

OUR MGs



2004 MG ZT-T 260 (vin 206)

Owned by:

contributor Malcolm
Robertson, Australia

Owned since: 2008

Mileage 120,000 kilometres
(75,000 miles)

Malcolm's MG ZT 260 perches at an alarming angle in the centre ditch of an Australian freeway after a lateral link on the rear suspension failed.



Are you dicing with death?

Malcolm discovers that some things on Scooter's List of jobs to do on a ZT260 are not optional and should not be delayed, but could mean the difference between life and death.

In my feature article on the fabulous MG Two Sixty in the January issue, it was recommended on Scooter's List that owners check the welding on the four radius arms on the rear subframe. These hold the rear wheels upright and pointing in the right direction. The reason for the check is that as the cars get older and their drivers more spirited, there have been several reported failures of the welding that hold the eyes onto the ends of these lateral links.

I now know that these failures can be deadly - just after the story was published, I had one fail at high speed on the freeway from Melbourne to Sydney. I was doing 120km/h on a straight stretch when I felt and heard a bang. The car immediately started to weave about, the swerving getting

more violent as the errant rear wheel flailed about until I was unable to keep the car straight while attempting to brake. I lost control and the car spun around and careered off the road backwards into the centre ditch, narrowly missing two concrete culverts. Scary stuff...

Once I got the car home a few days later, fortunately with minimal damage, I removed all four of the links from the car and took them to David Robinson, who has taught welding in the education system for many years and who built the all-steel indestructible coachwork on Harry Hickling's Peking-to-Paris 1938 MG SA. David knows his metal and his welding.

If you look closely at the broken link you can see that the original welding was minimal. When I went to pick

up my re-welded lateral links from Dave, his first reassuring comment was that these will never break again. More importantly for other Two Sixty owners though, his second comment was more cautionary - he would not take his family in any car that still had the original links on them. He was at a loss to explain how any engineer could have let the original parts be fitted to the cars, saying: 'The welding on my letterbox is stronger than these!' I muttered something about the death throes of MG Rover in 2004, but Dave was unimpressed, saying that someone could be killed.

His (and my) advice to all Two Sixty and Rover 75 V8 owners is, for the small amount of time and investment needed, take the four links off now and get someone you

trust to run a decent weld around the joints, or have new ones properly made. You will sleep more easily at night and drive with some peace of mind. An added benefit of doing this is that many owners will find that the toe-in and camber adjusting bolts at the eye ends of the links are seized solid thanks to the aggressively corrosive winter road treatments in the UK. They will have to cut the links free and source new bolts and bushes along the lines I mentioned in my report on old 206 in June last year. So, in addition to peace of mind as Two Sixty owners tear along the motorways, they will be able to have an effective four wheel alignment done and save on rear tyres - which on a 260, as we all well know, don't last very long anyway...



Weld penetration and metal added by the welding were both minimal on the original lateral links fitted to Malcolm's 260.



Externally, the new welding looks significantly stronger. Dave assures Malcolm that it really is stronger, too!