

The Dipstick

The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club



Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

Volume XXV, Issue 10

October 1998

Marque Time

Our thanks to John Jones for hosting the September meeting. Nice turnout, great food - thanks to his daughter - and we were spared a downpour that drenched other sections of the city.

The September tech session at Bob McClaren's Orphanage settled a long list of squeaks, thanks, and chugs. Some technical, some philosophical, and one "Look Ma, no brakes...!" The Peggy Memorial fence remained intact, the AAA guy got to stay home and watch the ball game. The 6 foot sub put up a valiant fight right to the end. Pam's early B is coming along nicely. It looks like a million bucks compared to its former plywood-floorboarded self standing planter duty in my backyard.

Thanks a million to the Watson's for all the hard work it took to make the first Pungo Pig Roast and Rally, to put it mildly, a "smashing" success. My B survived intact, save the front license plate and a loose seat rail which only needed tightening.. You should have seen the '78 Mercedes 280D that was towed away with both ends tucked under! How we survived intact is beyond me. All I can figure is that God protects the fools who drive His favorite Marque..... judging from the rear of Alan's car, He obviously prefers Rubber Bumper cars.... Barbecue leftovers will be served at the November tech session/museum tour at the Bond's.

Once again, I'll have to speculate on this weekend's British Car Day at Berkeley. Hopefully the weather will cooperate, the cars will run flawlessly and the lion's share of awards will go to TMGC members. But, win or lose, rain or shine, concours to con-demand, we're gonna' have a great time.

Safety First!
Mark

NOTE: We have several 4 packs of *Old Speckled Hen* beer, named after an MG racer, which will be raffled off at future meetings.

Upcoming Club Activities

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Oct 4 | British Car Festival, Waynesboro |
| Oct 7 | Club Meeting - Dave Sheppard's |
| Oct 18 | Hunt Country Classic, Middleburg, VA |
| Nov 4 | Club Meeting |
| Nov | Tech Session at the Bond's |
| Dec | Christmas Party |

1999

Looking forward to another year of meetings, car shows and tech sessions and outings!

The Dipstick printed courtesy of

ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

September Meeting Minutes

The meeting started at 8:10 p.m. as Mark thanks the Jones' for their hospitality for hosting the meeting. Martin Vander Haeghe was welcome as a guest.

The minutes were approved with one correction, the panoramic photograph brought to the last meeting was brought by Doug Wilson (not Doug Dewey). Thanks Doug.

Treasurers Report - Balance \$1322.62: Receipts \$354.00: Disbursements \$40.00

Membership - Bob not present

Activities - Chuck announces that the croquet match was in limbo; more information to follow. A reminder for the Wesleyan College Car Show to benefit breast on Saturday, September 12th. Also a reminder for the Pig Roast on September 13th. Anyone wanting to caravan to Berkeley should plan to leave Greenbrier Mall promptly at 8:00 am or after the last Triumph starts.

Newsletter - It was mentioned that the quality of the maps has improved. Also suggested that Alan try to obtain a copy of the ESI logo for the front of the newsletter.

New Business - No new business

Old Business - No old business

Marque Time - Chuck Hudson is selling his 1948 TC (\$24,000.00); Mike Murphy is selling a 1958 MGA Coupe (\$3,000.00).

Regalia - Frank mentioned that Andy and Cynthia took First Place with their TF at the AACA show - way to go!

Spares - Mark announced that Philco brand plug wires for the MGB are 2" short; however the YUGO plug wires are an exact fit (how embarrassing)

The club members wish to express their sympathy to Doug Kennedy for the loss of his mother. Our condolences to him and his family.

TROUBLESHOOTING WITH A VACUUM GAGE

Mark Childers

Troubleshooting with a Vacuum Gage

by Mark Childers

One of the best troubleshooting tools you can own is the relatively inexpensive vacuum gage. But you have to use it..... Although "more" is generally better, the actual figure is not as important as a steady, flutter-free indication. "Hot" cams, worn rings, bad valve seating and loose hardware all contribute to decreased vacuum.

Connect the gage hose to a direct vacuum port on the intake manifold, and start the engine. While warming up, vacuum may wander a bit as the mixture goes from rich to normal, but it should remain reasonably steady at some point between 16 and 22 "Hg. Use an average reading of 19 to 20 "Hg as a baseline for a non-abused engine:

Above 22" ? First, remove the air filter elements and re-read. If the vacuum drops to normal, the engine was choking for air. If no change is noted, first check the points for proper clearance, then check ignition timing. Excessive advance will cause high vacuum readings, along with lots of pinging under mild loading. If timing and filters were okay, check the gage against another engine. It may be overly optimistic.

