

## Different rear panel joints on Factory MGBGTV8s



1973 Factory MGBGTV8 in Damask

1974 Factory MGBGTV8 in Glacier White undergoing restoration

Michael O'Leary has sent in these comparative photos saying "as described in the V8BB posts the position and type of the joints are different on the two cars - the '1973 model has a lapped joint directly **in-line with the petrol filler aperture** whilst the 1974 car has a flanged joint **to the side of the filler cap**."

## Different rear panel joints on Factory MGBGTV8s

An interesting thread came up on the V8 Bulletin Board at the end of April 2012 on body panel joints from Michael O'Leary who is restoring a 1974 Factory MGBGTV8.

**Michael O'Leary** said "does anyone know if joints should be visible between the rear valance and the rear wings of any age of MGB – that is a visible line near the petrol filler cap and at the side underneath the ends of the bumpers, mirrored on both sides? I have a 1974 model where they're visible but a 1973 model that are not! I'm assuming they've been filled over on the 1973 model but I also know MG often changed how they built the cars – for example 1980's cars had a joint visible on the front windscreen pillar of GTs. Any help would be appreciated."

**Mike Howlett** replied "all MGBGTs have joints across both A and C posts, and also on the rear panel, near the fuel filler and in the equivalent position on the left side of the car. Up until about 1973 these joints were filled with lead/tin solder so they were invisible. After that the joints were not filled, possibly to save a little money in the production. The joint on the C-post was simply covered with a badge - you will notice that earlier GTs have no badge and that's why - they don't need one." Mike added "the joint on the lower panel behind the rear wheel arch (under the bumper) is always visible on all ages of the car."

**Stuart Ratcliff**, an MGV8 specialist in Sydney Australia, added "it is easy to tell if your vehicle had visible joints or not. On the rear panel below the boot lid the joints that were leaded are **lap joints** while on later cars the joint consists of **two folded in flanges that are spot welded together** on the inside and filled with seam sealer on the outside. Probably a health and safety issue about the use of lead but more likely a cost issue with no need for skilled body men to do the lead work. Replacement body panels cause a problem as the **joints are actually in a different place** on leaded and unleaded joint vehicles so you may end up with a vehicle with two lots of joints if the rear panel has been replaced. Leaded and unleaded joints are also used on the joint between the rear guard and the rear panel behind the cockpit on the roadster again lap or flanged joints."

**Michael O'Leary** replied saying "Stuart, I've just compared the two cars within the boot and see what you mean. As Mike said it must have been 1973 when they changed the detail. At the risk of being too anal; the outer sill of the 1974 car has five regular shaped water release profiles but the 73 car has two smaller profiles at the each end then three larger profiles in between. Is that another change from about that time?"

At this point the V8 webmaster asked Michael if he could let us have some photos of these detailed points so they could be popped on the V8 website in A4 PDF format so fellow members will be able to follow this interesting point? Michael very kindly provided the photos above within a couple of hours.

**Jon Moulds** said "did the C post badges really come in 1973? My May '75 V8 doesn't have them and I know it's wearing it's original coat of paint. I've had plenty of '74 V8s that didn't have a C post badge either."

**Stuart Ratcliff** added "In his book Original MGB Anders Clausager mentions the change to later type joints as being started at MGB Roadster 360301, GT 361001 and V8 2101 (Sept 1974) - in other words at the start of Rubber Nose production.(production changes on page 148). The leading of the GT roof joints is mentioned as being deleted at vehicle 401000 which meant that bodies were completed at Swindon without the need for them to be moved to Cowley where lead loading was carried out. I know early rubber nose V8s had no rear pillar badge as I have fitted them to cover cracked lead joints on customer cars!

**David Knowles** then provided a clarification saying "The changes were phased in over a period around 1974, but not all at once. There were a number of reasons - cost was a big part of it but also the fact that in the UK, the 'HASAWA' or 'Health & Safety at Work Act 1974' was an important piece of new legislation and certain industrial practices, such as lead loading, were becoming harder to achieve in a factory without the mild inconvenience of risking the death of members of the workforce. The first to go were the rear panel seams - and when my own V8 was restored the body man had to create some infill bits to bridge the gap between the old rear panel and the new BMH rear wings (he had cut away the old rear wings before checking the dimensions!). That car is of course Damask 1215, a spring 1974 car. I remember many years ago first seeing a late chrome bumper car with visible vertical seams and thinking at first it had been restored wrongly. On all 'rubber bumper' cars these vertical seams should be visible. On the 'C' pillars, the early 'rubber bumper' cars stuck with a filled roof/pillar joint until the 1976 model year, when a neat little plated 'mazak' badge with a little 'GT' logo cast in was introduced. This was styled by the future Director of Rover Design, Gordon Sked."

**Mike Howlett** thanked David "for giving us the full story - I didn't realise the C-post seam didn't get its badge until so late. I know the seams on my 1969 GTV8 conversion are lead loaded because when I was welding on a new rear valance the lead started to drip out of the seam!"