

# WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER



Dramatic display at Earls Court – the car is owned today by Robert MacGillivray

## V8 launched at the 1973 Motor Show

The MGBGT V8 was launched in August at the 1973 Motor Show at Earls Court in London with two V8s on display - Citron 798 on display up on a ramp with the logo "the new 124mph MGBGT V8" and Aconite 799 on the stand. Autocar reviewed the new MGBGT V8 and the specialist magazine Police Review and Motor Sport both gave it a thorough review in their October issues.

The review by Motor Sport concluded the V8 was "six years too late, with comfortable seating, poor ride, excessive wind noise, fast and economical". That was a frank verdict following their 1,900 mile road test of the new V8 model in October 1973. Rather than test the car immediately after its launch in August 1973, they had waited for a lengthy 1,700

mile continental trip to test the car in a demanding Grand Touring role. So quite a tough exercise for any car and particularly so when you read of the sustained speed the car endured during a trip of barely 141 hours - hardly "grand touring", more like a "pedal to the metal" thrash!

The test report mentions "this remarkable alloy V8 had succeeded in propelling the 110mph body design at cruising speeds of 120 to 130mph for miles on end, on one occasion at 121mph average which was maintained for almost 100 miles at night!" Then the report adds "in spite of this hard usage the overall fuel consumption worked out at exactly 18mpg". They went on to suggest normal motoring might see "17 to 26mpg". The reality is that driven for fun

most V8 enthusiasts can get between 27 and 31 mpg these days.

Despite the hard driving used for this unusually long road test, it is a most readable article and, more to the point, it expresses the contemporary impressions of what was then the new MGBGT V8 shortly after the launch of the model in 1973. Clearly the Motor Sport test team were lucky to emerge alive driving at such high speeds!

Another review was made by the specialist journal Police Review on its road test. They were keen on the MGBGT V8 saying "this car combines a businesslike appearance with a reasonable performance, and is capable of carrying a surprising amount of equipment. Now we have a new model which should make this one of the finest enforcement cars available - the MGBGT V8". A number of V8s were used by police forces and today one of those cars is well maintained by Malcolm Bailey in Hampshire who attends many shows complete with a blue light mounted on the roof of the V8.

## Marketing brochures for the V8

The marketing brochures for the V8 still look as exciting as ever over 45 years later. The collection of the brochures on the V8 Website has been assembled from copies of original brochures loaned by members so we have a reference set available online. You can see them via the link on our "More" page: [www.v8register.net/more.htm](http://www.v8register.net/more.htm)







Gordon Hesketh-Jones on the track

### V8 Register was formed in 1978

The first meeting of the V8 Register was held at the Crossroads Hotel at Weedon Bec on the Sunday evening of the Club's annual meeting at Silverstone in May 1979. By then the V8 Register's activities were well underway with the launch of the first volume of V8 Workshop Notes from contributions of useful spares and servicing tips by fellow V8 enthusiasts. That series has now reached Volume 14 and it's likely the combined total of the two workshop notes series for the V8 and RV8 will reach an aggregate of 1,000 workshop notes by the end of 2018 – an extraordinary achievement. The first 20 page V8 magazine was produced and distributed by mail to UK and overseas V8 members in Spring 1979. Since then the V8 Register has continued to develop, focusing on providing both good quality information and advice together with attractive social events. The first V8 Curry was held in Epsom in 1979 and has continued as the first event in every year since. The annual V8 Dinners held in Sulgrave were a popular feature for many years. The popular annual V8 tours have been enjoyed for well over 20 years.

In 2002 the V8 Website was launched which transformed how the V8 Register could distribute information and news to members in the UK but particularly to overseas members. The website has developed and become a leading classic car website packed with useful information and news items which are interesting, lively and topical.

Over the years the V8 Register has enjoyed support and contributions from many real characters, not least the early founder members like Peter Beadle, John Dupont, Jim Gibson, Howard Gosling, Walter Kallenberg, Alan Kingwell, Mike Maude-Roxby and Tom Studer. Today many active members contribute to the growth and success of the group.

