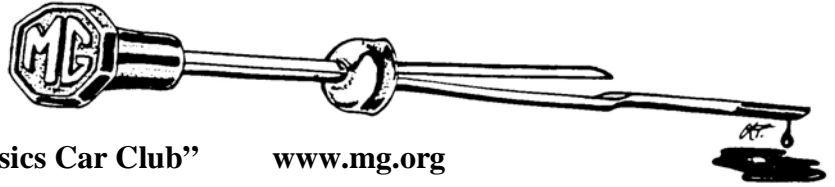


# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

[www.mg.org](http://www.mg.org)

Volume XXXI, Issue 5

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

May 2003

## MARQUE TIME

Thanks to Bill and Leslie for hosting the April meeting. Their brightly painted family room with its “Margaritaville” atmosphere set the tone for a relaxed meeting and helped usher in the anticipation of warmer weather.

Thanks to Mark and Debbie for hosting the Spring Tech session at their mini-farm “way down yonder” in southern Chesapeake. The weather was beautiful, just right for long drives down country roads in an MG, or about as close to country roads as you get around these parts. I counted 9 MGs, excluding Mark’s ‘B’ and ‘GT’. Several cars actually got worked on, and everyone left under their own power. Debbie put out a great spread of food, and a good time was had by all.

Our first drive-out of the year at the end of March to Gloucester was an enjoyable outing. Thanks to Alan for organizing the trip. Five MGs took part in the trek up Rt. 17 to visit Brent and Becky’s Bulb Farm, eat lunch in “downtown” Gloucester, and then finish the day “antiqueing”. Jim & Betty drove their MGB on its maiden voyage after a major restoration. My car was on its first outing after rebuilding the front suspension and brakes. The wheels didn’t fall off, and the brakes stopped the car when I wanted them to, so I count that as a success. The only downside to the trip was the pouring down rain late that afternoon as we were driving down I-64 on the peninsula, a bad enough road to drive even in good weather. Are they ever going to finish working on that road?

We were all deeply saddened in April to learn of the passing of our friend and fellow club member, Bill Keeler. Bill was much respected and well-liked by all who knew him. Bill’s restoration of the red ’74 Midget and the maroon ’73 MGB set a standard for all of us to follow, and are a testament to his attention to detail and the perfectionist he was. His ’73 MGB is the nicest example of that model I have seen anywhere. He will be missed by all of us, but surely not forgotten.

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## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check [www.mg.org](http://www.mg.org) for the latest info!

### April 30 Ice Cream Social Run (see page 3)

Until July 20, *La Belle Macchina: The Art of the Ferrari* at the Chrysler Museum  
[www.chrysler.org/Ferrari.html](http://www.chrysler.org/Ferrari.html)

May 3 Derby Day Car Show, Eastern State Hospital  
[ltarnold@hroads.net](mailto:ltarnold@hroads.net), 757-820-3909

May 3 Lewes, DE British car show  
[inquiry@leweschamber.com](mailto:inquiry@leweschamber.com)  
(I have a PDF entry form)

May 4 Britain on the Green  
[CapitalTriumphRegister.com](http://CapitalTriumphRegister.com)

May 4 Boulders Car Show  
[www.richmondtriumphregister.com/](http://www.richmondtriumphregister.com/)  
(meet at Cosmo’s at 9:00)

May 4 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield  
[www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)

May 7 Wednesday Meeting at Alan and Beckey Watson’s  
(see map on back page)

May 16 Dipstick Deadline

May 17 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration  
(see page 3)

May 16-17 Carlisle Import and Kit Car show  
[www.carsatcarlisle.com](http://www.carsatcarlisle.com)

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# APRIL MINUTES

Doug Kennedy

I remember at a tech session a few years ago, when a bunch of us were standing around talking and eating, like we always do at tech sessions, Bill asked the group if anyone knew what DCOE stood for. We all knew that it had something to do with Weber carburetors, but no one could answer his question. Bill had us stumped! I forgot all about that until the other night. Since I only know enough Italian to stumble through the menu at the local Olive Garden, out to the garage I went where I retrieved a couple of Weber manuals and began the search. According to the Pat Brady book, *Weber Carburetors*, DCO stands for *doppio corpo orizzontale*, or double throat horizontal. The E suffix refers to die-cast carburetor. I just wish I had looked it up earlier, and could have told Bill that in person. I encourage all of you to share fond memories you have of Bill with the rest of us, and to keep Libby, Greg, and Johanna in your thoughts.

