The mating surface may result. Similarly with the removal of the steel being damaged and together with the process of rust on the severity of the corrosion that may have resulted in some of corrosion on the chromed steel rim has to be removed. De-reassembly is carried out the wheel can be mated in exactly the wheel is recorded by ma.

alloy centre to be split from the steel rim with the removal of the wheel's integrity is paramount. The full refurbishment of a Dunlop composite wheel requires the alloy centre to be split from the steel rim with the removal of the rivets. It’s particularly important that the exact mating position of each wheel is recorded by marking both parts so that when reassembly is carried out the wheel can be mated in exactly the same position. Once the two parts of the wheel are split then the corrosion on the chromed steel rim has to be removed. Depending on the severity of the corrosion that may have resulted in some of the steel being damaged and together with the process of rust removal, a reduction in the thickness of the steel rim in the area of the mating surface may result. Similarly with the alloy centre interface, corrosion can leave damage on the alloy centre’s mating surface and any necessary grinding down of the alloy mating surface to achieve a good mating of the two restored interfaces can reduce the thickness of the alloy in that area. A real concern for specialist wheel refurbishers is whether the resulting thickness of each part will be sufficient for riveting during the reassembly of the wheel. In the past the refurbishers have cautioned that a repeat refurbishment of these wheels is unlikely to be acceptable for these concerns over the thickness of the metal in that area.

The riveting of the steel rim to the alloy centre needs to be of the highest quality, because if the rivets do not “clamp” the parts together firmly there will be relative movement called fretting, which will exacerbate the wearing away of any insulation coatings (anodising or paint) that might be applied. This will then allow water in and the risk of corrosion.

Usually the steel rims were sent off to a rechroming specialist who has the necessary skills to prepare the rims and rechrome them to a high standard. The alloy centres usually need cleaning down and repainting with a black paint.

MWS have stopped refurbishing Dunlop composites
A specialist wheel refurbisher, Motor Wheel Services at Langley in Berkshire, decided a few years ago to cease providing a full refurbishment service for Dunlop composites. To avoid the consequences of corrosion damage to the steel rims leading to a reduced thickness of metal at the mating face with the alloy centre, they had refurbished some wheels with new chromed steel rims, but they found there was a great deal of skilled labour needed to get a satisfactory fit during reassembly of the wheels and consequently they were expensive, sometimes around £500 to £600 a wheel. But there were still concerns that the alloy at the interface might not be sufficient to provide a strong and durable joint and hence concerns over product liability. There were also some issues with balancing refurbished wheels with new steel rims. So MWS did not continue refurbishing wheels using new steel rims and as we know they subsequently decided to cease refurbishing them using the customer’s original steel rim and alloy centre. Other specialist s have also ceased offering a refurbishment service involving splitting Dunlop composites.

MWS continue to offer wheel refurbishment services for other wheel types, for example wire wheels, and are well known for their professional skills and good quality workmanship.

What options are available if you have corrosion on Dunlop composites?
Preventative measures to avoid rusting of the chromed rims are a vital first step to try and avoid, or at least minimise, corrosion of the steel rims by keeping them clean of road film, using regular but careful polishing of the chromed areas to keep any rust from forming and also by spraying the chromed areas with WD40. Nic Houslip says “this spray (Water Dispersant #40) was developed for the US space agency NASA and works because it has a greater affinity for metal than water which means it can, and does, displace any water and allows the oil in the mix to form a waterproof coating on the metal.”

At least one specialist continues to offer a refurbishment service where there is only limited surface rusting. It does not involve splitting the alloy centres from the chromed steel rim in the way they had previously done for a comprehensive refurbishment of these wheels, but just careful polishing to remove the surface rust. This option could be a useful option if the early development of corrosion is spotted in time.

Dunlop composites in need of refurbishment – what are the options?
The original wheels fitted to the MGBGT8 model were a composite wheel with an alloy centre with characteristic features mated to a chromed steel rim. Over time the reassembly of the wheels are in a sad state and need refurbishment. Until a couple of years ago several experienced and reputable wheel restorers offered a refurbishment service for Dunlop composites but unfortunately ceased offering that service because of their concerns over being able to maintain their necessary refurbishment standards. So what options are there today for an enthusiast with Dunlop composites in need of refurbishment? Here Victor Smith and Nic Houslip look at the current situation and what is available.