The most used V8 is probably the late chrome bumper model owned by Gordon Hesketh-Jones who has enjoyed the car as daily transport for over 40 years, has undertaken many long distance tours to the edges of Europe and enjoyed his car on the track. It has covered well over 400,000 miles and has been rebuilt a number of times. Another V8 in daily use has been a Jubilee MGBGT converted to V8 specification on delivery by Brown & Gammons for Howard Gosling back in the late 1970s. It has had three rebuilds, including a reshell in 2005, and covered some 264,000 miles and is still in very active daily use.

### V8 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2018

For the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the V8 Register and the launch of the MGBGT V8 model in 1973 we have a programme of eight main events in 2018:

**Visit to the Symphony Hall and Organ** in Birmingham on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May.

**Visit to Packwood House**, a National Trust property in Warwickshire, on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> May.

**Tour of the Hook Norton Brewery and lunch in the brewery shop/café** on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June.

**V8 Anniversary Dinner** on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June at the Star Inn at Sulgrave near Silverstone.

**V8 Marquee** over the MGLive! weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> June at Silverstone with a warm welcome, seating and refreshment.

**V8 Register AGM** on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at noon at MGLive! 2018.

**V8 Technical Day 2018** on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July at Club Office in Abingdon.

**V8 Derbyshire Tour 2018** on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September based at the Matlock Bath Hotel, with a programme of visits.

**Rolling road session at the specialist**

**Aldon** in the West Midlands on a Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September with live rolling road sessions.

Information and bookings at:

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

### MOT exemption for VHIs

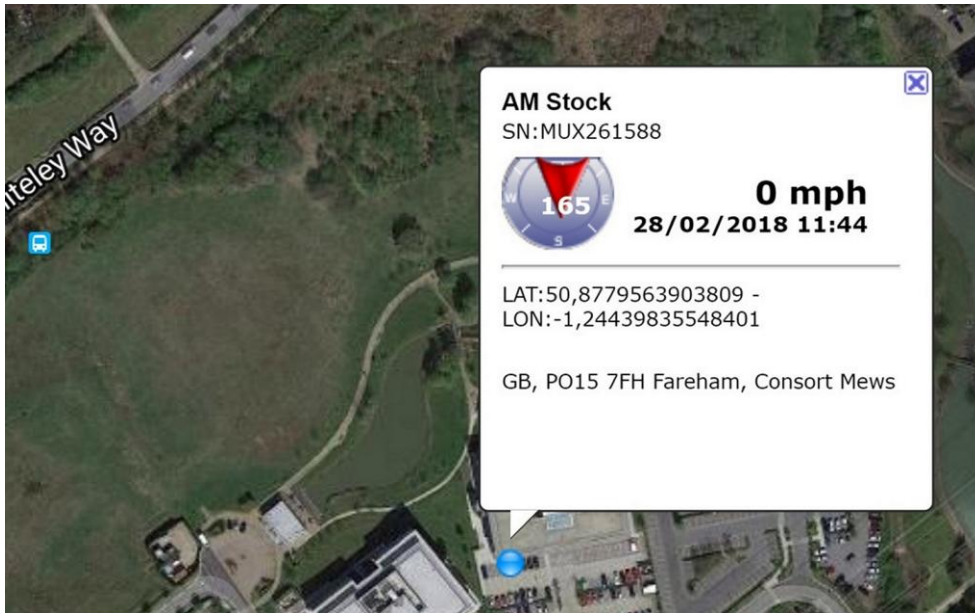
The new MOT exemption arrangement is one of three entirely separate matters concerning historic vehicles, which thankfully will stay separate as none of them affect each other at all:

**MOT exemption** – previously available to vehicles built before 1960 but from 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018 it will be available to vehicles manufactured or first registered over 40 years ago and declared to be a Vehicle of Historic Interest (VHI). Available on a rolling 40 year basis.

**VED exemption** for vehicles with the "Historic" road tax class is available on a rolling 40 calendar year basis. This concession was introduced several years ago and has not changed. The relevant date is the vehicle "built" date. A vehicle is eligible for a NIL value VED whether or not a car is declared a VHI. In the first year of eligibility the concession is available from the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

**Re-registration of a vehicle that has undergone substantial change.** The requirement to report changes to DVLA that affect the V5C and consider whether this is a radically altered vehicle. This is where the DVLA eight point rule comes from and it has no relevance to whether a vehicle is a VHI.