After such an event like this, my normal ramblings about car stuff just seemed so trivial and inconsequential. All I can think of saying is something that I have felt for a long time, which is my belief that "health is wealth". Sometimes no amount of money or use of modern technology can buy us good health. If you are healthy, you are wealthy. If you have both good health and the love of family and friends, you are truly blessed! It's easier to say than do, but occasionally we all need to slow down and count our blessings, and "Stop and smell the Castrol".

With spring upon us, and the winter car projects hopefully completed, get out in your MG and re-discover the enjoyment of driving it. Savor the moment. Why not join other TMGC members for the annual trek to the Boulders Car Show on Sun, 4 May? Check this issue of the *Dipstick* or the website for a departure time and place. And don't forget the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Sat, 17 May. Come and help celebrate our club's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday with your TMGC family.

**Safety Fast! Mike**



## Membership

Robin Watson

**Total membership 106**

For those members who would like to keep their 2003 Directory up to date. Bob McClaren has changed his MG stable to the following:  
1970 B, 1974 ½ B and 1947 TC

El Presidente' Haag opened the meeting with a mighty rap of his gavel at 8:07 pm, Lucas Standard Time. The crowd assembled with great excitement since at the last minute the raffle drawing became quite an amazing donated item by a local auto wholesaler. More on that at the end of our minutes.

Mike thanked Bill and Leslie for their hosting. Bob McClaren was also welcomed back after a bit of an absence.

Membership: Robin reported that we still have 106 members.

Treasurer: Out.....\$158, In...\$97.17, Left: \$1131.42 We're in good shape but we need to pad the coffers to prepare for the upcoming anniversary.

Newsletter: Another job well done!

Minutes: Approved as written.

Regalia: Frank reported that we have a lot of new, neat goodies. Start your holiday shopping now! We also have new grill badges. Various suggestions for mounting were also discussed. T-shirts come in all sizes from large to XXXXXXXXL. Oh, and there is new glassware as well.

Activities: Tartan Day festival approaches later this week. Tech session on the 13<sup>th</sup> at Mark and Debbie's. Ice Cream Social on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Come one come all. Mike Haag shared some info on a car show at Eastern State Hospital. There was some mention regarding free admission but a VERY expensive exit fee. Letters also went out to suppliers for anniversary goodies. Mike is also planning on heading to the NAMBGR gathering so talk to him to join the caravan.

Archives: Sue is still collecting items to copy and place in our scrapbooks. PLEASE get her your tidbits from the past. Robert related that he has a list of items he bought for Dave Barrows at some point during college. Unfortunately this didn't narrow the year down for us to pinpoint its age.

Clubs: Mike received a letter from the NAMGAR people soliciting donations for a raffle.

Technical: Mark showed off a gauge that needed some cleaning and discussed how best to clean the inside of

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30<sup>th</sup>**

**EXPERIENCE VIRGINIA BEACH'S NEWEST ICE  
CREAM EXTRAVAGANZA**

**COLD STONE CREAMERY AT RED MILL COM-  
MONS!**

**NO QUESTIONS TO ANSWER!**

**NO CLUES TO FOLLOW!**

**SIMPLE DIRECTIONS TO FOLLOW!**

**NO NAVIGATOR NEEDED.**

(but you might need a partner to help finish your ice cream)

**LEAVE KELLAM HIGH SCHOOL @ 7:00 PM**

**2323 HOLLAND RD.**

**FOLLOW SIMPLE TOUR THROUGH NORTH PUNGO**

**APPROX. 15 MILES, 25 MINUTES**

**Call Alan Watson, 426-2600, for more info.**

**It's the Eighth Day of Christmas....**

Peggy Craig

Almost everyday as George comes up the stairs with another box in hand from the UPS deliveryman I hear: "On the (first, second, third...) day of Christmas..." We're celebrating "day eight" today. Our familiar vendors and suppliers of MG/car related items and services have been quite generous in sending boxes of door prizes and goodie bag items for our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration which is taking place on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Aberdeen Barns Restaurant on Northampton Blvd. Their contributions will help make our evening a fun success. Some of our members have also obtained nice donations from local businesses.

The invitations are going out this week (Apr 21<sup>st</sup>) so look for yours in the mail and return your RSVP card and check as soon as possible so we will know how many people to count on attending. Lots of work is being put into this evening so we can all have a good time visiting, reminiscing, and having a great dinner—not to mention taking home some of these great door prizes--so mark your calendar now and plan to come. Oh, and plan to drive your MG as there will be safe parking in the banquet parking area in back of the restaurant. We'd like to take pictures of members and cars to mark this milestone in our club's history. See you there!

