



## **NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2016**

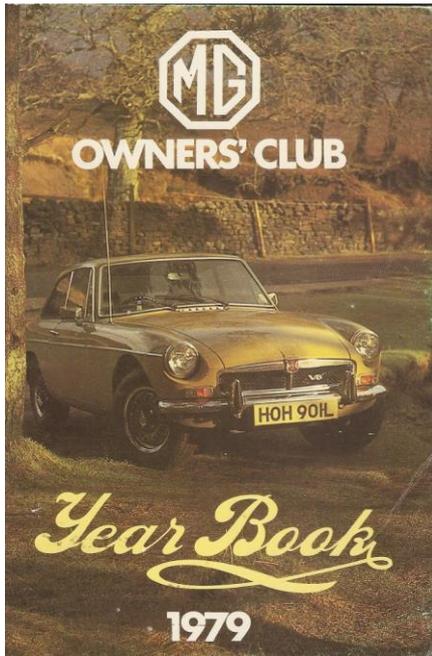
**Greetings Fellow V8 pilots.** I hope your cars are firing on all eight cylinders and are getting some outings over this rather wet winter period. Not ideal classic car weather.

This year we are again holding the 'Mighty MGs' run on Sunday November 6 in the Waikato region. See details on MGCC Auckland website. Hope to see some of you there.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, re-raising the height of the rear suspension by removing the 1" lowering blocks. I have done this and replaced the U bolts with no detectable change to the handling. It has eliminated the bottoming out effect and has not scraped the muffler either, a more comfortable ride too, so a good move it would seem.

The article below is from Peter Dunlop's brother in the UK. Michael has owned this pre-production car since 21 June 1976. Although this car is not in NZ I thought the article may be of interest.





### **HOH 901L Pre-Production MG BGT V8**

As you are no doubt aware there were only ever something like 2591 V8 MGB's built by the Factory in Abingdon in Oxfordshire spanning the years 1973 - 1976, and all were GT bodied. Included in this build number were 10 pre-production cars sprayed in the various British Leyland colours of the day. I am very lucky to own the fourth pre-production car built in the March of 1973, not only that but my car was finished in the very rare colour of Limeflower more commonly seen on the Austin Allegro and Marina models. In fact only two MG BGT V8's were ever finished in this colour ex-works and both were pre-production cars, the other MG BGT V8 now resides in Oporto in Portugal and has been resprayed in Glacier White which basically makes mine now the only Limeflower V8 in the world.

My car still carries the original Abingdon Works registration plate HOH 901L which is nice for the history of the car and also has the original gearbox with overdrive on 3rd and 4th gears. Very very few cars now have this arrangement as Abingdon discontinued the overdrive in 3rd very early in the production run of this model. It also has a rare radiator insofar as it has a fan guard fitted at the top of the rad to protect little fingers from the fan blade normally found on the front of the water pump. As you know V8's have two electric fans hidden between the rad and the cars front grill and have their own mesh protection grill fitted, so why the guard was fitted at the factory is a mystery and one that nobody to date in the UK register has been able to shed any light on. As a pre-production car HOH 901L was purchased by BLMC Marketing at Longbridge and was one of the cars given to various publications as a road test car for their particular magazine. The publications covered a large spectrum of public reading tastes, HOH 901L was tested by "Men Only" a rather raunchy mag of the time to "Hot Car" for the budding boy racer right up to "The Financial Times" newspaper read by the bowler hat brigade of London's financial district.

I am also fortunate to have the official test report on my actual car completed by the Abingdon Development Dept before it went off to Longbridge. It shows HOH 901L did a standing quarter mile in 15.1 seconds with a 0-30mph in just 2.2 seconds and a 0-60mph in 7.8 seconds, times which were very respectable for a car in 1973. The 0-100 in 21 seconds dead was not that exciting unfortunately. At this point I would say that I would urge no

owner of a V8 to try and better these figures unless they know of a ready supply of new gearboxes.



My car has still only done just over 43,000 miles from leaving the factory and is totally original apart from a stainless steel exhaust system and side sills, a front air dam designed by the Abingdon Works Competition Dept (which works really well) and a glass sun roof which to be truthful I regret putting in, but in my defence I was using the car then as my transport to work and as I worked night shifts for an airline at Heathrow thought it was a safer bet than the more traditional fabric Webesto type. After all Heathrow in the 70's didn't get the nickname *Thiefrow* for nothing.