See our "More" page for a full report.



Map available via the tracker showing its location to enable it to be found and the car recovered

### Time to get a tracker?

Thefts of vehicles have been growing in recent years with thieves, particularly organised crime gangs, using sophisticated techniques enabling them to remove cars rapidly which make tracing and recovering them very difficult. **Without prompt information that a theft has occurred together with the vehicle's whereabouts, the chances of tracing and recovering a stolen vehicle are often low.** Recent reports indicate that with steadily rising classic car values, some thieves have become active in stealing classics like Jaguars, Triumphs, MGs and Land Rovers. Sadly they are often attracted by breaking the cars for the valuable parts and the relative ease with which those parts can be sold in the secondhand parts market. The reality is many UK police forces have seen a tightening of resources because of ongoing budget cutbacks so are often losing the battle against car theft. So **private firms could have an increasing role in finding stolen cars including classic cars.** For many classic car enthusiasts aware of these risks their concern will be "what are the realistic anti-theft options, what are the costs and where can I learn more to be able to make a decision on what to do?"

### What are the security options for a classic car owner?

There are essentially two types of security measures: first various measures to deter the theft of the car and second live monitoring of the car for disturbance alerts and its location so if it is stolen there are measures available to trace and make an early recovery. Without prompt information on the car's whereabouts and your being able to make that available to the police or to a commercial monitoring and recovery service, the chances of recovery are much lower.

The **measures to deter the theft of a classic car** include a battery isolator with a removable key, a secret ignition cut-off switch, a secret switch to cut the feed to the fuel pump, removing the rotor arm, a steering wheel lock and a wheel clamp. Of course parking in a safe place is also a wise measure too! Another security check is to make sure your car cannot be seen on Google Street View – if it is there then ask them to remove it. Also be vigilant at shows and events as thieves are on the lookout for cars they can target for theft and may possibly place a portable tracking unit on your car so as it leaves the venue they can track where it is kept for a future theft.

**Live monitoring of the vehicle is best provided by a concealed tracker** which provides both an alert when the car experiences disturbance and also, very importantly, live information on the

whereabouts of the car if it is stolen to locate the car and help achieve its prompt recovery.

Here Victor Smith reviews what tracker options are available for classic car enthusiasts, what protection they provide, what information is available from a tracker, the monitoring services provided by the tracker and any associated commercial specialist services, the recovery rates and the concerns over thieves jamming tracker devices.

### What tracker options are available and what do they provide?

In mid-2015 I fitted a budget GPS tracker as a hard wired installation to my MGBGTV8. With a link by a mobile network, the tracker is able to provide disturbance alerts and also, in response to a phone call from my prior approved mobile number, the tracker can send me an automated message with details of the vehicle's location. It was a basic, low cost device providing a reassuring level of tracking information. Almost four years on it's clear that trackers have now become much more sophisticated.

The range of **professional tracker systems** is now:

**Type A1 trackers** with GPS (Global Positioning System), GSM (Global System for Mobile communications) and RF (Radio Frequency device) with an indoor and outdoor location capability and a 24/7 monitoring and stolen vehicle recovery service. If GPS signals are jammed it will still have location and recovery capabilities. With a professional fulltime monitoring service, then emergency Level 1 police support is available. It has good GSM mobile communication connectivity with a dedicated SIM card that is GPRS and SMS enabled, usually with international roaming. A GPS defined geo-fence area can be created around the vehicle and then monitored by the tracker.

**Type A2 trackers** with GSM and RF location for indoor and outdoor recovery without GPS but it will always need an RF local signal finder using VHF or UHF radio direction signal finding equipment to help locate and recover items hidden from satellite view.

**Type A3 trackers** with only GPS location





A steering wheel locking device which is an ideal size for the MGB and variants which may not be available if either GPS jamming equipment is in use or if the tracker is hidden from a GPS satellite view – for example where a car is located in an underground car park or metal container.

