



Congestion at filling stations in 1973 with petrol shortages

Serious economic difficulties in the UK shortly after the launch of the MGBGTV8 in August 1973

Stocks of V8s had been delivered from Abingdon to many dealers around the UK in time for the launch of the new MGBGTV8 at the [Motor Show](#) at Earls Court in August 1973, but within just a few weeks serious political problems arose and the consequent economic difficulties hit sales of MGBGTV8s the UK and other countries with a significant impact on the sales of MGBGTV8s. So what were those difficult political and economic conditions and what impact did it have on sales?

Political and economic factors that hit MGBGTV8 sales

Following growing tensions in the Middle East, on 6th October 1973 Egypt and Syria invaded Israel beginning the [Yom Kippur War](#) which lasted until a ceasefire was imposed cooperatively on 25th October 1973 to officially end the war. But there then followed the "[1973 oil crisis](#)" in October 1973 when the members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), led by Saudi Arabia, proclaimed an [oil embargo](#) restricting oil supplies. Initially it was targeted at nations that had supported Israel during the Yom Kippur War like Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, the USA and UK, but was later extended further. By the end of the embargo in March 1974, the price of crude oil had risen nearly 300%, from US\$3 per barrel to nearly US\$12 per barrel globally with US prices significantly higher.

The combination of consequential fuel shortages and high prices at filling stations had dramatic effects on the British economy, producing an energy crisis and growing domestic inflation. The UK Government considered a range of measures to reduce the use of oil by ten per cent, including rationing petrol and reducing speed limits. At the end of 1973, the UK Government announced a [state of emergency](#) and decided on a three-day week in certain industries. In 1974, the Government considered further measures for reducing the domestic use of oil. UK inflation increased to nearly 15% in 1974 and to over 27% in 1975.

How did sales go following the launch?

That combination of the shortage of fuel and rising prices created serious economic pressures that certainly made large engined cars look an uneconomic choice. As stocks of MGBGTV8s were dispatched from the MG Plant at Abingdon to distributors around the UK, inflation picked up too with rising retail prices depressing the marketplace. So many V8s were stuck in showrooms for many months before they were sold. Often V8 owners have seen the "sales delay" period between the date of the production and of the first registration of their car was unusually lengthy - typically 4 to 5 months and in some cases longer in 1973/74.

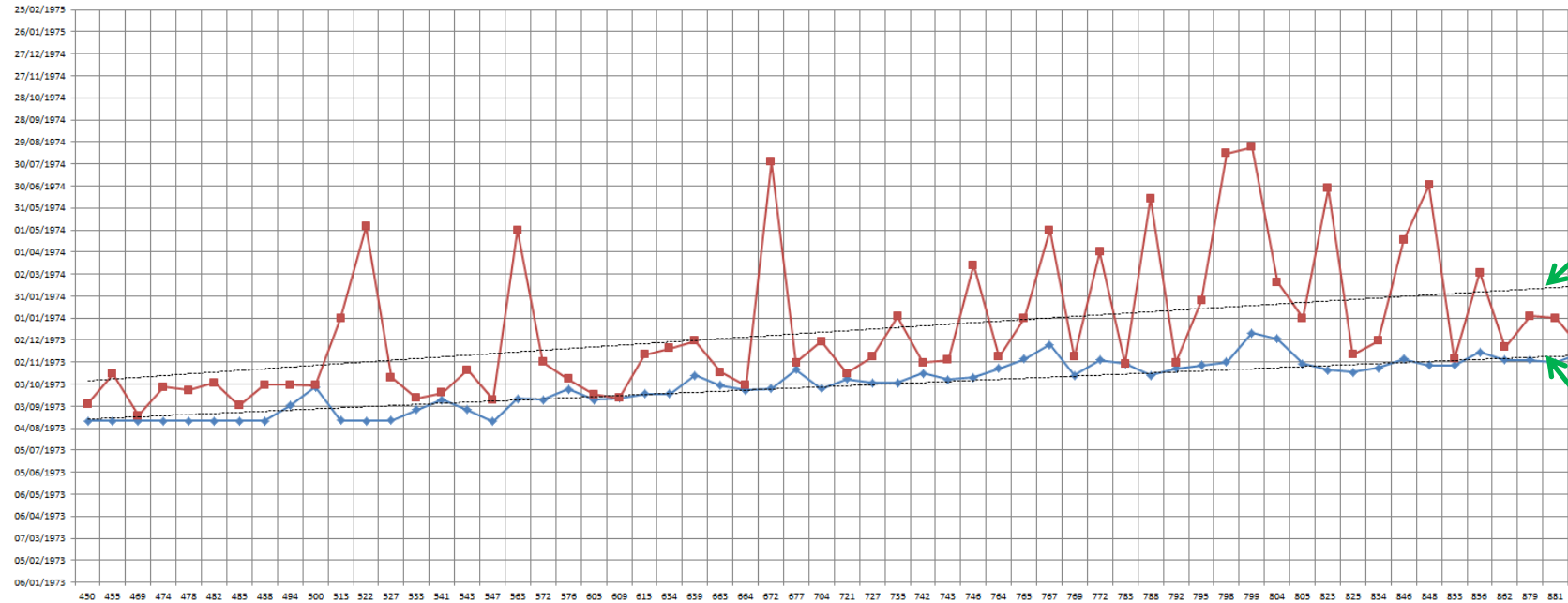
Analysis of available data shows the extent and trend of the "MGBGTV8 sales delay" period caused by the economic and fuel supply difficulties in 1973 and 1974

