. The other two systems are not speed sensitive but members report no problems. I have the MGOC system fitted to my car and am very happy with it. My only comment is that the pump is noisy whereas the electrical systems are quiet.

All members who have fitted one of the systems are clear that it transforms the driving enjoyment of the car which I would strongly endorse.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE235.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewayPASindex1.htm>

Mod 7 - Changing to silicone brake fluid

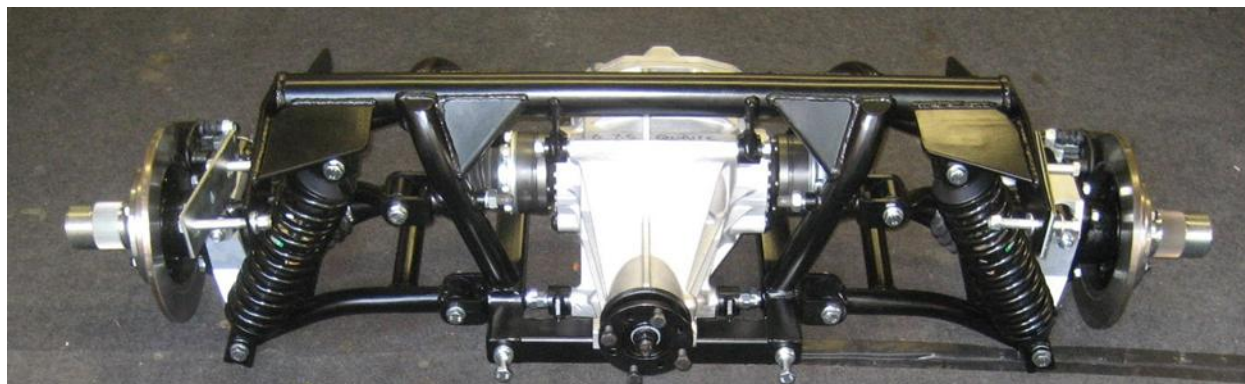
Only one member had done this. All other members saw it as unnecessary and costly (need to change all seals, flush etc). One member previously used silicone in an MGC with good results, but usually as part of a rebuild. There is a comprehensive advice note on this subject from Bob Owen at:

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/brakefluidindex.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/brakefluidarticle1.htm>

Mod 8 - Fitting a Hoyle Independent Rear Suspension (RV8NOTES 302, 310 and 311)

Only two members had actually fitted this system. However it seems to create more heat and emotion than any others! Firstly the positives. Those who have had it fitted are really impressed with the results. The car clearly handles better, sits under acceleration, is more comfortable, more enjoyable etc. Also there is no denying the sheer beauty of the engineering. I have often stood looking at John Hoyle's built up examples on his stand at Stoneleigh or Silverstone drooling and wishing I could afford it! And that is really the crunch, the cost of the whole shebang (including replacement differential and drive shafts) is currently £3,850, plus VAT. Fitting is a two day job so if you are not doing it yourself budget for about £5,500. You can sell your rear axle, shocks etc to a V8 rebuilder probably for about £1,000 or £1,500 so you are looking at a net cost of around £4,000 cash. It is a big investment on a car valued at around £13/15k and you wouldn't see it back on a sale, if that worries you.



Having said on that we don't drive these machines based on head, we drive them based on heart, for the thrill and enjoyment, the noise, the rush. So I have no problem with people doing this mod, it is the biggest mod you are likely to consider but I would say that if you tour abroad or just if you can afford it, go for it!

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE302.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE310.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE311.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/gateway/files/Hoyle-IRS-set-up-Angus-Munro-R4-300412.pdf>

<http://www.v8register.net/gateway/files/Hoyle-IRS-fitting-Steve-Newton-R2-011209.pdf>

<http://www.v8register.net/gateway/rv8suspension.htm>

Mod 9 - Converting an RV8 to LPG whilst retaining the option to run on petrol

No one responding to the survey had actually done this mod and I have to say that I don't really get this mod. Perhaps I don't know enough about it, but I regard myself as a "petrol head" not a "LPG head" so it really doesn't work for me. However if you are interested it costs about £2,000 to do, at 5k miles per annum that would be paid off in 5 years. You'll have no boot space to speak of and need to plan the route carefully so you know which filling stations offer LPG and don't get stranded. In short if it were me I would put the money towards the Hoyle.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesV8/What-a-gas-with-an-RV8-SF9web-080609.pdf>

Mod 10 - Fitting a cooling fan override switch (RV8NOTE373)

