V8 NEWSLETTER
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WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER

Photo: Motorsport in Focus

MGV8s at MGLive 2017

MGLive! was very warm this year – an unusual experience when at Silverstone on the site of a former RAF airfield up on a normally windswept plateau at 500ft. The tasty refreshments provided by Debbie Brading and the comfort of the seating in the V8 Marquee were popular with V8 members and friends, providing an opportunity to meet up and chat. Our guests in the marquee this year were the members of the Vintage Register. Peter Jevons (alongside) arrived in his RV8, clearly enjoying his drive to Silverstone on a fine day.

A **rare RV8 in Flame Red was on display in the Club's Main Marquee** to mark the 25th Anniversary this year of the launch of the RV8. The car was provided by Richard Homer with the help of Chris Wilkins delivering it to the circuit as Richard was involved in getting his race prepared Midget to the Circuit.

An **MGBGTV8 was on display in the V8 Marquee**, a car in the Citron colour for so long vilified by many but now much sought after by enthusiasts looking to get an MGBGTV8 as it's seen today as a colour so much of the period – BL in the 1970s. The car was provided by David Halliday and was formerly owned by the late Ron Armstrong.

On **Sunday at the V8 AGM** Nic Houslip was elected our new V8 Chairman along with fellow officers Debbie Brading (V8 Secretary) and Richard Homer (V8 Treasurer). The contacts for the other six members of the V8 Committee are available via the "Contact Us" link at the foot of the V8 Website homepage.

On the Friday the **traditional lunchtime gathering at Hook Norton** was as popular as ever and in the evening the **RV8 Anniversary Dinner** was held at the Star in Sulgrave.

Do “wanted” adverts work?

One method of finding a good MGV8 is through a “wanted” advert on the Cars for Sale webpage on the V8 Website and there are signs that type of advert is proving to be an effective way of attracting interest from owners of MGV8s who are beginning to think of selling their car. Most have owned and cherished their MGV8 for many years but typically as they are becoming elderly tend to feel the time is nearing when they should sell their car but would like it to go to a good home. As they think of selling they may feel they do not want the hassle of "tyre kickers" and dealers rolling up at their home but the alternative of their responding to a wanted advert and dealing with an enthusiast who would give the car a good home seems a great deal better. For many buyers they prefer direct contact with the owner of a car from whom much information can be obtained enabling an opinion to be formed of the care and maintenance the car has received over the years.

An example of how a wanted advert has worked well has been the recent experience of a long time RV8 owner, Angus Munro in Norfolk. He felt he needed the additional space an MGBGTV8 would provide for his dog and luggage so decided to sell his RV8 and try and find a good GTV8. His approach was to place a sensitively drafted “wanted” advert on the V8 Website. His aim was to make direct contact with an owner who might want to sell their car so he specifically said “no dealers”. The advert attracted several responses including, interestingly, a referral to the specialist MG trader Brown & Gammons who had on offer a good Condition 1 chrome bumper MGBGTV8 in Glacier White. B&G were handling the marketing and sale of the car for a long standing owner on a **“commission sale” basis**. They wanted it to go to a good home as B&G had restored it some years before and was about to start the recommissioning process following a long period of storage by the current owner. Angus made contact, viewed the car and the transaction was concluded through B&G with the owner who then sent Angus a full set of photos of the earlier restoration.

What is a commission sale?

Under a commission sale arrangement between a private seller and a specialist trader, the trader advertises the seller’s car for sale, responds to potential buyers by providing them with any additional information, arranging viewings of the car, negotiating a sale and then handling the payment, necessary paperwork and the handover of the vehicle to the buyer. The sale proceeds are then paid over to the seller less an agreed commission for the trader. All the terms and conditions for the arrangement and the scope of services provided by the trader are set out in a commission sale agreement between the seller and trader. Leading traders offering commission sale services will have their standard agreements setting out their role (usually on a sole basis), the display period, any additional services and costs, the duties of the seller and of course the fee and payment terms.

For a private seller there are many advantages with this type of service: the specialist trader can advise on pricing the car, the car gets visibility in the trader’s showroom, in their advertising in commercial magazines and on their website and the private seller avoids the hassle of prospective buyers visiting their home to inspect, test drive and haggle for the car. Engaging a specialist trader can transfer that role for an agreed commission, usually as a “success only” fee.

What are the additional services?

A specialist trader does not provide a warranty for a classic car sold on a commission sale basis but quite clearly a reputable trader does not want to be associated with poor quality cars in terms of mechanical defects, roadworthiness or poor presentation. Clearly there is a common interest as both parties want to achieve the best sale price, so in addition to basic checks of condition, roadworthiness and preparation for display for sale, other services or work may need to be agreed. That work will probably include servicing the car, possibly dealing with necessary repairs or parts replacement, but it may also include addressing aspects which could discourage buyers or cause them to haggle over the price to take account of for example dents in the bodywork, stone chips needing touching up, torn seat covers or scruffy carpets.

