



### Building a V8 Roadster

Many years ago Peter Nixon had a Factory MGBGT V8 (Black 2293) and feels he made the mistake of selling it. But he later thought about converting his wife's 1976 MGB Roadster to V8 power. He had built it up from a new factory shell, but she said firmly 'NO!'. So in January 2017 Peter bought a rolling rust bucket rubber bumper MGB Roadster off eBay which had no engine, no gearbox, no MOT but lots of rust. His intention was to rebuild it, convert it to chrome bumper and install a Rover V8 engine and a five speed gearbox. Peter recently completed what became a six year project to create his V8 Roadster and here he describes the work carried out.



### Rebuild and conversion to V8 power

Peter Nixon says "I mounted the Roadster on a rotisserie, stripped it down to a bare shell, cutting off the badly corroded panels, had it bead blasted to remove the remaining rust and patchy paint. Then I had it painted in acid etch paint to stop it rusting again while it was being rebuilt.

The MGB front wings were in surprisingly good under multiple layers of underseal, but I replaced them with new chrome bumper wings as the intention was to do a chrome bumper conversion. Other new panels fitted included both rear half wings, scuttle, passenger and driver floors, boot floor corners, both inner and outer sills, front and rear valances and an MGBGT V8 dashboard with instruments that a Tyne-Tees member had available. I replaced the doors with American model MGB doors with internal side impact bracing.

A Rover SD1 3500 V8 MOT failure was bought off eBay to get the engine, bell-housing and five speed gearbox, with the rest sold to a vehicle breaker. The V8 engine was rebored, the crank re-ground, fitted with 9.75 - 1 CR Vitesse pistons, Oselli gas flowed cylinder heads, a new water pump, a new oil pump and remote filter set-up, a Range Rover cam, new timing gears and chain, tubular headers, and a large bore exhaust and silencer. The original SD1 carburetors were remounted on a specially modified Range Rover inlet manifold and specially made tubular plenum provided of a Tyne-Tees member who had done a number of similar V8 conversions. With an MGBGT V8 air-box it all looks very much like the factory MGBGT V8 set-up, but it breathes better because the plenum is bigger bore.

The MGB tunnel under the radio console was modified for the taller SD1 gear-box, and the V8 engine, bell-housing, five speed gearbox installed with an MGBGT V8 differential and shortened prop-shaft. I added a new V8 radiator, a new V8 wiring harness, new brake lines and hoses, and new fuel lines. A pair of refurbished Austin Princess four pot callipers (off eBay) was fitted, with new vented discs and a new servo. Up-rated lowered front springs were installed. New headlights and new backing



shells were fitted. The original bonnet and boot lid were re-used. Because the tubular headers were fouling the inner wings, the engine was raised a couple of centimetres, this meant a small bonnet bulge was needed - this I preferred to bashing back the inner wings.

The car passed its MOT. I replaced the 14" factory Rostyle wheels with John Brown Minator eight spoke 15" x 5.5" alloys and new tyres. An original factory hood with a Michelotti folding frame was fitted, courtesy of another Tyne-Tees member. That made the Roadster more usable in the winter.

The Clive Wheatley big bore exhaust gives it a throaty roar and the acceleration is really quick. We had a minor problem with the brakes sticking on but that was solved by adjusting the rod between the new servo and the new master cylinder.



Chilly Winter weather in Cleveland in Northeast England

#### **What is the result?**

So far the car has completed only 250 miles but I am well satisfied with the end result. One day I will put it on a rolling road to have the carburation tuned and get a HP reading at the wheels.

Maybe another year of running it and my coming up to 80 years old, I may then decide to sell it on. Maybe it will be time to start thinking of the laidback sedate comfort of the Volvo XC70 rather than the exhilaration of an MGB that blows off racy "hot hatches"!