

### RV8 cats heat shield available

A new RV8 cats heat shield in high grade heat resistant fibreglass is now available from Clive Wheatley. The shields are fixed to the underside of the floor of the bodyshell above the cats to reflect heat generated in the exhaust system. In some cases the heat generated around the cats can burn the underside of the floor in the passenger compartment. The RV8 cats heat shield is available from Clive Wheatley mgv8parts at £99 including VAT plus carriage.

### ECU upgrade power amp check

Paul Baker reported he felt an Optimax ECU chip upgrade with an ignition amplifier, new spark plugs and Magnicor leads is a really good modification as it had resulted in a smoother, far more responsive engine through the gears and more economical too as he is getting 33mpg with his RV8. But he also provided a useful tip – the need to check the fixing of the remote power amplifier is sound.

The remote ignition amplifier is fitted to the car by sticking it to the side of the engine bay which the installer says they have always done, but on Paul's car it fell off and landed on exhaust manifold and burnt out as he was on his way to get an MOT. A costly trip as he had to be returned home on low loader and with no MOT! The installer's aftersales support was good and they repaired the unit which Paul refitted but as he was doing the work himself he made

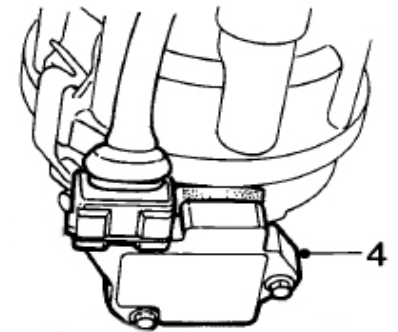
sure the power amp was fixed much more securely using the secondary support of cable ties as a safety mechanism so if it did come unstuck it would not fall down onto the exhaust again. The important message is if you have had one of these power amps fitted you might want to make sure you put some cable ties around the wires at each end to make it more secure.

### What does an ignition amplifier do and what is the benefit of having one?

This question was raised on a V8BB thread on rechipping an RV8. In simple terms the amplifier increases the spark output

delivered to the spark plugs. Mike Howlett felt it was a perfectly reasonable question about the ignition amplifier. The Lucas distributor used on RV8s and similar Rover V8 engines with electronic distributors has no contact breaker points, but uses an electronic sensor instead. The signal from this sensor needs to be amplified to be able to trigger the coil low tension. On the original distributor, Lucas fitted a small flat amplifier on the side of the distributor body (see 4 alongside). This worked well but wasn't very powerful and was prone to failure from getting too hot. An A&R power amplifier supplied with the ECU chip upgrade can be fitted remotely away from the worst of the heat and it produces a bigger output than the original. The amplifier Mike has on his MGBGTV8 conversion worked well for over 20,000 miles, the only drawback being the adhesive mounting which he feels isn't up to the job.

Simon Austin, an RV8 enthusiast in Canada, added a note on the V8BB thread that he had installed the remote amplifier on his RV8 some time ago and feels the location of the amplifier away from engine heat is helpful. His amplifier came mounted to an aluminium bracket, not fixed with adhesive, which he feels would take a major accident to dislodge.





"New" Dunlop bridge

### Planning a trip to Le Mans

In most years a group of V8 enthusiasts has gone to the annual 24 hours sportscar endurance race at le Mans. It's an event that combines a sense of expedition, an opportunity to drive on some relatively uncluttered French roads, the enjoyment of good food and wine, and of course spectating the race! Here Victor Smith provides a guide to planning your trip.

The event is usually held over the weekend closest to the longest day in June – the **dates for 2015 are 13th and 14th June**

Practice is held over several days during the week leading up to the race at the weekend, but do note there is no practice on the Friday. The race starts at 3pm on Saturday afternoon and the chequered flag comes out at 3pm on Sunday afternoon when the weary drivers gladly throttle back after more than 3,000 miles round the 13.6 km circuit. It is not only an endurance event for the competitors and their cars but also for the spectators because ambient noise levels are high and you are on your feet a great deal watching a 24 hour motor race in all weathers. But there are many compensations - good company and above all good food and the joie de vivre of being in France with the long hours of daylight in June. So what are the key points to bear in mind if you are planning to go to the event?

