



### Getting an MGV8 that's been stored back on the road

David Conte recently bought a Factory MGBGT V8 and as he had always been a classic Mini enthusiast he felt working on a V8 was a departure. He mentioned the car has been stored for the last 14 years and as a consequence needed a little work to get it back on the road. The car was in great condition body wise and mechanically seems strong. As the car only done a genuine 49,000 miles with evidence to prove it, David was not anticipating an engine rebuild but he had some questions and sought fellow members help in a V8BB posting.

**Mike Howlett** responded offering to answer what he could for a start and he felt others would fill in the gaps.

### Only 49,000 miles

First, the fact that the engine has only done 49,000 miles means little. What is more important is how those miles were done (long journeys are much better than lots of short ones), and how often the engine had oil changes. The Rover V8 has a tendency to build up oil sludge, particularly in the relatively cool rocker boxes. Have a look through the oil filler cap - hopefully it will be nice and clean in there. Regular oil changes are necessary - I do mine every 3000 miles. Without this sort of attention an engine can be seriously sludged up and need a rebuild at 100,000 miles.

**Can you remove the gearbox and not both the engine and the box? Is the engine and gearbox time-consuming to take out? It looks as though despite space it could be fairly easy - I think the Mini looks harder!**

No, you can't remove the gearbox without removing the engine. You can remove the engine without the gearbox, but it's probably easier to take them as one piece. Although it is a seriously large unit when seen out of the car, it isn't especially heavy and is easily manageable with an engine crane at home - I've had mine out and in three times!

I don't think the engine and gearbox are harder to take out than any other type of car. You need to jack the back of the car up so that you have room to hang the engine with the gearbox down. It actually comes out the car at about 45 degrees to horizontal.

Obviously you need to remove the radiator, and getting at the RH engine mount can be tricky with the steering column passing through it. I'm not sure how you deal with the block hugger manifolds on an original factory car - mine is a conversion with through the wings manifolds, like an RV8. On mine I disconnect the exhaust manifolds and leave them hanging in the holes in the wings. Disconnect the bonnet strut and you can open it up vertically and tie it there with a rope to the back bumper. Take the weight of the unit, maybe with a trolley jack under the gearbox, and unbolt the gearbox cross member. Once that has dropped, you can remove the cross member so it doesn't get in the way while lifting. You can disconnect the speedo cable at that point too. Then just haul away. If you want to give me your email address, I'll send a couple of photos of the lump going in to my car.

**Malcolm Venables** described his recent experience saying "I removed the engine and gearbox from my Factory V8 this summer and it is pretty straightforward. It's a comfortable 8 hours work, subject to everything coming apart as it should. I bought an engine crane and load leveller

from Machine Mart which are perfect for the job. I selected their 1 tonne fold away model which costs around £180 (order code 020110142) and the load leveller (order code 020110900). The load leveller is important as you need to raise the engine/gearbox at quite an angle to remove it cleanly from the car. I can't imagine now how I ever managed without one in my younger days, taking engines out with crude block and tackle systems. It is almost a one man job, although it is useful to have some else around to help guide the engine & gearbox out.

If you have the V8 Workshop Manual Supplement the process is well documented there and it's straight forward. The only thing I would do differently is that I would undo the 3 nuts and bolts that secure the engine rubber mounting to the engine block, as well as just releasing the single nut on either side, that secures the mounting to the chassis rails. The reason for this is that as you lift the engine the threaded stud on the engine mounting tends to snag on the chassis mounting plate and damage the thread, it also restricts forward movement of the engine until it clears the chassis legs. If you remove the other 3 nuts and bolts as well it should allow the engine to move forward unrestricted. I intend to put the engine and gearbox back in this manner. In order to get access to the 3 bolts each side you will probably have to jack up each side of the engine in turn prior to lifting, so a little bit more work, but it should make releasing the engine easier.

I'm expecting the gearbox back any day now so will be tackling the replacement in the car over the next few weeks. By the way, I would remove the bonnet completely, it makes it easier and removes the risk of it falling on your head! Just mark around the fixing brackets, so you can put it back in the same relative position."

