NEWSLETTER

Victor Smith 0208 392 9434
victorsmith@v8register.net www.v8register.net

V8 Register

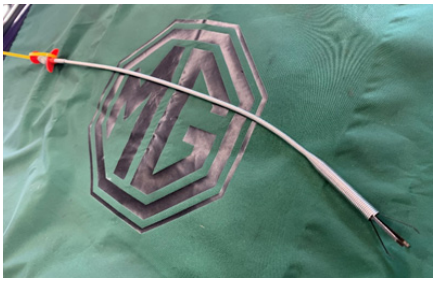
WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER

Air intake grille with mesh in place to keep leaves out

Fitting an air intake grille

Peter Spurrs found his fresh air intake chamber was full of debris and was starting to rust. He needed to find a way of gaining access to the grille surround to fit a mesh grille as a useful upgrade. Here is describes how he tackled the job.

The air intake grille is a chrome plated fitment with eight large apertures to allow the air to pass through. Whilst it fits with the car's style, it is less than practical and not effective at keeping leaves and other debris out.



Spring-loaded grabber tool

Maintenance access through the air intake grille is difficult

The eight holes in the air intake grille are sufficiently large to allow all manner of debris to pass and then accumulate at the bottom of the chamber. At the same time, they are too small for the hand to gain access and the chamber is deep making maintenance impossible other than cleaning out the drain tube at the bottom to remove accumulated sludge. A spring-loaded grabbing tool can be useful for reaching down and removing the bigger items, but it is laborious and only partly effective.

How is the grille attached to the car?

The grille is not designed to be removed. Fitment is by six pins on the underside of the grille which mate with six holes in the bodyshell. I am aware of two methods of fastening the pins to the body:

Blind fixings – the Parts Catalogue (AKM 0039) shows the part as "Blind Fixing" (item 25 in the diagram). The blind fixings form an interference fit between the grille pins and the body.

Spire pins – on my late '1973 car, there were six spire clips fitted to the grille pins when the grille was in place.

Removal of the grille

To avoid damage to the paintwork and the grille, care is required in removing the grille. Assuming you have the standard type with **blind fixings**, it could be possible to pull it off. I've not tried, but the security of the fit and ergonomics of leaning over the wing will make it difficult. A small puller is useful to lift the wiper arm from the wiper wheel box. They are available from the wish.com website. The option is to use a broad tipped lever (screwdriver) with a soft cloth to prevent damage to the paintwork. Inserting the blade between the grille and body, then twisting is relatively crude but effective. Accepting the inevitable, the paintwork may well need to be touched up afterwards.

With the **spire clips**, a straight pull is even less likely to be effective given its locking properties. I resorted to levering it off and repairing the damage. Any thoughts on a more elegant method would be gratefully received.

Preparing and fitting the grille mesh

After cleaning out the debris from the chamber, I prepared the damaged surfaces (both existing and caused by my handiwork), primed them with rust encapsulating primer and followed up with a top coat.

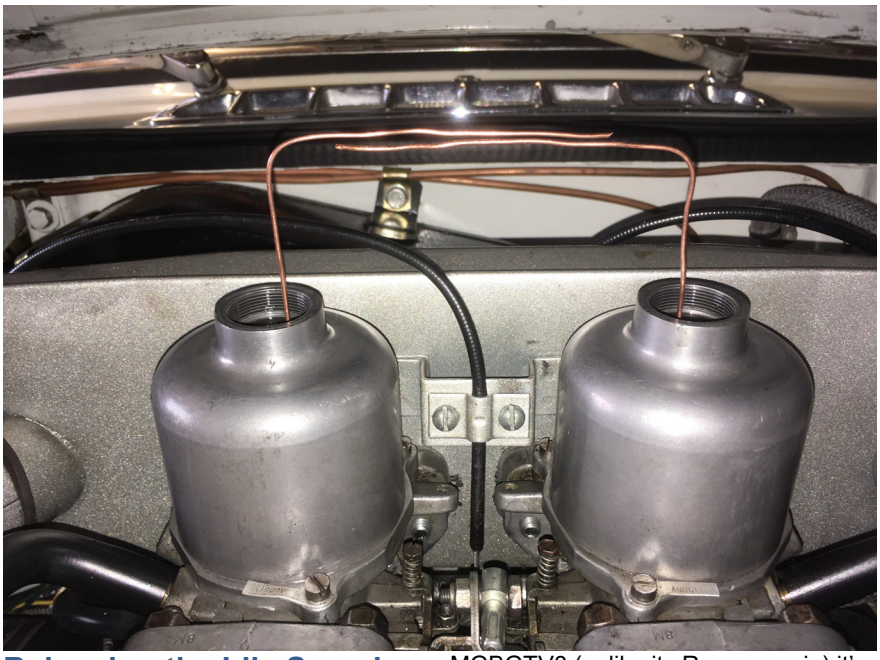
Grille with mesh in place and showing fixing pins