**Activities (continued)**

May 24-June 1 Drive Your British Car Week  
[users.arczip.com/zntech/  
britishcarweek.html](http://users.arczip.com/zntech/britishcarweek.html)

**May 29 Ice Cream Social Run**

June 1 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield  
[www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)

June 1 "British Car Week in Maryland" Picnic  
and Rallye, St. Leonard, MD  
[www.chesapeake.net/~oritt/](http://www.chesapeake.net/~oritt/)

**June 3 Tuesday Meeting at  
Ted Hughes**

June 4-8 NEMGT GOF Mk-74, Stowe, VT  
[www.nemgt.org](http://www.nemgt.org)

June 6 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield  
[www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)

June 6-8 Gold Cup Car Show and MG Vintage  
Racing at Virginia International Raceway  
[www.virclub.com](http://www.virclub.com)

June 7 Brits on the Bay, Virginia Beach  
[www.tidewatertriumphs.org](http://www.tidewatertriumphs.org)

**June 12 Dipstick Deadline** (this is earlier than  
usual, I am going to MG2003)

June 15 Original British Car Day at  
Gaithersburg MD  
[http://www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.  
com/](http://www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com/)

June 19-22NAMGBR, St. Louis, MO  
[www.mg2003.com](http://www.mg2003.com)

**June 27 Ice Cream Social Run**

June 28 Brits by the Bay, Anne Arundel, MD  
[www.tracltd.org](http://www.tracltd.org)

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL FOR MAY:**

**THURSDAY, MAY 29TH  
MEET AT GREENBRIER MALL @ 7:00 PM  
FOLLOW SIMPLE ROUTE DIRECTIONS TO  
BERGEYS DAIRY FARM, MT. PLEASANT  
RD. IN CHESAPEAKE.  
MORE INFO TO FOLLOW!**

**Future Ice Cream Socials to include  
Peninsula trip  
Farmer's Market Hoe Down**

## Minutes (continued)

the glass. It makes a HUGE difference in the newness of the appearance.

Old Business: He's in Florida.

New Business: If you have a minute please consider sending a card, e-mailing, or calling Bill Keeler. Bill's battling a nasty illness and could use all of our positive energy and attention. The club discussed at length what effort we could make. It was decided that the people present were happy to kick in the required funds to get Bill into a convertible for the weekend while he's getting treatment.

Jim Villers discussed his 'B' which is back on the road and looks great. It also has a five-speed from an English Ford Sierra that he put in via a kit that includes the tranny, bell housing, driveshaft and all the other bits. He's really happy with it. Please contact him if you're interested in installing this feature. The usual quizzing of questions from those in attendance then ensued. The answers and discussion became very technical very quickly so the secretary couldn't keep up.

Sue discussed the drive out last weekend. The ride was great but a bit soggy on the way back.

Bob McLaren just bought a wiring diagram for his 'B' off of Ebay. It's also in COLOR so you don't have to translate all the little codes. It was all of \$10 and on 11X17 paper as well as laminated.

Bill reported that Leslie fooled him into thinking that his MGB went up in flames!

Mark invites all sandblasters to bring their rusty bits to the tech session.

The Secretary passed along that after the last meeting he was reminded by the Virginia Beach Police on his way home that the speed limit on Kempsville Road is 35 and not 45.

Robert's bringing a container from England to the US in September if you want to stick anything (legal) inside.

Raffle: Of major excitement this evening was the fact that, out of the Blue, a local auto wholesaler Mike Stinson of Stinson Auto Brokers drove up in a 1965 MGB that was in good driveable shape, had a newly rebuilt engine, new interior, and only needed some tweaking and paint. Well, after years of keeping this "project" in his garage he now needs the space and drove up to tell us "Here, this needs a good home, your

club can have it!" After a short discussion it was decided that the MGB "Mean Green" as Mike called it would be the raffle. A flurry of dollar bills came out, Frank tore off tickets quickly and we were ready to go. Drumbats sounded, silence erupted and the number was drawn. Well, long-time member Bill Thompson was the delighted winner and about passed out in shock as we all grumbled at our bad luck. The title was turned over, we kicked the tires and poked around under the hood for a while and with a puff of blue smoke Bill headed off into the night as the rest of us retired to the goodies with the speed of college students running away from an April Fool's joke!