**Bob Owen** returned to the preparations for the engine removal saying "subject to the usual corroded fixing problems, I think the easiest way with the original block huggers is simply to remove the entire exhaust system. Undo from the manifolds backwards, tying temporarily if necessary and you're working alone.

Avoid strain on the exhaust to manifold fixings. These may well be badly corroded. If you're unlucky the huggers may be cracked in this region already and unfortunately are no longer available and are like hens teeth to find. This area and the studs may need some refurbishment if you want to stay with the original set-up.

When replacing the exhaust to the manifolds use either two brass nuts on each



stud or use the long nuts available from parts suppliers like the MGOC. These, along with copper-slip or similar lubricant, will make the job of getting the exhaust off next time a lot easier. For example, when the engine is in-situ, removing the exhaust allows easy changing of the starter and is less demanding than removing the manifold as some guides suggest".

**There are leaks in a few places around the gearbox to engine is this common?**

It shouldn't leak anywhere, but then it's 40 years old. My rebuilt engine and gearbox (Rover 5-speed) doesn't drip at all.

**The rear axle is leaking at the diff by the looks of it - is reconditioning this expensive and difficult?**

The front oil seal on the diff can be replaced but there is a crushable spacer behind the pinion flange which needs to have just the right amount of preload applied.

**The car has a vinyl roof and I understand this was never a factory option. Can anyone recommend a way of taking this off as I would like to remove it?**

No idea about removing the vinyl from the roof. Does the car have a sunroof, because that will complicate the issue.

Later in the V8BB thread **Gavin Brown** in Australia added "the only way to get rid of your Webasto (presumably) is drill out the spot welds and remove your roof, then fit another. We've done that a couple of times before. And yes it is a big job. It is a shame that so many UK cars had them fitted".

**Bob Owen** added that back in the 90s he paid well over £1,000 to have a Webasto fitted to his MGBGT V8. He added "I have no regrets. You wouldn't want it open on the motorway, but on a nice sunny day in England or France on a lazy country road you're half way to having a roadster - but

without the downside. At the risk of tempting fate, with no attention except some occasional 3 in 1 lubrication, it hasn't leaked a single drop in nearly 20 years. I think the British are a bit funny in their attachment to sun roofs. Maybe it's because we rarely need protection from the sun and want to revel in it when we have it. I'd wait and use the car next summer before you go to great expense to remove it".

**David Conte** then clarified he wanted to keep the sun roof but remove the vinyl roof covering that is over the whole of the roof and down the C pillars as "it is really not my taste!"

**How easy is it to rewire an MGBGT V8? I would like to re wire if the engine is out**

The wiring isn't so complex, and you can buy a complete harness without difficulty. You need to work through it logically with a really good coloured diagram to hand. Go to [www.advanceautowire.com](http://www.advanceautowire.com) and select Stock Schematics for MGB you can download coloured diagrams for all models of MGB. Just choose the right page.

**Jacking points and axle stand locations for the back look a challenge. Can anyone recommend a location that will**

**allow for word to be done underneath?**

If you don't need to take the wheels off, jack under the diff. In fact jack under the diff anyway, then put axle stands under the front platforms where the leaf spring attaches and remove the jack. This is a very strong point. The wheels can drop and you can remove them. The car will be perfectly stable like this and won't tend to rotate backwards despite what you might think.

**Is the axle a tube version or not in a 1974 model how do I tell the difference?**

All MGBs from late 1966 to the end of production had Salisbury tube type axles. This axle has a removable plate on the back of the diff casing to get at the internal gears. It is called a tube axle because the half shafts are housed inside steel tubes which are pressed into the diff housing. Access to the early (banjo) axle is by unbolting and removing the front casting. There is no rear plate and the half shaft casings are an integral part of the diff casting. No V8 was fitted with a banjo axle - I doubt it could take the torque.

Motor Mart website link:

[www.machinemart.co.uk/shop/product/details/cfc100-1-tonne-folding-workshop-crane](http://www.machinemart.co.uk/shop/product/details/cfc100-1-tonne-folding-workshop-crane)