To prevent further accumulation of debris, I have installed a mesh between the grille and the body. The mesh panels are available from suppliers such as Brown & Gammons (P/N AHH6202X) currently at £6.24. I looked at making my own, but the cost of the materials was more than the finished commercial item.

Refitting the grille with the mesh is straightforward. Again, assuming blind fittings, they are put over the grille pins, then offered up to the body. It is an interference fit which was quite tight on my car. I initially applied hand pressure to place the fixings, then covered the grille with a cloth and tapped gently with a hide hammer.

The alternative method is to place the fixings in the body and apply the grille to the fixing. It doesn't work, the fixing is merely pushed through the hole and its plastic lip destroyed. Blind fixings are widely available at about 14p each. I bought eight, expecting to damage some on the way.

The result is a subtle upgrade which is an effective modification to keep most of the debris out of the fresh air chamber but there will still be road dust gathering at the bottom so periodic cleaning the sludge from the drain plug will be necessary to ensure any water is able to drain away and leave the bottom of the chamber dry. Just a reminder, do not remove the drain plug as it's a devil to refit!



Balancing the Idle Speed on MGBGTV8 Carburettors

Many articles have been written on the topic of balancing the idle speed on SU carburettors and just as many suppliers have come up with products to synchronise two or more of these admirable instruments. With the exception of the tube in the ear method they require expenditure on a specialised tool which will lie unused in a toolbox for months if not years on end. Jim Livingstone feels that if you are not happy with the subjectivity of the tube in the ear approach, then the following method combines minimalism with objectivity.

The idea is not new and in fact a tool was marketed in the seventies relying on the same principle - that the SU carburettor is itself an airflow measurement device requiring only a readout mechanism. The airflow sensor is, of course, the piston and its height in the suction housing is its response to the airflow. As both carburettors are conveniently situated side by side in the MGBGTV8 (unlike its Rover cousin) it's a simple matter to rig up a means of reading the height of each piston. As the method relies on what are effectively two airflow meters, the matching of the carburettors is critical. This method is particularly suited to the MGBGTV8 in that it avoids the removal of the airbox between the carburettors and the heater box and the insertion of a bulky airflow measuring device in the very restricted space there. An added benefit is the ability to check the balance of both instruments at different points in the rev range.

It's worth mentioning this note describes only balancing the idle airflow of twin SU carburettors and not adjusting the air-fuel mixture. For mixture adjustment see pages 58 to 60 of the MGBGTV8 Driver's Handbook AKD8423.

Material and fabrication

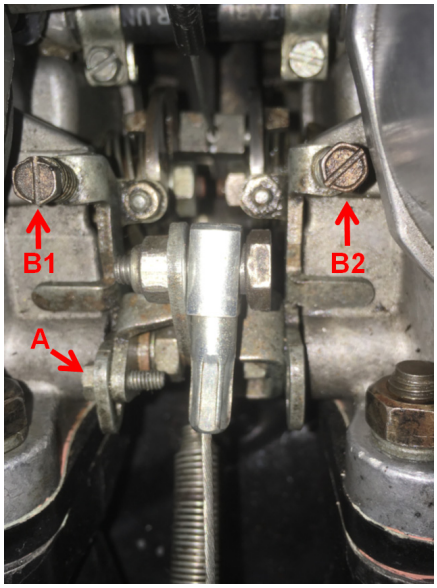
You need 50cm of 1.2mm dia. copper wire (an offcut of household mains electrical wiring will be fine) and the steps are straightforward:

1. Cut the wire into two 25 cm lengths.
2. Bend into an L shape 16cm x 9cm.
3. Fold over the end of the 16cm leg to remove the sharp edge.
4. Shape the bottom 5cm as shown in the image to be a tight fit in the 8.5mm dia. damper chamber.