## Editor's Notes....

Susan Bond

It is time to roll out the usual spring blurbs about getting the cars out of the garage and getting them ready for the top-down driving season. You've heard them all before so just rerun them in your head and say you've been told. Some of us got a jump on the process at the tech session at Mark's, and we have already been to a car show and a drive out. The activities calendar is taking up much more column space. You could do something car related almost every weekend if you wanted to - who wants to do yard work anyway? Unfortunately, this year there are several conflicts which make the choices very difficult. Makes me wish I could be in 2 places at once. All I need is 4,000 more miles and my GT will turn over 200,000 so maybe that isn't such a good idea after all.

Congratulations Peggy and George Craig! Their article about Ryan Pentecost (which first appeared in these pages) was printed in the March/April issue of *MGB Driver*, the journal of the North American MGB Register.

My internet provider has changed my e-mail address so if you have me in your address book, please change it to sue007@infionline.net. Everything except taking *The Dipstick* to the printer is done by e-mail and I won't get anything at the old address after 15 May, so please PLEASE don't forget to change it.

Many thanks to Mark Childers for filling this issue!!!

## Officers and Committees

President	Mike Haag	496-7348
Vice President	Barry Tyson	488-7304
Secretary	Doug Kennedy	460-5037
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	382-7547
	Susan Bond	482-5222
Membership	Robin Watson	721-9277
Activities	Dan Kirby	430-9591
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Frank Linse	461-7783
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307

# Gloucester Excursion

Becky Watson



Although disappointed by the number of "no shows," five cars and their occupants had a great time on Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. Jim Villers was particularly proud of the maiden voyage of his just-finished-restored 'B with its 5-speed transmission conversion. The group met at Cosmo's in Suffolk for breakfast/coffee/bathroom break before heading out 664 to Route 17. The weather was nice enough for top down, but not yet too hot.



The destination was Brent & Becky's Bulbs at Daffodil Lane in Gloucester. A guide took us on an hour and a half tour through the daffodil fields. We were each



given a catalogue so we could circle our favorite ones along the way. We saw some rare varieties and learned a thing or two, including a new word -- florific.

(We're not sure if she is making it up, but it *is* fun to say.) A quick stop at their recently opened retail shop gave us the first chance to spend the \$5.00 gift certificate that comes with each paid tour.

A short drive to Main Street led us to several choices

for lunch. Our five MGs parallel parked along the shops provided entertainment for the locals. We couldn't have found a better place to eat than at Kelsick Gardens, a gourmet deli. The grilled Panini was a favorite, and Alan Watson quickly located a can of "Speckled Hen" (beer) to take back to Virginia Beach for later. We ate our lunch outside to enjoy the spring weather and view of the shops and daffodils along the street.



As luck would have it, there were costumed interpreters in the courthouse area as we walked through the center of town, which certainly added to the quaint character of this very old part of Virginia. Unfortunately, the rain started lightly about that time, and Jim informed Betty that one part of the restoration he didn't get to was insuring that the top would go back up. They were last seen headed back to Virginia Beach, top down, in raincoats.

The remaining four 'B's headed to Holly Hill Antiques. Mike Haag and Terry Bond both said they had driven



past the place on their way to Topping, and longed to visit it. We were not disappointed! There are barns, sheds, gardens, and an old farmhouse stuffed with everything imaginable. Terry Bond found a desk he couldn't live without, and Becky Watson located the perfect wash tub/beer cooler -- check it out at the May meeting. (Terry returned the next day with a van to retrieve the goods.)

There was much more to see and do in Gloucester, and we should consider a return trip!

# Remembering Bill Keeler

Mark Childers



Pig Pickin' 1998

Many years ago, before I knew Bill, I wrote and performed a song titled "The Body and Fender Dentist". Had I known Bill in 1970, I could have just as easily written it about him. So, he didn't have an Associates Degree in Auto Body Technology from the Community College of Flint prominently hung above a Doctor of Dental Surgery, but true car-nuttery is pretty much universal, be it MGs or Land Speed Racing, and Bill Keeler was blessed with a pair of hands that brain surgeons and bodymen alike could envy.

Dr. William B. Keeler, Jr, DDS, died April 3, 2003 at the age of 54 in Seattle, Washington, after a valiant fight against cancer. He was a past-president of the Tidewater MG Classics and a long-time member of both NAMGBR and the New England MG 'T' Register. Bill and Libby were looking forward to meeting some Seattle area MG club members when he took a turn for the worse and was admitted to the hospital.

