

# THE DIPSTICK



JUNE, 1987

President.....Mel Baker  
 Vice-President...Tony Perino  
 Secretary.....Andy Wallach  
 Treasurer.....Jerry Moore  
 Editor.....Jennifer Ash/Brenda Banvard

## "T" TIME:

Many thanks to Brenda and Jim Banvard for hosting the May meeting. Atain, we had an excellent turn-out and everyone enjoyed Brenda's hors d'oeuvres.

This is the time of the year we all look forward to, and I wish everyone a summer of fair-weather, top-down, trouble-free driving.

The next meeting will be at RAS and Jennifer Turner's home, out on Bay Island (see map for directions), and I look forward to seeing you all there.

MEL

DUES ARE DUE...IN-TOWN MEMBERS \$10.00...OUT-OF-TOWN MEMBERS \$6.00

## U P C O M I N G E V E N T S :

- June 3           - Wednesday - Monthly meeting at the Turner's  
                   7:30 p.m. - Kick Tyres  
                   8:00 p.m. - Business meeting followed by a social hour.
- June 5           - Friday       - Deadline for application for British Car Day
- June 14          - Sunday      - Tech Session at Baker's  
                   10:00 a.m. Bring your problems and solutions
- June 21          - Sunday      - British Car Day - <sup>Bowie, Md.</sup> 10th annual  
                   8:30 a.m. - Field opens - see later for application form.
- July 7           - Tuesday     - Monthly meeting at Lund's
- July 19          - Sunday      - Pool party at the Baker's - 2 p.m.

## MAY MINUTES

President Mel Baker, wearing Judy Baker's nametag, patiently waited to call the meeting together at 8:07 and then started with "Jerry (Moore) is taking dues. He will be glad to have your money." Mel welcomed new member Fred Horner. Mel asked if there were any guests and Barbara Perino, referring to Roy Wiley who hasn't been around lately, answered "Yes. I'm talking to him. He can use my pen (to write a check for dues." There were no additions or corrections to the April minutes and they were approved as printed in the May Dipstick. Treasurer Jerry Moore reported a beginning balance of \$704.35, income of \$4.00, expenses of \$161.79, and an ending balance of \$546.56. Roy Wiley asked: "Has Giffin paid (his dues)?" (This refers to Hank Giffin, currently out-of-town, who believes that we always have too much money in our treasury and should have more parties.) Mel continued with reports. Vice-President Tony Perino in charge of regalia stated: "I have a deal today. T-shirts, normally \$4.50, are two for \$8.00, three for \$10.00. I'll put them out after the meeting." Mel, noting Historian Mike Ash's absence, stated that Mike has been writing great material in the newsletter. In the absence of Jennifer Ash, Mel reviewed the upcoming activities: June 4th meeting at the Turner's and June 14 tech session at the Baker's. He stated that the newsletter deadline is May 20th and encouraged people to send in articles.

