Successful V8 Anniversary year

The V8 Anniversary has been an enjoyable year which featured the publication of the new MG V8 book from David Knowles, an interesting anniversary day in May with a full programme of presentations on technical topics covering biofuel concerns to air conditioning upgrades and the enjoyable V8 Two Day Highland Tour which followed the popular European Event of the Year run by the Caledonian Centre. We also had visits to Hardwick Hall, Rousham House, the BMH Body Plant at Witney, a tour of the Hook Norton brewery and the recent V8 Pas de Calais Tour. Quite a year but now we are thinking of 2014. Charles Peers, our host for the anniversary day at his farm near Watlington in Oxfordshire, has suggested our joining a local **Historic Churches run** in conjunction with the "Churches Conservation Trust". We hope to be able to arrange a short organ recital at one or more of the churches we visit as Ian Quarrington is the organist at his village church and has enjoyed invitations to play at other churches as has fellow organist Tudur Jones. We are also planning **another V8 technical day** at the "village" hall on Charles Peers' farm, possibly in May next year.

Sunday Times RV8 article

"If the TVR is the bruiser and the MG RV8 the cruiser, then the Lotus Elise is the car for the driving purist" - that was the view of Jason Dawe in a "your used car question answered" feature on the Car Clinic page in a recent copy of the Sunday Times. The question raised was "with a budget of £12,000 what British-built, two-seat sports car could I buy that would be perfect for weekend drives?" The article declared their best buy was the TVR with a 4 litre V8 engine commenting: "For: handsome styling, intoxicating exhaust note and brutal performance – Against: cars vary widely in quality, heavy on fuel and tyres". See www.v8register.net/sf/more.htm for a copy of the article.

Replacement rubber bumpers available from BMH

During the tour of the BMH Body Plant at Witney in September by a group of V8 enthusiasts, John Yea mentioned they had a small stock of new rubber bumpers but when they had gone they would be gone! So if you feel you need to get replacement rubber bumpers for your MGBGTV8 then don't let this opportunity slip by!

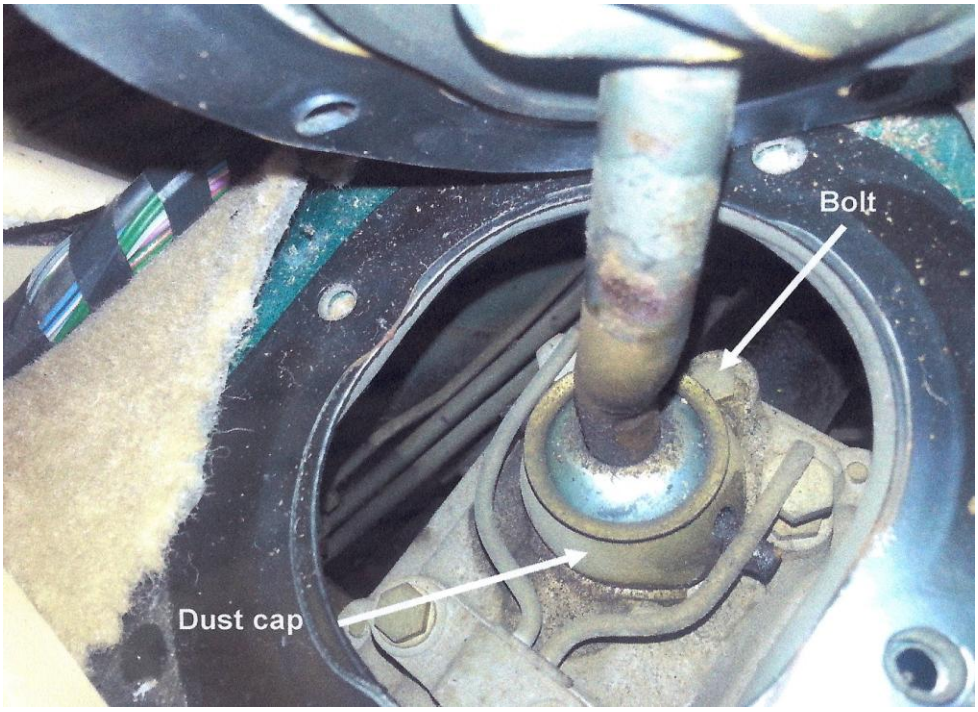
Replacement Triplex windscreen glass for an MGBGTV8