For those who didn't get the opportunity to meet Bill Keeler, well, Bill was a perfectionist with a great sense of humor. He was equally at home in his dental practice or his "after-hour's clinic" a small, but amazingly, well equipped garage. With every wrench hanging in geometric precision and three sets of Allen keys lined up according to length and size like a Busby Berkley toolbox tribute, it was arguably the most well organized two-car, attached garage in the universe. It's where Bill and son Greg completed a museum quality restoration (and I don't use that term loosely) on a drop-dead gorgeous maroon '73 'B' roadster. By the way, if you haven't heard about the infamous radial arm saw incident, just ask anyone who has... After backing out of the garage for a brief maiden voyage, the following day father and son won both the rally and best in class at Berkeley. A few short weeks later, it was on the road to the Indianapolis NAMGBR show, garnering an honorable mention against some very stiff competition, and a cherished parade lap around the Indianapolis Motor

Speedway. That was in 1996, as I recall, and 7 years later, looking under the bonnet after his memorial service, the engine compartment still looked like it was finished yesterday. Bill also owned a nice '52 TD, in cream and maroon, that was a source of many hours of driving pleasure and tinkering. When the auto-cross bug bit, he built a Midget for Libby, which also turned out quite nice.



Waynesboro 1996

I might be speculating, but I'd venture a guess that if Bill had been a zillionaire, able to wave a checkbook at any project of his choosing, he would still have done about everything himself--from his office building to home improvements to restoring and maintaining the family fleet of cars. He never quit until the job met his uncompromising standard of quality, be it a fender, a fence, or filling. But, unlike many wannabe perfectionists with a dozen projects just waiting to be "perfected", Bill completed his jobs, sometimes in the dead of night by flashlight held by a sleepy eyed, mosquito ravaged member of the Keeler household.



Berkeley 1997

Bill Keeler brought abundant good cheer to a lot of folks in his lifetime. His quick wit ran the gamut from bone dry, to Dennis Miller hip. And he could crack you up like a young Robin Williams. Once, at the conclusion of a long and tedious procedure, he mentioned offhandedly that here had been a bit of a problem getting my cap color matched at the lab. After installing the cap, he gave a slow "Close enough," (on the Keeler Perfection Scale, I took it to mean "absolutely perfect to me, but disappointing to Dr. Bill").

Slowly, he raised the mirror for me to see the results of my three-week wait. Well, Bill had rubbed a charcoal grey powder on that pearly white cap. Never cracked

so much as a laugh line, and said, "Looks better than your MG". On another visit, when the chair-side banter between Bill and his assistant turned to ideas for a present for Libby, and lingerie was suggested, Bill deadpans something about cross dressing, and breaks into a pretty fair falsetto rendition of "You Make Me Feel (Like a Natural Woman"...). If ever there was a guy who was confident of his masculinity... He was also known to smile, on occasion, if he was certain that there weren't any cameras pointing his way--photos of Bill "Deer in the Headlights" Keeler celebrating his "wild" fiftieth birthday party at the Bond's tech session were no exception. Browse through the club's annuals, check out just about any photo catching him off guard--there's Smilin' Bill being hisself.



Even in his final days, he showed a sterling example of courage, bowing out of this life with grace and dignity. His kids, Johanna and Greg, were bequeathed a legacy that went far beyond the wit and wisdom of "Bill's Pearls". He passed away in peace, surrounded by his family, and in the hearts and prayers of many friends. Bill's memorial service was a true celebration of his life and times, tears of sorrow mixed with tears of laughter. Our good friend was no doubt looking down over the crowded chapel from the driver's seat of a perfectly restored TC, wearing jeans and sneakers, and driving goggles, wondering why we were making such a fuss on a Friday afternoon. Even a rainy one.

## Bills Pearls

Read everything before you sign it.

Never take advice from someone too eager to give it.

Never buy from someone too eager to sell.

Never take advice from someone poorer than you.

If you tell someone something ahead of time it's a prediction

– if you tell them afterwards it's an excuse.

Never say anything that you would not be totally comfortable saying in court.

A good deal today is still a good deal tomorrow.

There are no free lunches.

You won't get rich off your job.

Never touch principle.

Education is the only thing no one can take away from you.

Never depend on anyone else.

Never make a decision based on emotion.

Never co-sign a loan.

Never pay mortgage insurance.

There are exceptions to everything.

From the *Virginian Pilot*, April 10, 2003

## William B. Keeler, Jr.

CHESAPEAKE – William B. Keeler, Jr. DDS, 54, died Thursday, April 3, 2003, in Seattle.