Using data provided over the years by members when registering their MGBGTV8 with the V8 Register and a copy of the MG Factory production control records, which have details of the key production and dispatch dates for each car, we have been able to find the date they were dispatched from the MG Factory to various agents and dealers around the UK prior to the launch of the model in August 1973 and during 1974. Then using the vehicle registration number for each car we have checked the date of its first registration in the UK using the DVLA data available on the GOV.UK website. What was found is interesting and shows the impact of MGBGTV8 sales.

Two sets of charts below show:

- Number of days between Date of Dispatch and the Date of First Registration.
 - Dates of Dispatch of MGBGTV8s and the Dates of First Registration (and sale).
- At the start of the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East on 6th October 1973 the typical delay was around **90 days** (12.8 weeks or 3 months), then up to around **75 days** (10.7 weeks) shortly after the launch in mid-August 1973. With the Oil Embargo from October 1973 it rose to just under a **100 days** (14.3 weeks) and then grew to **115 days** (16.4 weeks) by June 1974. With the UK inflation at 15% in 1974 the typical delay reached **120 days** (17.1 weeks or 4 months), then flattening off at **125 days** (17.9 weeks) through to 1976.

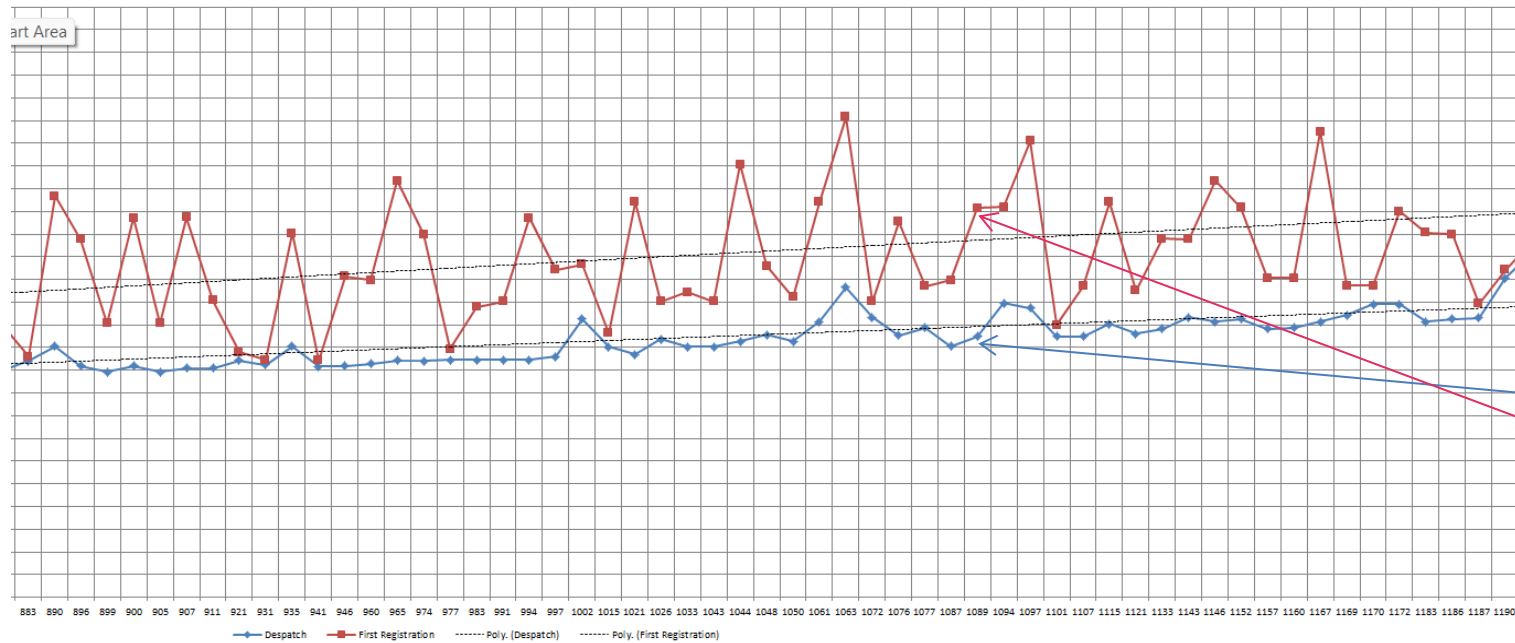
Charts show the dates of dispatch of MGBGTV8s from the MG Plant (blue) and the dates of first registration (and sale) (red)