In response to requests for any Old Business, Vince Groover responded "Richard Hall is here. Is that 'Old Business'?" Mel: "No. He's a guest." (Richard is really a member who hasn't been visible for awhile.) Under new business Mel stated "Need a better system to keep nametags organized. I couldn't find mine. Also need to make new tags for new members." Tony Perino asked if it is T-Time or B-Time yet. Mel concluding that there was no other new business asked if anybody went to waterside for British Isle Days. (It was raining that day). Tony responded "I drove by. Only six cars showed up. On the 16th they are going to run the rally. They still have the food left over." Ira Cantin: "That should be good." Tony continued: "If anyone is interested, get ahold of Phase I." Robin Raphael talked about an event in which an admiral got to ride in a beautiful 1953 (according to Richard Hall - 1957) Cadillac. Richard Hall mentioned that on May 16th the State meet of the Antique Car Club was being held. Robin: "High Class. We can't enter; have to have an income of 100,000 a month." Richard: "I've been a member (of the Antique Car Club) for fifteen years. I make right at 200,00." Richard continued "In August there is a meet everyone can come to." Tony: "They are very hospitable." Richard explained the different automobile classes and that judging was done by a three-man team. Someone stated that Twin B was having a show at Southern Shopping Center on June 2nd or 3rd; all types of cars in different classes. Dave Bowling related "I had an interesting experience with the thermostat off my TD. Took it down to Dave Barrows. Interesting talking to him and seeing his TD, Silverstone, VA and scrapbooks. He fixed the thermostat. Jim Banvard asked how did Dave Barrows fit the thermostat in and Dave Bowling responded: "Force fit. I'll have to take it back to him if I ever have problems." Tony Perino reported: "Putting the crank back in the B. If anyone wants to come--I'll even wait till you get there." Ira Cantin: "Took my transmission out of the TC. Had a crack in the bell housing. Someone offered to fix it. All I had to do is take it out." Fred Horner asked: "What book were you using?." Ira: "All three; everyone I could find. Don't know if I can ever get it back in. Missing five bolts." Jim Banvard discussed the use of helicoils to fix stripped threads. Richard Hall: "If anyone is out in Blackwater, I'm going to be putting my TD back together." He related various experiences including diesel fuel, ladies backing into TDs, and stopping at rest areas - "After 10 o'clock, no one there but you and the crickets." The business meeting adjourned at 8:32.

Everyone mentioned above along with Richard Mullins, Bill Gordon, Margie Moore, John and Sandy German, Don Jones, Jim Jackson, Paul Thiergardt, Roosevelt Moseley, Randy Lewter, Tom Lund, Ed Hazard, and Kelly Blaylock feasted on Brenda Banvard's delicious foods. Thanks Brenda and Jim.

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DEADLINE for the J U L Y newsletter is Wednesday, June 24.  
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F O R   S A L E

1938 VA Complete, Needing Restoration  
1949 Y Restored in 1981  
1952 TD Partially Restored  
1953 TD Basket Case  
1955 TF 1500 - Runner

Plus many spares, new and used. Prices negotiable based on bits accompanying vehicle.

Come See; Make Offer.

Jim Banvard  
3633 Van Buren Drive  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452  
804-340-6737 Evenings and Weekends

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ACTIVITIES:

The June Tech. Session has been switched from Mel's garage to Tony Perino's garage (see map), due to a last-minute conflict with Mel's schedule. Mel will host the August Tech. Session, so please mark your calendars accordingly. Thank you, Tony, for taking over.

You will find a flyer for the 10th Annual BRITISH CAR DAY, in Bowie, Md., in this issue; there being no room for the application form, these will be available at the meeting - all you have to do is ask!

The July event will be the Annual Pool Party, hosted by Judy & Mel Baker. Once again, we will ask you to bring your own burger/hot dog/steak, and Mel will provide the grills (hot ones, this year!). Think about what you will bring as a salad, snack-food or dessert, and we will have a sign-up sheet at the next 2 meetings, or you'll see a reminder in the next newsletter to call Judy and tell her.

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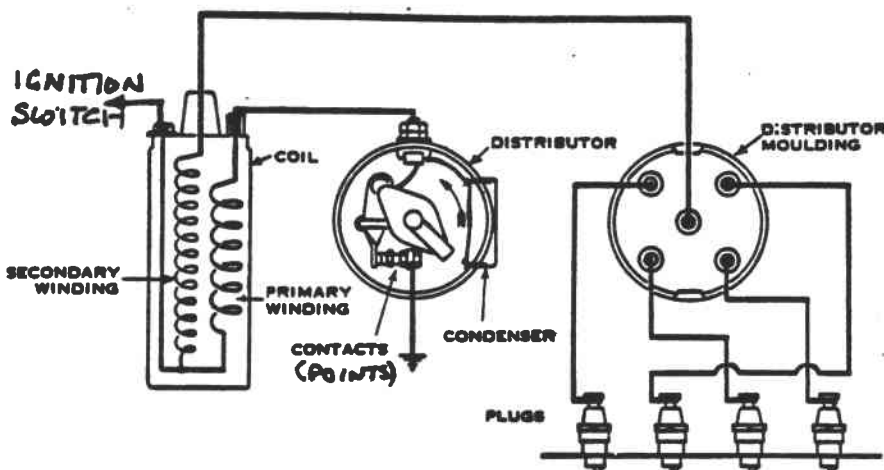
MEMBERSHIP NEWS: No new members (that I know of, since I wasn't at the last meeting) this month. Don't forget to get your due in to me in a timely fashion....Thanks - JENNIFER