Clearly with a classic car nearing 45 years old neither the private seller nor the trader can guarantee nothing will go wrong – an alternator or cooling fan motor could fail without notice. Where a car has been regularly serviced by the trader, they will have a good knowledge of the condition and maintenance record of the car so will be able to market the car well.

Transparency over the sale price

A reputable commission sale trader will provide transparency over the sale price. An understandable concern for the private seller is a less than scrupulous trader might sell the car and collect the proceeds but disclose a lower sale price to the seller thereby paying over a lower net amount to the seller. With a transparent process a reputable trader will disclose to the seller the sale contract made with the buyer which will include the buyer’s contacts so if the seller wishes to make checks with buyer to verify the sale price that is open to them.

Feedback from members suggests they have found commission sales services from reputable specialist traders both good quality and effective, but of course they incurred the cost of the commission. Selling at a classic car auction would also have incurred a commission. The useful advantage for the trader with a commission sale is they do not have to fund the commission sale stock because their customer owns the car. But as the car will need to be with the trader for a commission sale, it is worth checking that when it is in their care it is fully insured under their trader’s policy. Some traders may not have enough insurance cover.

Concerns with LED bulbs

Lighting standards in modern cars have improved with the greater use of halogen bulbs and developments like daytime running lights or DRLs. The beneficial effects have been improved visibility for drivers after dark or in poor conditions and better daytime "relative visibility". Classic cars with original light fittings with incandescent bulbs and no DRLs have become less visible compared with modern cars. So "relative visibility" has become a real concern for classic car enthusiasts. An additional factor has been modern cars are much bigger today so consequently MGB models feel relatively smaller today. So many classic car enthusiasts have considered lighting improvements with halogen bulbs and now LED upgrades. But what are the concerns?

Concern with LED bulb upgrades

Concerns with upgrades on classic cars were highlighted in an article in Classic Car Weekly earlier this year which noted "classic car owners should not replace exterior bulbs with LED items because we it has been discovered no LED replacement bulbs on the market in the UK can comply with legally required UK technical standards. Only LED bulbs in purpose-built housings are legal. Used in original bulb housings some modern replacement bulbs can dazzle oncoming traffic, while others are too dim". Here **Nic Houslip** says if you are suffering with headlights on your MGV8 that are dim, all is not lost. He outlines the essential features of lamp technology and the concerns when considering an upgrade from the original incandescent bulbs originally fitted to MGBs.

Key features of lamp technology

The **incandescent lamp** is a much-underappreciated device that few really understand and has that name because the filament, made of Tungsten is heated to a very high temperature inside a glass bulb and becomes incandescent. The bulb has its air evacuated and usually a little inert gas, such as Argon or Krypton, is added. The filament runs at white heat, typically between 2000 to 3000 Deg C and is the source of the light emitted.

With the filament is operating near to its boiling point, small amounts of metal boil off during use and condense on the relatively cooler glass bulb. This produces a familiar blackening of the bulb which prevents the light getting out to where it is useful. Side, tail and stop lamps often suffer this blackening, so it is a good plan to replace the bulbs regularly, probably every 2 to 3 years. It's always worth checking frequently as any corrosion can be spotted and cleaned up. The side and tail light units fitted to MGBs are susceptible to water ingress, which can be prevented by replacing the foam gaskets every now and then. Personally, I always use a little WD40 on the base of the bulb and on the contacts, as it displaces moisture and helps prevent corrosion.

H4 headlight reflector

Originally the MGB and MGBGTV8 had **sealed beam headlamps** which are NLA. By modern standards they seem like candles today.

Halogen bulb and reflector upgrades

use Halogen headlamps in which the reflector and lens assembly is designed to take an H4 Bulb, but there are some points to note that can help with getting more light on the road. Halogen bulbs are like regular lamps but have a small amount of a Halogen compound added inside the Quartz bulb. This enables any Tungsten that boils off from the filament during use to condense back onto the filament instead of the inside of the bulb, thereby improving its life. Top do this the bulb needs to work at a very high temperature, so the bulb must be made of Quartz rather than glass. You should not handle the Quartz bulb with your fingers, since any oil on your skin will leach into the Quartz and shorten the bulb's life. Halogen bulbs do lose light output after prolonged use, so changing them can make a considerable difference.

H4 bulb

Most lamp manufacturers offer higher light output versions of the standard 55W/60W H4 Halogen lamp. Halfords has a range of better bulbs with up to 130% more light output for the same input power in Watts. There are higher wattage versions of most Halogen bulbs, but these are illegal in the UK for road use. They are intended for competition and off-road use only. These are probably best avoided as they will draw much more current and your aging electrical system may not be able to support this.

Making sure all the electrics are in tip top condition is important, the MGB fuse box is a common culprit and if it is corroded or the fuses are loose, there will be a voltage drop across the contacts that can reduce the voltage available at the bulb. If you have converted to Halogen lamps it may be worthwhile adding two relays, mounted near the headlamps, fed with a new fused supply from the battery, this will ensure that the lamp runs at its intended voltage. Light output is proportional to voltage, so it is best to keep it at its design maximum at the bulb. Curiously, under running a regular incandescent bulb will increase its life considerably, but the reverse is true for Halogen bulbs, when under running may shorten its life.