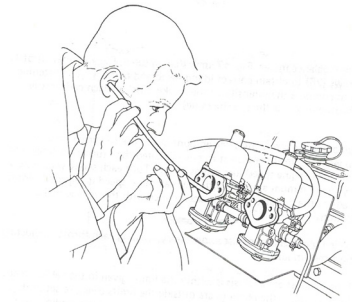
Application

1. Run the engine until the temperature gauge registers.
2. Having marked the damper assemblies to ensure correct replacement, remove them and store safely.
3. Fit the shaped wires into the damper chambers.
4. Rotate the wires to face one another.
5. Bend the horizontal legs to be level with one another.
6. Loosen the throttle interconnection clamping screw **A**.
7. Restart the engine.
8. By turning the throttle adjusting screws **B1** and **B2** adjust each carburettor individually until the wires align.
9. Retighten clamping screw **A**.
10. If the idle speed is incorrect turn both screws **B1** and **B2** by equal amounts to adjust it – the idle speed specification is 800/850 rpm.
11. Remove the wires, top up the damper oil level and replace the damper assemblies in their respective chambers.

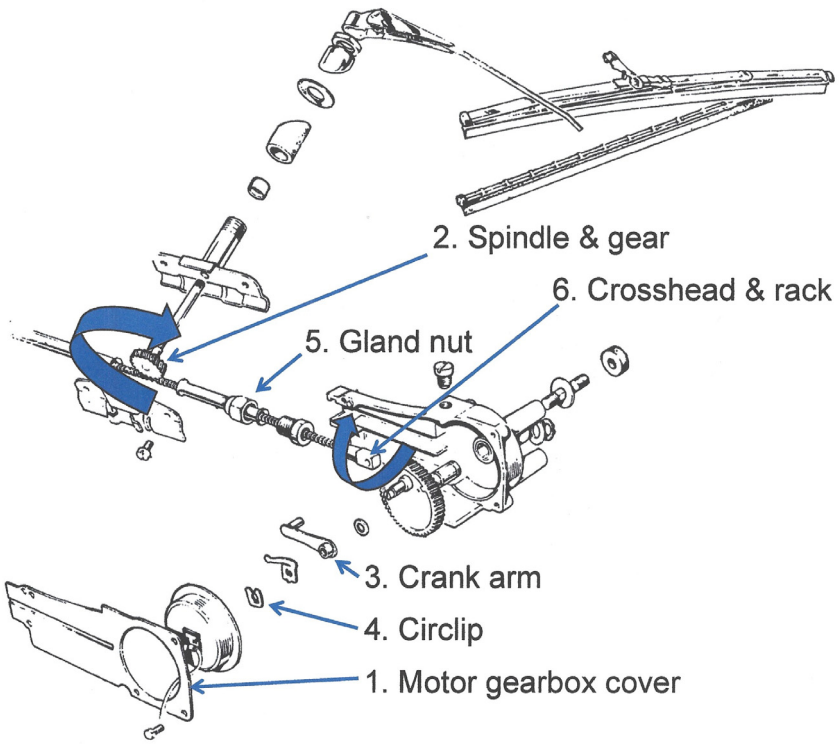
As a footnote, a variation not checked by the author would permit the function of the damper to be tested. This would involve drilling a hole in each damper cap and modifying the ends of the vertical legs to sit on top of the damper tubes. By this modification the balance of enrichment could be checked.



Balancing with a tube in your ear



The traditional way of balancing the twin SUs is by using a length of tubing to the ear and then listening for the "hiss" of the airflow in each carburettor. But for an MGBGTV8 that needs the removal of the airbox which the method described by Jim usefully avoids. The "listening tube" diagram is from the book Tuning SU Carburettors, page 78 published by Speedsport (ISBN 85113-072-0).



Giving a second life to a worn wiper drive

The Lucas rack and gear wiper drive was a popular fitment on British post war cars. It had packaging and cost advantages but suffered from premature wear due to the high loads on the gears and has been superseded nowadays by the crank and link mechanism. However, it did have one unique advantage: inbuilt redundancy. Jim Livingstone first discovered this in the sixties when investigating why the wipers in his Mini overshot the screen edges.