Barry Brickland from Australia was in touch saying "I am rebuilding a GTV8 and have removed the old screen marked Skursiv Climaglass DGM 5908 VSP Plate 857 which looks full tint and is 7mm thick. The new screen which came with the car (along with a new rubber set amongst many other parts purchased in the 80s in the UK) is marked Original Tamguass or Tamglass M32 ASI Laminated DOT 8 TP GS 313 plate F HI -S is 6mm thick. I noticed it weighed less which drew my attention to the thickness, it also is full tint." We contacted Pilkington and received a most helpful reply from Richard Lawrence, UK General Manager for the Pilkington aftermarket business, saying "all of our MG glass is built to BS857 – amongst other requirements the glass is tested by dropping a steel ball from height onto it. If it goes through then the glass is considered to be a failure. BS857 was the specification in place when the vehicle was originally manufactured and our Triplex logo for this glass includes the BS kite mark symbol. We have two thicknesses of glass for MG cars – we offer a standard glass which consists of two sheets of 2.5mm with an interlayer, giving an overall thickness of just under 6mm and then we also offer a thicker glass of 3mm giving overall thickness of just under 7mm. Both windscreen glasses pass all the requirements of BS857, but a number of customers over the years have asked us to build a thicker glass so that it more closely resembles what was originally fitted."

He added "the MGB glasses are coded 2230, 2224 and 2238 with the Midget 2227. After this code comes the colour tint (ACL= Clear, AGN = Green etc) and if required we also offer shadeband version, so for example 2230AGNBL would be a green glass with a blue shadeband. Thicker glasses are designated with 1A or 2A after the code. You'll find all the details on our website where there is a "contact us" link for technical questions and local distributors' contacts." www.windscreensforclassics.com

Spares news

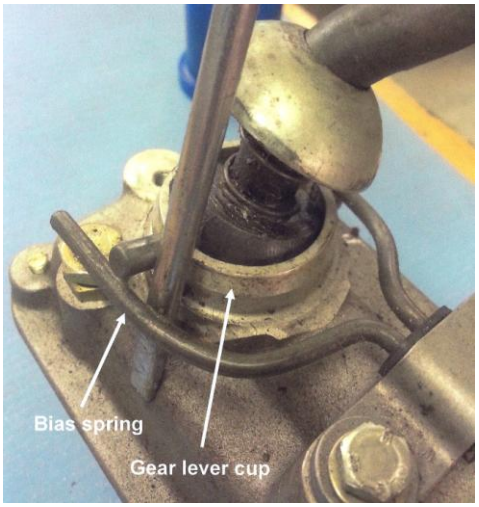
Clive Wheatley has a number of spares coming through which should be available before too long. He has had a batch of high quality replacement **RV8 antiroll bars** reproduced by a local specialist in the West Midlands. They are also ideal for MGBV8 conversions as they have a dip in the profile which clears the bottom pulley. End bushes are available too. A particularly interesting part Clive is sourcing is a **new all alloy Factory style MGBGTV8 wheel** which has not only the distinctive alloy centre, which is a key feature of the original Dunlop composite alloy and steel wheel, but also a highly polished alloy rim. So this replacement wheel appears virtually identical to the original Factory wheel with a chromed steel rim. With the high cost of refurbishing the original wheels and the scarcity of original wheels offered for sale, these alloys will be a good alternative and likely to be good value too. The new all alloy replacement wheels are 15" rather than the original 14"but with the same rim width as the original Factory wheel but the larger diameter wheel enables a four pot front brake calliper to be fitted. Clive is also sourcing a new batch of **MGBGTV8 wheel centre cones** which will be very welcome. For the RV8 Clive has a local specialist working on producing new **plastic radiator expansion tanks** which will be a much welcomed replacement part as they are currently NLA. For the LT77 and R380 gearboxes Clive is getting a new batch of **gear lever dust caps** made (see photo alongside). The single bracket on the original part can easily fracture involving a repair by welding the cup as replacements have not been available for a while.



