



WELCOME TO THE

V8 NEWSLETTER

50 V8
 coming in 2023

**Weekend of anniversary events in August 2023**

In 2023 we will have the 50th anniversary of the launch of the MGBGT V8 model in August 1973 and the 45th anniversary of the formation of the V8 Register five years later in 1978 together with the 30th anniversary of the start of RV8 production and sales in 1993. It's a welcome opportunity to celebrate the anniversaries of two understated and enjoyable V8 powered MGs and many MGV8 conversions too. Julian Holmes is arranging three anniversary events over the weekend of 19th and 20th August 2023 as part of the MG100 celebrations.

**Display of MGV8s on the Market Place in Abingdon
Saturday morning 19th August 2023**

Parking spaces are limited so book early for access to the display area. Members whose bookings have been accepted by the V8 Register will be sent a free Display Area Access Pass which they will need for the entry checkpoint to the

Display Area. This should simplify access at the checkpoint and avoid traffic congestion in the centre of Abingdon on a busy Saturday morning. Opposite the Market Place is Abingdon Museum with an MGB Roadster on display together with much information on the the MGs produced at the plant there and the people who worked there.

**Buffet lunch at the Dog House pub to the west of Abingdon****Saturday 19th August 2023**

This well-known pub is west of Abingdon is on the old test route used for the MGBGT V8 model by the MG Factory. A buffet lunch will be available from 1.00pm. Parking is available across the road.

**MGV8-50 meeting at the Motor Museum at Gaydon
Sunday 20th August 2023**

The British Motor Museum will host the 50th birthday of the MGBGT V8 and the 30th of the MGRV8 at this special event with cars parked outside the front of the Museum from 10am - 4pm. All MGV8s welcome. Inside there will be two dedicated rooms for V8 members with light refreshments and presentations on the MGBGT V8 and a video on the RV8 and more. A special ticket is available which includes entry to the display area in front of the Museum, admission to the two dedicated V8 meeting rooms plus entry to the Museum. For 'More' info see our webpage www.v8register.net/more.htm.



Anniversary of the formation of the V8 Register

The V8 Register was formed in October 1978 and held its first annual general meeting in 1979 over the weekend of the Club's annual meeting at Silverstone. Within 6 months of the launch there were over 50 members and founder member John Dupont (left above) contributed the first V8 Workshop Notes and many more later. That series of maintenance and spares tips has since grown and has now reached 646 notes in 18 volumes! A similar series for the RV8 was launched in 1995 which has reached 479 in 13 volumes. Our very active V8 website was launched in May 2002 and provides useful information and news which aims to be interesting, lively and topical.

V8 Scottish Borders Tour 2022

Tony Smith, ably assisted by Lorraine Noble-Thompson, organised this year's successful V8 Scottish Borders Tour in September. The following is Ken Clayton's account of the V8 Tour..

A chance conversation with Lorraine Noble-Thompson after a V8 Committee 'Zoom Meeting', led to Lorraine nominating Tony Smith to run this year's 'V8 Scottish Borders Tour'. As they say "nothing like a volunteer!" Tony, an old hand at organising tours, was contacted and we chatted through possibilities. The Barony Castle Hotel in Eddleston, near Peebles was chosen as our base for a 3 night stay. And they did us proud. Thank you to the Barony Hotel.

www.baronycastle.com The hotel is famous for 'The Great Polish Map of Scotland' www.mapscotland.org



The Great Polish Map of Scotland

Tony's objective: "to let you enjoy the unspoilt vista of the Scottish Borders and to give you a tour and hospitality to be remembered". Tony's objective was certainly met; 'and some.' Thank you Tony.

Friday 9th September, saw 32 Club members and 18 cars assemble at the Barony Castle Hotel. A selection of BGT V8s, RV8s, a WSM midget, one Midget, a TC and a Landrover

Discovery! Goodie bags were welcome received followed by a drinks reception.