### When to be there

It is probably best to go over on Wednesday or even earlier in the week so you can avoid the invasion via the ferries and the Channel Tunnel - with over 60,000 enthusiasts making the annual pilgrimage to le Mans from the UK, this is a serious consideration. That way you will have a more relaxed journey, be able to see at least one day of practice and get a feel for the layout of the

place - particularly in daylight! The Mulsanne Straight is returned to a public road at the end of each afternoon after practice, so it's always a pleasure to take a run down that famous straight passing Restaurant Hunaudieres on the left and then hammer down through the right kink to the roundabout at Mulsanne corner just outside the village - preferably before dinner!

With no practice on Friday it is an opportunity to drive down to Chartres and see the magnificent cathedral.

### How to get over there

You can take a ferry from Portsmouth to Cherbourg, Caen or le Havre, but if you take the early morning ferry, sailing at between 8am and 9am, it takes until early afternoon French time to get to the French port. There is then a fair drive to le Mans and the traffic can be heavy, and the journey slow and tiresome. In recent years Bob Grieves has been a frequent visitor to the event and mentions "now the new A28/E402 motorway is open west of Rouen to le Mans, this reduces the travel time from Calais by over an hour. Also beware of the toll section of

motorway on the A16 between Boulogne and Abbeville both going and coming back on Sunday and Mondays because the French police can time you between tolls and they also have speed cameras!"

### Where to stay

You have essentially three choices depending on the style you wish to enjoy and the price you can afford - **camping**, a **small hotel** or as a **paying guest** in a house or chateau. The difficulty is that rooms at hotels get booked 12 months ahead, so your real choice is a smaller place which can be fine, but do make sure that they will let you in at one or two in the morning when you roll back from the circuit. The camping facilities within the circuit are reasonable as the ground is sandy and well drained with spaces sheltered by pine trees. Bob Grieves says "for 2015 we are camping at a new campsite in the Vert area called Epinnette - the entrance is opposite Houx - everyone is welcome to join me in a beer, just look for the MG flag". Bob has provided useful information on the layout of the camping areas at le Mans and how to find the ticket office. See our "more" page at: [www.v8register.net/more.htm](http://www.v8register.net/more.htm) for a longer guide and further information and links.

### Coming back

If you plan to return on the early Sunday evening ferry from le Havre for example, you will **need to leave the circuit before the end of the race**, probably 90 minutes or so beforehand, and then park up about 15 kilometres from the circuit so you can listen to the local FM radio transmission of the closing stages of the race before you go out of range. This way you avoid the exodus of around 250,000 fans and the scratch race to the ports - probably the most dangerous part of the weekend. You should be able to reach le Havre in time for the early evening ferry without pushing too hard.



Warming the pain au chocolat!





Jane Macartney and Bob Collins operating the engine crane and leveller

### Popular rebuild series

Following a major restoration of a Factory V8 previously owned by Dugald MacNeil, Mike Macartney met up with his old friend and as Dugald was so attached to the restored car, Mike generously let it go back to him. But Mike had thoroughly enjoyed driving the V8 so the bug had bitten him. We soon heard Mike had bought another MGV8 for a major restoration, a V8 Roadster conversion. As he was preparing the car to start the restoration Mike then offered to send in regular reports of the restoration which have been posted to the V8 website. They are proving very popular with fellow members as the illustrated reports show the scope and detail of the work involved and reveal for many members what is involved and some of the alarming aspects of corrosion on the bodyshell. Mike aims to complete the rebuild in time to take the car to MGLive! in June this year and he is attracting a supporting team including his wife Jane and Bob Collins who have been operating the engine crane and leveller during an engine and gearbox removal. Mike has bought an RV8 engine and gearbox as a replacement power unit. The rebuild series, which should clear 50 reports before the rebuild is complete, can be followed via a link on our "more" webpage.