On dismantling the mechanism, which is an easier job in a Mini than in an MGB, it was immediately apparent that the gears were badly worn. What was also apparent was that a large arc of gearing was totally unworn. To an impecunious engineering student, the attractions of a cost-free repair were irresistible, and the gears were rotated to present the unworn arc to the rack. The spirally wound rack cable had only light wear but being symmetrical at the crank end it was also rotated.

Procedure

Jim wishes to point out that he has not carried out this procedure on an MGB and only on a Mini and that was almost 60 years ago. The following procedure, therefore, should be regarded as a guide only.

1. Disconnect the electrical connections to the wiper motor.
2. Remove the wiper arms from their spindles.
3. Undo the gland nut **5** connecting the motor housing to the rack casing.
4. Remove the screws securing the motor bracket to the bulkhead.
5. Carefully withdraw the motor with cable attached from below the facia panel.
6. Mark each wiper spindle **2** and rotate 180 degrees.

The following steps 7 to 9 are optional and only required if you wish to rotate the rack cable and lubricate the crank and drive mechanism.

7. Mark the parking switch position (early motors only), remove the gearbox cover screws followed by the cover **1**.
8. Remove the circlip **4** followed by the crank arm **3** and washers. Rotate the crosshead and rack cable **6** 180 degrees, replace the crank arm and washers and secure with the circlip.
9. Lubricate the gear mechanism with a high melting point Lithium based grease and replace the cover.
10. Grease the cable rack and reinsert into the casing.
11. Reverse steps 1 to 4 and test to confirm smooth operation.

Jim notes “Lucas were quite specific about the grease used in the gearbox. They specified that Ragosine Listate* Grease be used. However, this is now prohibited due to its lead content and a current Lithium based product like Castrol LM or Shell Retinax A should give similar performance.

* MGB manual 25729 Issue 3, page N.33 refers to this as Histate.”

See the full article via a link on our “More” webpage. Diagrams are from the MGB Workshop Manual AKD3259 and MGB Parts Manual AKM0039.

Evolution of the MGB wiper arm and rubber blades

A seemingly standard part on MGBs and derivatives has an interesting history and Peter Beadle explains how the part has evolved over the years.

When the MGB was launched in 1962 the wiper arms and blades fitted on the assembly line were supplied by TRICO (originating from Tri Continental Corporation) as the standard fitment. They were narrow 5.2mm wide stainless steel "Rainbow" blades, a TRICO brand name, with chrome plated arms attached to the blades with Lucas supplied wiper wheel boxes.

Everything ran smoothly until 30th November 1965 when Ralph Nader published his book "Unsafe at Any Speed" about the American Automotive Industry which was a "Best Seller" in the non-fiction category in 1966. The ripples of change spread to Abingdon as 75% of all MGBs were exported to the US. One of these changes was to reduce the dazzle caused by chrome plated or stainless steel items in front of the driver’s eye. The windscreen frame fittings became satin silver, so did the wiper arms and blades. TEX also started to supply the black dipping rear view mirror.

With the introduction of triple wiper blades for the LHD 1969 USA model year MGBs, MG started to use TEX as a supplier for a brushed satin silver arm and blade. The arm was wider at 7.2mm and used a "wedge lock" screw locking device.

TRICO regained its position with the introduction of satin black wiper arms and blades in 1972 which were fitted to all MGBGTV8s. Today TEX arms and blades seem to be the only British product now available. TRICO wiper arms died when the company closed their factory on the Great West Road in Brentford and moved to Pontypool South Wales in the late 1990s.

In the 1970s and 1980s UNIPART, originally part of British Leyland, resourced and recoded most of the blades by introducing the General Wiper Blade GWB range of blades. These were originally made by OE British suppliers but things have now changed. TRICO USA are reintroducing a classic blade but again these could be made anywhere in this world as they now manufacture in five different countries.

Replacement wiper arm

Most MG specialists supply the Tex wiper arm item **W76364E** under BL part number BHA5205 or BHA5205Z for the RHD MGBGTV8s (BHA5204 - W77364E for the very few LHD cars). See page 38 of the BMH/Tex catalogue via a link on our “More” webpage.

