

## Ken Costello

By Rick Astley

We were sorry to learn that Ken Costello, the engineer who showed the world how to install a V8 into an MGB, passed away August 28th at the age of 88.

The MGC, British Leyland's high power version of the MGB, was not well received by the UK's motoring press largely because its heavy cast-iron 6-cylinder motor caused it to be very nose heavy. MG, looking for a better solution to competing with higher power cars like the Triumph TR6, considered using the ex-Buick Rover aluminum 3,500cc (215-in<sup>3</sup>) engine, but concluded that the car would have to be widened by at least 3½", which was not considered feasible or cost-effective.

Ken Costello, however, looked at the problem differently and, impressed by the size and lightweight of the Rover V8 engine, found a way to fit it into a standard MGB body. He completed his first cars in 1971 to rave reviews from the press, which recognized the potential of a car having performance to rival the Jaguar E-Type, but at a much lower cost. BL bought one and were similarly impressed, enough so in fact to cut-off further engine supplies to Costello and to copy his design and launch its own MGB-GT V8 in 1973. Undeterred, Costello found other sources for the engine and in all, produced 255 cars.

Ken Costello's engineering prowess went further than the V8 MGB for which he is most well known. Continuing well into the 1990's, he produced many other modified systems for the MGB, including upgraded suspension and running gear. Ken's work lives-on in the Frontline Developments LE50 anniversary edition of the MGB, which we reported on in April 2014, and which purchased the rights to his designs.

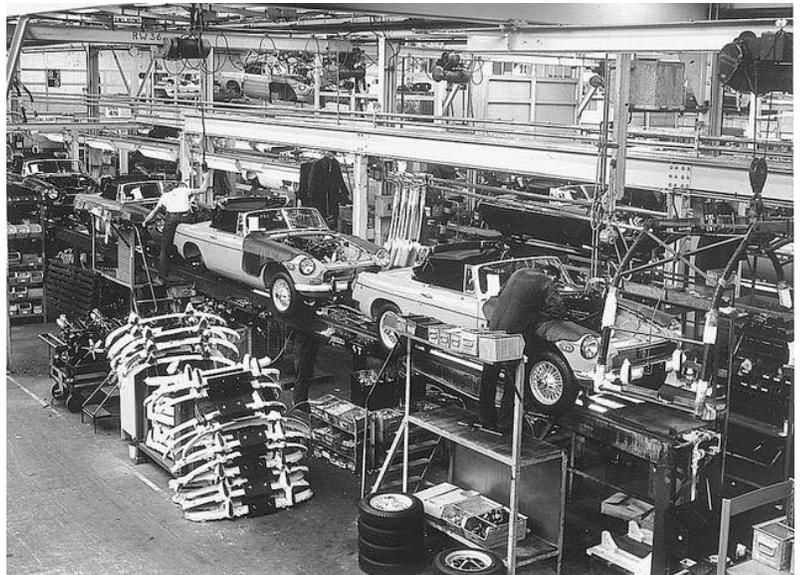


Ken Costello attended British V8 meets on at least 2 occasions. He is seen here on the left with club member Dave Burstyn standing by Graham Creswick's MGB-V8 in Terre Haute, Indiana in 2005.

Picture: BritishV8 website.



A young Queen Elizabeth with her dogs and an MGB



Another shot of the assembly line in Abingdon