### Thirteen part classic car series on Channel 5

A new 13 part series of one hour programmes on Thursday evenings at 7pm with presenters Quentin Willson and Jodie Kidd is proving popular viewing. Each episode is a carefully crafted patchwork of parts seemingly aimed at various groups

with an interest in the classic car world. The content of the episodes has been interesting and engaging but for many real classic car enthusiasts the most welcome feature was the programmes in the series avoid overblown stunts and other "TopPrat" type of crass material. You can see past episodes each for a limited period on the Channel 5 website.

An MGBGV8 was featured in Channel 5's promotional video flying by on a straight country road with Quentin Willson at the wheel saying "Ding Dong!" That car appears to be the Green Mallard, a press car which featured in the Autocar magazine roadtest published on 16th August 1973 as the model was launched. The V8 featured in an episode of Channel 5's series as an example of **"an affordable classic that gives you all the nostalgic feel-good . . . for a mere £5,000"**. It's likely that price would be more in the region of £15,000 or more now because since the filming of the series MGV8 prices have continued the upward trend seen over the last 18 months. The results of a very well attended Anglia Car Auctions sale in January and an H&H auction at Buxton in February underlined that raised level of interest in MGV8s.

### Events in the week before MGLive! 2015

A visit to **Nuffield Place**, the home of one of the most remarkable men of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and founder of the Morris Motor Company, on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June has been arranged by Ian Quarrington. The following day Nic Houslip has arranged a visit to **Bletchley Park** with its WW2 code breaking history and on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June we have a tour of

the **Hook Norton Brewery** followed by lunch at the nearby **Pear Tree Inn** both arranged by Debbie Brading. On Friday evening an informal **V8 Supper** at the Three Conies near Brackley has been arranged by James Brooks Fisher. On Saturday evening we will be at the Club Dinner so do join a V8 Table. Over the weekend the V8 Marquee will provide a welcome and a comfortable refuge with the **V8 AGM at 12.30pm on the Sunday afternoon**. For more information on these events and booking arrangements, together with details of the V8 AGM, see our "more" page: [www.v8register.net/more.htm](http://www.v8register.net/more.htm)

### Tax exempt evidence in Europe

With the end of paper tax discs in 2014 you will now need to carry evidence that a tax exempt classic car has a **current NIL value VED** when driving in Mainland Europe. The main source for checking current road tax status is the Vehicle Enquiry System on the GOV.UK website where you will need to call up the record for your car and print off a copy. The first line will say **"12 month rate - £0.00"** and further down **"Vehicle status - tax not due"**. For more details see our "more" page: [www.v8register.net/more.htm](http://www.v8register.net/more.htm)

### GPS tracker for classic cars

With increasing concern over classic car theft, a self-monitoring GPS tracker that alerts you if your car is tampered with or stolen is good news. It's about the size of a box of matches and can be easily fitted in a concealed location and connected to the car's electrical system. Monitoring your car is done using your mobile phone - even a basic mobile phone will do because there are no apps to be loaded. It's all done with simple text messages (see below) as a reply from the tracker which show the grid location of the tracker which you can give to the police to enable them to locate and intercept a stolen car. With a smart phone with Internet access you can click on the web address at the foot of the message screen and see the location of the car on Google maps. There is a reduced price for Club members of only £89 including VAT and UK P&P. See our "more" page for full details.

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### Updated MGV8 price guide

As part of our regular update of our MGV8 Price Guide released recently on the V8 website, Victor Smith and Adam Fiander highlight some of the background to the price trends over the last 12 months.

The increased interest in classic cars noted in our price guide released in 2014 has continued over the last 12 months. We have seen prices of good quality MGV8s moving up, particularly for MGBGTV8s. Typically enthusiasts nearing retirement with funds available have felt the wafer thin interest rates on deposits are derisory so forgoing meagre interest income on a part of their funds to invest in the enjoyment of owning and driving a classic car like an MGB or V8 is a relatively painless decision. Well now there are more signs that this move from passive deposited funds to fun assets could continue to drive prices ahead in the classic car market in the coming months.

