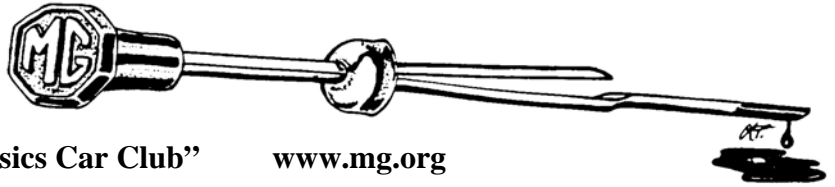


# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

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

Volume XXXII, Issue 8

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

August 2004

## MARQUE TIME

It Runs! Thanks to Frank Linse's tinkering, Josh Wallach's '59 MGA started after 35 years dormancy. A little welding ... all the floorboard supports, new floorboards, new brake lines, and a few other minor things and the car may be ready for the road.

The 5-speed transmission for my TF arrived. I had hoped to have it installed in time to take the TF to the New England Gathering of the Faithful in Strasburg, PA July 7-11. But, as it seems with all my MG endeavors, all did not go smoothly. So Cynthia and I went in a Toyota. Mike and Jennifer Ash also attended (see Jennifer's write-up of the event). All I'll say is that there were some "more pristine than new" "trailer queens" that were gorgeous.

I have preliminarily sorted the TD nuts, bolts, washers and various fasteners that came back from plating. Amazingly, I think that I'll be able to determine where they go. It will be so nice to assemble vehicles with shiny, clean, non-rusty, non-greasy bolts. Can one work on cars and not get their hands dirty?

Becky Watson still needs more volunteers to host the monthly meetings. Please give her a call. Also make Robin Watson's job as Membership Chairman easier by getting your renewals in promptly. Let me again thank all the members who do so much to make our club such a success. You are great!

We have lots happening in August. Come on out and enjoy the fun.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

- Aug. 1 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield, [www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)
- Aug. 3 **Tuesday meeting at Jim & Betty Villers** (see map on back page)
- Aug. 8 **Drive out to the Eastern Shore** (see page 3)
- Aug. 12-15 University Motors Summer Party Reunion, Grand Rapids, MI
- Aug. 17 **Dipstick Deadline**
- Aug. 21-22 SCCA Evolution Driving School Pungo Airfield, [www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)
- Aug. 21 Kedhive Show (see Auto Weekly in the Pilot)
- Aug. 22 **Tech Session at Libby Keeler's** (see page 4)
- Aug. 26 **Ice Cream Social Run** (see page 4)
- Sept. 1 **Wednesday meeting at Paul & Carmen Thiergardt's**
- Sept. 5 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield, [www.odr-scca.org](http://www.odr-scca.org)
- Sept. 8-12 NEMGTR GOF MK 77, Painted Post, NY, Charlie Searles, [cseares@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cseares@rochester.rr.com)
- Sept. 17-19 Brown's Island BCS, Richmond [www.britishcarclub.com](http://www.britishcarclub.com)
- Sept. 19 **Dipstick Deadline**
- Sept. 25 Wings and Wheels [www.fly.to/wingsandwheels](http://www.fly.to/wingsandwheels)



# Membership & New Members

Robin Watson

*Total membership 111*

Membership is now 111, up by three from last month.

Mark & Kathy Davidoski  
4733 Red Coat Rd. Virginia Beach VA. 23455  
Phone 499-4647  
E-mail davidoskicrew@cox.net  
1965 B

Bernie Imdahl  
Apt. H Ivy Trail Chesapeake VA. 23320  
Phone 410-8495  
E-mail berni.vabeach@erols.com  
1971 B and 1972 B.

Gary Morrison & Linda Ritter  
800 Walnut Forest Ct. Chesapeake, VA. 23322  
Phone 549-0702  
E-mail mgb@lindaandgary.com  
1977 B.

## PLEASE READ IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED MEMBERSHIP

We have 59 members so far that have renewed — this does include the new members. Last month I made a comment about renewal time, and enclosed a renewal form with the Dipstick. I will be having the 2004 – 2005 Directory printed the first week of September. This means that I will be doing the final work the last week of August. If you have not renewed by the end of August your listing will not be in next years Directory. If you have any questions about this please phone or E-mail me (757) 721-9277 or wof101

## Officers and Committees

President	Andy Wallach	622-8315
Vice President	Alan Watson	426-2600
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	Becky Watson	426-2600
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Frank Linse	461-7783
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307

# JULY MINUTES

Will appear next month.



