

WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER



Early UK spec RV8 in Nightfire Red with 15,400 miles seen for sale

V8 Technical Day

The event will be held on Saturday June 1 at a study centre on a fellow V8 member's farm near Watlington in Oxfordshire, just west of the M40. Details of the programme of presentations and speakers, together with booking details, are available via a link on the "More" webpage or the V8 Scribe above.

Events in MGLive! week

On Wednesday June 12th Nic Houslip is arranging a visit to the Forge Mill Needle Museum which celebrates Redditch's history of needle and pin production in the UK. On Thursday June 13th a visit to Birmingham Symphony Hall will see what goes on behind the scenes to cater for the world's leading artistes in both classical and modern music. The organ is a truly amazing masterpiece and the tour guide's stories are legendary. Briefing webpages and booking details are available via our "More" webpage.

V8 Lincolnshire Tour

The next V8 Tour will be from Thursday 12th to Monday 16th September 2019 in Lincolnshire and

is planned to give a taste of some of the attractions in this often underrated county. The tour will have contrasting scenery from the open flat fenlands to the largely unknown Wolds, with visits to Lincoln Castle and Cathedral, Heckington Mill Windmill, the 8 Sail Brewery, the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre and the Kinema in the Woods at Woodhall Spa. The tour organisers are Richard & Victoria Withington. An event information webpage and booking details are available via our "More" webpage at

www.v8register.net/more.htm

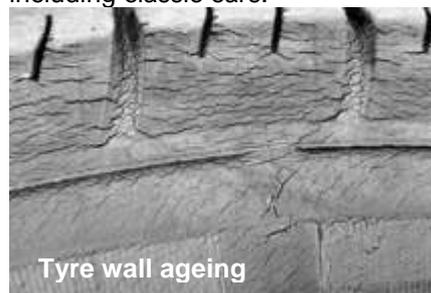
Re-registration after substantial change

Reporting changes made to a vehicle to DVLA that affect the V5C is required so DVLA can consider whether it is a radically altered vehicle. This is where the DVLA "eight point" rule comes from. A recent news item in circulation suggested a crack-down on unsuspecting classic car owners seems imminent as Westminster discuss inconsistencies with DVLA changes to classic cars and the way in which they are registered. The

safest route with a V8 Roadster conversion would be to purchase a four-cylinder MGB Roadster, and rebuild your V8 engine into that bodyshell or a new shell, keeping the registration of the Roadster. You would then have to report the change of engine size and perhaps colour to the DVLA, but there should be no concern that the identity of the vehicle has changed. Useful links to the GOV.UK webpage on the eight point rule are on our "More" webpage.

Consultation on a ban on 10 year old tyres

An announcement on the GOV.UK website says "the Government will consult on options to ban older tyres from use on buses, coaches, heavy goods vehicles and mini-buses to help keep road users safe. This follows a research project, launched by the Government last year to look at whether the age of a tyre has a direct impact on its safety". At this stage the options seem to cover heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and public service vehicles (PSVs). In November 2018, the DVSA guidance on maintaining roadworthiness was updated to say that tyres of 10 years of age or older should not be used on the front axles of heavy goods vehicles as well as buses and coaches. Hopefully this recognition of tyre age safety concerns and prudent guidance will extend to other categories of vehicles in the UK including classic cars.



Tyre wall ageing



How old are tyres when you must replace them?

Over time the suppleness of tyre rubber reduces so that by around 7 to 8 years old the ageing effect will have reduced the flexibility of the rubber to something that begins to have characteristics similar to that of wood with consequent adverse effects on grip, handling and ride. For most classic car enthusiasts doing modest annual mileages this will inevitably mean the tyres age well before they wear out. For many it will feel wrong to throw away tyres which appear to have plenty of tread remaining but with a high performance car which has a suspension package from an earlier age, good wet and dry grip and braking performance are essential together with supple rubber for a comfortable ride. But the age effect does not only affect the tread, the tyre walls also age and fine cracks can develop in tyres over 10 or 12 years old.

So be prepared for a tyre change well before 10 years and preferably at 7 or 8 years from new. Avoid offers of “brand new” tyres that have been in dark storage for a year or more and are claimed by the supplier to be “as good as new”. Sadly there are reports that a few traders and service providers seem not only unaware of the age effect on tyres and state, or by implication recommend, relatively unworn tyres that are over 10 years old are serviceable. In one case a trader insisted tyres well over 18 years old he was offering with an MGV8 were “perfect and safe to use”!

Remember your classic car insurance policy will include a condition that you must maintain

your car in a roadworthy condition. Tyres well over their prudent service life may well be regarded as not meeting that condition and in the event of your making a claim, a vehicle inspection by an insurance assessor may well note the old age of the tyres in their report and the insurer may regard that as a breach of the policy and decline to pay out.

How can I know the age of my tyres?