Born in Petersburg, he was the son of Annie Poland Keeler of Hopewell and the late William B. Keeler. Dr. Keeler graduated from Virginia Tech with a BS in biology in 1971 and received his DDS from the Medical College of Virginia in 1975. Dr. Keeler opened his dental practice in Chesapeake in 1975 and had practiced on Cedar Road for the past 14 years. He was a member of the Tidewater Dental Association, Virginia Dental Association and the American Dental Association.

Dr. Keeler also derived many hours of pleasure as a member and past president of the Tidewater MG Car Club and was a member of the New England MGT Register, the North American MGB Register, and the Central Virginia British Car Club.

Besides his mother, he is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Keeler of Chesapeake; a daughter Johanna Michelle Keeler, also of Chesapeake; a son, Gregory Scott Keeler of Blacksburg; and a sister, Anne Sherwood Quinn of Chesterfield.

The funeral will be at 2 p.m. Friday in the chapel of Oman Funeral Home and Crematory, Chesapeake, with the Rev. David Shelton officiating. Interment will follow in Chesapeake Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends at the funeral home today from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, Portsmouth-Chesapeake Unit, 2730 Ellsmere Ave., Norfolk, VA 23513.

# April Tech Session

Jim Villers

There was a pause in the week of rain to roll the MG out of the driveway, drop the top and head to the Tech



Session at Mark Childers' home in Chesapeake. What a wonderful drive, with the bright sun, blue sky and the refreshing cool air as I

drove down London Bridge Road, Landstown Road, Salem Church Road, North Landing Road, Mt. Pleasant Road, Centerville Turnpike, Battlefield Boulevard... Wow! is this an interesting drive. After about fifty minutes I came to Ballhack Road and had three more enjoyable country road miles until finding Mark's home in the country. This was a drive that every MG owner should make every once in a while to remind him or her why MGs are special little cars.



I arrived a little early and, with Frank Hurley, was able to enjoy Debbie's hospitality (or a second breakfast). As the early arrivals, Frank and I got the garage slots. Frank did a few minor items to his car and I tightened the three front pan bolts on my car with Mark's special wrench (I will guarantee that nothing will fit those bolts except Mark's wrench).

Frank Linse arrived in his red roadster, Mike Haag with his white B, Bob McClaren in "Pam's" maroon rubber bumper and Vince Groover in his roadster.



Sue Bond brought her BGT and made an effort to reduce the windshield water leaks by replacing the windshield wiper seals. She also has an engine (?) vibration that was discussed without conclusion. Bill Goff drove his bright yellow B and his friend Barry Robinson arrived with a green GT, which was running a little ragged. After replacing the plugs and a quick compression check, it was a little better but not cured (if you read this, try swapping the #2 and #3 plug wires).



## On the Green at Walsingham Academy

Craig & Joyce Cummings

The journey to Williamsburg from Alexandria was not the usual 2-hour drive, but rather a 4-1/2 hour battle with



Vince Groover and Jared Church



heavy, Friday afternoon, Washington DC commuter traffic.

The CVBCC outdid themselves this year with the first car show of the season on March 15. The weather, of course, was truly spring-like and remained so for the show and the presentation of trophies.

At my count, there were well over 90 U.S. and British cars entered in the event. All were beautifully displayed in a field perfectly suited to showcase a large and diverse collection of unforgettable classic cars.



Taylor Sumner & Terry Bond



I am sure the Academy Sisters were pleased with the results of the bake sale. Two hundred dollars were presented to them, on

behalf of the CVBCC. There were many imaginative and delicious goodies donated by the club spouses, making it difficult, if not impossible, to pass by the bake good sale tent without making a purchase or donation.

Awards presented this year reflect the fine quality of the club. The silver tankards are among the best awards presented on the car show circuit.



Doug & Eiko Wilson

Doug Wilson looked like a two-fisted drinker as he left the podium with 2 first place mugs for his '52 TD and '76 MGB. Doug also gave his usual outstanding performance as "MC" for the event. Though it was a chal-

lenge to award such a generous array of prizes, he managed to do so with wit, charm, and an irresistible stage presence. No doubt he will be back next year, by popular demand.

Frank and Kerry Hurley took a First in the Chrome Bumper



'B' class with their "new" MGB. Kerry & Frank Hurley I just love the smell of a freshly painted yellow MGB in the morning. I understand he completed the car the night before the show. Fine job, Frank.



Frank Linse

Frank Linse took home the 2<sup>nd</sup> place trophy for his MGA.

