



WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER

This month we have a reminder of our upcoming celebration events in 2023, details of John Twist's recent visit to the UK, a timely reminder on how to recommission your MGV8 after a winter layup, how to replace your speedo illumination bulb and an interesting piece on MoT exemptions, going forward.



MGBGT V8 50th Anniversary Celebrations

A V8 powered MGBGT was a model which the MG management team at Abingdon were very keen to develop and launch but were held back by the politics within the BL group. The team had seen the Buick V8 conversion of an MGB Roadster carried out in 1967 by Mark Keeley, a high-performance American car importer in Australia, and then later by Ken Costello producing his MGV8 conversions on both Roadsters and GTs. Eventually the BL senior management saw the light and Abingdon developed its MGBGT V8 rapidly on a very tight budget. The launch was in August 1973 at the London Motor Show at Earls Court. To celebrate that launch the V8 Register now has a programme of events in the week before and over the Club's major annual event at Silverstone in mid-June. There is a further weekend of events at Abingdon and Gaydon over the weekend of 19th/20th August.



MGBGT V8 50th Anniversary Parade Lap at Silverstone

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the launch of the MGBGT V8 model, MGV8 enthusiasts are able to join a Parade of 50 V8s on the track at Silverstone on **Saturday 10th June 2023**. This will be a rare opportunity to drive your MGV8 on the Silverstone track at a modest speed behind the

course car controlling the event. The Parade Laps will be during the lunchtime break. You can book your place using the online booking form on the V8 Website. Just go to the 'More' webpage for further information and a link to an online booking form. <https://www.v8register.net/more.htm>
The programme of events in the week leading up to the MG-Triumph 100 event on 10th/11th June 2023 includes:

Visit to Rousham House and Gardens

A guided tour of the house for a special tour group of MGV8 members has been arranged for **Wednesday 7th June 2023**. Rousham House is a particularly attractive, privately owned house which has been in the same family for over 500 years. The gardens run down to the River Cherwell and were landscaped by William Kent in the late 17th Century. It is likely to be a popular visit for partners and friends of V8 members with a relaxed drive reaching Rousham House by around 10am, in time to assemble for the tour. Book a place on the tour via the link on our 'More' webpage.

Lunch at Sywell Aerodrome

There is an informal lunch at Sywell on **Thursday 8th June 2023**, just northeast of Northampton, one of the UK's leading general aviation airfields. The Aviator Hotel, bar and restaurant are unique, not just for their Art Deco style but also for their wonderful views across the bustling airfield. It was formerly the original pilot's clubhouse and officers' mess during WW2. Book a lunch via the link on our 'More' webpage.

Lunch at Hook Norton Brewery cafe

This popular annual informal lunch has been held for well over 25 years in Hook Norton on the Friday of the MGLive! weekend. We meet at the Hook Norton Brewery Cafe from just after noon on Friday 9th June. Again, book a lunch via a link on the 'More' webpage.

V8 Supper at the Star Inn, Sulgrave

An informal supper at the Star Inn in Sulgrave village north of the A43 between Silverstone and Brackley on **Saturday 10th June**. Meet up in the bar with fellow V8 enthusiasts from around 6.45pm. This fine Hook Norton pub keeps its ales in a very good condition and has a splendid supper menu. Book a place via a link on the 'More' webpage.

Display of MGV8s on the Market Place in Abingdon

An opportunity to visit an MGV8 display on the Market Place in the centre of Abingdon where the MGBGT V8 was developed and built cannot be missed. Parking spaces for MGV8s are limited so book early for access to the display area on **Saturday morning 19th August**. Members whose bookings have been accepted by the event organiser will be sent a free Access Pass, which they will need to display on their MGV8 windscreen at the entry checkpoint. This should

simplify checking access by the marshals and avoid traffic congestion in the centre of Abingdon on a busy Saturday morning.



Buffet lunch at the Dog House pub west of Abingdon

This well-known pub lies to the west of Abingdon on the old test route used by the MG Factory for the MGBGT V8 model. A buffet lunch will be available from 1.00pm on **Saturday 19th August**. Booking is essential. Parking is available across the road from the pub. Ian Quarrington will be there to greet fellow V8 members. Book a lunch place via a link on the 'More' webpage.

MGV8-50 event at the Gaydon Motor Museum

The British Motor Museum will host the 50th anniversary of the MGBGT V8 and the 30th anniversary of the start of production and sales of the MG RV8 at this special event on **Sunday 20th August 2023**. MGV8s will be parked outside the front of the Museum from 10am - 4pm. All MGV8s are welcome. The focal point of the event will be inside the Museum with two dedicated rooms for V8 members - one with a selection of traders, Club stands and light refreshments and the other, in an adjoining room, will host presentations on the MGBGT V8 and the RV8, plus more. Tickets for entry to the Museum and its display of classic cars are just £10 which includes the parking area, the two dedicated V8 meeting rooms plus entry to view the contents of the Museum. This represents extremely good value. Book now to obtain your Access Pass via a link on the 'More' webpage.