The tyre sidewall markings have an elongated circle within which is the date of manufacture as four numbers – the week number and the year. So in the example above the **2618** indicates that tyre was made in the twenty sixth week of 2018.

Tyre sidewall markings explained

Understanding the markings on the sidewalls of tyres will help you choose the right tyres for your car. Here’s a guide to those sidewall markings using a **175/80 R14 88H** tyre as an example.

175 - Tyre width

This is the width across the tread measured in mm but more accurately defined as the section width - the width of the inflated tyre section, excluding any lettering or decoration on the sidewall.

80 – Aspect ratio

The aspect ratio or profile of the tyre is calculated as the sidewall height expressed as a percentage of the tyre width. So a tyre with an aspect ratio of 80 is a tyre whose height is equal to 80% of its width. Modern tyres have lower aspect ratios – for example 60 - than the 80 originally fitted to the MGBGTV8.

The expression “sidewall height” is

more accurately defined as the section height – the radial distance between where the bead of the tyre sits on the wheel rim to the outer most point at the centreline of the tread.

Selecting a lower aspect ratio than originally specified for the wheel on your classic MG can lower the gearing, so care needs to be taken in any tyre choice. However if you fit wider tyres, say 195 rather than 175, then a slightly reduced aspect ratio may not result in a significant change to the gearing of the drive train, but it will need to be carefully thought through before making a decision on choice of tyre width and aspect ratio. The rim width also has to be a major factor in tyre choice.

R – Radial construction

This marking is almost redundant these days because very nearly all tyres for cars are radials but when the MGBGTV8 was launched in 1973 tyres with crossply construction were still available and fitted to some vehicles. Radial tyres were specified equipment for the MGBGTV8 from its launch.

14 – Wheel rim diameter

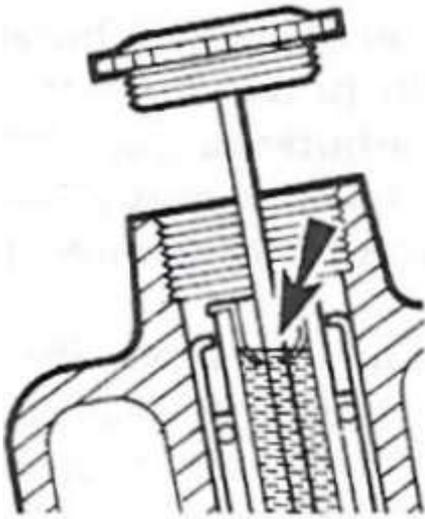
This is the diameter in inches of the rim of the wheel that the tyre has been designed to fit. The diameter is measured bead shoulder to bead shoulder which equates to the tyre internal diameter. Simply measuring the external wheel diameter includes the bead/rim retaining lip and will make dimension appear slightly larger than it actually is.

88 – Load index

This is a numerical code which gives the maximum load that the tyre can carry whilst it is travelling at up to the maximum speed set by the speed rating of the tyre. In the example above, 88 means that this tyre can carry 560 kg whilst travelling at its maximum speed.

H – Speed rating

This indicates the maximum permitted speed that the tyre can endure for a period of ten minutes without being in danger of sustaining damage. The speed rating of the tyre must match or exceed the maximum speed of your car. “H” is 130mph.



Out of winter layup checks

As many MGV8s come out of a winter layup, Nic Houslip provides a useful checklist of some important service items that need attention.

Time to renew the engine oil?

The Buick derived V8 engine is a design dating from the early 60s but does include hydraulic cam followers. The importance of regular oil changes with this V8 engine cannot be repeated too often because the engine lubrication system is a low pressure-high volume system and the oil passageways to the rocker shafts are prone to sludging up. So an oil change every 3,000 miles or at least annually is vital.

As some lubricants mentioned in the original handbooks and manuals may no longer be available, but useful information on choosing a suitable oil can be obtained from a book with the title "Which oil?" reviewed in 2014. See our "More" webpage for a link to the review.

The Rover V8 is a relatively low stressed engine compared to modern cars, where outputs of over 150 bhp per litre are not unusual. The MGBGTV8's specific power is in the low forties per litre while the RV8 is still under 50 bhp per litre, so engine oil is less stressed.

Remember to change the compressible sump nut washer to avoid oil weeping around the sump nut. It's worth buying three or four of those washers and having them in the arm rest pocket so one is

always readily available when needed.

Topping up SU dashpots

With SU carburettors topping up the dashpots with engine oil is a must, it improves drivability, particularly a smoother pick up from low speeds. An oil can with a long projecting spout makes reaching over the engine to the carburettors much easier to deliver the oil to the dashpots.

Check the gearbox oil

It needs checking regularly as the level does drop through weepage. Draining and replacing is a good idea at longer intervals. The MGBGTV8 original gearboxes use EP90 like Castrol Hypoy rather than engine oil for MGBs, whereas MG V8 Conversions and RV8s with LT77 or R380 gearboxes use Automatic Transmission Fluid or ATF.