How to grease your RV8 gear lever cup and remote

Steve Newton describes how the grease the gear lever cup on the remote on an LT77 or R380 gearbox fitted to an RV8 and many V8 conversions. Access is tight and particular care needs to be taken with a spring loaded nylon plunger which holds the gear lever both when removing it and when replacing the gear lever – if you are not careful it can fly off and then you will need to spend time scrabbling around under the car hunting for the spring and plunger!

Pull the leather arm rest clear of the four pads which reveals the black volumetric alarm unit mounted on a cream coloured moulded panel. Disconnect the plug from the volumetric unit and then loosen the four cross head screws which secure the moulded panel. Unscrew the gear knob from the gear lever and then as you lift up the centre console and place it to one side, but be aware of the remote alarm aerial cable which should be taped to the underside of it – just pull it free and re-tape it back in position later.



Now remove the four screws holding down the rubber gear lever gaiter metal clamping ring and pull it upwards out of the way. The exposed carpet is eased to the side. Next remove the **bolt holding down the bracket on the side of the dust cover cap** (see above) – you may find at this stage that the bracket has broken so you will either need to replace it or repair it. You can see above that the access to carry out this service work is very restricted and tight.

Take a flat bladed screwdriver or pry bar and **lever the bias spring arms** from over the gear lever cross pins (see left) on both sides so each spring arm is then below the cross pins. The bias spring ensures the resting place for the gear lever when out of gear is in line with gears 3 and 4. The cross pins are part of the gear lever ball. Now the gear lever is very nearly ready to be withdrawn from the cup but first be aware that the nylon plunger and anti-rattle spring will fly out and could be lost easily. I overcome this by using a screwdriver or pry bar again to try and **press and hold the spring loaded nylon plunger in place** when I pull the gear lever upwards and out of the remote casting. If you have been able to keep the plunger in place then now is the time to pat yourself on the back. Grovelling around the garage floor looking for them if they have shot off is not much fun.

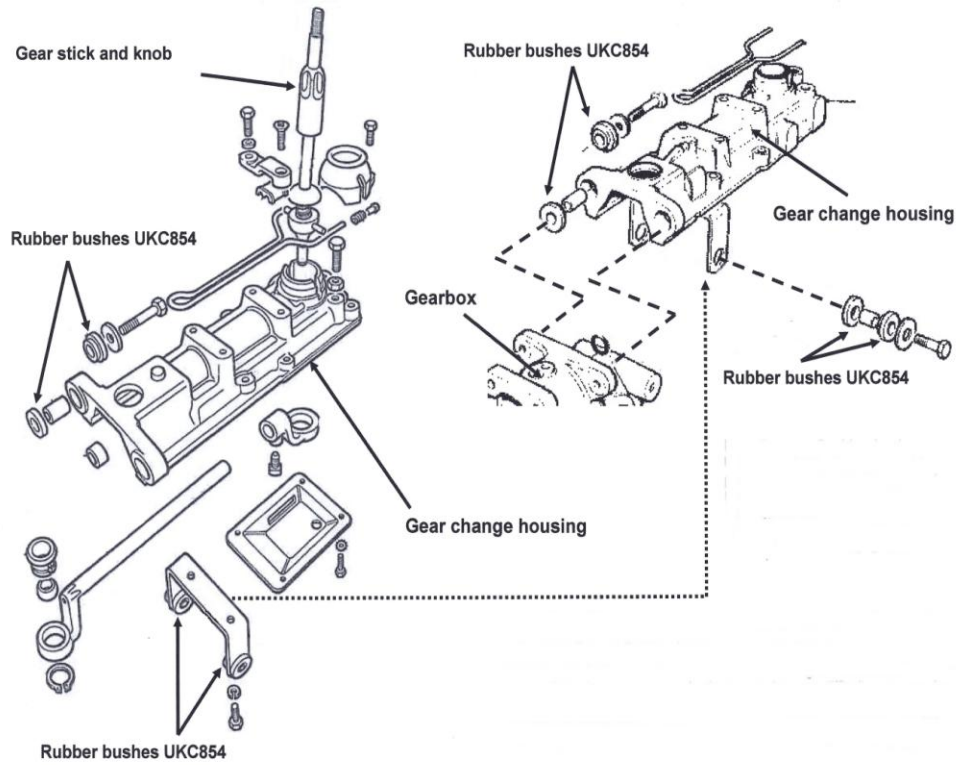
Looking into the centre of the ball at the bottom, it's like a rose joint. Clean off the old grease from the gear lever and remote casting. When all is clean it's time to re-grease them both with a multipurpose grease (for example Castrol LM or other general purpose grease) including the selector rod yoke ball which you can see when you look down into the remote casting. With road dust flying about you can see how vital it is to keep these parts well-greased - including the dust cap too. Also do not forget to grease the nylon plunger and spring as this will help hold the plunger in place when you refit it.