## For Sale

1979 MGB. Beautiful Metallic Black finish. Appears to have been very well restored and has been garage kept. 84,834 miles. Has hard top. Convertible top, tonneau and boot covers in excellent condition. Black interior in good condition. Manuals included. (757) 896-6396 afternoons or evenings before 9:00 P.M. email: jluptonatp@cox.net Asking \$7,500 or serious offers.



## Must See TV

Tune in to WHRO on August 7th at 2:00pm to watch the latest in the *Great Cars* series. The featured car will be **MG**. If you have the ability to tape off the TV, some of us who are electronically impaired would really appreciate it if you would.



## Notes from the Editors....

Susan Bond

There has been so much going on in our MG world lately that this is a very full issue — and I haven't even begun to write about MG2004 yet! Looks like next month will be just as busy,



lots of opportunities to get out and drive your MG. We sure did drive them on the Winery Tour Weekend. I still marvel at what a great trip it was — and no tow trucks were involved! I love the roads in the Charlottesville area, lots of twists and turns and HILLS on 2-lane roads with very little traffic, perfect for LBCs. If you join us on our annual trip to the Waynesboro show, you will get to sample more of them, and maybe see some fall foliage at the same time.

Don't miss Becky's article on The Last MG. Some of us saw this car at Brits on the Bay a couple years ago and it is pristine.

# Join us for a great summer Get-Away

Sunday, August 8th

We'll drive over the beautiful Bay Bridge-Tunnel to the Eastern Shore and lunch together at the Eastville Inn (a recently opened restored inn) at 1:00pm, then travel a few miles to the weekend home of Jennifer & Mike Ash for dessert and beer.



## To Join the Caravan

The toll is \$17 round trip across the BBT (save your receipt for the discount). We'll meet at 11:45am for a noon departure. If you'd like to join us, meet at the Crown gas station at the intersection of Shore Drive & Greenwell Rd in the 4400 block of Shore Dr.

## To drive directly to Eastville Inn for lunch at 1:00pm:

From BBT, Eastern Shore end: turn left at 3rd traffic light (about 16 miles) onto Willow Oak Dr (at gas station & mini-mart). At "T" junction (about 1/4 mi) is Courthouse Rd. You can see Eastville Inn (white clapboard B&B) towards the left, the Inn is on the right.

**From Northampton Blvd:** Take Shore Dr exit, bear right at end of ramp and Greenwell is 1st traffic light. Turn left & park in Crown station.

**From Oceanfront area:** Take Shore Dr, Crown station is on right immediately before on-ramp to BBT.

**From Ocean View:** Take Shore Drive past Amphib Base, go under Rte 13, turn left onto Greenwell.

Jennifer suggests you bring your secateurs, clippers, plastic bags, pots, etc., if you'd like to take home cuttings or divide some perennials. (If you don't know what that means, you're probably not a gardener and wouldn't be interested!)



## To go directly to Jennifer & Mike's home to meet around 2:00pm:

Follow same directions as above from the end of BBT, except at the "T" junction, turn right onto Courthouse Rd. Drive past the high school (1/2 mi) to fork in road around a church--choose **left** fork. Turn left onto Old Town Neck (Rte 630); drive through the farm land, at end will be a white sign and white fence. Turn right onto Hungars Beach Rd. Their house is the 5th house on the left side; look for an MG out front!

Point of contact for this event is Beckey Watson. For more informatin, please contact her at 426-2600 or Beach723@aol.com. Alan's cell phone is 757-438-2328 if you need to call along the way.



## A Very Special Tech Session

Bill Keeler, past president of our Club, passed away last year and his wife, Libby, and her children have requested our help in getting Bill's MGs running and to help sort the stash of MG parts at their home. Our August Tech Session will center around helping them accomplish this, so come out and join fellow members in this effort.