There were many other club members in attendance for the event.

Susan Bond and Taylor Sumner brought her MGB GT. Robin Watson entered his MGB. Vince Groover brought his grandson, Jared, along in his MGB.

Gregg Coogan brought his Midget and Terry Bond entered his beautiful Triumph motorcycle.



Craig Cummings

Bruce Woodson got plenty of attention with his outstanding Cord. We took first place in Class 1 for MGB'GT's.

Great Event!

## Free to Good Home: Wiring diagram

Ed Kehrig ordered a color coded wiring diagram for his B but received the wrong one by mistake. The sender told him to keep it. The diagram is for car numbers GHN3/101-48765. My Moss catalogue says those are early Bs, '63 and '64. Ed says he can't use it and will bring it to the next meeting -- first one who asks gets it.

## EX234 and ADO 21: Doomed Replacements for the MGB

Mark Childers

After World War II, Detroit quickly figured out that the ugly, boxy basic black sedans carried over from December, 1941, were not going to meet the needs of the average American who had quickly evolved into a fickle consumer. Marketing gurus decided that America wanted the future to arrive a little sooner, and with a lot more style. And what better way to be one-up on the Joneses than to own "next year's car" this year in September?

Detroit's edict proclaimed that henceforth, Labor Day weekend would become a springboard for dealers throughout the land to unveil and launch the latest and greatest automotive offerings. And to make it work for the long-haul, a brand new, yet unmistakable design was absolutely, positively necessary at least every other year. An eighteen year-old flathead V8 design and wobbly kingpin suspension with knee action shocks wrapped up inside the all-new, clean-lined 1950 Ford was a huge success. Suddenly it's 1957 and "Ready for take off in the all-new-for-'62 Oldsmobile Jetfire's space age cockpit!", and "Tomorrow's styling for today!" were heard on the airwaves, on billboards, and in showrooms throughout America. At every big car show, manufacturers rolled out futuristic impressions to lure investors. But the abstracts rarely influenced the assembly line designs. Competition was stiff, and the stakes were high. It was no great surprise that every once in a while, a particular design fell on its financial backside, while certain monstrosities sold like hotcakes. But the occasional failure didn't stop the great American dream machine in all its two and three-toned, jet-aged, white-walled glory. The big three and little four tried to one-up each other for a share of the September showroom sweeps, and only a handful of manufacturers didn't endorse expensive annual clean sheet designs. VW's legendary "Why change perfection when you can improve it" campaigns sold a lot of Bee-

bles, and the Corvair was an American rarity in that the '67 was simply a slightly swoopier version of the original 1960 design. The Henry J/Allstate was homely enough to have a self-limiting run of about 5 years before the factory folded, while Citroen rolled out a zillion 2CVs, each one slightly "different", depending on the day of the week. In the US, only Checker was renowned for its annual unveiling of "last year's model".

English manufacturers had a history of redesigning every three to five years, and making improvements between models. They were also known to introduce the occasional "interim model" such as the MGTF, a temporary bridge between the TD and the not quite ready for market MGA. To be sure, Rolls Royce and Jaguar, regardless of year, were immediately recognizable, but they were also rare and out of the range of the average person. So, when the revolutionary MGB was introduced in 1962, it became an instantly recognizable ambassador of four-wheeled Anglican good will. Twelve model years came and went before the first significant cosmetic change, and those black bumpers hung in for another six model years, until the line shut down.

The MGB's amazing longevity was not part of the original plan. Conceived in 1959, the B was a welcome successor to the aging, side-curtained MGA. The new weatherproof design vastly expanded the pool of potential buyers, and its sales success gave BMC a much-needed economic boost. But, while the B was well ahead of its time when conceived in '59, by 1962 when the assembly line opened, the need for an updated driveline was already being addressed. The original design was far more revolutionary than the gem that finally rolled off the assembly line. A panhard linked rear suspension was fitted to the test mule, and prototypes, allowing the spare tire to be stowed in the upright position behind the cockpit. A series of frightening mechanical failures during testing led to the final semi-elliptical rear suspension design. Aside from the rear suspension, and a few minor cosmetic changes, the final product was pretty much the same as what was said to have been sketched on a napkin on a lazy afternoon.