### Signs that interest in the classic car market is likely to continue in 2015?

A recent news item on the V8 website highlighted just a few of the signs: there is the likelihood of a large **release of funds from pension pots** from April 2015 under the UK Government's new pension access rules, **Sotheby's has re-entered the collector car market**, the **frenzied activity at a classic car auction** held by Anglia Car Auctions reported in January and auctions since, and the **raised visibility of classic cars on Channel 5** with their current 13 part series which features classic cars at affordable prices with predictions their prices are poised to rise.

### RV8 market

The key features of the market for RV8s have been the shortage of good quality cars offered for sale, a strong demand for top end and Condition 1 cars and the speed with which good RV8s have sold – often in a matter of a few weeks. There are clear signs that buyers of top end and Condition 1 RV8s are seeking a car in very good condition which will not need the hassle or expense of refurbishment work. Buyers are prepared and able to pay a good price to get that type of vehicle. Prices for Condition 1 RV8s have risen by around 6% over the last 12 months and for exceptional cars more so.

The RV8 market is slightly unusual because a very high proportion of the stock in the UK, and to some extent in Mainland Europe, is reimported RV8s. Around 80% of RV8 production went to Japan and were fitted with air conditioning for that market whereas the UK spec cars had no aircon. In addition most (79%) of the cars sent to Japan were finished in Woodcote Green which is a second factor - colour.

These two factors are reflected in the pricing – generally a preference showing as a **premium for a car in a colour other than Woodcote Green** ("Other colours") and to some extent a **premium for a UK spec car**. Many might feel the premium for a UK spec car is slightly odd as the Japan spec car has the additional feature of aircon, although with the loss of legroom comfort for the passenger. Many owners have removed the aircon system to provide better legroom.

Another factor influencing price is whether the RV8 has a **retrofit power steering system** with a preference for the electronic EPAS over the other option of a hydraulic PAS. In general terms PAS attracts a price uplift in the region of £1,500.

The fourth factor as always is **condition**. Our usual three condition categories apply to MGV8s but for the RV8 model there are relatively few cars in the lowest Condition 3 category needing refurbishment as the RV8

bodysell has far better rust protection with the phosphoretic coating. So in our updated RV8 price guide table on the V8 website we have not included the Condition 3 category.

### MGBGTV8 market

Adam Fiander has reviewed current market prices for MGBGTV8s and provides a useful update on the factors and trends influencing prices. Sad, perhaps, but nonetheless a clear trend, is fewer people are interested in committing the time, or indeed have the skills and tools required, for getting underneath cars at the weekend to carry out their own repairs and general maintenance. So, for many enthusiasts seeking a classic car like an MGBGTV8, a 'quality' purchase in terms of the condition of the car has taken on even more significance now than ever before.

While **colour** will always remain a subjective and emotive subject, colours do affect values to some extent and the ability to sell a car. Damask Red, Teal Blue, Glacier White and Black tend to be regarded as the 'safe' options, with Harvest Gold, Blaze, Tundra, Bracken, various Green colours and Flamenco Red perhaps as being somewhere in the middle. But some of the more 'interesting' (some might say lurid) colours of 1970's MGBs are part of the character of our cars placing them squarely "in period" - a fact which should be viewed as a positive and not a negative factor.

**Modifications** like the addition of leather seats and walnut dashboards and other non-original "cosmetic" modifications may enhance value but the very highest priced cars nearly always have originality at the core. Full restorations need to be to a high standard of fit and finish to ensure top value, but owners may struggle to recoup their considerable rebuild investment when they come to sell. See our price guide, reports and price charts on the "more" page:

[www.v8register.net/more.htm](http://www.v8register.net/more.htm)

#### Updated MGBGTV8 price guide – March 2015

MGBGTV8 (RHD models)	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3
Chrome bumper MGBGTV8 – 1972/1974	£17,250	£9,750	£5,250
Rubber bumper MGBGTV8 – 1974/1976	£14,250	£8,000	£4,250
Concours winning or total 100 point restoration	£22,500 plus		

#### Updated RV8 price guide – March 2015

MG RV8 (RHD models)	UK spec	Japan spec	UK spec	Japan spec
Woodcote Green	£14,600	£12,600	£12,250	£11,000
Other colours	£17,750	£16,000	£15,300	£13,800
Exceptional or concours winning	£25,000 plus	£20,000 plus		