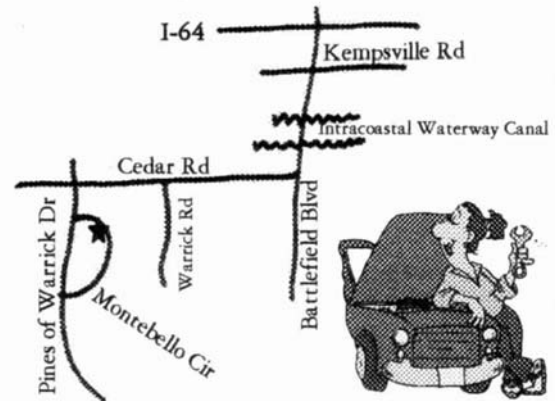
**Please bring "finger food" to share. Drinks will be provided.**

### Date & Time:

Sunday, August 22nd, 10:00am

### Place:

636 Montebello Circle, Chesapeake  
(Great Bridge area) 547-2709



For additional information, please contact our Activities Coordinator, Beckey Watson, at 426-2600

## August Ice Cream Run

Thursday, August 26th - 7pm

Meet at the South Trust Bank building at the intersection of  
Newtown Rd & Princess Anne Rd  
(Virginia Beach/Norfolk city line) at 7:00pm.

We will motor to the new Bruster's Ice Cream on  
Indian River Rd in Virginia Beach.

For information contact Alan Watson at 426-2600

## Tech Stuff

Mark Childers

When it comes to cool cars, and little Brits in particular, there's a fine line between a loving, distant gaze, and the longing stare of a car-crazy. When I first saw new-member/old-friend Mark Davidoski's '65 with the Sebring flares and mini-lites, from behind and at a distance, I immediately liked its wide stance, accentuated by a near two-inch drop and fat tires all around. But at the same time, I also thought it was somewhat of a poseur, a wannabe racecar with an inspection sticker. When it comes to MGB's, I'm basically a cosmetic purist with a penchant for making the mechanicals as good as they can be while maintaining reliable driveability. But this one whispered "check it out...."

Like all new acquisitions, it came complete with a worm can full of minor quirks and blemishes. My first drive took place in his neighborhood, mostly just off idle, and it seemed like an okay driver, but nothing jumped out at me. It went, it turned, and it stopped. Problem here, problem there, but nothing major. A good start for any car....

In *my* neighborhood, where there aren't any roller skaters or dog walkers to contend with (only deer, deep ditches and the occasional bear), I tested its limits of adhesion while accelerating out of that nasty turn a hundred yards to the west where my dead-end street intersects Ballahack Road--a pretty good stretch for test-driving a Williams F-1 for that matter--and almost had to peel the grin off my face. This car bolted out of the curve under full throttle in third gear, and made an effortless hard over left onto my street, in spite of all four tires agonizing from terminal sidewall weather checking and sclerosis of the tread. It felt more like a Formula Vee than an early MGB, exceptionally neutral with just the slightest hint of understeer even under full throttle in spite of the rock stiff rear suspension. And with a new set of semi-sticky Yokohamas it would likely give any number of modern sports cars a run for the money on a short, twisty road course where brute acceleration is often a handicap. I'm getting attached.

In the garage, I began inspecting every nook and cranny for whatever aches and ailments that I might find. As with any car, look hard enough and things that need attention will reveal themselves. A whole bucketful jumped right out. Most easily and economically fixable, with few that detracted more than a whit from being a good car.

I pulled up a stool and began writing notes. Fix this now, tweak that later; a couple dozen lines of minor ailments that could fall somewhere between emergent to picky to obsessive. A few that were serious enough to fix before going any further with the look-see. Under the left drum a leaky axle seal puked on the

brake linings rendering half the rear brakes little more than unsprung deadweight. And with that, I think to myself: "What if I had to panic brake at the apex of my last sweeper?" The normally unforgiving Ron Hopkins anti-sway bar and uprated shocks in the rear might very well have swapped ends on anything but tacky asphalt with just the right side shoes at work. But I digress. It pulled through just fine, and except for the unusually high pedal effort, the brakes were okay. And it's not as if the wheel cylinder was pumping brake fluid onto the roadway with the pedal dead on the floor like in a Quinn Martin TV show.