John Twist's UK visit in February 2023

Ian Ailes, who together with Jon Glover runs the Fairmile Natter in Surrey, as part of the South East Centre wrote in recently to tell us about John Twist's recent visit to the UK and his attendance at the Fairmile Natter. Ian takes up the story.

Many of you will be familiar with John Twist of University Motors, Grand Rapids, Michigan USA and will have watched his videos on looking after your MG. The remarkable thing about John is that he loved MGs so much, he got himself a job as a mechanic in 1972/3 working for University Motors in Hanwell West London on 11 shillings (55p!) an hour and loved every minute of it. He also drove round in an old TF at the time. On his return to Grand Rapids, he registered and set up University Motors USA.

John heard about the University Motors reunion organised by the Fairmile Natter in Surrey run by Ian Ailes (V8 1561) and Jon Glover and asked if he could come over and join in. The man behind all this was Peter Beadle, one time wholesale parts manager at University Motors Epsom and V8 parts guru. Peter got in touch with his old workmates and arranged for them to reunite at the Fairmile Natter in February. Peter also organised a private tour for John around the BMH body

plant at Witney on Friday. Here they are looking through the parts bins and testing each other on part numbers!



Martin Davies BMH sales manager took them around the plant and Ian was able to accompany them, having driven John up to the factory. BMH built the bodyshells for the RV8 and here is a little known interesting fact; the tooling for the RV8 bonnet was a modified version of the MGC bonnet press. Did you know that? BMH reckon they have about one million factory drawings which they are now scanning for future reference. They have scanned 65,000 so far, so this huge task is well underway for the posterity of all this information.

Five V8s were sent out to the USA as samples. At least one was used in a Federal crash test and destroyed but the MGB GT V8 was never exported to the USA by BL for sale. However, a few have found their way out there.



John sent this picture of Lyle York's pre-production US Federal spec 1973 MGB GT V8 VIN 098. John reckoned he had worked on about 4 or 5 V8s in the USA which had been through his workshop.

On the Saturday evening Peter took John to the V8 curry night in Knowle, where they met up with 12 other V8 Register members including Club Vice president Ian Quarrington, Club Director Lorraine Noble-Thompson and V8 Registrar Victor Smith. The next day John attended the MG and Triumph spares day at Stoneleigh.

A small tip from John during his time at the Fairmile, was to do with the fuel gauge for the V8 – or indeed any MGB, come to that. A common problem with it is the accuracy of the fuel gauge. John said, in his experience it's usually the sender unit which is at fault. The gauge itself and voltage stabiliser are pretty reliable. The modern reproduction items seemingly have poor windings and give poor readings. So the tip here is to make sure your original is beyond repair

before you replace it. If you can repair it, you are more likely to have an accurate fuel gauge.



Pictured here is Ian Ailes (left) and John Twist with Ian's factory V8. Ian was able to give John a copy of the V8 Drivers handbook, which turned out to be one of the very few books not in his collection.

If anyone reading this worked for University Motors, please contact the Fairmile Natter. We would be delighted if you could attend our next reunion and/or send us pictures of your time with UM.

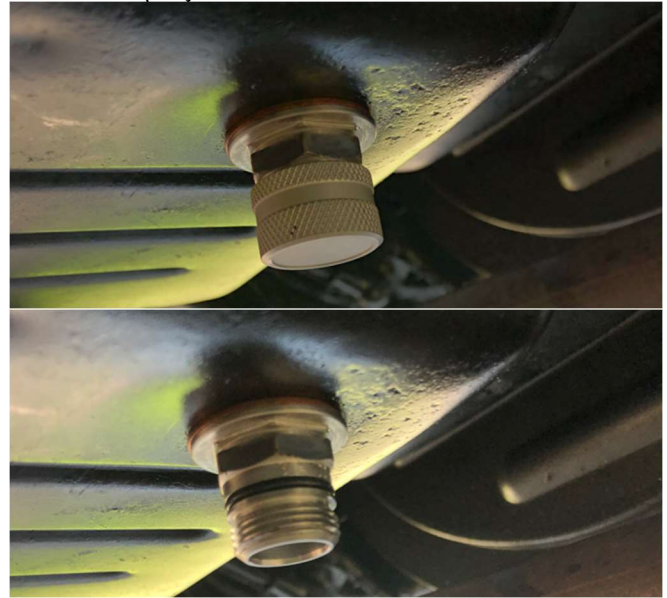
Summer Recommissioning

Many MGV8 owners lay up their cars over the winter months and prefer not to use them during the gloomy months of short days, rain, snow and the dreaded grit / salt on the roads. The grit certainly makes our roads safer during the sub-zero temperatures but it does terrible things to the average MGV8, unless it is extremely well protected. The old design is full of rust traps, including all the self-tapping bodywork fixings, which can begin to rust when the inevitable salt spray finds its way into all the little corners.