TECHNICAL CORNER - by Mike Ash

Well, here we are again without much to report. The TF is now in daily use with regular plates and insurance, instead of antique plates and insurance. So I can now drive it to work every day, both legally and morally. I had 500 miles on the rebuilt engine by this past weekend, so I re-torqued the head and adjusted the valves. Everything seems to be fine and the engine is running very well, so maybe I can get some use out of it again. The next project is the body work on the B-GT. I have the B up on blocks in the garage now and the task looks quite extensive. It will require complete replacement of both the inner and outer sills (rockers). So far I have removed the old rusty metal (actually most of it fell out and now needs sweeping up off the floor!), but will need to see the new replacement panels before I can do much more. So, I will probably keep you informed on this project as it progresses.

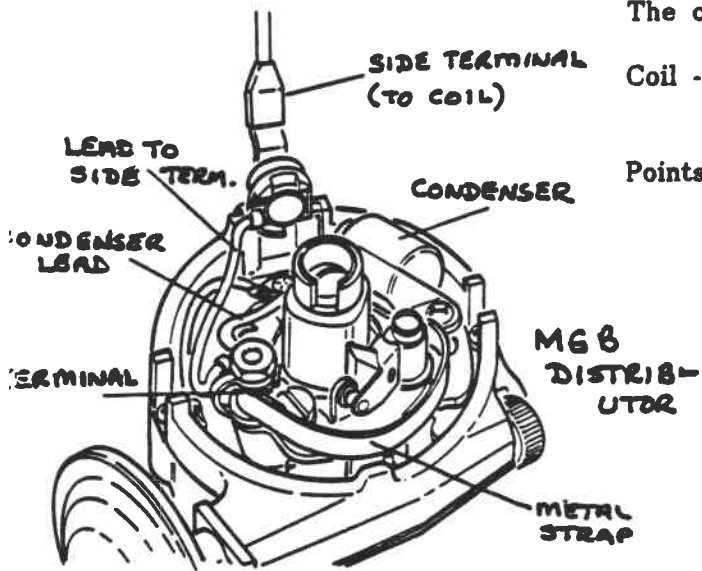
Chris Holcomb called me yesterday to say he was having a problem bleeding the clutch on his MGA, and thought there might be a problem. He is trying to fill and bleed a completely empty and rebuilt system. In my experience, this is not an easy task because, unlike the brake master cylinder, the clutch master cylinder does not have a one-way check valve at the end. Consequently, filling the master cylinder and pumping the pedal does not pump fluid down to the slave cylinder. All that seems to happen is that pushing down on the clutch pedal pumps fluid down toward the slave cylinder, and releasing the pedal draws the fluid back up again. I do not possess an "Eezi-bleed", but I think that might solve the problem because it is attached to the bleed screw on the slave cylinder and pumps fluid into the cylinder from below. Otherwise, the only solution I have found is to fill the master cylinder, attach a bleed tube to the bleed screw, loosen the screw, and pump the pedal a few times. Close the bleed screw and leave it alone for about half-an-hour. Then repeat the process. After a while, the fluid will find its way down to the slave cylinder and the final air bleeding can be done in the normal manner. It might also help to fill the slave cylinder with fluid prior to installation.