You may be tempted to think about some of the **HID or High Intensity Discharge bulbs** that are on the market, but like the LED versions, these cannot be used unless the reflector and lens assembly has been specifically designed for that bulb. The light source in these is an electrical arc across a

gap between two electrodes contained in a quartz tube filed with Xenon gas. The operating voltage needed to strike the arc is very high and is potentially lethal, so great care must be taken when working on or near these lamps.

Why can't I use alternative light sources I hear you ask?

The reason is quite simple. When designing a lamp, the bulb is considered an Isopolar emitter (emits light in all directions) and the job of the reflector is to capture and reflect as much of that light as possible out through the front lens as a focused beam. That beam is also "shaped" by the features moulded into the glass lens. For any reflector and lens combination there is only one specific point in space where the filament of the bulb can be located. Typically, the filament is a small surface are, usually a coil of coiled wire about 1 mm in diameter and about 5 mm long. The job of the reflector designer is to arrange the curvature to ensure that where the rays from the filament strike its surface they are reflected forward through the lens. It is not a simple curve, often a greatly modified parabola.

Looking at a **replacement LED headlamp or an LED bulb for a side or tail lamp** and you will see a typical cylindrical assembly with LEDs affixed to the surface. LEDs emit

LED bulb

light only in one direction, at right angles to their surface. The rays of light will be reflected in many different directions than the reflector designer intended, and although you may get more light on the road, it's a fair bet that there will be a lot of stray light going where it shouldn't and cause dazzle to oncoming cars.

There is more on LEDS in many references, but the best I have seen is on Wikipedia at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light-emitting_diode

Can I upgrade side lights to LEDs?

I think upgrading to LED for side and tail has some advantages for visibility and I doubt a roadside police check would attract concern with them, however I would caution that unless the lamp assemblies are in good condition (in particular they are not corroded) there may be difficulty in maintaining good electrical contact as LEDs draw a much reduced current. For Indicator bulbs, the OEM flasher unit sets its flash repetition rate by the current drawn by the bulbs. So if one bulb fails the flash rate increases. Fitting LED replacements will usually mean that the flasher unit needs to be replaced as well so it may not be worth an LED upgrade.

DVLA maintains VED exemption arrangements

Good news, DVLA has altered its systems to enable it to continue to record the correct build date of a car if it was first registered in the subsequent year to the year in which it was manufactured. For cars first registered in 1976 and subsequently, the system previously assumed the car was built on the date of first registration. As cars usually took a month or indeed several months to be sold and then first registered, this would have meant many cars eligible for VED exemption on the rolling 40 year basis would have been denied the exemption and have had to wait a further year for DVLA to accept their "eligibility".

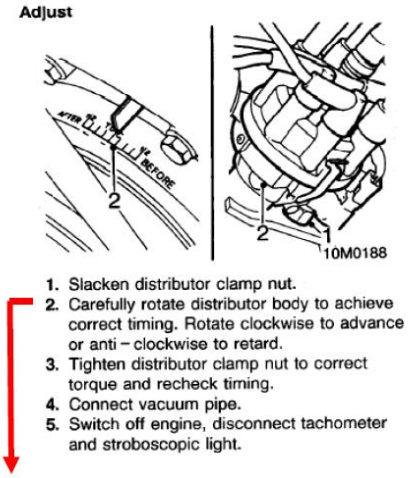
Classic Car Weekly had previously reported that some owners of classic cars manufactured up to 31st December 1976 but not taxed until the following year were experiencing problems in gaining VED exemption.

Following one of their regular meetings with DVLA covering a wide range of issues of concern to historic and classic car enthusiasts, the Federation for British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) heard the good news from DVLA that they had fixed the technical problem. The FBHVC expressed their gratitude that, despite the very small proportion of DVLA's large workload represented by the historic vehicle sector, the department were willing to invest considerable time and effort in solving a difficult problem and quickly too.

For further developments see our "More" webpage at www.v8register.net/more.htm

Mistake in the RV8 manual over setting the timing

Mike Macartney and Nic Houslip believe the description of setting the distributor in the RV8 Repair Manual AKM7144 is not correct. The correction is needed on page 7 of the Maintenance section of the manual – see extract and correction alongside. A copy is available on our "More" page which you can download to place in your manual as a reminder.



Correct text should be: **Rotate anti-clockwise to advance or clockwise to retard**.

V8 Anniversaries in 2018

In 2018 we have two major anniversaries: the 45th anniversary of the Launch of the MGBGTV8 in 1973 and the 40th anniversary of the Formation of the V8 Register in 1978. A compact programme of anniversary events is planned, probably with eight core events, and outline details should be available later this month. Already Steve Newton has plans for a V8 Technical Day with speakers on a range of topics on MGV8 maintenance and new products and also a visit to the BMHIT museum at Gaydon and Ken Clayton is planning the next annual V8 Tour in Derbyshire for 2018.