



WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER

MGBGTV8 Restoration

This month we have the first part of Alex Curzon's story regarding the very comprehensive restoration of his recently purchased MGBGTV8. Alex isn't new to MGBV8s as he previously owned one from 1983 to 1992. When it was sold, the next owner tuned it into a race car, which Alex considered to be a waste of an original factory V8. Other commitments and family life kept him busy until last year, when Alex took the plunge and bought himself another MGBGTV8. Another rubber bumper car again, outwardly quite respectable but underneath the inevitable tin-worm had worked away in all the usual places. Alex took the decision to have everything stripped back to bare metal with every last piece of rust removed and new panels and hand-crafted repair pieces installed and let in where necessary. That's a big decision and this type of restoration is not for the faint-hearted!



The V8 on purchase and arrival. Respectable at first glance

Alex engaged Beer of Houghton to undertake the work, as he has known Malcolm Beer (and Syd, Malcolm's father) since he was in his early 20's. It's worth stating here also that the view taken by Alex was that it is simply not worth 'missing' small areas here-and-there in the pursuit of excellence. Malcolm was in agreement with this approach. The rust will inevitably reappear at a later date when the car is put back together again, at which point the very last thing you want to do is take it all apart again.

So, as well as preparing for new front wings, inner and outer sills, splash guards, etc. minor repairs were required on both rear quarter panels, plus a repair to one castle rail and a partial repair to the boot floor and battery carrier areas. The prospect of dipping the whole shell was considered but as the floors were perfect and still had the factory sound insulation on them, which was also in good shape, it was decided to manually clean the car down to bare metal.



This took a considerable time to complete on the underside of the shell and Alex is very grateful to Malcolm, Bob and Maliki (Malcolm's grandson – a real family affair!) for the time and effort taken on the preparation work (in all weathers) by everyone concerned.

Alex considers this to be money well spent at the end of the day as the whole idea of this restoration was to end up with an original, factory spec car, saving as much as possible and reusing original items wherever possible. There will be a few exceptions to originality, such as lowered suspension, a limited-edition front air dam and electronic ignition. More of these details later.

The engine and gearbox have covered around 46,000 miles, so these are both having a sensitive and careful restoration with the engine bay being presented as visually factory fresh.



The usual areas up under the front wings had seen better days when the wings were removed, so these were cut out and repaired as necessary.



Repair work continued throughout the bodyshell and the following pictures give some idea of the extent to which the preparation was taken.



This is indeed a very thorough restoration project and in part 2 (in our next Newsletter in August) we will follow the painstaking continued work to the bodyshell and other components required to achieve the very best results.

Eric the MGBGTV8 PFE 330P

We have another 2-part story this month, charting the process of Mark Turner's acquisition of his first MGB GT – and yes, it's a V8. In fact, this is Mark's very first classic car!

Mark takes up the story: With retirement approaching in January 2026, I'd promised myself an MGB GT and received permission from she who must be obeyed. After all, nothing would happen until the middle of 2026, and the budget was £5k. Then I spotted something too good to miss. The budget and timescale went out the window!

A drive from Kilkenny to Dublin, a flight to Glasgow and a hire car drive to the frozen highlands of Scotland beckoned. It was a long day and there was less than an hour of daylight remaining when I arrived. The object of my fascination? A 1975 rubber bumper MGBGTV8, Flamenco Red but with the paintwork badly faded. More a beast than a beauty; a bit

highly strung, but rare enough and seemingly authentic. Completely mechanically overhauled with a rebuilt engine, gearbox, brakes and suspension. The owner, a gentleman by the name of Eric, had intended a bare metal respray as the next step, but felt it was time to let someone else take custody. After pleasantries, cold starting the monster of an engine and letting it idle, he went inside his house to get me a cup of tea and I lay on the ground, tapping under the sills and trying to believe I knew what I was doing. The car was described as solid, mild surface rust in small areas. Under the bonnet was in good shape, and there it was, the legendary 3.5 litre V8, happily burbling away. The boot area was perfect, everything looked original, and the spare wheel had never been used. Eric explained that he regularly drove the car eighty miles per month in the company of a local classic car club. Before the mechanical refurb it had been laid up for a decade.