14 - 18 "Hg and steady ? Moderately retarded ignition timing is the first suspect area. Excessive blow-by out the oil fill cap (with or without blue smoke out the tailpipe) indicates low compression across the board. If the engine doesn't smoke but is lacking in power, excessive wear at the cam chain/follower can be the culprit. Check for vacuum leaks around the intake and carb with carb cleaner or an unlit propane torch. Propane sucked into the induction system will cause a rise in rpm. Check the throttle shafts for wear, especially if the problem is intermittent and idle speed fluctuates from time to time.

Normal or slightly low at idle, but drops like a rock under acceleration? A crushed muffler, tailpipe or clogged catalytic converter, or an open EGR is the problem. Slowly raise speed from idle to a steady 2500 rpm. If vacuum drops as rpm increases, there's a restriction in the exhaust system.

Low vacuum (12 - 15 "Hg) rapidly fluctuates 3-5 "Hg ? Sounds like worn valve guides to me, especially if you see a puff of blue smoke after a two minute idle. It's caused by engine vapors entering the cylinders thru the valve guides, causing the mixture to vary between normal and lean.

Low vacuum, slow, regular fluctuations of about 4 "Hg? A rich mixture is to blame. If the air/oil separator screen or metered orifice on the valve cover is clogged, the needle may wander slowly. If the needle wanders irregularly, a lean mixture is indicated.

Normal vacuum, steady as a rock, but plagued by an intermittent fluctuation and a noticeable change in output? An intermittently sticking valve will often lose 10" Hg. Pull the valve cover and watch valve train movement for erratic operation. No luck? Try removing all spark plugs, and turn the engine over slowly, watching each valve open and close. Sometimes carbon builds up on the guide and wedges the valve open until it's overcome by spring pressure. At wit's end? Pull the head, pull the valve springs, push each valve up and down by hand until you find the one that sticks. Have the heads machined as necessary.

Low power, accompanied by regular, wide (up to 10 "Hg) fluctuations? When this occurs at idle and under acceleration, it indicates a dead cylinder. As an intake valve opens, and its piston moves down, a lot of air is pulled into the engine. If the exhaust valve is not seated, air will also be pulled through the exhaust system, and into the cylinder, upsetting the orderly flow of gases out the tailpipe. If the intake valve is not seated during the power stroke, a backfire, or spit through the carb will result.. A compression test will identify the cylinder and course of action.

A regular fluctuation resulting in a loss of 3 - 5 "Hg indicates partial power loss in one or more cylinders that can often be traced to an ignition problem. This problem also occurs in engines which have experienced head gasket failure and attendant overheating. The anti-leak agent in antifreeze - sodium silicate - turns to glass when exposed to high temperatures, and can foul valve seats. If the heads get hot enough to cause the head gasket to bleed into the combustion chambers, it's time for some machine work, anyway.....

From the MGB Driver

Mark Shoe, Technical Director
Peachtree MG Registry

Do you own a 1970 or newer MGB? Have you ever gotten in and turned the key thinking all the electrics are in order and yet, the car won't start? Well then, let me RELAY a message to you!

In 1970 and all subsequent years, in an attempt to increase the longevity of their ignition switches, MG added a relay between the ignition switch and the starter. In this way the ignition switch only carried the small amount of current needed to operate the relay, with the relay doing the hard work of operating the starter itself.

You can find your relay located just behind the fusebox on the right hand inner fender. It is a small silver box with four wires plugged individually to its underside. The BLACK wire goes directly to ground and along with the WHITE/RED wire from the ignition switch completes the circuit and energizes the relay. The relay has heavy-duty contacts inside which connects the direct battery current to the large BROWN/WHITE wire which in turn energizes the starter.

If you are having a starting problem, first set the handbrake, placing the car in neutral and chocking the wheels as a safety precaution. Then find the relay. Once found, disconnect the BROWN and the BROWN/WHITE wires and identify their position so you can replace them properly later. Then turn on the ignition and "jump" the

brown wire to the brown/white wire momentarily! A paper clip will accomplish this but DO NOT touch the paper clip to anything metal as sparks may fly! The MGB should now start, if this solves your problem all you need is a new relay!

So, your car doesn't have a 'silver box' as a relay, but rather, there is a small black cylinder with the same 4 (or 5) colored wires protruding from it.

Guess what? It's the same thing! Lucas

used several versions of relays and the later cars, have these round black cylinders (as well as later replacement relays.) Don't worry, they function and test just the same.