**DIY tracking systems** which are more basic GPS trackers usually supplied with a PAYGO Voice SIM designed to report GPS positions for short periods. Usually these devices do not have professional support like monitoring and stolen vehicle recovery. The tracker cannot be tracked and the vehicle recovered without GPS so will not function if a GPS jammer is in use by the thieves or the vehicle is hidden from GPS satellite view.

## What are the commercial monitoring and vehicle recovery services?

These services monitor your tracker continuously on a 24/7 basis and respond to any unauthorised movement when their physical tracing and recovery services are provided. Their 98% success rate in locating and recovering vehicles and equipment is very good and they have close coordination with local police forces.

## Automatrics' car trackers can help recover stolen cars

Automatrics is a private company based in Fareham in Hampshire which is a specialist provider of trackers and the essential monitoring and theft recovery services. On their website they have a regular series of video reports of those services in action where vehicles and valuable machinery have been tracked and successfully recovered. Their long-life battery powered tracking devices can be discreetly hidden by owners in their vehicles and armed by remote control to detect any unauthorised movement, enabling the proactive alarming, live tracking and recovery.

Automatrics' GPS, GSM and a UHF radio location technology can position to an accuracy of less than one metre. This unique technology enables their equipment to work where competitors fail, tracking assets located indoors or hidden from satellites inside shipping containers for example. They can also be used when a GPS jammer is in use by thieves. Systems are professionally monitored 24/7 by Automatrics staff. They were first to take a self-powered tracker through the Thatcham Accreditation process. The Automatrics MTrack Proactive model remains the only rechargeable approved device.

Many valuable cars can be an easy target for organised crime with thousands stolen every year. Covert self-powered car tracking devices are particularly suitable as they cannot be scanned and have a strong and robust casing, up to 4 years battery life and motion detection. It's these features that make the Automatrics MTrack theft recovery car tracker the perfect system for classic car security.

Automatrics trackers use preventative measures such as using CCTV and parking in perceived safe areas make sense but nothing will stop a determined thief. The ultimate security protection can only be achieved through fitting an Automatrics MTrack car tracking device, providing the best chance to recover high theft risk cars such as Land Rovers, Range Rovers, Audis, Porsches, BMWs and more recently classic vehicles. Automatrics –

[www.trackersecurity.co.uk](http://www.trackersecurity.co.uk)

## Automatrics MTrack Proactive

The MTrack Proactive is a self-powered tracker with a 30 month battery life (when it will need a 12 hour recharge) and is the only CPI Secured by Design Police Preferred Specification and insurance accepted tracker. It comes with the first year of Automatrics 24/7 monitoring service and has a 3 year warranty. It is easy to fit. It costs £347 including VAT and free shipping. Fellow V8 Register member Gavin Brown in Australia has used this device and says "the units are excellent and they do have a very high success rate in getting stolen vehicles and farm equipment back. Basic trackers won't work unless they have a clear view of

the sky whereas the MTrack can. Like anything, you get what you pay for: it just depends upon the value of the item you want to protect and track. The thing that I like is it is battery powered and not hardwired, so it required no electrical installation and you could simply remove it when you changed cars. The Automatrics service has been brilliant and I have to give credit where credit is due. I can't account for their competitors but at no point have I been disappointed - they are right on the money."

## MPN Automatrics Active SS

This is their smallest wired tracking unit, size 45mm x 45mm x 20mm. It has the same high quality Automatrics customer services but with a super small GPS, GSM and UHF radio location wired device. Rechargeable backup battery and embedded antennas. For buyers who do not need a tracker with Thatcham certification right now, this unit is currently ahead of all insurance standards. Users have the same functionality on this Automatrics tracking unit. It comes with the first year of the Automatrics monitoring service and costs £274 including VAT and free shipping.

## Reluctance to get a tracker?

There may be a reluctance to spend on security measures by owners of mid-price range classic cars, like Condition 1 MG V8s, but the reality is classic car theft is on the increase and whilst an enthusiast may not use their car a great deal, on a few occasions their car can be left in a potentially vulnerable location. It only needs one successful theft for the car to be lost.. So I feel the case for more sophisticated security measures for even mid-range classics is increasing.



Car stolen in Birmingham was traced with a tracker to Southampton docks and recovered from inside a shipping container.