Eric in the sunshine

We went for a test drive, but in my heart I was ready to accept any shortcomings. It was an MGBGT V8 after all. The car was full of condensation and it was a two-man job to operate the controls and keep the screen clear at the same time, but I knew the heating and ventilation was notoriously ineffective by modern standards. The ride was very choppy, but I'd read that was the case anyway. The windscreen wipers were wrongly parked, only randomly stopping at the bottom of the screen, which I'd noticed in the sales photos online. The steering was very heavy, heavier than I'd expected, but it had a smaller aftermarket steering wheel and I've been driving power steering cars for the last forty-five years. If 77-year-old Eric could handle it then I should be able to. I had an excuse in my head for everything, busy selling the car to myself. Then we swapped seats. I was behind the wheel and revved the engine. It was all over and I fell in love with that V8. Sold! Eric declared a few things needing attention by the next owner. An MOT advisory nearside exhaust manifold blow, a non-functioning heated rear window, a wobbly driver's door mirror. Spares for all these issues and a boot full of rubber seals, seam fills, replacement brightwork and further spares were included in the sale. Mysterious water ingress in the passenger footwell and a few areas of rust bubbles in the usual seam areas, but the car appeared to be in very solid condition. No welding needed or historically obvious. And it was soon to be mine as I transferred a deposit.

Collection – Inverness, 1st December 2025

Drive from Kilkenny to Dublin, flight to Edinburgh, train to Inverness. An even longer day than the first time so I stayed overnight in Inverness. The Grand Highland Hotel was grand indeed, particularly the dining room. The cost of dinner was the same as the cost of the overnight stay! In the morning, Eric drove in to meet me and we sealed the deal. The MG was packed to the hilt with stainless steel manifolds and other bits and pieces. Eric explained that the driver and passenger door

windows were reluctant to wind up fully and needed a firm hand. I explained that I had decided on a name for what was now *my* MGBGT V8. The name would be Eric the MG. Eric the Human wasn't too sure how he felt about that, but I thought it was a nice gesture. After a tearful farewell, and banging my shin twice on the driver's door frame, Eric the MG and I were on the road, hoping to reach winter storage south of Glasgow airport, a drive of 4 hours and 200 miles. I put my trust in the car and the RAC, and congratulated myself on my bravery.



A boot full of useful spares came with the car

I opened up the Waze app on my mobile and found the car's speedo was reading accurately. The miles on the clock were 1,120 since the engine rebuild. The engine ran very nicely, as I remembered from the test drive, and I started to find my way around the switches and controls. Keeping the windscreen clear was again a challenge. Wipe with one hand, drive with the other. The fan was very noisy and didn't seem to add much to the airflow. The rear screen was a misty lost cause with no visibility and the driver's door mirror occasionally wobbled into the right position to see traffic behind me, then wobbled off again. Opening the quarterlights seemed to help in clearing the screen. After about twenty minutes the windscreen settled down to a good level of clarity, greatly aided by the door windows which were permanently stuck half an inch open. The weather was dry, sunny and cold, around two degrees according to my mobile, but heat was flowing into the cabin. From my comfortable seat I could see fields covered in frost and Highland cattle lying down on the ground, frost on their backs. This was the life!

Vehicles began to appear from the opposite direction with headlights on, hurtling towards me at high speed through the mountain pass. Then the fog descended and mist began to creep across the inside of the windscreen again. I fumbled with the switches, wondering which one operated the lights, not having any way of telling if I had the lights on or not. Eventually I sussed it by flicking on main beam and seeing the blue warning light on the dash. A line of cars materialised in front of me and I realised I had been driving at the 60-mph

speed limit, lulled by the V8 power. Then the rain started, intermittently, or perhaps it was fog, but the screen was getting wet - outside this time. The wipers worked okay, but parked randomly and the blades were frayed. Road dirt began to smear the screen. I found the washer, which turned out to be just one jet of water, presumably the other was blocked. Fortunately, the working jet was on the driver's side. With careful timing of the washer and the wipers, I could get enough of a clean patch on the screen to peer through, although it was partially obscured by the randomly parking wipers. Then I realised the fuel gauge was running low and it was time to fill up. So I stopped in Perth, where I cracked my shin on the driver's door frame once again.

