



WELCOME TO THE V8 NEWSLETTER

The North Lakes Tour 2024

Tony Smith, Chairman of the V8 Register was this year's V8 Tour organiser. Here Tony gives his own account of some of the preparations that went into the smoothly run and very successful North Lakes Tour.

"Notes for Safety Fast! MG Car Club V8 Register North Lakes Tour September 2024"

You might be surprised to learn that although this statement seems simple, the reality was quite different. I will endeavour to relate some of the efforts that went into making a such a trip into a successful and enjoyable MG V8 tour. It is the main aim of the V8 Register to provide information for V8 Register members and enthusiasts about their unique MGB derivations, which are powered by a Rover V8. We also aim to give members the opportunity to meet and socialise with likeminded members. We aim to do this at least twice a year, whenever we can. Our Committee agreed and so I volunteered to have a go at organising this event this year.



Now let's see, my general criteria were as follows:

- 1) From mid-September – schools are back!
- 2) Mid-week, probably 4 days and 3 nights
- 3) Find a hotel with good space, good parking – at least twice the size of our group, not a big chain, etc. so we were looking locally for a 4-star hotel with good amenities.
- 4) So, how many rooms? Let's say 30 max, for around 50 people (allowing for some single occupancies).
- 5) Make contact hotel with the chosen hotel. (Very fortunate that my contact from a 2019 tour was still working there!)

- 6) Arrange a face-to-face meeting for initial discussions regarding pricing, availability, booking terms, (no risk to the Car Club) etc. If all was in order, we would have ourselves a framework agreement to work within.
- 7) Booking was to be initially via our website, with entrants booking directly with the hotel.
- 8) Unsold rooms would be handed back at 4 weeks prior to the commencement date.

The above generally went very well, although I had another three meetings with the hotel prior to September to iron out the details. With the framework of our 'base-camp' in place, now I had to get on with fleshing out the ingredients: 3 evenings to fill (dinner, briefing, social quizzes and prize giving), 2-3 days of touring, places to visit, welcome packs to arrange, route books to prepare, an MSUK Certificate to organise and much more. As they say, the devil really is in the detail!



Items on my 'to do' list included:

- 1) Approach sponsors to see if we could obtain any donations. (5 were obtained – pretty good!)
- 2) Consider how to cover at least 5 Lakeland passes.
- 3) Make contact with the Lakes Motor Museum, Bluebird at Coniston, The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway and High Force.
- 4) Prepare routes avoiding inevitable road closures (I visited four times in total; March, June, July and early September to iron out as much of the uncertainty as possible. With the best will in the world, road works and closures can suddenly appear with minimal notice.)
- 5) Apply for the necessary MSUK certificate and write to the Local Route Liaison Officer.
- 6) Arrange hotel pre-dinner meet-ups, organise dinner arrangements and flesh-out next day briefings

- 7) Check my budget details for the tour to ensure we were remaining within the target budget.

The actual list was probably much longer than this and included such things as V8 parking for sufficient cars at 5 individual locations, local supplies of E5 petrol for our thirsty



V8s, prizes and breakdown prizes (yes, there were a few – see later!). Then there was the pre-order for memento polo shirts to commemorate the tour **and** a special 84th birthday celebration to arrange at High Force! Yes, there really was a lot to consider, arrange and organise. However, I had some excellent assistance and so special thanks must go to the following: Ian Quarrington and Debbie Brading for their quiz, Peter and Jean Ellis for the car badge quiz, Victor Smith for the website entry arrangements and reminders, and last but by no means least, Lorraine Noble-Thompson for preparing and arranging the printing of the route book, the MSUK certificate, as well as chivvying me on to meet deadlines and reminding me to bring my loudspeaker and mike.

A special thanks must also go to our sponsors, Noel for the rally plates, Lorraine for the V8 place mats, the High Force Hotel for the alcohol-free bubbly for Mike's Birthday and to Rose and all the staff at the North Lakes Hotel and Spa.



So how did it turn out?

- 1) We had 4 days of glorious sunshine and scenery
- 2) We had 25 V8s, a Midget 1500, 2x TF 85th Anniversaries, 1xTF and an MG3 Hybrid attend.
- 3) We had 4 breakdowns.
- 4) Hard Knott pass was blocked by White-Van-Man.
- 5) The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway held the train by 15 minutes to enable a few re-routed V8s to make the train.

Overall, I think everyone enjoyed themselves with a great feeling of camaraderie between participants. I've had a considerable amount of very positive email feedback, so I guess I must have got something right! It was great fun to do, with the burble of V8s clearly audible throughout Cumbria. So here's to the V8 Tours and Activities in 2025. Keep an eye on our website for further details, as they're announced.

V8 Newsletter for the December 2024 issue of Safety Fast!



Photos courtesy of Lorraine Noble-Thompson, Richard Jenner and Tony Smith.

A Tale of 2 Steering Wheels

In the July V8 News Column this year we reported on the problems experienced by Steve Hunter with condensation in the VDO instruments on his RV8. The eagle-eyed readers amongst you may have noticed a very smart wooden rim steering wheel in the picture of Steve's dashboard, in place of the black composite standard item – which suits the car well.

Steve bought his RV8, chassis number 276, two and a half years ago and had some 'fun' putting right the problems which came with it. The steering wheel wasn't one of them as the standard wheel is a handsome thing. But Steve had a Nardi 50's wood rimmed wheel on his study wall which had been in his Daytona replica. As it was a birthday present back in 1995, he was loathed to part with it. So, it occurred to Steve that the colour of the wood perfectly matched the dash in the RV8. However, it would be a challenge to make it fit. Laying the MG badge on top of the Ferrari badge on his study carpet provided the inspiration he needed, as it just looked so right.

