

Why does an MGBGTV8 feel other cars are getting bigger on motorways today?

Driving an MGBGTV8 on motorways and major roads today you are aware that other **modern cars seem to be bigger in your rear view mirror** and they grow larger as they close on you to pass. Often when you are travelling at “around the legal limit” for the section of road modern cars gradually close on you, seemingly on cruise control. Some drivers have an irritating habit of hanging off behind you some 30 to 40 yards, sometimes less, so as you close on a vehicle ahead in moderately heavy traffic and need to pull out to overtake the slower vehicle, it can be difficult to pull out. Often dropping out of overdrive, even taking third, you have available the still electric V8 powered acceleration and can signal and move out and ahead in a safe but assertive way. Often the driver behind flashes as though a “small old car” has had the impertinence to enter the outside lane which is of course the rightful place for OLODs like them – “outside lane owner drivers!”

But the question is **how has the relative size of the MGBGTV8 changed over the years when compared with a typical hatchback or saloon** in 1974 and now the natural evolution of that type of car in 2016? I recall a year or so ago reading a Which? magazine review of the latest VW Golf in which it mentioned the new Golf was several inches wider than the original Golf, so I set about checking how the width and height, indeed the volume, of that popular model had changed over the last 42 years and how that change related to the size of an MGBGTV8.



When you look at two features – the relative changes in **frontal area** and the relative changes in the **volume or perceived bulk** of the cars – the results are interesting.

Increase in the bulk of a Golf compared to an MGBGTV8				Comparative dimensions			
	ft3	BGTV8	Plus		Length	Width	Height
					ft	ft	ft
MGBGTV8	272.19	100.00%	0.00%	MGBGTV8	13.25	5.00	4.25
Golf Mk1 1974	286.19	105.15%	5.15%	Golf Mk1 1974	12.16	5.28	4.58
Golf 2016	384.89	141.41%	41.41%	Golf 2016	13.96	5.90	4.76
So increase in bulk of a Golf hatchback compared with an MGBGTV8 since the Mk1 in 1974 =							
			36.26%				
Increase in frontal area of Golf compared to an MGBGTV8							
	ft2	%					
MGBGTV8	21.25	0.00%					
Golf Mk1 1974	24.18	13.77%					
Golf 2016	28.12	32.31%					
Change in frontal area of a Golf hatchback compared with an MGBGTV8 since 1974			18.55%				

So the frontal area of a typical modern hatchback like a VW Golf is now nearly a fifth larger (**18.5%**) compared to that of an MGBGTV8 and in terms of bulk, a surprising **36%** greater. That’s quite a change and clearly helps explain the feeling when driving an MGBGTV8 that modern cars are getting bigger. The changes with other modern cars, like BMW, Mercedes and Audi saloons and the ever increasing number of “urban prat x 4s”, are I suspect even larger on a relative scale than the earlier models of those brands.