4 members had fitted this mod. No costs are available, and it requires some electrical knowledge to do yourself. (see RV8NOTE373). One member commented that they had fitted it but never had to use it, whilst another that it was useful in hot climates. Two members had fitted a thermostat that operates 10 degrees lower than OE (97 instead of 107 degrees, TVRs use them). However most members reported no overheating problems.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/RV8NOTE373-fan-override-switch-R8.pdf>

Mod 11 - Fitting a cooling fan run-on kit (RV8NOTE370)

No one responding to the survey reported actually fitting this mod. Peter Garton in RV8NOTE370 describes the fitting of a new relay to allow the fans to run on for about 30 seconds after turning the ignition off. This may be useful when touring, however it has implications for the alarms in some cars which have immobilisers fitted.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE370.htm>

Mod 12 - Fitting gas struts to the bonnet (RV8NOTE365)

Simon Austin has fitted a gas strut kit to his RV8 allowing the bonnet to be lifted freely. Moss supply these as a kit at £58 as do MGB Hive. They raise the bonnet to near vertical which some may find useful.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/RV8NOTE365-RV8-bonnet-strut-installation-SA3-120818.pdf>

Mod 13 - Fitting electric wing mirrors (RV8NOTE375)

John Taylor and John Cumming have both fitted (ex MGF) electric wing mirrors to their cars. They were fitted partly following problems with loose originals. One bought them on eBay the other from a scrap yard. Full details are in RV8NOTE375. Resprayed to the car colour they certainly look the part.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/RV8NOTE375-electric-wing-mirrors-JT1.pdf>

Mod 15 - Fitting a remote control central locking system (V8NOTE422 for an MGBGTV8)

Two members had these fitted. One of them was me, although mine was fitted by a previous owner! Mine is a Scorpion alarm which includes central locking and was £500 plus, Richard Wood used the MOSS MGB Kit at £300 including fitting. I have to say that I rarely use it.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesV8WN/V8NOTE422-central-locking.pdf>

Mod 16 - Fitting electric windows

Only one member fitted these and I have no details.

Mod 19 - Fitting replacement engine mounts (RV8NOTE255)

Derek Matthews reported having to replace these at 37,000 miles. Be careful, "the fat one fits the off side!" Available from Clive Wheatley at £25.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE255.htm>

Mod 20 - Replacing the front grilles with stainless steel replacements

Two members had replaced their original grilles because of damage. They replaced them with stainless steel from Halfords (£20), which also provides increased air flow.



Mod 21 - Restoring the road wheels originally supplied with the RV8 (RV8NOTES276, 314 and 317)

Four members reported refurbishing their original wheels. Two stripped, polished and re lacquered them themselves using products such as Autosol to polish them. (See the RV8NOTES above). Two members took their wheels to commercial providers where they were stripped, re-diamond turned and powder coated. (For example Angus Munro went to Alloy Art in Essex at a cost of £280 for 4 wheels, very good quality) Best to remove the dummy nuts beforehand.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE276.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/RV8NOTE314-wheel-refurbishment.pdf>

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/RV8NOTE317-refurbishing-RV8-wheels-HB-080110.pdf>

Mod 22 - Replacing the original wheels with 17 inch Compomotives or other wheels

Only one member reported using different sized wheels. Me! As I mentioned in the intro they were replaced in Japan by the first owner for three part alloy and chrome wheels. At 16 inches they fill the wheel arch and I don't need the low profile tyres that the 17 inch do (and which can be a harder ride). Having said that I haven't seen mine offered for sale anywhere in the UK. Clive Wheatley sells the 17 inch in the picture and two other (cheaper) versions.



Mod 23 - Shot blasting and zinc plating the front cross member

Three members reported having to have this work undertaken. One was undertaken by a company in Snetterton for around £200. John Cumming had it shot blasted then repainted it himself with Rustoleum Primer and two coats top coat. I would recommend owners check every few years.