Now for the hard bit – reassembly. This could go right the first time or you could still be there for an hour or two wishing you had not started the job in the first place! Position the gear lever into the casting with the nylon plunger and spring facing the rear of the car. Then depress the nylon plunger against the spring pressure and maintain that pressure using a screwdriver or pry bar whilst at the same time pushing the gear lever down until it is fully home in the remote casting.

Next take your screwdriver or pry bar and lever the bias spring back into place on top of the gear lever cross pin arms on both sides. Make sure you have greased the spherical washer above the spring on the gear lever shaft, then press the gear lever dust cap down on to it and into place. Refit the single bolt through the bracket flange and tighten. Replace the metal ring securing the gear lever gaiter.

Now it's time to refit the trim. Lower the centre console on to the gear lever and re-tape the aerial wire back on the underside of the console. Push the cable for the volumetric sensor back through the hole and reconnect the plug. Then screw the gear knob back on the gear stick and refit the six cross head screws. Don't forget the two larger screws go to the rear of the console. Refit the trim pad below the radio and then the arm rest panel and arm rest.

More at: www.v8register.net/sf/more.htm



Solving crunching gears with an RV8 gearbox

A query posted on the V8BB touched on a topic that will increasingly become an issue for RV8 owners as the mileage builds up on their LT77S or R380 gearboxes. Peter Varley said “my RV8 started crunching gears when I changed gears, especially on the down shifts. The problem got gradually worse over a couple of days. At first I thought that I had a damaged gearbox but as the RV8 has now done only 30,000kms I thought that maybe I had lost oil from a small leak over time. I drove the car to my local mechanic who said that he would "evaluate the situation" and let me know the outcome. Well to cut a long story short the problem was that the four rubber bushes that hold the gear stick remote assembly to the gearbox had perished thus putting the shift gate out of alignment which resulted in crunching gears and also it was touching the prop shaft. He machined up a new set out of neoprene suspension bushes and I was back on the road the same day - now for a good night’s sleep not having to worry about removing and repairing the gearbox”.

Over time the rubber bushes **UKC854** on the bolts that connect the remote gear change housing to the gearbox (TKC3821 or FRC7102) rot and then the remote housing becomes loose on those bolts. That can lead to gear selection difficulties because as you try to move the gear lever to select a gear, the remote housing moves on those bolts and then selecting a gear become difficult – you may hear a crunching sound when you change gears and then it may soon become impossible. So those rubber bushes have to be replaced, preferably with the improved polyurethane version **UKC854POLY** as they will last a great deal longer than the standard rubber parts which typically will last between 5 and 20 years depending on the extent of the contamination on the rubber bushes leading to their rotting.