Gert vd Leeden and Ilse Overvest's RV8 on the Talla Linn Hill Climb

Saturday 10th September, Rally Plaques adorned, the cars set off on a grand tour of the Meldon Hills, Tweedsmuir and the Talla reservoir (this feeds Edinburgh 28 miles away). This was followed by the famous Talla Linn 1 in 5 Hill Climb, (much used on historic rallies and competitions) the Meggat reservoir, St Mary's Loch, the Ettrick Valley, and the Annandale Valley to Moffat, returning via Tweedsmuir, the source of the River Tweed.

We called in at Dawyck Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. It is an historic, richly landscaped woodland garden hosting not only one of Scotland's finest tree collections, but an array of shrubs and herbaceous borders. Well worth a visit. The day was an absolutely stunning run. Fantastic scenery and almost deserted driving roads. We all returned to Barony Castle for a well-earned, delicious evening meal. This was followed by a stimulating talk by Doug Niven, Jim Clark's cousin, from the Jim Clark trust.

On Sunday 11th September, we headed to the Jim Clark Motorsport Museum, via the Lammermuir Hills.

www.jimclarktrust.com This was officially opened by Sir Jackie Stewart OBE in August 2019. Here we discovered, in a very modern museum, the history of Doug's cousin, Jim Clark OBE. Jim was a Scottish Border sheep farmer, who showed potential for racing cars from a very early age.



Jim Clark Motor Sport Museum: Tony Smith's RV8

Jim went on to become 'the greatest racing driver of all time'. He dominated the world of motor racing including rallying, sport cars, grand tourers, single seaters in the US and Australasia, plus Formula One (and Two) across the World. He was a much-admired gentleman, sportsman and 'Quiet Champion'! Sadly, Jim died in a tragic Formula Two accident at the age of 32, in 1968. The museum is a true reflection of his courage and impact upon Motor Sport. Not to be missed if you are in the area.

Equally, the Jim Clark Bistro, set on the back streets of Duns, is well worth a visit. We were treated to some delightful scones, jam and cream. Absolutely delicious.



Tony Smith (Tour Organiser) and Doug Niven at the Jim Clark Café Bistro

The route then took us further into Jim Clark's Scottish Borders, taking in the stunning Scott's View, the Wallace memorial and Selkirk via the Tweed valley, returning to the hotel for another great evening meal, followed by a hotly contested observational quiz. The price for the most "outrageous" answer went to Bob and Carolyn Owen! I would personally like to thank Tony Smith and Lorraine Noble-Thompson, for their organisation and planning of "One of the Best V8 Tours" we have experienced. Absolutely stunning scenery, fantastic route planning and great venues to visit. Thank you from all the V8 Register participants. See our "More" webpage at: www.v8register.net/more.htm

The People Provenance of my MGB GT V8

Duncan Taylor, an Englishman now living in Canada, has been in touch with a detailed story on the restoration of his chrome bumper, factory V8. Duncan, seen below with his fully restored car, (photo courtesy of John Grose) takes up the story.



I'm writing this article at the end of my V8's first summer on the road in Canada - certainly its first in Quebec and, as I'll explain, the first time on ANY road since September 1999. It's been a GREAT year, and I'm REALLY proud of my car. The restoration has been long, and it looks like it's just rolled off the production line. Being a factory V8 on this side of the pond puts it in a pretty exclusive category. With such a large number of MGBs exported to North America yet NO V8s shipped over to be sold thanks to the 70's oil crisis, it's a rare sight indeed! I'm very grateful for all the nice comments received through in-person events and social media, but I always feel in the back of my mind that I'd like to bring the

'people provenance' aspect along with me to receive all this praise and thanks.