My eyes traced the sweeping fender flares, front and rear, narrow, black-accented gold stripe hugging the flares and sills that I either love or hate, but can't figure out which, and can't stop staring at. Even with aging paint, and a front bumper and grille not usually part of the Sebring conversion, this car looks way-cool. An edited scene from *Walter Mitty* runs on the wide-screen behind my eyelids. I've eighty-sixed every trace of upholstery and door glass, bolted in a period highback racing seat (just one), a chopped windscreen, and a five point Deist belt with traditional Koch fittings. A minimalist kind of the hair in the wind, old school four wheeled café racer without the bugs in the teeth. The Ballahack Road Vintage Motorsports Complex beckons. I dive into turn one, passing a fly yellow Enzo on the inside, and bolt down Bunch Walnuts Straight. Aside from the vicarious rush it might bring, there's no reason to bust the speed limit. It's the twisties that make these cars a joy to drive. And I *really* like this one—a lot. With freshly tweaked engine, new drums, and shoes, and axle seal in place, the second test drive was as thrilling as the fantasy. Except for the absent Enzo which no doubt would have left me standing like J-Lo at the altar.

After 4 years, I still miss my lovely red 74-1/2 roadster. A great long-hauler, it had superb brakes, taut suspension, plenty of power, and few quirks. But compared to Mark D's, mine was just a big old town car. If I only had it to do over again, I probably would have done it up exactly the same; with chrome bumpers instead, and I NEVER would have sold it.

My raggedy '70 roadster, with its strong and sound engine from Vince's first GT is in dire need of new sheet metal south of the chrome line, and the interior is three broken threads away from disintegrating. It's been a part of the landscape since day one, anchored to the driveway for lack of time, money and a sense of direction .... Let's see, flared glass fenders, a set of 8" wheels from a Supra, gutted interior, rollbar and--Reality check: I got it running at the last tech session out here in April 2002. At that rate, I'll be using my social security checks to pay for the paint job. I miss having an MG to drive whenever I want. Maybe I could plant a few small-yield mechanical "time bombs" set to go off when convenient for me, and Mark will

call me up and say “this or that needs to be looked at,” and I’ll say, “Gee, Mark, that’s a real bummer. But great timing, dude. I didn’t have anything planned. I’ll be right over. Ok if I leave my car at your place and drive yours to my house? It’s only a hundred and forty miles, and I know all the back roads between there and here so I won’t even have to take it out on the interstate... see you in a couple weeks....”

Drive ‘em if you got ‘em--the amount of time that life allots us to drive for pure fun is far too short to fritter away in air conditioned, power-steered, boulevard-ride comfort.

*Safety Fast!*

## June Ice Cream Run

Robin Watson



Once again we managed to pick nice evening weather for the Ice Cream Run and Alan managed again to pick out some nice roads to take us to the Dairy Queen on Holland Rd.



Unfortunately, Alan and Beckey’s ‘72 B was not yet quite ready for

the road so they finished up in one of the other brands. Also, Peggy was having a paint job done on her B hoping it will be ready for the winery run in July, so she and George were in another brand. Andy and Cynthia, Mike Haag, Susan, Rob & Olive, making a total of ten members, finished up for a good chat and ice cream at the Dairy Queen.



## RED, WHITE, AND BLUE - AND BLACK AND GREEN TWO

George Craig

(Note to Ed. - nope, not a mistake - that was the unique distribution of car colors.)

Another "howling success" can be used to describe the Second Annual Wine Tour held the weekend of July 10-11. Ten cars, two of each color, participated and included 9 Bs and a GT. Members who came along for the ride were: Alan, Beckey, Robin & Olive Watson, Terry & Sue Bond, Mike Haag & Denise Starke, Jim & Betty Villers, Chuck & Becky Hassler, Vince & Pam Groover, Barb Taychert & Mike Knepler, George & Peggy Craig and last, but not least, was Bernie Imdahi who joined the Club that weekend.



Meeting at Greenbrier Mall

What good fortune to have

Rest stop

Beckey and Alan plan and organize these



events and, in their usual manner, everything was meticulously planned and came off flawlessly. It’s hard to

imagine the tremendous amount of pre-planning and work that was put into these arrangements. For example, we were greeted at our Greenbrier Sears rally point with a sack made from a road map and inside a complete tour guide book including every crook, turn, and stop, a menu at our lunch stop deli, with dime



Lunch stop at Sparks Deli

included for the parking meter, a puzzle (more later), and a pen. We will give Alan a little credit, but we know this was Beckey's doings.