What follows is Steve's story of how his Nardi wood-rimmed steering wheel eventually ended up in his RV8.

"I took some measurements to look at the feasibility of the project. The Nardi wheel is slightly larger than the RV8 in diameter at 15" to 14" but it is not a big wheel by any means. It also has a slightly different dish but the main problem was the mounting hole pattern which was not similar at all. I could have thrown a Mountney wood rim wheel on in 10 minutes but where's the fun in that? The Nardi is metric with a PCD (pitch circle diameter - the diameter of the holes) of 74mm. My RV8 had an EPAS (electric power assisted steering) system fitted from the MGF before I bought the car, which complicated the matter. So, it needed an adaptor hub with the MGF spline and shaft size with a 74mm PCD. It didn't

take long to find such a thing on eBay and for only £40.



It had the advantage that the length was in the right ball park and it came with a separate shroud. The original is a one-piece cast and machined aluminium job.



The badge also came from eBay, which was perfect for the job (part no. DAH 0000401) for only £7 each, so I bought three.

A further complication was that the indicator cancelling mechanism had to be fabricated and the one on the car was a hybrid. I obtained some black

plastic round stock and turned up the extension piece needed to create the right depth and diameter on my cheap, Chinese mini lathe. I cut the cancellation prongs out with a hacksaw and file.

The hub adaptor fits securely to the steering shaft with a large nut and the rear extension exists only to operate the cancellation of the indicators so it would not affect the security of the steering wheel and could be glued on along with the horn contact ring.



When offered up to the steering shaft it fitted really well but the new adaptor's soft plastic cover was just too long. It needed 6mm removing to clear the hard plastic shroud around the stalks. Back on the lathe I cut out a circle from some one-inch plank on hand and tapered the diameter slightly. The shroud was pushed onto it, so that it jammed firmly and squared-up, in line. Then it could be cut with a

Stanley knife held on the carriage cross slide by rotating the spindle slowly until it was cut right through. The cut and fit were perfect up to the shroud, leaving a neat 3 to 4mm gap. The original horn push with the Ferrari prancing horse is made from clear resin and painted black on the underside. Replication in clear resin was not as easy as first thought, as it is very difficult to release the entrapped air without a vacuum pump. You can use a naked flame, with care, or blow on it but if the resin is too deep the small bubbles stay.



As I had bought three badges, the first attempt can be seen in the accompanying picture. It held promise for the overall effect but I decided the moulding process was too tricky and the outcome too bubbly. This shows up in the photo above. So, I decided an alternative approach was needed. I machined a copy of the original in wood - some very nice teak in fact donated by a friend. The back is shown.



I painted it black and glued the badge in place. I then made a circular 'moat wall' as it were from Sellotape to hold the resin in. By mixing carefully, pouring very gently and using a brush to spread it round the bubbles were eliminated.



Once cured the top needed some curvature and the sharp edge dressing back. It was an easy job on the lathe with a file and then increasingly fine wet and dry paper, ending with some chrome polish and a wax finish. Cured resin is very easy to dress. The clarity of the resin suddenly shone through and the result was very pleasing. The trial fit showed that the plan was coming together very nicely.

The horn push fits into the neat aluminium surround and is held by a spring clip, which is a push fit into a slip ring bolted to the wheel. The EPAS column had been fitted with quite a few penny washer spacers, which lowered the wheel more than on other cars I had seen. Removing them also had the effect of slightly lightening the weight of the steering without introducing any ill effects. However, the end of the steering shaft in the engine bay must line up with the shaft from the other side. The EPAS shaft is in two sections, the lower one having two UJs. Lining up means undoing the steering rack and releasing the lower UJ which is a job for the future.



In the meantime, the height is improved, which more than counteracts the 1/2" larger wheel size at the bottom and there is slightly more distance from the driver, which was a V8 Newsletter for the December 2024 issue of Safety Fast!

desirable objective. So, a double whammy was achieved; better looking and better position. The handbrake lever is still close, as it was before but does not cause a problem. However, the modification on RV8 Note 291 was on the cards anyway and will be done when the 5-link rear suspension is fitted. And finally, the Nardi is replaceable with the original within 5 minutes.

Before and after pictures. Both are equally handsome in my opinion - but the Nardi is unique!"



A cautionary remark here, if anyone is considering changing their RV8 steering wheel. If the wheel does not release easily and freely from the steering column, do not be tempted to employ a hammer. To do so is likely to damage the collapsible element of the column, a safety feature on many modern cars, causing a whole lot of additional problems!

Annual V8 Curry Evening 2025 and Stoneleigh MG and Triumph Spares Day

With the December and January editions of Safety Fast! now combined, this is an appropriate time to remind all our members of the popular V8 Register annual curry evening on Saturday 8th February. The venue is our usual location at Lloyds Indian Restaurant in Knowle, near Solihull in the West Midlands. As space is limited it is essential that you book a place with Ian Quarrington, who is arranging this event. For further details, please visit our 'More' webpage at www.v8register.net/more.htm

Once again, our curry night has been arranged to coincide with the Stoneleigh International MG and Triumph Spares Day, at Stoneleigh Park the next day, on Sunday 9th February 2025. This very popular event will be open from 9:30am to 4pm, and is the ideal place to track down those 'difficult to find' parts for the winter restoration season. If you locate the parts you require in advance and they are too big or heavy to post, many suppliers will bring those parts to the show, which can result in a significant saving in shipping costs. See you there!