Where are these bushes?

Fellow V8 enthusiasts might want to try and see where these bushes are on the gearbox by checking the gearbox manuals on the RV8 Technical Information CD or by trying to find them on the diagrams and descriptions in the manuals for the LT77S and the R380 or the RV8 Parts Manual CD. You soon find that the exploded diagrams of the gearbox really confuse the issue as they show far more parts than are necessary but do not detail the rubber bushes.

The two diagrams above show the four bolts where the 8 rubber bushes are used in pairs to make up the “bushes”. Two pairs (4 bushes) are used on the bolts between the gear change remote housing and the gearbox and another two pairs (4 bushes) on the “U” shaped bracket under the gear change housing.

Geoff King contributed to the V8BB thread saying “wear or disintegration of the bushes between the gear change remote and the gearbox is a common problem. Replacement upgraded UKC854POLY bushes are available from Rimmer Bros at £3.20 each including. VAT and probably from most of our usual parts suppliers”. That price is 90p greater than for the standard plastic bush so for a set of eight the additional cost for a better performing part is £7.20 - for most owners it will be a clear decision to go for the polyurethane part. Geoff adds “I believe the remote gearchange arrangement for both the LT77 and the R380 is the same and they use the same bushes.”

Dealing with a notchy RV8 gearchange

Another thread on the V8BB sought help with a notchy gearbox on an RV8 which brought a useful suggestion. Michael Burnside said “I don't know if all RV8s are the same, but when changing into 2nd from 1st or 3rd in my car it’s a tad notchy. It is not crunching, it just is not smooth going in. My car is chassis 0951 so has the later gearbox with reverse to the right and back. Are there any adjustments or fiddles I could try?” The RV8 gearbox changed from an LT77S to an R380 as VIN 0644.

Dominic Scott in New Zealand with an R380 in VIN 1837 responded saying “my RV8 had a similar issue when I first got the car - particularly in cold weather here in New Zealand. I changed the gearbox oil and added a tube of gearbox additive for manual transmissions made by Wurth. It made a noticeable difference straight away and has got better the more the car has been driven - about 6,000 kms since the change. Additives aren't my first choice but in this instance it seems to have improved the situation.”

Geoff King added “if you change the gearbox lubricant to Castrol Syntrans Multivehicle 75W-90 Fully Synthetic MTF the gear-change quality should be more acceptable. It’s available from Opie Oils. On their website they say Castrol Syntrans Multivehicle 75W-90 Fully Synthetic MTF replaces SMX S 75w-85 and is recommended for most manual transmissions where API GL-4 lubricants are required. It has been used successfully as a problem solver in the manual transmissions of a number of manufacturers. Opie Oils offer a 1 litre pack at £10.99 including VAT.” For more information see: www.opieoils.co.uk/p-739-castrol-syntrans-multivehicle-75w-90-fully-synthetic-mtf-replaces-smx-s-75w-85.aspx

Musing on an obstacle forming part of the course for the Frappadingue event found close to the Montreuil walls – Sue Walker, Carolyn Owen and Jim Gibson

The V8 Pas de Calais Tour and the Frappadingue…

It was the weekend before the V8 Pas de Calais Tour 2013. Carolyn and I were returning home in our V8 having been to Sardinia with MG Italia. We were in Montreuil-sur-Mer, the picturesque walled town that was to be the venue for our tour. It was our job to check and compile the route book and to create a mini-guide to the restaurants and brasseries of Montreuil.

Organisation of the tour was split between Al Barnett, Robert Crowson and me, Bob Owen, assisted by our respective wives. We had decided that for the tour over the four days from Friday 27th September to Monday 1st October everyone would eat together in Le Hermitage Hotel, our base, on the first and last nights, but on the Saturday and Sunday nights people could have fun eating out in one of the many establishments in Montreuil – hence the mini-guide.

