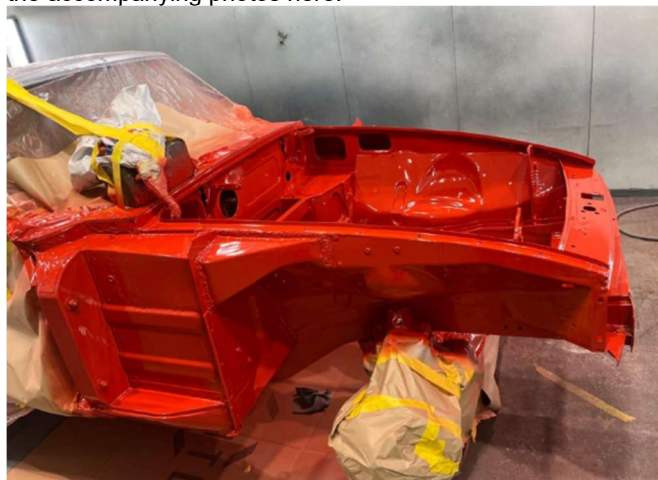




WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER

MGBGTV8 Restoration

Since we last reported on the very thorough restoration of Alex Curzon's rubber bumper MGBGTV8 back in April, work has moved on, in all areas. Readers will recall that it was Alex's intention to 'leave no stone unturned' by cutting out and repairing the rusted areas, in pursuit of excellence – and although this car looked quite respectable when Alex first acquired it, the usual areas had suffered from the ravages of time to a greater or lesser extent. No surprise really for a car of this age. The remedial work has all been completed now and the spraying has commenced, before putting the whole car back together again. Progress can clearly be seen from the accompanying photos here.



Malcolm Beer has chosen to prepare and spray all removed panels, such as the doors, front wings and tailgate while they are off the car and then refit them. Great care is obviously needed here to avoid damage to the fresh paint at this stage



during fit-up. The splash guards under the front wings have also been resprayed in the body colour, so the end result will be very smart indeed.



By the time you read this, the rest of the bodysell will likely have been resprayed and reassembly will be well underway and nearing completion. Perhaps even complete!

Alex has been lucky enough to source a very rare LE steering wheel, which will go on the car on completion. These are very difficult to find in good condition today, so although not original to the V8, it's an appropriate replacement.





During the work, a number of the smaller components have been tidied up and resprayed, prior to fitment back onto the car. Wherever possible the team have reused and renovated the original components. This is a far more rewarding process than simply replacing parts. Frequently replacement parts are either no longer available or (as experience shows) don't always fit particularly well. We will cover the final stages and general recommissioning in a follow-up report within these pages.

Eric the MGBGV8 PFE 330P

We conclude the story this month of Mark Turner's acquisition of his first V8, his first MG and indeed, his first classic! As you will read, the journey proves to be quite a baptism of fire. In the previous instalment we left Mark having successfully driven his 'new' V8, Eric, from Inverness down to his brother's house in Kilmalcolm; a journey of 4 hours and just under 200 miles. No mean feat in an unknown, 50-year-old classic car. Mark continues his story:



The next morning, I unloaded all the spares from the car, finding a lot of stainless steel, chrome fittings, carpets, rubber seals, rear window glass, historical documents, brochures and many other things. A bag of random fittings in the rear offside well was half full of water, letting me know there was an issue there. Retrieving the extensive assortment of files and books from the passenger seat, I noticed that the footwell carpet was soaking wet. In the cold light of day, I surveyed the car and saw the driver's door wasn't closing very snugly. Also, the passenger quarterlight wasn't closing into the rubber seal very easily. The rear hatch looked a little proud too. The door and boot locks were awkward to operate. All the exterior lights worked, but the hazard warning lights weren't functioning, nor did the switch illuminate. The courtesy light on the roof inside the hatch didn't light at all, and fell out of the headlining into my hand on closer investigation.

My father's neighbour Kevin appeared, came over and asked about Eric the MG. I mentioned the faded paintwork and Kevin said he liked the patina and would leave it like that if it was his. I started the engine, which spoke for itself. We had a

proper crawl over and around the car, and Kevin pronounced the bodywork as surprisingly sound for its age. As a fan of old Land Rovers, Kevin knows a rot-box when he sees one, so I was pleased to hear his verdict on Eric's physical integrity. I offered a cup of tea but Kevin had to get on with looking at some secondhand Land Rovers, and our brief bromance fizzled out.

I thought about the fixes that had to be done. This was exactly what I had bought the car for – to occasionally drive it but mostly to fettle around with small, manageable jobs. So I dealt on the spot with what I felt was within my capabilities, which was to spray WD40 in the locks and rattle the keys in and out. One problem solved. I did one other thing. I placed a GPS tracker inside the back hatch, just for luck.