What are the issues with refurbishing Dunlop composites?
Over time corrosion at the steel rim/alloy centre interface and necessary refurbishment work will reduce the thickness of the steel rim and of the alloy centre and as this is where the re-riveting takes place during reassembly of the wheels. There are concerns that the reduction in the thickness of these parts can result in weakening the wheel. The strength of a wheel on a sports car capable of speeds of well in excess of 100mph is clearly important – and remember at 100mph they are rotating at about 1,400 rpm and are subject to huge forces when braking, accelerating and cornering. So the wheel’s integrity is paramount.

The full refurbishment of a Dunlop composite wheel requires the alloy centre to be split from the steel rim with the removal of the rivets. It’s particularly important that the exact mating position of each wheel is recorded by marking both parts so that when reassembly is carried out the wheel can be mated in exactly the same position. Once the two parts of the wheel are split then the corrosion on the chromed steel rim has to be removed. Depending on the severity of the corrosion that may have resulted in some of the steel being damaged and together with the process of rust removal, a reduction in the thickness of the steel rim in the area of the mating surface may result. Similarly with the alloy centre
individual wheels available that they wanted to offer for sale, but it’s fair to say that with the leading specialists ceasing to offer a refurbishment service for Dunlop composites, the number of wheels seen advertised for sale has fallen significantly and they have been replaced with “wanted” adverts.

A set of new all-alloy Dunlop composite lookalike wheels is increasingly seen as a practical and affordable option. In mid-2014 the leading MGV8 parts and service provider, Clive Wheatley, sourced a supply of new all-alloy wheels that look very close to the original steel and alloy composite wheel. At the time Clive was working with a specialist wheel manufacturer in the West Midlands to produce a good quality lookalike wheel, the specialist refurbishers were still offering a service for original 14” Dunlop composites. So Clive Wheatley’s new supply of all-alloy wheels were made in a 15” size and aimed principally at the MGV8 Conversions market because the 15” size was attractive as they enabled a larger front brake caliper to be fitted and the Hoyle front and rear suspension upgrades too.

The all-alloy lookalike wheels are nano coated to provide protection from the potentially damaging effects of a film of road spray, particularly on the alloy rims. As with many other alloy wheels, the manufacturer recommends washing the wheels when they are coated with a film of road spray. Most V8 enthusiasts with the original Dunlop composite wheels would do that in any case, but with alloys it’s particularly desirable they are not left with a coating of road film.

However fitting 15” wheels will need a different tyre size choice, but fortunately there is a good choice of tyres. With 175 or 185/65 R15 tyres the rolling circumference is a little less than with the original 175 80 R14 tyre, so at 65mph on the speedo the actual speed is a little lower at 62.2 and 63.6mph respectively. We have a guide note on the V8 Website on tyres for 15” wheels and the marginal effect on the speedometer reading.

Clive’s 15” lookalike wheels have been available for a couple of years and have been selling well, but since the specialist refurbishers have ceased offering their service, some owners of original Factory MGBGTV8s who have been unable to get their original 14” Dunlop composites refurbished, have opted to buy the 15” all-alloy lookalikes.

The idea of arranging a supply of 14” all-alloy lookalikes has been considered by Clive Wheatley but he has found the original brake caliper used on the Factory MGBGTV8 unfortunately cannot fit within the 14” all-alloy wheel. In addition the front end costs of creating the alloy centres and the minimum stocking levels do require a very substantial initial investment which would go alongside his remaining major investment in the earlier 15” lookalikes.

Replacing badly corroded Dunlop composites with a set of 14” Minilite wheels is an option as they are a classic wheel for cars of the sixties and seventies and are much liked by many MGV8 enthusiasts. Often they are accepted by many buyers of MGBGTV8s when they come up for sale.

Resulting options for enthusiasts
So sadly with the availability of good quality refurbishment services no longer available for original Dunlop composites from reputable and experienced wheel refurbishers, that option has effectively closed. So the options are now try and find a good set of original Dunlop composites, fit 15” all-alloy lookalikes or fit a set of Minilites. But above all – look after the Dunlop composites you have and treasure them with careful cleaning, polishing and spraying with WD40, particularly when the car is parked up for extended periods in the garage!