Mod 25 - Modifying the handbrake so it is not so close to the steering wheel (RV8NOTE291)

Hugh Boddington undertook this mod and gives details in the above note. No one else has used it.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE291.htm>

Mod 26 - Installing a Thatcham 1 security system

I was the only member with this fitted. (See my comments on remote central locking). Worth saying that this is **not** required by all insurers (Peter Best don't require it). Mine has an automatic immobiliser which activates after one minute, which I think is probably more useful than the full alarm which I rarely use.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE117updated.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE168updated.htm>

Mod 28 - Creating a soft bag to slip over unzipped rear hood window to prevent scratching

No one had done this mod. John Cumming mentioned in an early RV8NOTE an alternative which is to use a foam pipe insulator to push over the rear bulkhead edge to prevent the hood window from folding sharply and leaving a permanent crease. I have used one for years.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE108.htm>

Mod 29 - Refurbishing the interior Elm burr trim when it is cracked (RV8NOTE154 and RV8NOTE277)

Five members had experience of this mainly for door cappings. Various commercial outfits can do the work, examples given for door cappings (not always with date) were; Doors Chapman and Cliff, Cheshire £100, Cooper Woodtrim of Crewe, Keith Broughthom Cawston, Norfolk £80 and Classical Dash £188 (2007).

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE154updated.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE277.htm>

Mod 30 - Replacing a corroded windscreen surround (RV8NOTES22, 225 and 246)

Four members had needed this replacement fitting. The carbon fibre version from Clive Wheatley cost £1,000 in 2005.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE22.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE225.htm>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE246.htm>

Mod 31 - Fitting a boot luggage rack (RV8NOTE346)

3 members reported fitting a removable or permanent version (per MGB/C). You can also use an MGF BootBag at £70.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE346.htm>

Mod 32 - Replacing the electronic ignition amplifier

I understand this is a mod carried out to most Land Rovers. 4 members had fitted one. It provides an enhanced spark and moves the ignition over to the off side wing where there is less heat. I have one fitted to my car by a previous owner (fitted by Clive Wheatley £125 including fitting in 2009) however John Cumming sourced the same from JSF 4x4 in Norwich (Cost £65 in 2010). It is difficult to assess the benefit, there is no obvious improvement but I guess only time will tell.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/120813-RV8-remote-ignition-module.pdf>

Mod 33 - Removing a section of rubber bonnet seal next to the windscreen to allow engine heat to escape

John Cumming reported removing sections of the rubber seal to improve temperature reduction in the engine bay, then used cut down MGB rubber near to the hinges to prevent any rattle. No one else had tried this.

Mod 34 - Lowering the driver's seat for a tall bodied driver (RV8NOTE233)

Two members had completed this mod. Roger Davies explains how he did this in RV8NOTE233. Whilst it lowered the seat by one and a half inches, it is achieved by removing the slider mechanism, so once removed the seat stays put! Roger also drilled new holes on the seat bottom in order to locate it further back. The other issue that strikes me is that unless you do the same to the passenger seat it can look unbalanced?

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE233.htm>

Mod 35 - Replacing the clock with an oil pressure gauge

One member reported this having been fitted when new. An alternative route was completed by Peter Varley who has replaced his temp gauge with a Smiths combined temp/oil pressure gauge. The gauge is not identical to the OE gauges but pretty close.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/121127-RV8-combo-water-temp-oil-press-gauge.pdf>

Mod 36 - Changing the coolant temperature gauge to show the real temperature (RV8NOTE207)

6 members have completed this mod. It was created by Stefan Matthaei and is detailed in the RV8 note. In simple terms the temp gauge is routed via an ECU which damps the signal so that it either shows "normal" straight up at 80 degrees, or red meaning you have a problem. There is no in between. This happened to me, I had a loose top hose dumping coolant and the first I knew was the gauge spinning up to red. By rewiring the gauge direct excluding the ECU the gauge reverts to a normal reading. If you need more encouragement, John Cumming had a similar experience leading to him making the mod. When touring in Holland he developed a leak and not aware until the car boiled. This caused No 8 cylinder liner to move resulting in a tapping sound. Engine replacement repair was £4,700.

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesRV8WN/RV8NOTE207-temperature-gauge.pdf>

Mod 37 - Removing the air conditioning equipment

As most will know the Japanese spec cars all had air con fitted. For me this remains a real plus, I have driven to Le Mans, top up on the motorway, in complete comfort despite searing outside temperatures faced by my MGB and MGF travelling companions. Also in the rain it makes a big difference to keeping the screens clear. So I would not think of removing it. Having said that there are disadvantages, the passenger footwell space is significantly reduced (you can remove the compressor cover or resite it to make some improvement), it can be noisy on some cars and of course the car uses more fuel both using it. It weighs 32 kilos. Only one member reported doing this mod.