Last month I said that I would write about ignition timing, so here goes. First, however, a few words on the operating principles of the ignition system might be appropriate. The coil and the



points generate the ignition spark and the distributor distributes the spark to the plugs. Since the distributor rotates at half the engine speed, the points are located in the distributor to provide the timing for the ignition. The figure is a diagram of the ignition system. When the primary side of the coil is connected to ground through the points, the coil is charging and storing electrical energy. When the points open, the energy stored in the coil is rapidly discharged into the secondary side developing a high voltage and consequently a spark across the spark plug gap.

Therefore, the ignition spark is generated instantaneously at the instant the points open. The secondary, or high voltage side of the coil, is connected to the center of the distributor cap where a short carbon rod conducts the spark voltage to the center of the rotor. The rotor then connects the spark voltage to the appropriate ignition lead and thence to the appropriate spark plug.



The critical elements of the ignition system are:

**Coil -** rarely fails, if it does, it is usually a breakdown of the high voltage side.

**Points -** a common failure point, usually through burning and pitting of the contact surface or going out of adjustment. If the points are burned or pitted, they should be replaced. I usually change them every 12,000 miles. However, they do go out of adjustment by closing up due to the wearing of the "plastic" cam follower. I have found that the bright red plastic cam followers wear quite rapidly and that adjustment should be checked after about 4,000 miles. The brown, phenolic composition cam followers do not wear so quickly, but they do not seem to be too available any more.

**Condenser -** an occasional failure point, and should be replaced with the points.

**Rotor -** an occasional failure point, usually a breakdown of the insulation causing the spark to "leak" to ground in the distributor.

**Distributor cap -** another occasional failure point, usually a breakdown of the insulation causing the spark to "track" to the distributor body. I usually replace the distributor cap, rotor and plug leads every 24,000 miles.



**Spark plugs -** an occasional failure point from opening of the gap through burning or gumming up in a rich running or oil burning engine. I usually check the plugs every 4,000 miles and clean and re-gap as necessary, and replace them every 24,000 miles. One thing about getting the lead out of gas is that plug life will be extended.

Before attempting to set the ignition timing on an engine, all of the ignition system components should be in top condition. If the age and condition of all of the above items except the coil is unknown, I would suggest they be replaced. Replacement of the distributor cap and rotor is quite straight forward. When replacing the plug leads be sure to get them in the correct relative locations. On all MGs (and most 4-cylinder engines) the plug firing order is 1-3-4-2, with no. 1 plug at the front of the engine, and the distributor rotor rotates in a counter-clockwise direction. Replacement of the points and condenser is also quite straight forward. The condenser is usually held to the base plate by a bracket fixed by a single screw. The wire lead (sometimes a metal strap) from the condenser connects to the terminal on the side of the distributor. Some early and original equipment distributor base plates have the condensers soldered to them, in which case the entire plate must be replaced to replace the condenser. The points are attached by two screws on the T-series, with a metal strap connecting to the side terminal on the distributor. Be careful when attaching the condenser lead and points strap to the side terminal of the distributor to ensure that both connections are insulated from the distributor body. The points are adjusted by slackening the

# THE SPORTS CAR AMERICA LOVED FIRST!

MGM 57

While the TC often gets the credit for starting the sports car revolution in America, it really was the TD that made Americans aware of the pleasures of real motorizing. True, the TC did make its appearance on these shores in the late 1940's; only 2,001 of the total 10,000 produced were originally imported—hardly enough to cause even a tiny skirmish, let alone a revolution.

Now, there were 30,000 TDs built, and 23,488 of them came to America; revolutions are made of such things. The TD was the first MG sports car made with the American market in mind: it had left hand drive—something never before offered on a sports roadster from Abingdon. There were other changes, too: gone were the big nineteen inch wire wheels, harsh suspension, vague Bishop Cam steering, and the delicate clamshell fenders that distinguished all of the previous two-seat Midgets bearing the octagonal badge.