Charts show the dates of dispatch of MGBGTV8s from the MG Plant and the dates of first registration (and sale)

First registration (sale) trend line

Dispatch from the MG Plant to dealers trend line

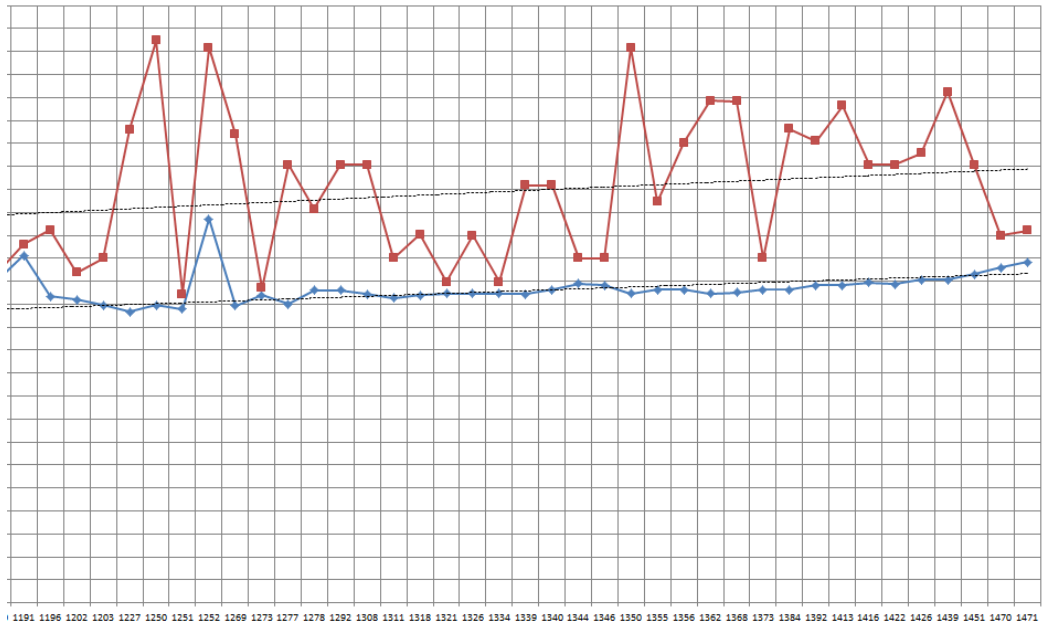


Charts show the dates of dispatch of MGBGTV8s from the MG Plant and the dates of first registration (and sale)

Red: first registration

Blue: dispatch

MGBGTV8 Harvest Gold 1089
 Dispatched 17th December 1973
 First Reg 6th June 1974
 Time to sale 169 days or 24.1 weeks or 5.5 months
 As you can see, not the longest delay to reach a sale as the typical delay then was 115 days or 16.4 weeks or 3.8 months



MGBGTV8
 Dispatched
 First Registered
 Time to sale
 Typical delay then:

Damask 1471
 27th March 1974
 7th May 1974
41 days or 5.9 weeks
127 days or 18.1 weeks/4.2 weeks

MGBGTV8
 Dispatched
 First Registered
 Time to sale
 Typical delay then:

Harvest Gold 1089
 17th December 1973
 6th June 1974
169 days or 24.1 weeks/5.5 months
115 days or 16.4 weeks/3.8 months

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