The biggest expression of this thanks would be towards the car's previous custodian; a fellow 'Brit in Canada', albeit in British Columbia, a mere 5000Km from me here in Montreal, Quebec. The gentleman I refer to is Alan Riches and to say he's an MG 'nut' is an understatement. I won't go into all the other owners, but in this case, he took a 'rather rusty' MGB GT V8 from the UK, exported it to Canada and then spent the next 20 years restoring it, and essentially replacing or making it shiny one bolt at a time. He spent thousands on the body and engine restoration, and countless orders of new parts from every parts supplier you can list, both sides of the pond (More about Alan later). As I pour through the paperwork, I also have to express a little gratitude to the first owner and his work in 1987. After being on the road for 12 years it already needed 2 new sills, a new door skin and a host of other 'rust replacement' pieces. Although firmly into its mid-life as a daily driver at this point, its proof that for cars to reach this age, they need TLC along the way, especially on the wet, cold and salt-ridden roads of the UK.

As with many projects, time and life got in the way of Alan finishing the project. So, when it became apparent that he wouldn't be able to finish the project decisions were made. Having met Alan in BC, it was very obvious that he wanted the car to go to a good home. At this point I recall similar statements in car shows on US/Canadian TV where people say the same thing, but in reality, the cars are flipped and sold on without any regard to the previous owner's wishes. In this instance, however, I took it to heart. When I was comfortable that Alan wanted to stay in touch and follow the car's onward journey, I was able to connect with him properly. This enabled me to keep him up to date with further progress, as well as gaining further knowledge regarding special aspects related to the car's completion, and the various nuances of the V8 configuration.

The car took a further 18 months of effort to complete. With sarcastic thanks to the COVID pandemic, the time taken was much shorter than otherwise. When you're locked down without access to friends and family, you can spend extra time on items which would otherwise have taken weeks. Alan had included LOTS of pieces he'd accumulated over time, but now it's on the road I do have a mountain of receipts to add to the box collected over the years.

This thought of the 'human heritage' prompts me to ask the following. Does the fact that you sold your car mean you don't want to know about it for fear of future regret? For many the answer would be yes, but for some, including Alan and myself, it's enabled this fine fellow to stay in contact with his car, and celebrate his work through the success of the car at shows. The highlight of this in 2022 was receiving the 'Don Hayter award for most original MGB' at the NAMGBR conference in Peterborough, Ontario in June this year. I was hoping Alan could be there, but with some health concerns and family commitments, sending him the trophy hardware had to suffice. But what of the other owners? Geoff Allen thought it worthwhile to record them where he could. One of Alan's documents was a spreadsheet. This was the 'excel version' of a certificate that Geoff would have given out to V8 owners expressing an interest. In his later years he'd 'gone digital' so what I received was an excel that I've since made into a pseudo-certificate. It shows ALL the previous owners. I've made some attempts to contact them in the hope they may have a picture or two to share, but to no avail. In summary, I KNOW I've got something special. I THINK there are three in Canada, and 20 or so in the USA, which, given the geographic size, means we are spread pretty thinly! Sharing the ongoing story of this car with Alan has been very valuable to me and a pleasure. I truly feel privileged to have him as part of my 'virtual pit crew'.



Alan Riches with the Don Hayter award

Here are some of the highs and lows of the work done to complete the car over that 18-month period.

1. Front Seats. Completely stripped downs, sand blasted and wire brushed. Then resprayed. Refitted the original, cleaned covers as these are no longer available.

2. Rear seat: This was stripped down and with scissors, swearing, and a staple gun, I fitted the new Moss covers which came with the car. I had to purchase a new felt under liner as this wasn't available from Moss, but a fellow in the UK manufactured the item and it sent over to me. The rear-facing element of the backrest proved more trouble. It should be carpeted but with a distinct lack of spare carpeting other than what was for the car, I had to improvise, using the removed seat fabric.

3. Rear deck lid. This was removed, repaired, sanded and sprayed. After not being able to find new hinges which attach the deck to the rear seat, I wire brushed and clear coated the old hinges. They look pretty good!

4. Windows. I bought a brand-new Pilkington Glass windscreen from Chris Hollum. (Miss you Chris!) After fitting we found a crack in it the next morning! There may have been some swearing at this point. I found a second-hand original windscreen and had a glass fitter fit it. All OK this time. I took the rear quarter windows apart and re-manufactured the 90-degree joints, including the TINY screws attaching them. I then bought 3 variations of window rubbers and eventually fitted one into the frame. Reassembly into the D-shaped metal framework was rather difficult and after losing patience with a mallet, I was soon back on eBay looking for a new window! Hatch rear screen: Overall the rear hatch was the most painful part of the job. The glass was in and out twice, plus the trim, which was more pain than I'd like to remember.