Those who didn’t make this tour missed another really great time. The weather cooperated by cooling just a bit and we only saw a shower while attempting to visit the Jefferson-designed house ruins Saturday at Barbourville Winery.

Along the way to the “wine country”, some navigators had time to work on the “Word Search” puzzle created by Beckey. The time and talent required to create this crisscross style maze is unimaginable since it not only included the name of each tour participant, but the name of each winery we were to visit, and names of the more popular wines.



First winery stop on Saturday was Horton Cellars which included an interesting tour and a tasting which permitted a sample of any or all of their more than 60 wines. Fortunately, we all used caution in that a “taste” of all would surely have been about a gallon.



Next stop Barbourville Vineyards with their huge vineyards and equally large and beautiful tasting room and store. Although they do not have tours they do provide a tasting of each of their high quality and consistently excellent products.

I bet you have never been to a “wine glass tasting”. If not, you missed a great experience at our next stop, Burnley Vineyards. Our owner/host, Lee Reeder, has been conducting important research for eight years to find “the perfect wine glass”. As a part of that effort he had prepared seating for us in his tasting room where each “guinea pig” was confronted with four numbered wine glasses of assorted shapes and sizes. To each of

these he added generous portions of his wine, including dessert wine for a series of scientific experiments



in which he invited each guest to designate their favorite glass with each wine tested. To the amazement of all, I believe, there was a significant and detectable difference. It was interesting to note that two particular glasses tied for first place with the other two glasses



received few or no votes. Lee followed the tasting with an interesting discussion on glasses, his pursuit of the “Holy Grail”, and history of his winery. We owe him our thanks for providing the tour highlight by being such an interesting and gracious host and for his unique presentation of his products. It is always flattering to feel that you have

contributed to man’s store of scientific knowledge.

Fortunately this was our last winery visited Saturday since it was noted that some participants seemed to struggle to find their parked MGs after this “tasting” times four.

After a long day, and with three plus wine tastings under our belts, we ended up in Orange, Virginia, where reservations awaited us at an almost new Holiday Inn Express perched on the crest of a hill that provided delightful views in all directions.

After only a short rest and clean-up time we headed for the important work of the evening, dinner. Almost all opted for the Silk Mill Grill located in a converted old silk mill. This good choice resulted in an excellent meal served with lots of atmosphere created by the ceiling suspended with pieces of old farm implements and tools.



It is suspected that these displays triggered the numerous stories from Betty and Denise regarding their “growing up on the farm”.

Thanks to Jim's efforts (and the Club checkbook) he had polled participants at each tasting and purchased a winning selection from each winery. These, along with other goodies contributed by the ladies made for a hilarious after-dinner social in the meeting room reserved



for us by the thoughtful hotel. Becky even made each person a wine charm to mark our glasses and with each person's initial on it. Great job Becky! Lots of conversation and recall of prior experiences – and thus to bed.

Sunday morning while at the hotel preparing for our continuing pursuit of “the meaning of life”, we were treated to vistas of beautiful fog-filled valleys and a sun working overtime to win its battle. After a bit of coaxing to start Peggy's B we were off to Blenheim Vineyards.

On the way to our first winery Becky wanted us all to



stop at the bottom of a hill where she had discovered an octagonal barn. We all parked in front of it and Becky, who was let out of the car at the top, took pictures.

And what an eye popping trip it became. While winding South along the Shenandoah foothills we were treated to miles of meandering white fences corralling



horses and cattle enjoying their knee high Sunday Brunch. Lot's of oohs and ahs came over the 2-way radios provided by Sue and Jim.

Arriving at Blenheim Vineyards we were treated to more “eye candy” with the spectacular copper clad roof, alpine style buildings clinging to a hillside overlooking



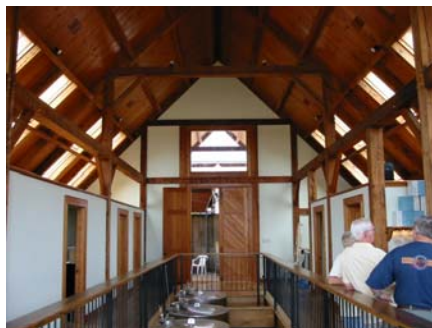
their 18-year-old vineyard in the valley. Our host/owner was more than anxious to show off his modern equipment and gravity fed grape-handling system. This system, he claimed, improved product quality by minimizing



“man handling” the grapes while on their way to crushing and their introduction to the aging vats. Production facilities are located in the basement but its vats protrude through the

upper level tasting room floor to provide visitors and interesting opportunity to view the processing in air conditioned comfort while tasting the generous servings of 4 or 5 excellent wines. Although most of the sampled wines were “whites” we were encouraged to hang around until Tuesday when the bottling of the 2004 “reds” was to begin.