While researching restaurants and brasseries in the main square, La Place General de Gaulle, a friendly dog came up to me. I patted him. "Here boy!" came the stern command from nearby. Strange, I thought, I understood that immediately. Then I realized that no translation was in fact necessary as the couple with the dog were English. It turned out that they were expats who had lived in Montreuil for six years and were the perfect people to give us a run down on the local eating places from an English perspective. We now had the material for our mini-guide.

The tour plan was a day for exploring Montreuil on Saturday with its market shops and historic ramparts and citadel, for Sunday a tour through the local valleys and on Monday a route to the coast. We had called in to the Tourist Office at nearby Hesdin and had obtained 30 maps for each of the two areas covered by the routes. Now we were at the Montreuil Tourist Office feeling well pleased with ourselves. All that remained was to check with them for any last minute loose ends.

"You know that next weekend is the Frappadingue?" the lady asked. "Er, no – what's a Frappadingue?". "Ah, it's a sort of crazy obstacle race" she said. "There will be about 5,000 participants plus visitors and the police will close various roads". Gulp. We investigate further. There are five Frappadingues per year each in a different town. We had chosen the very weekend and town . . . roads might be closed and there would be 5,000 or more additional people wanting to eat at the weekend.

The Frappadingue course is typically 12km long and includes wading through mud, climbing barricades, running over rough, steep terrain, crawling through pipes in water and more. Like marathon runners, the participants fall into two broad camps – the serious professionals and amateurs who often take part in fancy dress. Most runners are sponsored and raise money for one big French charity which sends aid to third world disaster areas. So, it's a fun event – if only it weren't in Montreuil on our weekend.

We contacted Al Barnett to check out some of the restaurants and make some advance bookings as a precaution. He booked some places in his name and some in mine. I spoke to the proprietress of "Le Darnetal". "No problem, Ze Frappadingue people don't eat in restaurants" she said, with a touch of Gallic disdain. Perhaps things were not too bad after all.

Tour weekend

On Friday night the following weekend we advised people to use their mini-guide and make advance bookings for their weekend meals. Saturday night found Carolyn and I at "Le Darnetal" along with numerous others on the tour. Our charming proprietress was there, a lady of a certain age but still attractive. Part way through the evening she came in with a gateau with flaming candles singing "Joyeux Anniversaire" (Happy Birthday). We all joined in. She gave the gateau to a lucky unknown Englishman at a nearby table, along with a big kiss. Following Oscar Wilde's maxim of never giving in to anything but temptation, I said loudly "Madame, c'est mon anniversaire aussi" (it's my birthday too) expecting that to be the end of it. However, a little later she came over to me and whispered "Please be patient – I'll be wiz you in a minute". I tried to protest but she was gone and sure enough a few minutes later in she came with another gateau and flaming candle, singing "Joyeux Anniversaire" with everyone joining in, but this time for me. She purposefully removed her glasses and gave me a large kiss. It was fun - but very embarrassing - I'm sure she knew the score, as did everyone else. But worse was to come – Mark and Mary Randle were on an adjacent table and it *really was* their wedding anniversary. But they couldn't say anything; no one would have believed them . . . . . It's a guilt I have to bear.

On Sunday morning Bob Cole was first to go – but he found the road north from the hotel barred. We discussed the situation and adopted a French solution – we moved the barrier. Road closure problem solved.

Sunday night was likely to be more of a problem for eating as many French restaurants don't open, including the one at our hotel. To the rescue comes Eric, our ebullient barman. "Leave it to me. I make some phone call" he said. It transpired that he was a good friend of the proprietress of "Le Victor Hugo" and persuaded her to open on Sunday for a couple of dozen members of our tour. Other members of our group familiar with the area decided to eat out of town at restaurants they already knew.

So in the end everyone was well wined and dined for all four nights of the tour and the Frappadingue proved a colourful extra rather than a dire problem. And with the fine weather and an excellent hotel it's safe to say that a good time was had by all.