Rear axles

They are quite highly stressed and the correct grade of oil according to the handbook must be used. The RV8 has limited slip differential and bearing where gear loadings are higher than in a non-LS unit.

What else needs lubrication?

Certainly, throttle linkages, bonnet catches and especially the bonnet release cable on a BV8 and RV8. These are difficult to get at but a spray of WD40 along the outer cable will help as it is usually an open wire wound type. If in doubt, replace it, opening the bonnet may be a tricky job if it breaks or freezes solid.

On the MGBGTV8 the choke cable will benefit from the same treatment. The throttle cable is nearly always a nylon lined type and should not be lubricated. If you suspect it is sticky then replace it as it's embarrassing to have a throttle stick open.

There are numerous grease nipples on the MGBGTV8, the most important are located around the king pins and must be greased regularly to help keep the steering effort manageable and wear minimized. Check too for grease points on the prop shaft. The

workshop manual will indicate where, when and how to grease up.

Door locks and strikers benefit from lubrication, but beware of excess, if it gets onto the passenger's clothes it may be a long, quiet journey home. For the exposed parts of door locks there are "solid" greases that work well, but simply rubbing a stump of candle on the exposed parts is better than nothing.

Battery

Most MG V8 owners have some form of battery maintenance charger when the car is in a garage, so now is a good time to check that the electrolyte level is still above the plates. If not, add distilled water. If the terminals are corroded, when you have the car outside pour a kettle or jug of hot water over the top of the battery and the terminals which will clean them perfectly. Some No-Crode smeared over the terminals will keep corrosion at bay for another year. Mixing some baking powder with Vaseline works just as well.

Checking tyres pressures

Check the tyre pressures and clean off any WD40 spray on the wheels used to deter corrosion during the layup.

With an MGBGTV8 with 175/80 R14 88H tyres, experimenting with pressures you will find 22 (F) and 26 (R) certainly give greater comfort and less thump from drain covers and bumps in the road, but the tyres at those pressures do squirm on corners to some extent. Raising them to 26 (F) and 30 (R) gives a more positive feel, good handling but a noticeable reduction in ride comfort.

With an RV8, whilst the handbook shows pressures at 22 (F) and 24 (R), many RV8 owners tend to run higher pressures around 28 (F) and 28 (R) depending on the load (passenger and luggage) carried.

How old are your tyres?

Two reports of tragic accidents involving vehicles have highlighted a failure of tyres over 18 years old. In the case of a horsebox on the M5 in 2017, the driver experienced the



failure of an 18 year old front tyre. With an earlier case, a coach crashed on the A3 in 2013 that claimed three lives and it has been reported the coach had aged tyres, one almost 20 years old. Links to the crash reports are on our “More” webpage.

But what has a horsebox or coach to do with our MG V8s? Many horseboxes, and some coaches, like classic cars may be driven infrequently and so tyre wear isn't the issue that determines tyre life, ageing of the rubber is the dominant factor. Ageing by time is accelerated by exposure to sunlight and chemicals.

Classic car tyres usually age long before they show any sign or wear on the treads. If you cannot remember how old the tyres are without looking in your car file or checking the tyre wall markings, it's probably time to replace them. Change tyres at 7 to 8 years old and certainly at 10 years as rubber compounds harden which compromises wet and dry grip, handling and ride comfort. This happens slowly over time and it may not be until by accident, you are forced into a difficult manoeuvre that the tyres' deficiency becomes apparent.

Another and more alarming failure, is that an aged tyre subjected to a long fast run on a motorway, perhaps for 2 or 3 or even more hours, will heat up and

be liable to catastrophic failure with loss of steering and the inevitable collision. The same stress occurs on a track day under high speed cornering as can be seen alongside, the nearside front tyre and suspension are compressed while the offside is not at all.

See additional notes online via a link on our “More” webpage.

Mild tune, big pleasure

A 19 page lead feature in Classic Cars magazine took “six current best value V8 grand tourers on a shakedown tour of the Peak District” and the result was “the MGBGT V8 was a real surprise. Forget what year it was made, it's a thoroughly enjoyable sports tourer that won't break the bank”. It was

up against an Aston Martin V8, a Porsche 928 S4, a Mercedes 380SLC, a 1966 Gordon Keeble GK1 and a 1967 Bristol 410.

The MGBGT V8 there was the exceptional example in Damask owned by Keith Belcher, one of our hardworking Pricewatch duo. He bought it in 1991 and then it was laid up in 1994 “when life got in the way”, but on retirement he spent £3,000 re-commissioning it for the road followed by a light restoration. Keith says “it's a pleasure to own – the sound and abundance of torque are addictive “. Journalist Ross Alkureishi sums it up: “throttle blips of beefiness elicit a recurring smile”. Photo: by Alex Tapley for a Classic Cars magazine feature article by Ross Alkureishi.