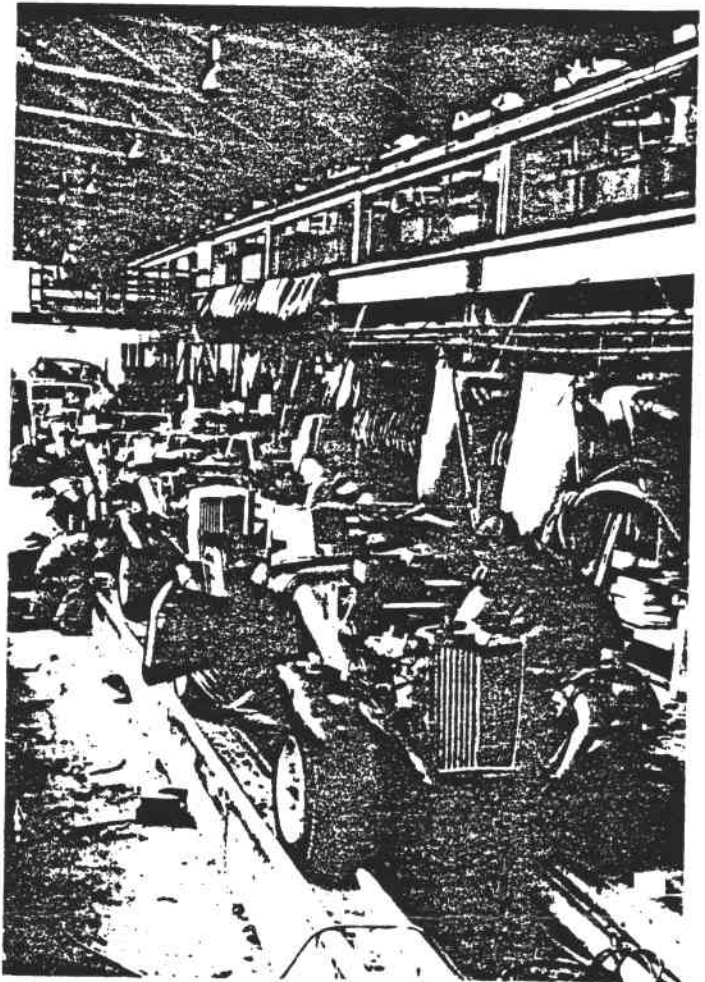
The TD was different. It was modern where its predecessors had been anachronistic. A major improvement was the use of independent front suspension. Not that this was the first MG to use it; right after the war, designers tried that out on the MG YA saloon.

The story about how Cecil Cousins, Alex Hounslow, Henry Stone, and Willie Wilkens shortened a YA chassis and then fitted a TC body to it in order to make the prototype TD long before the drawing office had an idea of what a new MG should be, bears repeating. Legends are made of such stuff and must be perpetuated. With a minimum of drawing and developmental time, the first TD rolled off the line on November 10, 1949.

Combined with the independent suspension were rack and pinion steering as well as fifteen inch disc wheels with wider tires than the previous 4:50 x 19 tires on the TC. This combination gave the TD marked improvement in handling and drive comfort without sacrificing any of the 'Safety Fast' characteristics of its ancestors on the MG family tree. It has been said that you can run over a dime with a TC and know whether it is heads or tails; in a TD you can run over a change purse and not notice it.

The complaints about the demise of the TC neither lasted long nor were they particularly valid. By late 1949 there were other sports cars on the scene that gave MG a considerable amount of competition both on and off the track. Clearly, a change was necessary and a transition from TC to TD was really not all that drastic. The TD was instantly recognizable as an MG Midget. As such, it was entitled to all the rights and privileges accorded to that proud name. It was a sports car with a long heritage earned on the tracks of England as well as the continent. The TD had a purposeful, practical look to it that became most meaningful when the car was driven well. Enthusiasts instantly accepted the car after they had a chance to try it on their favorite stretch of twisty road.