The next day my brother appeared and followed me down to Das Auto in Beith where I had arranged winter storage. I took joy in occasionally leaving his Octavia for dust as I exercised the V8 on the country roads. Then Gary at Das Auto did his thing and Eric the MG took his place amongst the expensive looking classics and supercars, a soggy but hungry wolf in faded sheep's clothing.



Mark and Eric in perfect harmony in Scotland.

Back in Ireland – the obsession begins

Anyone who has even considered owning an MG soon finds out the wealth of information available in this internet age. Clubs, chat groups, spares suppliers, not to mention the traditional printed knowledge. When you've just bought your first MG this shared wisdom is a godsend. I sat in Kilkenny, looking at the FindTag GPS location app on my phone and wished I was in the same country as my MG. The app works with Android in a similar way to an AirTag, bouncing off devices that have their Bluetooth switched on. I looked at my car being moved to its resting place at Das Auto. Then I watched Gary walk home for his dinner. Sorry Gary, it was never my intention to stalk you. I'm not exactly sure what my intention was. I thought over my brief time with Eric the MG and started to think about the opportunities for fettling in the future.

The leaking exhaust manifold for sure, but that would require a suitable place and I was having trouble locating a lockup for hire in Inverclyde or Kilkenny where I could do the real dirty work. Besides, there were more pressing issues. The windows (windscreen, doors, rear screen) couldn't be seen out of most of the time. The wipers weren't great in the constant Scottish (or, potentially, Irish) rain. The windows wouldn't easily open or, more importantly, close fully. Water was getting into the car in several places. I started to research how to deal with this, then I remembered the courtesy lights, the panel lights, the hazard lights. Next, I discovered upgrades and improvements. Or should I keep it original? Clausager's *Original MG* became my bedtime reading. Astley's *MGB Electrical Systems* at breakfast and lunchtime. The rabbit-hole of MG information welcomed me in and I disappeared for a few days. When I clearly emerged from the warm darkness, it became clear

that I would have to prioritise the jobs to be done on Eric the MG. Time for a trusty Excel sheet. Over the next week I listed out the things that needed attention, researched possible solutions, priced and prioritised them. Thirty problems to solve. This was perfect, exactly the reason I wanted to buy a classic car. I also realised that a lot of the issues were things which would have been resolved when rebuilding the car after a bare metal respray, and the logic of Eric the Human became clear. No point in addressing the fiddly jobs if the whole of Eric the MG was soon to be disassembled and reassembled. I had no respray intentions in the near future, so all the jobs were fair game.



Eric and Friend on the west side of Scotland

Over the next few days mysterious packages began to arrive at my father's flat in Kilmacolm. Items from Moss, Rimmer, MGB Hive, MGCC, MGOC, Winparts and Amazon. Small things, like a secondhand rheostat for £15. A special tool for something special. A wheel clamp for occasional parking outside my brother's flat. A replacement windscreen washer jet. (*Scribe's note: The most difficult job to replace on an MGB; ask me how I know!*) Dashboard bulbs, courtesy light bulbs. Other things I can't even remember ordering. An outdoor car cover for the times when Eric would be sitting out overnight in the elements during my care visits. Fourteen packages arrived at my parents' house over the next seven days. It all made sense at the time. Highland single malt whisky on ice may have been involved.



Mark's new 'favourite' view

At the time of writing, I am two days away from being reunited with Eric the MGB GT V8. The first job will be to take some pictures and properly examine door and window seals etc. Also to properly catalogue all the spares that came with the car. Then to replace the windscreen wipers, clear / replace the washer jet, replace the dimmer rheostat. Get underneath and

check out Tom's Knob (does a V8 have a knob?) Remove the door cards, clean and grease the window mechanism and channels. Stabilise the driver's door mirror. Check the wiring of the heated rear window and the interior lights. Replace interior bulbs. Basic maintenance checks, fluids, carb dashpots. Too many tasks, too little time, too much Scottish weather.

Oh, and I may as well visit my elderly parents while I'm in the village. We are family. Eric the MG and me.

MGBGTV8 4.0 Engine Upgrade

As some readers will know, I've owned my MGBGTV8 for well over 40 years now and I have no intention of parting with it any time soon. Besides, my wife and sons tell me I can't sell it – (not that I want to) so that's that, it's here to stay! However, in recent years the engine has suffered with a few age-related niggles, including terrible cold start problems and a prolonged warm-up cycle. It's no fun having to balance the choke with the accelerator for the first few miles and I've tried many things to cure the problem but without success. A modest increase in oil consumption also meant it was time for a re-think.



Out with the old 3.5 litre P5b unit

Back in 2018, Vitesse Global fitted their 5-speed gearbox to the car and I've been very pleased with it, as it suits the character of the car perfectly. I believe many V8 owners have followed a similar path since then. When I collected the car, I was told "If you ever need us to build you a 4.0 litre engine, just get in touch." That thought stayed with me over the years and came back into focus recently, after deciding to use the V8 more for touring holidays in the future. I contacted Christian Disney at Vitesse Global and we talked. After much discussion and many emails, (also great thanks to Ralph Hardwick of the V8 Register for endless advice on so many decisions) an overall spec was drawn up and Vitesse set to work to build me a bespoke unit. At the same time, the original SU carburettors were rebuilt and jetted for the 4.0 upgrade. The radiator was re-cored, a pair of Revotec fans added to the list and the tubular manifolds were Cerakote coated to keep things cool under the bonnet.

