



MGBs with V8 power in 1966?

The Works entered MGBs for the 24 hour endurance race at le Mans in 1964 and 1965 ran well with the Hopkirk & Hedges car winning the prize for the highest placed British entry in 1964. But clearly MG felt they could do better so a totally standard MGB Roadster was sent to Ricardo at Shoreham in 1966 with a brief to develop the car using a Daimler SP 250 two and a half litre V8 engine.

The car was a totally standard MGB

Roadster, finished in Tartan Red with chassis number GHN3/28395, which had been despatched from Abingdon in mid January 1964 and registered in June that year in Bath with the registration plate AGL 624 B. What is less clear is how it came to be used by MG for Project 51A and sent to Shoreham where the Ricardo engineers set to work on the modifications needed to install the Daimler V8 powerplant. The first track tests at Donington resulted in the lay gear shearing and then gearbox problems

it so went back to Ricardo for repairs. Not long after two more bodysells went down to Shoreham and then mysteriously the project seems to have come to a stop. Why – well hopefully Don Hayter's MGB Story, to be published in August this year, will throw some light on that mystery.

The MG Daimler V8 Roadster was registered with the V8 Register many years ago by Colin Groves in Wiltshire with the same registration plate and chassis number and still in Tartan Red. You can see in his photo above the engine bay with the twin SU carburetors on the SP 250 V8 engine and the wide radiator. Later the car was registered by a Swiss enthusiast, Marcus Peterka.

Another MG V8

An Australian MG enthusiast, Tom Aczel, mentioned an Australian preceded Costello with a Buick MGB V8 conversion by at least a year. Tom says "I clearly remember reading the original Sports Car World article while still a school boy." The article by Al Lauder originally appeared in their issue for November 1967 and reviewed the car fitted with a 3524 cc alloy Oldsmobile engine and owned by Mark Keelev.

So an MGB Roadster had V8 power in 1966 several years before the conversions created by Ken Costello using the Buick V8 engine and any available Rover V8s and then MG with its MGBGT V8 produced from 1972.