The visit to Blenheim was difficult to end because the ambiance created by its gorgeous building constructed from ancient white oak and yellow pine timbers using precision mortise and tenon joints held together with wooden pegs. A gabled window wall overlooking the vineyards and the rolling hills beyond complimented this atmosphere. But, lunch calls and we are off to nearby Kluge Estate Farm Shop.



No tours are available at Kluge, but their very high quality wines can be sampled in the Farm Shop. Included in the Farm shop is a deli serving unique sandwiches, soups, and sinful desserts. This delicious repast was enjoyed on a nice porch complete with lots of conversation and giggles.





During one of these trips a couple of years ago we saw Betty collecting large rocks for her yard. (How many rocks will an MG hold, Jim?) This year she was also searching our headlights for bugs. BUGS! She was collecting them for her grandchild. What will you be on the hunt for next year, Betty?

But, all good things must come to an end and we, more or less, head for home. So, again thanks to Beckey and Alan – “you done good”!

Beckey Watson’s report of the rest of their trip...

We ended up with six MGBs that went on to First Colony Winery, just down the road from the Kluge Estate Farm Shop. We were greeted by a young lady named Wallace, who said, "Wow! That was quite an entrance!" She said she watched our trail of LBCs climb up the mountain from her office window, and called to one of the employees to come look at us snaking our



way up the road, then realized we were coming to their winery as we drove through the gates, and parked all in a row in front of the building. (I wish she could have seen the spectacle we made with ten cars.) We didn’t stay for a tour because we were anxious to start the 200-mile trek home, but several members tasted and purchased wine. They had some great patios and decks perfect for a club picnic, and if we get to that area again, I’d like to spend more time there.

It was funny when we made our last stop for ice cream at the Dairy Queen in Ivor and someone from our group called out, "Hey look, there's an MG at the traffic light!" And Alan said, "It's Peggy & George!" Glad to know your car was behaving.

**Peggy’s note:** And now for the answer to the mystery of those three white pyramids sticking out of the countryside in the painting above the fireplace at our hotel. They are parts of the roof of the huge sports complex at the Woodberry Forest School, a private, all-boy’s school that is situated on the property that was the original estate of a brother of James Madison in Woodberry Forest, Virginia.



At the hotel — picture is in the background

## GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL, MK.76

Jennifer Ash

Mike and I had intended driving our TF to the Gathering, and then go on to the MGA Register’s GT in Connecticut the following week. But, it was not to be; Mike’s job got in the way and we had to spend a couple of days in Washington, DC before going to Strasburg, Pa. for the T-Register event. Then we had to come back to Washington after that and spend a couple of days working (Mike works, I play!) before going up to Cromwell (Hartford area), Ct. So... what with having to take suits, shirts, ties, etc., driving the TF (or even the Mini) was out, and we took the Bravada.

On Wednesday noon-time we left the District and headed on up to Strasburg and hit torrential rain and thunderstorms around York, Pa, but it had all cleared by the time we got to the Netherlands Inn and Spa – set in the farmland of Amish country. It was just such a delightful spot, but we just sat at the bar and chilled out before having dinner on our own. The “earlybird” unwashed car show was cancelled on account of the rain earlier.

Come Thursday morning, we headed for the Pennsylvania Railroad museum to see what was new since we were last there – 25 years ago; there was a lot more! Then we went back to the hotel bar for lunch. There was a tour mapped out for a drive through the country lanes and farmland, so we did that in the afternoon; wow, those families work hard! Hay-making is done with a mule pulling a mower, then the grass is “tatted” (tossed to dry) a day or so later – again by mule, with a teenage boy driving. The younger children are put to work doing other chores, like topping out the tobacco plants, picking the vegetables for dinner, etc. In the evening, Andy and Cynthia caught up with us and we dined together; the restaurant at the hotel was very good so we saw no reason to go further afield to eat (and drink!), although there was no shortage of family-style eateries in the vicinity – an Amish specialty.

