



MGV8s at MG 100 at Gaydon

Tony Lake wonders what the best collective noun for the vista of MGs at Gaydon might be - a **MaGnificence** or a **sMorGasbord**? Everything from Old No1 to a heavily disguised Cyberstar EV was there. He could see it would be too wide for his garage and far too tall with the scissor doors open in the vertical position. He mentioned he "can't see that design feature making it to production". Here Tony reflects on the day.

MGV8s adorned the area in abundance, I saw an early Costello with period photos of Ken. Plenty of V8 Roadster conversions with 3.5 and 3.9 engines. All of them had a slant on best radiator arrangement, one had a mechanical fan fitted à la Rover of the period as well as a pair of pusher electric fans, another had pinched an inch from the bonnet slam panel to move its larger radiator forward. Yet to see somebody bite the bullet and shorten the water pump hose to provide the space for a pair of suckers behind the radiator.



MGBGTV8 (Black Tulip 0120) a Factory Press Car which featured in reviews of the model in Autocar October 1973 and Motorsport December 1973. Owned for many years by longstanding V8 member, Joe Bannister. (Photo: John Fry)

There were lots of MGBGTV8s there. I bumped into Judy and John Fry, past chairman of the Midland Centre celebrating its own 90th anniversary this year. He owns the MGBGTV8 press car **HOH 920L** which was road tested by Autocar in August 1973.

John had spotted HOH 919L & HOH 932L - all press cars. John also has an MG ZTT V8 (Estate); an early example - the first registered owner was MG/Rover Engineering Department, and was sold as one of the assets when the Company went bust. It's the same colour as the Bonneville Estate X-15 also on show – very quick but not quite as fast!



See photos of this MG ZTT V8

I also met David Russell, another Midland Centre committee man and Jim Gibson past Chairman and Treasurer of the V8 Register, both RB MGBGTV8 owners of many years.

My own RB GTV8, VIN 2489, clocked up 200,000 miles on the way from Northampton to Gaydon, a bit to go before I catch up with the 400,000 plus miles on Gordon Hesketh-Jones' much used MGBGTV8.

RV8s were there in profusion too, in immaculate condition like all the V8s either on display in front of the museum or in the car parks.

MG SVs with the big Ford V8 engine were scattered about too, but the daddy of them all was the MG ZT-T, codenamed X-15, which reached a top speed of 225.609 mph (360.9 km/h) at the August 2003, 55th annual Bonneville Speed Week Nationals, on the Salt Flats in Utah, USA, setting a new world record for an estate car. The engine was prepared By Roush Performance who extracted 765hp from its naturally aspirated 6.0l V8. It was fired up at intervals during the day and made all the right noises for such a powerful vehicle, what a tool!