Back in the fifties and sixties, when every General Motors brand was autonomous, aside from drivetrains and suspension pieces, very few parts were interchangeable from make to make, or from year to year. BMC, however, was the UK equivalent of our modern day General Motors, accustomed to building "badged" cars using as many corporate parts as possible to keep pricing and tooling at a minimum. Thus, the "new" MGB got a

prewar vintage, non-synchro first gear, a whippy-cranked three main bearing engine (arguably a better revver due to less bearing friction, but prone to spinning bearings and twisted journals nonetheless) and a banjo style rear end. Even the front suspension system was relatively untouched from the Y-Types. But the B had great looks too and amazingly forgiving handling to get it off to a great start.

Early drivetrain shortcomings considered, temporary salvation came in the form of rave reviews from the motoring press and word of mouth from owners who loved the concept of an affordable, weatherproof sports car. When the five main engine and four synchro gearbox were finally fitted, the MGB became the "better mousetrap" and corporate bean counters at BMC apparently knew better than to mess with a good thing, at least until the tooling costs had been recovered. By 1967, the plant was producing 100 MGBs per day, and had already built 100,000 units.

John Thornley, MG's general manager, told the motoring press that he believed the MGB would be the last all-new design to come out of Abingdon because of the prohibitively expensive retooling costs for unibody design changes. He was right, and wrong at the same time--after production halted on the MGB, a long time passed before the MGF came along. The two-seat MGB and the even smaller Midget were fine sports cars, but they were two-seaters. Young Americans, who had bought the first generation of MGBs were getting married and having kids, moving away from two-seat roadsters for affordable and relatively luxurious Ford and GM pony cars, VW Beetles, Opels, and the upscale, sporty, Mercury Capri in record numbers. The new MGB'GT', while beautiful in design, and far more rigid than the roadster, remained essentially a two-seater with room for a couple of unbelted young kids at best.

"Officially" unaware that the beginning of the end of BMC was only a year away, management looked for a way to get back into the market.

In April of 1967, a design team was formed to build a four-seater sports car to revive MG's glory days. The premise was to replace both the MGB and the Midget with a platform of essentially the same dimensions as the MGB, yet lighter, more rigid and roomier, with better handling, all while maintaining MG's classic cosmetic bloodlines. And, in keeping with tradition, the new design would continue BMC's long held policy of using as many off-the-shelf parts as possible. The "Midget" version was spec'd with the 1275cc engine, 4-

speed, and twelve inch tires. The "MGB" version was to be fitted with thirteen-inch tires, the existing corporate 1798cc engine, and a choice of auto or stick shift gearbox. While at first considered for a competition version, the 2.9-liter engine in the then-new MGC was simply too long and too tall to fit in the engine bay. As an aside, rumors abounded that the MGC was not long for this world due to a number of engineering problems far too expensive to overcome, thus dooming the self-proclaimed "successor to the big Healey" to a very short production run.

EX234, as it came to be designated, was four inches shorter on the wheelbase than the B, yet was a genuine four-seater (okay, four adults in a pinch) 2+2 like the Jaguar E-type coupe, with plenty of front leg room. Dampened by the same Hydrolastic units fitted to the Mini, the wishbone front suspension and independent trailing arms in the rear rounded out the corners. The production version would have been fitted with the new and improved BMC Hydragas suspension to replace the notoriously unreliable and expensive to repair Hydrolastics. Engine and gearbox were off the shelf MGB/Austin Marina pieces; driveline mounting points were designed to accommodate existing MGB rubber mounts. The differential was from the off-road version of the Austin Gypsy; and front disc/rear drum kits were built up from off-the-shelf pieces, depending on wheel size.

(to be continued)



## Link of the Month

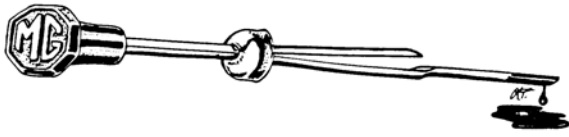
I know this is already in the activities calendar, but check out the web site of British Car Week:

<http://users.arczip.com/zntech/britishcarweek.html>

If you follow the links there are things to read, a list of things to do, stuff to buy, a page of business links, and some pictures of featured marques. I even found out Burt Levy, the author of *The Last Open Road*, will be at VIR for the Gold Cup races. If you haven't had a chance to read the book yet, you can get a copy there, complete "with personalized autograph, greasy fingerprint, and official *The Last Open Road* decal."

Check out the site and don't forget to drive your British car May 24 to June 1!

# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond  
541 Forest Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

## FIRST CLASS

Monthly Meeting  
Tue, Jun 3rd  
Ted & Louann Hughs  
6069 River Crescent  
Norfolk  
451-4969



7:30 - Kick Tyres  
8:00 - Meeting