Top of the list will be an engine oil and filter change for the coming season. If you do this yourself, you will need to warm the engine first, then jack up the front of the car, securing it firmly on axle stands before emptying the sump. This is very important from a safety point of view, when you will be working beneath the car. Your Scribe purchased a very handy oil drain valve to avoid the inevitable hot oil running down your arm. This particular item was manufactured by stahlbus and is manufactured to a high quality from high-strength steel. (Be sure to order the G 1/2" = R 1/2" = 1/2" BSP set.) It simply replaces the original drain plug (full time) and includes a clever little ball valve, which is activated by a drain hose. Just remove the protective cap from the drain plug, insert the drain hose and turn a quarter turn, Hey-presto the oil starts draining immediately, down the tube and into the catch-tank below. When draining is complete, do not forget to remove the drain tube and replace the protective cap, it's as simple as that. The pictures here show drain valve with protective cap fitted (normal driving situation) and with the cap removed, ready for drain tube insertion.

This device works extremely well and is made in Germany. Your scribe engaged in some correspondence with stahlbus and they were very helpful and prompt in their responses.

It's also worth clarifying that the Scribe has no connection with the company whatsoever.



Moving on to the oil filter, a handy tip here (again to prevent a mess and spillage) for removal, is to cut the bottom from a plastic four-pint milk container and place it up, around the filter prior to loosening. Any released oil is caught in the plastic container, which is removed from the car with the old oil filter in it.

When replacing your GFE 121 oil filter, rotate to finger tight, then give it an extra quarter of a turn. Any more than this and you may find it difficult to remove the filter again next year! Keep an eye on the seal at the top of the filter when you restart the engine and nip it up a little further if it should start weeping.

While the front of the car is jacked up, it's worth greasing the front king pin grease nipples (3 on each side on the V8) and for completeness, with the grease gun in your hand, there's a further nipple on the handbrake cable, accessible by removing the rear offside wheel.

Next step, check the tyres for correct pressure and any signs of wear. Check the date stamp on the side of all modern tyres. (How to find this is covered in a previous V8 Workshop Note but is available on a quick internet search.) Replace tyres if worn and certainly before they reach ten years old, as the rubber compound will harden with age and they could become dangerous if used in adverse driving or weather condition. The sidewalls are obvious places to check for ageing signs but be sure also to check between the treads, as cracks can appear here on older tyres, which are not so easily detected without careful examination.

All fluids levels should be checked; hydraulic fluid in the brake and clutch reservoirs and coolant in the radiator. Bleed the brakes and/or clutch (or have this done for you by a reputable specialist) if there is any doubt about moisture entering the system, if the level is down, or if the brake/clutch pedals feel spongy in any way. Also check and top up the windscreen washer reservoir – especially if you have been using your MGV8 throughout the winter months.

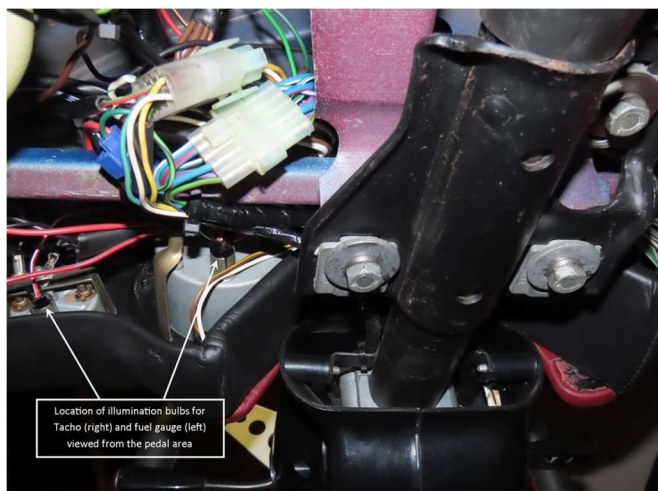
V8 Speedo Illumination – How to Replace the Bulb

MGB GT V8 owner Tony Head, experienced considerable difficulty relacing his speedo illumination bulb last year when the original bulb blew. Access is a real problem up behind

the dashboard, above the speedo drive, in amongst other wiring. Tony therefore posted the question on how to reach this bulb on the V8BB to other members. The V8 Webmaster responded that feedback from Tony Lake was that he had experienced similar problems when he bought 4 LEDs to replace the original bulbs – a modification which other members will have embarked upon, given the low light levels of the original setup.