For its power the TD utilized the same dependable *grit* introduced on the TB in 1939 and continued in the TC and Y type after the war. The XPAG engine, displacing 1,250 cc and developing 54.4 BHP and 5,500 rpm, was dependable and good for many miles of service, even if those miles included long distance trips on American super highways.



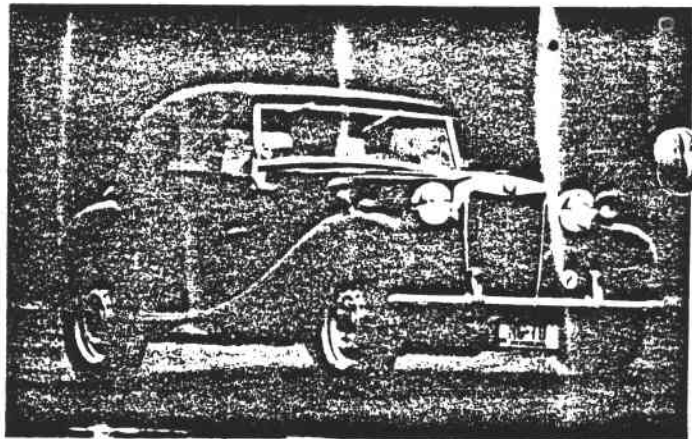
*TDs moving slowly along the Abingdon production line in the early fifties,—scarcely mass production, but it worked.*

The TD had its share of competition glory. A TD engine was used to power Col. Goldie Gardner's record car (EX 135) at the Bonneville Salt Flats to a class record speed of 203.9 mph. At the same time Gardner was breaking records on the salt flats, a stock TD was there and succeeded in gathering up a fist full of records. Back in England, George Phillips took a special bodied TD, that looked very much like the later MGA, to LeMans and was doing well until it was forced to retire with engine problems.

In America any number of TDs were raced in Sports Car Club of America events with distinction. Today the TD is fully accepted for Vintage Sports Car Club of America events and several are seeing action at various tracks around the country. So the TD is still winning races some thirty-four years after its introduction.

Owning a TD in 1984 provides many of the pleasures that ownership gave in the 1950's, and there really are few problems. First and foremost has to be pride of ownership. In 1950 one could buy a new TD for about two-thousand dollars. A new Ford convertible was considerably cheaper and bigger. Americans, most still uninitiated to the joys of owning a sports car, found it difficult to understand why anyone would pay \$2,000 for a diminutive two seater. Constantly answering the ques-

*TDs still race on the vintage circuit. Our editorial board member Dick Knudson used to thrash this one round Lime Rock. Now he shares a special racer with several colleagues.*



*The majority of TDs have the good-looking pierced disc wheels.*



tion, "You mean you paid two grand for that?" MG owners were able to answer the question because they were proud of their purchase and knew there was more to motoring than merely getting from point A to point B.

While the MG owner in 1950 had a fledgling dealer network to rely (more or less) on, in 1984 no official MG dealership exists in North America. Today's owner, however, probably does most of his own maintenance. Serving him are several reputable parts dealers only an 800 number away. With the telephone, credit card, and UPS, needed parts can be easily and quickly obtained. In 1950 dealers often had trouble supplying needed parts. Today, major vendors are remanufacturing and stocking virtually anything a TD might need. The club scene in 1950 usually consisted of racing, rallying, and gymkhanas. Car shows were extremely limited and almost unknown in many parts of the country. Staying active in the local club meant staying competitive. Being able to compete successfully usually meant going faster. As some early motoring guru once said, "There ain't no substitute for cubic inches." That meant that members kept swapping their cars for faster machinery; thus, very little marque loyalty developed in these early clubs. Today the most active clubs in the car hobby are those devoted to a single marque; often clubs for types of cars within a marque will develop where there is a need. This is the case with the older MGs. Today's marque clubs are more orientated towards social and concours events.