Friday, there was a drive-out (at your leisure) to the very quaint town of Lititz – one of those Main-Street USA, picturesque places. This town was founded by a Moravian community in the early 1800’s. If you ever go there, the guys

must be sure to visit the men's room in the basement of the General Sutter Inn, to meet Pearl! We then drove back to town to visit the Toy Train Museum – what a lot of stuff they have, and some very neat model-train layouts, all working; Mike was in his element! There was a family-style dinner organized for our group, but we decided to eat at the restaurant – again; by this time, there were a lot of old faces around and plenty of company in the bar!



On Saturday morning – the weather had been GORGEOUS since Thursday morning, by the way, sunny, with low humidity – the car-show was



held VA Tickford on the grounds, next to a field of fine-looking corn. There were 65 cars in the show, including two pristine TA Tickfords and a VA Tickford – all brought from Can-

ada by a Register-member.



During our trips to the bar, Chairman, Hank Rippert told us the story of a member in the south who wanted to donate his



TA to the Knudsen-Churchill Scholarship Fund and of his (Hank's) trip to get it, and find it a very respectable car. The upshot is that the car will be raffled to raise money for the scholarship fund. There are 200 tickets to be sold for \$100 each,

and 50 were already sold before the banquet started! The



Foundation has been a few years starting up, what with raising funds and complying with IRS and Homeland Security regulations, but the first scholarship was to be awarded at this Gathering. The scholarships are open to anyone wanting to pursue an education in the fields of Journalism, or Automotive Engineering studies. Well,

enough money had been raised to award not one, but two \$20,000 scholarships – one in each discipline! (Anyone wanting to contrib-



ute to this fund, or buy raffle tickets can get information from the Sacred Octagon). All the pewter was awarded, after an excellent meal, and we all parted company until the next Gathering in the fall, at Watkins Glen, for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Collier Cup. This is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of the New England MG "T" Register. A lot has been accomplished in those years. Two guys got together and formed this organization, enabling the "Maintaining of the Breed" and the formation of many, many lasting friendships.

As a footnote; Dick Knudson is to be ordained Priest in the Episcopal Church next month.

## The Last MGB

Becky Watson

There are many great things about living in Pungo, where the pace of life slows down a little, a secret respite from city life. Well, you might not guess what cropped up in the cornfields this time -- the last MGB ever imported to America. As modern cars whizzed by on Princess Anne Road, time



stood still while Alan and I were transported back in time as we stared at the showroom quality of this 1980 LE. Words can't adequately describe the feeling of coming face-to-face with a brand new MG, since most of us met our LBC's in various stages of scrap metal. Even the owner himself seems in awe of the of the car whose license plate states the obvious "Last MGB" as he unwraps it from storage, like a Christmas present. The path it took to Pungo isn't all that long, but it is very interesting, and makes you feel giddy, like a chance meeting with a celebrity.

First, some technical details. The last MGB was a legacy from the day it was born in Abingdon, being destined to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. The VIN number is GVVDJ2AG523000. There were only two more MGB's produced: number 523001 (a roadster, metallic bronze LE) and number 523002 (a GT, metallic silver LE), and they reside at the British Motor Heritage museum in Gaydon, England. The made for America LE features left hand drive, of course, silver MG side stripes, a chrome luggage rack, a sporty front spoiler/air dam, and a special Limited Edition plaque mounted on the glove compartment lid. (It is amusing to note what *is not* included on the car, such as no radio or zip-out rear window.) The story goes that Henry Ford Sr.'s son Edsel Ford "dissed his dad" by riding around in an imported car -- the very first MG imported to the