Well that's about it folks apart from some pics for you to dribble over. For you readers who already own a MG V8, you know the feeling of that lazy surge of power and effortless cruising the V8 gives you and that special feeling being behind the wheel of the fastest road MG ever to have come out of Abingdon, for those of you considering this model don't take too long as they are (certainly in the UK) becoming collectable and hence the prices for good ones is going up. In 2013 you could get a condition 1 -2 car for £10,000 today you have to have £16,000 plus in your pocket. Just thought I'd let you know - all part of the service from that Little island in the North Atlantic, you must have heard of it, the one which built the legend we call MG.

**Michael Dunlop MGCC UK**



### AN MG CONNECTION

MG came into my life in 1974, aged 18 I decided I needed a sports car. (The 1956 MK1 Zephyr just wasn't doing it anymore). After perusing the NZ Herald cars for sale one Saturday morning I drove to 31 Marine Parade, Herne Bay, and parked outside a 1920's steep pitched roof house was a 1969 pale primrose MGB roadster with chrome wires. The scene was set. After a quick spin around the block and giving the car a once over money changed hands and the car was mine!



HT3460 proved to be a huge amount of fun over the next few years. Jill and I joined the MG Car Club where Paul Walbran soon had us participating as a manned check in club trials. Eventually the car was sold to fund the big OE.

While travelling the UK during 1979 in our Bedford camper on a week day we visited the MG factory in Abingdon. Unfortunately the factory was closed that day being a bank holiday and sadly we never made the effort to go back. Note the completed B's stored two high outside, above the Camper.



In 1979 at the Abingdon works an Inca Yellow 4 cylinder MGBGT was built, chassis GVGEJ1AG 507962. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1980, while we were living and working in London, John Short purchased new from the Rover dealer Howells of Cardiff ex-works delivery car GVGEJ1AG507962 for £5175.

In March 1994 John Rattle, a coach builder, purchased the same one owner 4 cylinder BGT from Mr Short for £3000 with the intention of building a factory spec V8 conversion. In April 1995 John Rattle purchased a complete 1980 Rover SD1 5-speed 3.5 litre V8 sedan CR 9.35:1 for £400.



While living in Cardiff, John removed the engine, cleaned stripped and re-conditioned it, altering carburettor, oil filter and sump plug positions to suit the BGT engine bay. With the help of the MG Centre workshop Cardiff, parts from Rimmer Brothers and other suppliers and repair shops, he purchased new and reconditioned parts and proceeded to work from the front to the back of the car converting all components to factory BGT V8/SD1 specifications, including:

**Radiator:** V8 spec. **Clutch:** Rover SD1 – V8 master cylinder. **Gearbox:** Rover SD1 overhauled. **Propshaft and rear axle:** original V8 spec. overhauled **Brakes:** front and back upgraded to V8 spec. New copper nickel brake lines fitted Tandem servo assist master cylinder **Suspension:** upgrade with urethane bushes and V8 spec front and back springs. Gas Spax adjustable shock absorbers fitted **Steering Rack:** Replaced. **Fuel System:** New tank and pump. **Ignition:** New distributor with electronic ignition.



The body shell was completely dismantled all items were removed apart from the dash and steering wheel. Rust repairs were completed where necessary, the whole body was prepared and undercoated then painted with cellulose lacquer. Underseal was applied front to back.



When the restoration project was finished the car was displayed above at Howells of Cardiff where it was purchased 18 years previously.

In 1998 John Rattle immigrated to New Zealand bringing the BGT V8 as his family car. The car was first registered in New Zealand under the Low Volume Vehicle system as MGB 8Ø.

I became the fourth New Zealand owner in 2011 when I purchased the car from long established MG Car Club member Dewar Thomas, after he had owned it for ten years.

MGB 8Ø is a fantastic drive, we have enjoyed many back country adventures on sealed and metal roads. All it needs now is chrome bumpers, but that's another story!!

Ian Forbes

'Sonny Bill' is very close to completion after a chrome bumper conversion and some body work, should see Jill and Ian back on the road for summer V8ing around the country.

Tony Bushell's beautiful 2005 ZT 260 is for sale at the moment, this would be a great buy for any potential MGV8 owner, having the best of both worlds by owning an MG and a modern handling car with all the luxuries.

I have found an amusing RV8 related video on youtube lifted from the Rover Dealers service instructions. Go to youtube and search for '[Rover Service Insight MG RV8 Technical Reveal](#)'.

That's all for this month, if any V8 owners have stories on their cars or experiences please let Mike or Col know and we can include this in the next newsletter.

Cheers for now, Col Minton and Michael McCowan.

***Don't be late buy a V8!***