The largest club special aimed at T series MGs is the New England MGT-Register, Drawer 220, Oneonta,

New York, 13820, celebrating its twentieth year in 1984. This organization can account for approximately one-fifth of the total production of TDs. The Register also includes all T Type MGs as well as all of the pre-1955 MGs. The Register holds two major meetings a year which are called the Gatherings of the Faithful. To these gatherings come MG enthusiasts from all over the world. It is not unusual for the distance trophy winner to cover in excess of 3,000 miles to attend a Register gathering. To top that off, distance winners have often won first place in the car display. Today's club member is every bit as enthusiastic as the club member of 1950. In addition, he is apt to be much more loyal to his marque.

Information for the 1950 TD owner took the shape of a shop manual, owner's manual and whatever tidbits from the factory service bulletins the dealer could share with him. Sports car magazines were in their infancy. Of the dozens started during that period only one survives at this time. Today's TD owner has a wide range of MG history books available to him. One book, *The T Series Handbook*, has most of the essential information a TD owner would need in order to restore his car to original condition. That book is available from the aforementioned T Register. At least three professional magazines are devoted exclusively to MGs. We like to think the one you are reading now is the best one. Most of the clubs devoted to MGs produce newsletters or magazines that are full of MG lore. Since it would be impossible as well as expensive to belong to all clubs, we suggest you search very carefully to find the one best suited to your needs.

# The Original British Car Day

Tenth Annual Meet

Sponsored By the Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG "T" Register  
*SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1987 at Allen Pond Park in Bowie, Maryland (RAIN OR SHINE)*

**FEATURING: ANTIQUE, CLASSIC AND NEW BRITISH CAR DISPLAY, ANTIQUE & CRAFT DEALERS, FLEA MARKET.**

**FIELD OPENS AT 8:30 A.M. — JUDGING BEGINS AT 12 NOON**

*All British Cars and Motor Bikes welcome, Car Parts Vendors, Antique, Flea Market and Craft Dealers are also invited. Last year over 600 cars were on display and more than 115 awards were presented to the car owners. The show was attended by more than 4,000 people.*

*A dash plaque and tenth anniversary patch are guaranteed to all preregistered cars and every car will be placed in a class for judging and award purposes. Cars not parked in assigned class will not be eligible for awards.*

## AWARDS:

First place pewter for each marque or series with at least 6 PREREGISTERED cars.

First and second place pewter with at least 9 PREREGISTERED cars.

First, second and third place pewter with at least 12 PREREGISTERED cars.

Honorable mention ribbons.

Judging done by registrants (Popular Vote).

The field opens at 8:30 AM, the judging begins at noon and the balloting is closed at 2:00 PM. The awards will be presented at 4:00 PM.

## "FOR SALE"

A special area will be set aside for all "For Sale Cars." \$20.00 preregistered, \$25.00 at the gate. "For Sale" class will have awards based on number preregistered.

No "For Sale", etc. signs will be allowed in award classes display area.

## VENDOR SPACES:

Minimum size for one space is enough area for a van and two tables. \$16.00 preregistered, \$20.00 at the gate.

Absolutely no selling, vending in display areas, Any advertisement of this event without written consent is prohibited.

## ADVERTISERS:

Send 600 inserts before June 15 along with \$50.00 and we will put one in each registration packet. Inserts/flyers, etc. may only be distributed from a vendor space.

## CAR ENTRANT:

Car classes will be based on number preregistered by June 5th. Preregistration by June 5 is \$7.00. After June 5 by mail and at the gate the fee is \$12.00. The field will be limited to 700 cars. No race prepared cars will be accepted. No car trailers allowed on field.

## SPECTATORS:

\$1.00 per person admission and children under 12 accompanied by an adult are free. Parking is 50¢ for car.