5. Centre console and gear lever: The centre console needed some TLC. When dismantling, I noticed the gear stick retainer was missing a bolt. The gearbox housing had stripped a thread, so a new tap was employed and a larger bolt fitted.

6. Steering Wheel: After restoring the original steering wheel with around 40 hours of work, I decided the dusty one found in a departed friend's parts warehouse was better, so this was purchased and fitted.

7. Interior Autumn Leaf trim panels: These were all replaced or refurbished. Even the 'new' unfitted panels came apart after 22 years in a plastic bag. They needed much gluing, reglueing and clamping, before fitting. The door and rear cappings all had to be stripped and new vinyl applied over the wood and foam structure. I became quite good at that!

8. Steering column: The collapsible steering column had already collapsed, due to a few too many mallet blows to remove the steering wheel. This required dismantling, refurbishing, and the melting of craft glue into the injection holes, plus the addition of two small pins. I didn't think I'd be using carpenters glue for car safety purposes!

9. Engine: After successfully starting soon after purchase, all was thought to be in good order; but after a further check Joe found that ALL cylinders were suffering from low compression and it was clear that something wasn't right. Over the next few months, and head removal the valves were found to be incorrectly set during a previous piece of work. They required replacing. After two failed attempts at UK replacements, a good set was eventually sourced. One failed fitting attempt by a shop in St Laurent resulted in my good friend Joe Sfeir working his magic, fitting and setting them all correctly. Thereafter, we found many parts either installed incorrectly, or partially installed, which if left, would have caused a catastrophic failure of the engine due to a lack of lubrication. Many, many hours later, the engine was complete, reinstalled, and ready for the road!

10. Driving lamps: Part of the desired look was to replicate the driving lamps on my roadster. So, with the supply of the same ill-fitting badge bar, I machined the bar to allow fitting, with authentic driving/fog lights, including a super 'James Bond style' hidden switch inside the ash tray. This also required the covering of a hole I drilled incorrectly, by gluing in an authentic-to-the-year 2p and 1p coin! What else would a non-smoker use an ashtray for?

11. Boot lid and Rubber Seals: The door seals ended up being a miraculous find thanks to our departed friend Chris Hollum. After looking at options for non-Autumn Leaf door seals, Chris and I found the seal for the driver's door and some extra rubber for the quarter windows. The passenger door seal was in good shape, so this find was one in a million! The boot/hatch seal was more problematic. The first replacement seal was too hard, and the spare one was too short. When correctly located, the boot lid had to be removed from the car. This fit was time consuming but not horrendous. However, the outer seal is retained with a strip of aluminium. After restoring the retainer and screwing the strip to the underside of the hatch, I mislabelled a bag of screws and used screws which were too long. These punctured the outer skin from beneath. Imagine the swearing on that one! Here I met Richard Grenon, a professional restoration fellow here in Montreal. A wad of cash later, and some exact matching paint now had a perfectly finished boot lid using screws of the correct length.

12. Sunroof: I'd never heard of a 'Webasto' roof before this car, but I have now! Mine is made by Britax, and even came with an instruction manual. Needless to say, spare parts for this are non-existent and although the roof itself is in good shape, the wind deflector was not. After gluing, plastic repairing and fashioning a new hinge fitment which attaches the deflector to the roof, I now have a good-looking wind deflector. I fear a piece flying off in the wind, so its usefulness is 'a bit compromised'.

So, I now have a beautifully restored, very rare MGB GT V8, here in Quebec, Canada, which I intend to thoroughly enjoy, along with my like-minded MG family in the Montreal MG Car Club on drives or at local car shows. As the classic car driving season here soon gets replaced with 5 months of snow, the spring of 2023 can't come soon enough!