A tankful of E5, a cup of tea and a hot chicken slice went down well, but the car soon steamed up again without the constant airflow of the open windows under movement. A new round of window wiping and attempting to optimise the air and heat controls was conducted. The rear screen was now dry again but inexplicably misted in a way a cloth couldn't resolve. The driver's window was dry and clean but not clear, it looked scratched. Back onto the road and up to speed again. The outside temperature fell, or was I just tired? When Eric the MG and I reached Stirling, I was feeling fatigued from the constant noise from the gappy windows, necessarily open quarterlights and the raucous blower fan. Other noises intruded; something coming from the front running gear. With the clutch dipped the noise was still present – driver's side wheel bearings? Glasgow started to get closer. Then it began to get really dark. By the time we reached the M8, it was as dark as could be. The headlights were surprisingly good, but I couldn't find the control for the panel lights. Darkness across the dash. I thought I had found what must be the right control but the rotary switch wouldn't move or pull out or anything. (It turned out later that the rheostat was frozen!) No lights on any of the gauges. No visibility of the speedo or rev counter. I had my varifocal sunglasses for daylight driving but no varifocals for the dark; I couldn't read my speed on the Waze app either. I was driving on instinct, but felt able and in control. Three hours of driving now and I was becoming attuned to the car. Another noise was becoming apparent in the stop-go lane on the M8 through Glasgow. The aftermarket steering wheel was rubbing against the steering column housing. I added that to my to-do list of things to think about.

Burbling through Bridge of Weir and into Kilmacolm, I felt like a million dollars. We parked up outside my brother's place. I turned off the engine and cracked my shin on the driver's door frame once more for good luck. At this point I noticed that the interior lights weren't coming on with the driver's door open. Ditto the passenger door and the boot. The map light switched on manually, but was extremely dim. I made some alteration to the windows, pulling them up the last half an inch by hand, hopefully enough to keep out the rain, which was by now falling heavily. A Chinese takeaway and several beers finished the day off nicely. I'd made it!



*Eric in his pyjamas! (i.e. a lovely new outdoor cover.)
To be continued...*

Petition calling for lower VED rate for 20 to 30-year-old cars

An online petition has been launched calling for reduced car tax (VED) for cars from the nineties and naughties to save them from scrappage and to make them affordable 'classics' for younger enthusiasts. But there is a further group of enthusiasts who are keen to buy them - daily users driving in low emission zones who want to buy a low-cost car to avoid the burden of paying daily LEZ charges in urban areas, which can run up large costs. So although classic car enthusiasts might do modest annual mileages, other daily users could clock up high annual mileages. This petition highlights a growing movement to protect 'modern classics' from being scrapped due to high taxation, arguing for a more nuanced approach that encourages the preservation of older, functional vehicles. The petition was opened on Friday 6th February 2026 with a Signature Deadline of Thursday 6th August 2026.

What the petition says:

"Introduce a 50% VED reduction for cars aged 20–39. High road taxes force functional vehicles to be scrapped, creating a 'disposable' culture. Keeping existing cars is greener than building new ones, as it preserves embedded carbon. This 'Young-Timer' bracket supports the circular economy and UK heritage." Manufacturing a new car creates massive carbon debt. We must move from a 'disposable' car culture to a circular economy. Keeping a functional 20-year-old car on the road is often greener than building a new one, as it preserves the embedded carbon already spent. Current VED rates force many well-maintained cars to be scrapped prematurely. We call for a 50% 'Transition to Historic' tax discount to encourage repair, support the UK heritage industry, and reflect the low mileage of modern classics".

Federation for British Historic Vehicle Clubs

The FBHVC is reported as saying "the Federation aspires to persuade the UK Government to extend the present VED exemption for vehicles 40 years old and over to 30 years in line with the international definition of historic vehicles, however seeking a 20 plus reduced VED benefit has not been contemplated". It adds that the official DVLA data shows the sheer number of vehicles that would be included in a 20 plus reduction in the eligibility for a VED reduction, and with their continued use as everyday transport, the Federation would find it hard to challenge a Treasury view that those vehicles are not "heritage or historic vehicles". So far nearly 40,000 people have signed up to support the petition. At 100,000 signatures, the petition will be considered for debate in Parliament.

You can read more about this via links on the V8 website 'More' page at <https://www.v8register.net/more.htm> complete with links to the petition.

MGBGV8 checks after a Winter layup

At this time of the year, many MGV8s will be coming out of a winter layup and Victor Smith has prepared a very useful checklist of a number of important service items which will need attention before the car can be returned to the road. Items include engine oil and filter change, SU dashpot top-up, gearbox and overdrive oil and filter check / change, Front suspension lubrication, tyre checks and various other minor items frequently overlooked by owners.

Much of what is contained in Victor's aide-memoire applies to the RV8 too and will, I'm sure, be useful to all MGV8 owners. Full details can be found on our 'More' webpage at <https://www.v8register.net/more.htm>