Early consideration was that the centre console and steering column may have to be removed to provide the necessary access for nimble fingers. Tony further stated that by lying on his back in the footwell he could see the back of the speedo and the offending bulb holder fairly clearly; reaching it was the problem though.

Peter Ellis posted a useful picture, showing that while the tachometer and fuel gauge bulbs are reasonably accessible, the speedo and oil/water gauge bulbs were more difficult.



Bob Owen contributed to the thread, stating that he had replaced his speedo some 20 years ago and that he had checked back through his notes. He evidently had no problem since he had only noted the old speedo mileage and the supplier and cost of the new unit, rather than noting any access issues. At around the same time he modified the centre (radio) console to accept a Smiths clock and also fitted new air hoses, so he thinks (from memory) that he likely accessed the speedo with the centre/radio console removed. This is relatively easy with two screws each side. It can be partially withdrawn leaving all wiring intact. Bob further commented that as stated above it may be easier to change the speedo bulb by releasing the whole instrument and part withdrawing it on its cable.

The following day, Tony posted that he had 'cracked it' and had successfully completed the job, using a cheap "11 inch extra long nose pliers (25 degree bent tip) obtained via eBay.



Tony also pointed out that of course it's worth disconnecting or isolating the batteries when doing this job as there is a high risk of the pliers shorting out various connections in the vicinity behind the dashboard. Also it is important to grip the metal bulb holder (by the rim) when pulling out the bulb; attempting to pull on the connecting wire risks the electrical connection inside the bulb holder being broken. Wearing a pair of protective goggles is also wise in case any material is dislodged and falls onto your face when you are in an upended position in the leg well!

V8 Newsletter for the April 2023 issue of Safety Fast!

As a footnote, Mike Howlett reminded us all of the amusing fact that the MGB was fitted with a dash-lights rheostat so you could dim the gauges down. As many will know, they are hard enough to read when fully on! When you look in a new car at night the fascia is lit up like a Christmas tree with electronic screens in abundance. Mike said that he would bypass the rheostat control, and simply join the two wires together. LEDs will give a much better illumination without being too bright and he doubts that the rheostat dimmer control would work with them anyway. (Scribe's note: I did this many years ago and replaced the rheostat with an 'Overdrive' warning lamp – but that's another story.) As a final note, Mike pointed out that "If you are putting LEDs in the warning lights, remember that you cannot use an LED for the ignition light, and that you should use coloured LEDs for the others." In other words, don't put a white LED behind a red, green, amber or blue lens. Use an LED of the same colour as the lens to get the right colour effect.

DfT Reassessment of MoT Exemption for Classic Cars

By the time you read this, the deadline to have any say over this matter will have passed. However, the facts still make interesting reading. The Department of Transport was seeking the views of classic car owners on the MOT exemption for classic cars over 40 years old, introduced in 2018. This exemption from the requirement for an annual MOT test replaced an earlier legal exemption from an MOT test for pre-1960 vehicles. Now it appears the DfT is interested in the views of classic car enthusiasts and the wider public on how they feel this exemption ruling has worked and whether it needs to be reviewed. The deadline for opinions was 22nd March 2023.

Following the MOT exemption introduction in 2018, classic car use fell during the Covid period, although now many enthusiasts are using their classics a lot more once again. When the exemption was first introduced many people felt that whilst it was a convenient concession at that time, there were general concerns over the wisdom of allowing owners to decide whether or not to have their classic car tested annually by an experienced tester, where a fault could easily be missed by a diligent and enthusiastic owner. A reputable MoT tester's response was was: "If you saw some of the things we see you wouldn't stop having the MOT annual test!". He then briefly mentioned that he sees cars coming in for a test with dripping brake fluid, cracks on the steering rack connection to the crossmember and more. Alarming!

What effect did the MOT exemption have on classic cars? Figures obtained from the DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) reveal a significant drop in classic car MOT tests, although since Covid has eased the numbers tested have now started to increase slightly. The following number of classic car tests are thought provoking.

2017 -	221,860
2018 -	117,565
2019 -	83,737
2020 -	60,657
2021 -	63,629

The 2021 increase in tests may well be the result of some owners who value the keen eye of an MOT tester booking a test now, as they plan to bring their cars out of an extended layup during Covid and enjoy driving them more this year. For further information see our 'More' webpage.

Please note

The V8 Scribe has changed to Peter Berry. Please check that the details at the head of each V8 Newsletter of the copy you set for this issue are:

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