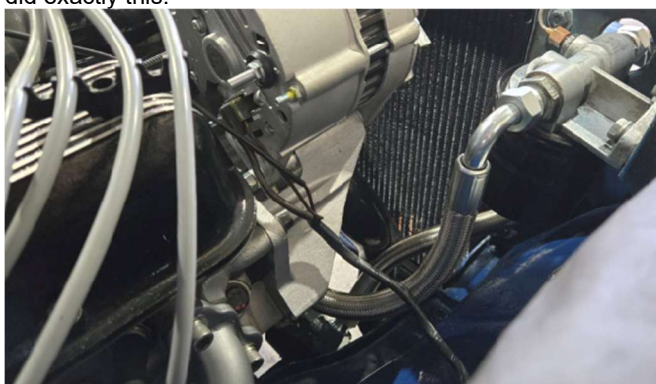


Cerakoted tubular exhaust manifolds,

Oh yes, a John Eales front cover was also thrown into the mix to improve the oil pressure and add to the overall reliability. This won't appeal to the purists out there – and I understand that but my car, number 101, was never a matching numbers car as the original engine dropped a liner and had a P5b unit fitted to replace it before my ownership. Respect to the purists though!

To address the additional power, a set of RV8 4-pot callipers and vented discs were also installed to stop everything effectively. (It's worth noting at this point that my insurance company has been advised of all changes, which resulted in a new policy with a different underwriter but still with the same broker. The premium was very similar to the original policy, which was a nice bonus.)

I collected the car recently after Vitesse had worked their magic, (together with a long list of minor bits and pieces) and drove it the 170-mile journey from Hinkley back to NW Kent. Running-in was planned (see below) but it seemed to be a moot point with Vitesse. The advice was "Definitely don't labour it but vary the revs up and down from time to time, rather than sitting on the motorway at a constant speed." So I did exactly this!



JED Front cover, high output alternator and re-cored radiator

Am I happy with it? You bet!! It's very smooth indeed and without pressing on too much (although it's tempting) I can feel the power reserves under my right foot. And the cold starting issues? Gone! It starts on minimal choke now and runs sweetly with no choke very soon after start-up. A running in session of 600 miles was planned (A return journey to The Spa Classic in Belgium) which was performed without missing a beat or any drama whatsoever. You may recall that the weather over the May Spring Bank Holiday tuned a little warm in the south of the UK and north west Europe. Temperatures of around 30 degrees were shrugged off by the new engine (which is more than can be said for the occupants) although the new Revotec fans saw a lot of action on the homeward trip. I'm looking forward to many more miles in the V8 now, for as long as I'm still able to drive it. Now where are those touring maps?

All photos are courtesy of Christian Disney of Vitesse Global.



The full package, very neatly installed.

Brands Hatch MG Fest'26 on Sunday 16th August 2026

As you read this, you should have just about 2 weeks left to book your tickets for the Car Club's major event, on Sunday 16th August, this year at the iconic Brands Hatch circuit in Kent. Billed as 'A New Chapter at Brands Hatch', it promises to be one for the history books.

There are some venues that simply feel right for MG, and Brands Hatch is undoubtedly one of them. Steeped in motorsport history and etched into the memory of generations of British racing fans, the Kent circuit will play host to the MG Car Club when it welcomes MG Fest '26. This landmark event will serve as the MG Car Club's official national gathering for 2026, and promises to be a memorable combination of competition, camaraderie, and celebration. For the first time in a number of years, Brands Hatch will stage a major event dedicated entirely to MG, and it feels like a natural fit. Few marques can boast the same depth of grassroots motorsport involvement as MG, and few circuits have witnessed such a rich variety of club racing, saloon car battles, and historic competition. Bringing these two together for a national festival is a mouthwatering prospect for fans of the marque.

One of the most ambitious plans for MG Fest '26 is an attempt to set a new record for the most MG cars on a circuit at the same time. This mass parade lap will be a powerful visual symbol of the brand's enduring popularity and the strength of its community. Imagine hundreds of MGs filling the curves of Paddock Hill Bend, Druids, and Clearways, a moment that participants will never forget.

The V8 Register will have a gazebo there and the V8 AGM will be held at noon on Sunday during the event. For further information see www.v8register.net/more.htm

MG FEST '26
A NEW CHAPTER AT BRANDS HATCH
www.mgcc.co.uk/mgfest

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MG Fest is coming to Brands Hatch
– and it promises to be one for the history books!

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Mark the date in your diary: Sunday August 16 2026