Replacement rubber blades
TEX recommends the use of their rubber blade **B12312E** but this is only 12 inches long instead of the original 13". The original 13" Unipart part number was GWB245. Recently **Bosch blades** seemed to be a great buy in terms of their top quality and price from MG specialists and on the internet. In an earlier article Tony Lake commented "make sure you get Bosch SP13 blades, there are other similar designations but I know **SP13** fits an MGBGTV8". You can see Tony's article via a link on our "More" webpage at www.v8register.net/more.htm

Removing wiper arms
A small puller is useful to lift the arm from the wiper wheel box. Peter Beadle reports they are under £5 plus postage from the wish.com website.

See our "More" webpage for the links to the part mentioned above.

V8 Kent Tour 2020 update

Ian Quarrington reports he has sought the views of members who have booked for the tour as to whether they feel it should go ahead or be postponed to 2021. There responses agreed to postpone the tour to Monday 13th to Friday 17th September 2021.

V8 on the Nurburgring

Guy Konz at speed in the Karussell at the famous Nurburgring during a track meeting in May 2020. It's a relatively early Factory chrome bumper MGBGTV8 (Ferrari Red 0543, originally Teal Blue) built in August 1973 when the model was launched. Guy is based in Luxembourg and acquired the V8 in 2007. It was previously owned by Colin Rea in Gwent.

V8 on the North Yorkshire moors

Mike Breedon has had MGBGTV8s since 1983, including his Factory chrome bumper model (Blaze 0796) which he bought in 1984 and still owns.

Mike has been active in motorsport for many years and used Blaze 0796 as his road car and raced it in the MG Car Club's BCV8 Championship from 1984 to 1997. It was driven to every race track he raced at in that time, including

Guy Konz in the Karussell at the famous Nurburgring

three "annual" races at Zandvoort (Holland) and Zolder (Belgium).

Without altering much from the "gentle" race track specification, 0796 has continued to be used as an occasional road car and competed in several Classic Runs including the 1999 European Classic Run covering 2,900 miles in 9 days starting from Brussels, Belgium, taking in laps at Spa, the old Nurburgring as well as other European smaller race tracks or Proving Test Circuits and tracks. That run finished with a few laps round the Saltzburgring, the former F1 race track in Austria then eventually making his own way back to the UK and home.

Mike has ensured (0796) has been kept in good shape throughout by Malcolm Beer and his own "tinkering and polishing" using it when he can in the spring and summer months. The photo alongside was on a pleasant day driving out over the North Yorkshire Moors - here parked with the Ribblehead Viaduct in the background which carries the Settle–Carlisle railway across Batty Moss in the Ribble Valley.

An active BCV8 competitor
Mike competed in the Club's BCV8 Championship for many years, initially with his long term V8 (0796) and then with the ex John Tadman car (PCF 900M) as he particularly enjoyed the performance of an MGBGTV8 set up to the regulations for a "road going modified Class B car". It was very easily recognised with its Gulf Oil light blue and orange bodywork. The car had a Rover Vitesse 3.5 litre engine and a Borg Warner T5 gearbox.

Mike agreed to share it with the late Joe Parrington which meant it was regularly raced in more than one championship at meetings, not least the Club's successful annual race meeting at Snetterton towards the end of the season. Joe took over the car when Mike had to retire from active motorsport in 2009 and following Joe passing away Steve Lockhart took on the car.

Mike also took a very active part on the BCV8 Championship Committee eventually as Chairman making a valued contribution for many years.

Parked with the Ribblehead Viaduct in the background

V8 Roadster Conversion

Jack Spencer joined the V8 Register earlier this year as one of our younger members, graduating in 2018. In March 2019 he mentioned he had inherited an MGB Roadster in 2015 and as part of a comprehensive restoration he included a V8 Conversion. He mentioned in 2019 that the car had been treated to a bare metal restoration and that he was looking forward to the completion of the rebuild.

Over the winter the comprehensive restoration continued and he felt "a big build up in excitement for how much more fun it would be when finished". Now Jack has contacted us with photos of his V8 Roadster Conversion and says "I have used it a lot and discovered all the niggles that occasional use doesn't elucidate…".