One last bit of info to RELAY to you! If yours is a 1977 or later MGB, you also have an ignition switch relay. The same round black relay can be found in front of the fusebox nearer the radiator. If your '77 or later MGB will start, and run while starting but fails to continue to run when you release the key, then perform the same test as before on the ignition relay. Only this time "jumper" the wires BEFORE you start the car. Once you find the car runs, disconnect the wires to turn off the engine. The wire colors are the same now, except the previous white/red wire is just plain white. ■



CONGRATULATIONS AT BERKELEY TO

Bill Keeler - First Place Chrome Bumper MGB's

Frank Linse - First Place MGA Coupe

Chuck Hudson - First Place Open Class, Honorable Mention TC's

Bob McClaren - Second Place GT Class

Andy Wallach - Second Place TF's

Doug Wilson - Honorable Mention Rubber Bumper MGB's

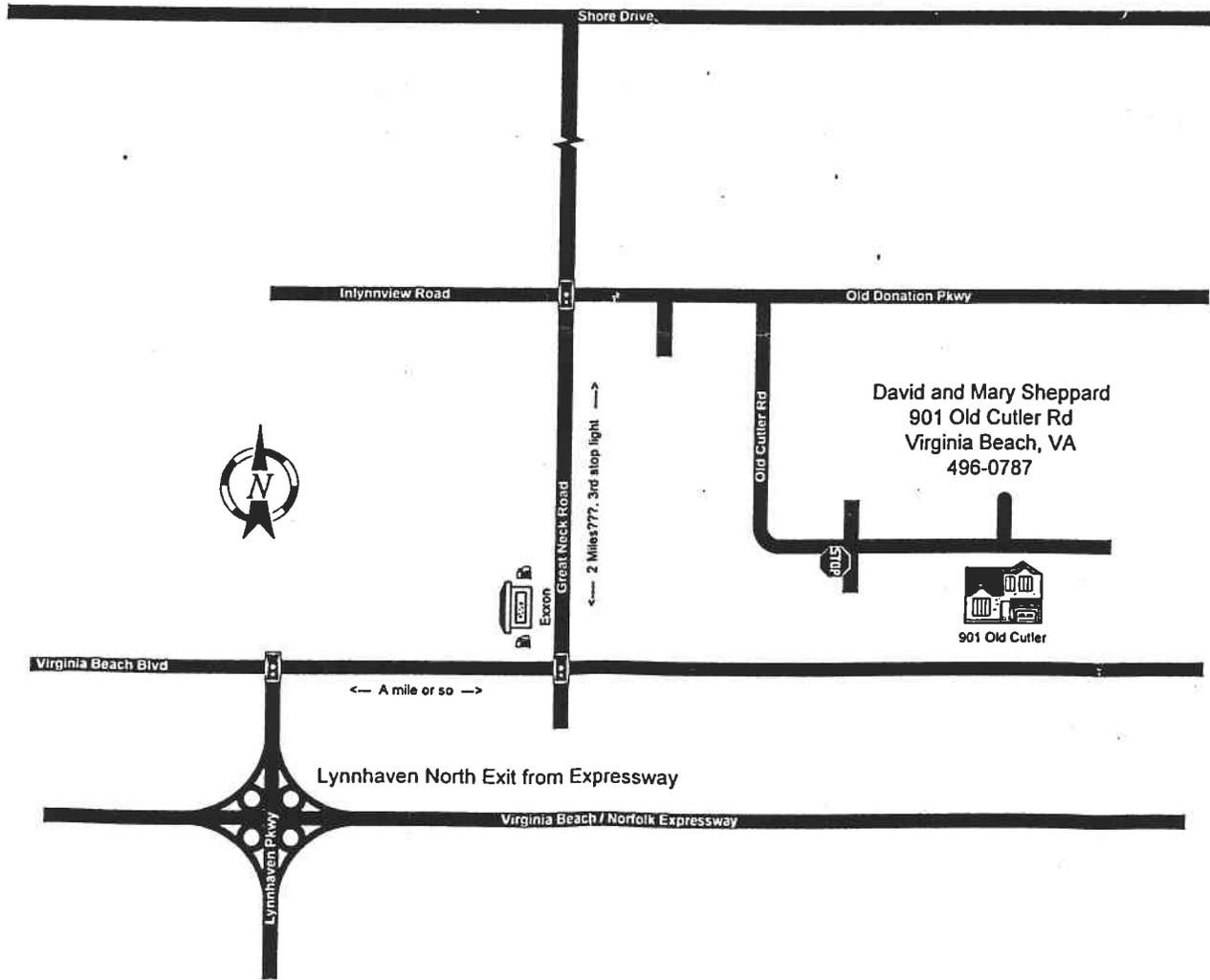
George & Susan Ulrich - First Place Rally

**MEETING NOTICE
OCTOBER 7, 1998
DAVE SHEPPARD'S**

KICK TYRES 7:30

MEETING 8:00

**901 OLD CUTLER ROAD, VA BEACH
496-0787**



The Tidewater MG Classics

Bob Miller
5448 Mt. Jackson Ct.
Va. Beach, VA 23462



FIRST CLASS

23222+4326



**NEXT TECH SESSION AT THE BOND'S
IN NOVEMBER**

Officers and Committees		
President	Mark Childers	473-1757
V. President	Barry Tyson	488-7304
Secretary	Doug Kennedy	460-5037
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editor	Bob Miller	497-2214
Membership	Bob McClaren	490-2114
Activities	Chuck Hudson	425-6882
Technical	Volunteer Needed	
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307

NEXT MEETING
DAVE SHEPPARD'S

7:30 pm