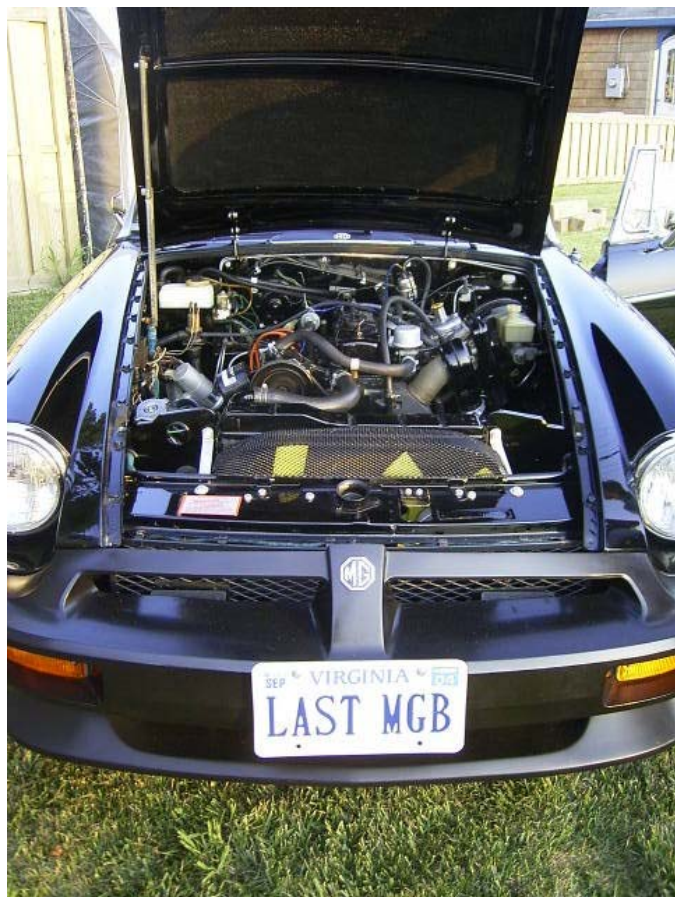
United States (a 1929 MG M type Midget purchased in 1933 with 27,000 miles). So Graham Whitehead, Jaguar Rover Triumph President, wanted Henry Ford, Jr. to have the last MGB, kind of to honor his father's good taste in vehicles. In January 1983, the Gast Classic Motor Cars Exhibit, a private automobile museum in Strasburg, Pennsylvania purchased both the 1929 and the 1980 MG's. In November, 1997, the last MGB was purchased by an individual in Dix Hills, New York with 871 miles indicated on its odometer. It was then sold to a relative of Mathew Gresalfi.

Mathew is adamant that he doesn't consider himself the *owner* of the Last MGB, but rather is its *caretaker*. Just as I was filled with emotions as I stood in front of the "after" picture of how all our restored vehicles appear in our minds, it was emotions, I believe, that pulled Matthew to the car to begin with. No stranger to restoring old vehicles, Matthew

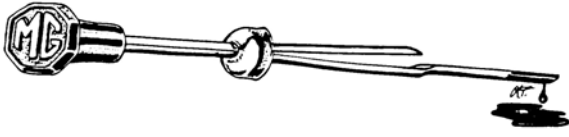
was in New York to pick up a vintage pick-up truck for his brother. He saw the car his relative had purchased from time to time, as it sat outside (not even in a garage!) I get the feeling Mathew felt the car deserved more that it was getting, and it tugged at his heartstrings. (I know the feelings I have felt for LBC's that have followed Alan home over the years.) The car was never even registered until Mathew visited the DMV in Virginia -- during the car's twentieth year. It is now stored inside a reflective canvas enclosed carport, covered in a soft cloth to protect the paint, and zipped in a special bag that monitors temperature and humidity. Mathew takes his caretaker role seriously.

What a thrill it is to sit in the same seat as Henry Ford, touch the VIN number that is registered on papers and plaques. I held its leather-rimmed steering wheel, I saw 1,325 original miles on the odometer. And Alan added two more -- what a rare treat! It sports a current state inspection sticker. The seat cushions actually have padding (unlike any MG I've ever been in). It has the original air in its tires.

Mathew was generous with sharing his time and beautiful car. He invited us in to his home, which he is also restoring with the same care and patience as the 1937 Dodge pick-up in his driveway. He showed us the car's official paperwork, plaques, and books with articles about "The Last MGB" with as much excitement as you would expect from a fellow TMGC member. Alan and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit, with Mathew and the car. It was truly an honor to meet the last of "the sports car America loved first."



# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond  
541 Forest Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register

## FIRST CLASS

### Monthly Meeting

Tue, Aug 3rd  
Jim & Betty Villers  
3133 Inlet Rd  
Virginia Beach  
481-6398



7:30-8:00 pm - Kick Tyres  
8:00 Meeting