## FOOD:

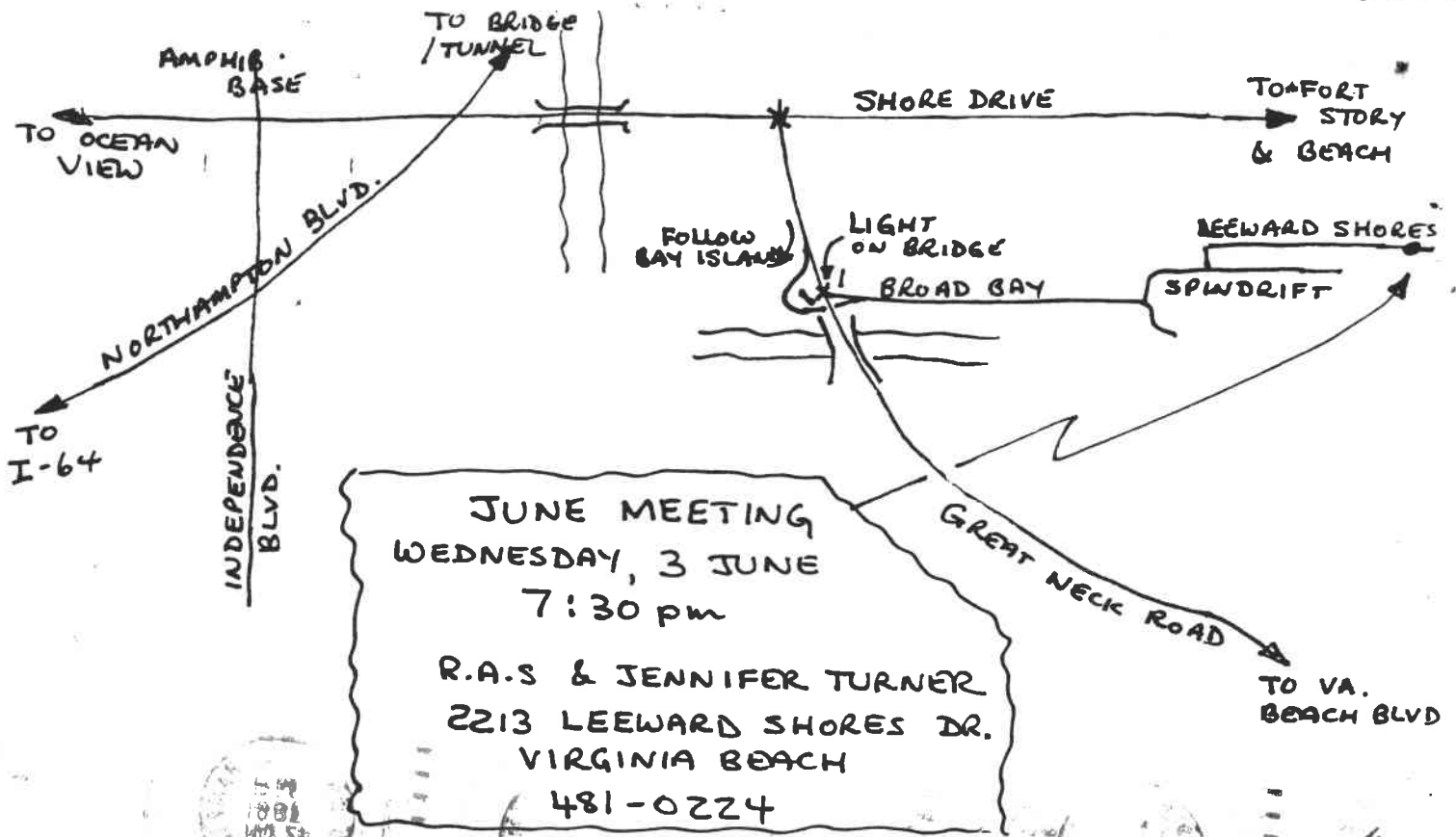
Food and beverages will be sold at the show and picnic areas will be available.

*All Profits from British Car Day Will Help Sustain Local Non-Profit Organizations.*

All New  
One Time Only  
Car Badge







DADS  
 MAY 29 1987 PM  
 TIDEWATER, VA. "T" CLASSICS  
 5149 BELLAMY MANOR DR.  
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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