Mod 38 - Replacing the aircon intakes with spot or fog lights

Assuming you have removed your air con you can then fit the UK spec spot lights. John Cumming went further and removed the wire mesh on the bumper in front of the condenser radiators and fitted "Angel Eyes" driving lights wired into the main headlight beam harness. The Angle Eye lights have a ring of LEDs on the edge of the reflectors and these were wired into the sidelight wiring loom. The result is that when the sidelights are on, with the brighter LED bulbs fitted, the LEDs in the Angle Eye light give more light, almost matching the white light to the front of the car. Interestingly John did not remove the air con when fitting these lights as the intake fans still draw in from below the car.



The LED side lights were supplied by SVC Components Ltd (via eBay) and cost £54.90.

<http://www.v8register.net/rv8partsnotes/111104rv8partsnewsfrontfoglights.htm>

Mod 39 - Removing the Rover badges from the wings

Eight members have done this. The badges can be easily removed using a hair dryer to warm the letters and the glue, then prized off. Remove the glue with spirit and T cut to finish.

Mod 40 - Removing or replacing the CD player

7 members reported replacing the OE equipment, which was seen as poor quality, some replaced all their speakers as well.

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/RV8NOTE239.htm>

Other Mods needed?

Ideas for future mods that could usefully be developed included a power hood (!), cruise control, space saver spare wheel and heated rear window per MGF. See:

<http://www.v8register.net/FilesV8WN/V8NOTE423.pdf>

<http://www.v8register.net/subpages/gatewaytyresindex1.htm#spacesaver>

My thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the survey (listed below), also to Clive Wheatley, John Hoyle and Classic Additions for photos, and Victor Smith for doing all the hard work on the technical side of the survey.

The 25 members who completed the survey;

Peter Jevons, Peter Varley, Richard Withington, George Wilder, Ian Haynes, Terry Starkey, John Cumming, John Anthistle, John Taylor, Angus Munro, Hugh Boddington, Roy Miller, Jim Dolbel, Gavin Bailey, Ken Clayton, Tim Curtis, Derek Matthews, Nicholas Oliver, Frank Labruier, Roger Aldridge, Mike Lane, George Miller, Mario Kloostra, Richard Wood and Ian Quarrington.

Full list of mods considered in the survey

- Mod 1 Rechipping an RV8 engine
- Mod 2 Fitting a PAS or EPAS system
- Mod 3 Fitting a windstopper/wind deflector
- Mod 4 Replacing the plastic coolant filler plug with a brass or stainless steel plug
- Mod 5 Adjusting the tyre pressures
- Mod 6 Fitting new tyres
- Mod 7 Changing to silicone brake fluid
- Mod 8 Fitting a Hoyle IRS
- Mod 9 Converting an RV8 to LPG whilst retaining the option to run on petrol
- Mod 10 Fitting a cooling fan override switch
- Mod 11 Fitting a cooling fan run on kit
- Mod 12 Fitting gas struts to the bonnet
- Mod 13 Fitting electric wing mirrors
- Mod 14 Fitting replacement clear indicator lenses
- Mod 15 Fitting a remote control central locking
- Mod 16 Fitting electric windows
- Mod 17 Fitting a replacement performance exhaust system
- Mod 18 Fitting replacement poly front suspension bushes
- Mod 19 Fitting replacement engine mounts
- Mod 20 Replacing the front grilles with stainless steel replacements
- Mod 21 Restoring the roadwheels originally supplied with the RV8
- Mod 22 Replacing the original wheels with 17 inch Compomotives or other wheels
- Mod 23 Shot blasting and zinc plating the front cross member
- Mod 24 Fitting bespoke SPAX shock absorbers developed for the RV8 and supplied by Clive Wheatley
- Mod 25 Modifying the handbrake so it is not so close to the steering wheel

- Mod 26 Installing a Thatcham 1 security system
- Mod 27 Replacing the original leather gearknob with an Elm burr "Starkey" gearknob
- Mod 28 Creating a soft bag to slip over unzipped rear hood window to prevent scratching
- Mod 29 Refurbishing the interior Elm burr trim when it is cracked
- Mod 30 Replacing a corroded windscreen surround
- Mod 31 Fitting a boot luggage rack
- Mod 32 Replacing the electronic ignition amplifier
- Mod 33 Removing a section of rubber bonnet seal next to the windscreen to allow engine heat to escape
- Mod 34 Lowering the driver's seat for tall drivers
- Mod 35 Replacing the clock with an oil pressure gauge
- Mod 36 Changing the coolant temp gauge to show the real temperature
- Mod 37 Removing the air conditioning equipment
- Mod 38 Replacing the aircon intakes with spot or fog lights
- Mod 39 Removing the Rover badges from the wings
- Mod 40 Removing or replacing the CD player