

# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

www.mg.org

Volume XXXIII, Issue 1

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

January 2005

## MARQUE TIME

Happy New Year! This year we can celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the MGA which debuted in September 1955. Make your MG resolutions. I have two: Help my son Josh get his MGA on the road and finish one of my TDs. Maybe we should all make our MG goals public... it might give us more incentive to accomplish them.

“Thank you” to all the great cooks for the wonderful food at our December holiday party. Turnout was great... almost 70 people attended. Sorry that I did not give people a chance to tell the stories that went along with their delectable edibles. Frankly, I forgot. A special thanks to the ladies who performed dish recycling. It kept me out of too much “hot water”. As a driver (occasionally) of an elderly car, I should recognize the need for backup materials. While I will still opt for real dishes versus paper or plastic, I’ll have some disposables as backup.

I honor Vince Groover with the President’s Award for 2004. I admire his very active participation in Club activities along with his technical knowledge and willingness to help others. He has helped most of us over his almost 30 years as a Club member.

An update on my used book selling... which is indirectly connected to straightening my garage which is indirectly related to working on my MGs. I reviewed hundreds to see if they were worth listing, have listed 80 of which I have sold 17. While average selling price is around \$10, I did sell one for \$135.

Have 10 used wire wheels at the greatly reduced price of \$0, zip, nothing. They need to leave; call before January 15<sup>th</sup>. Each comes with a box of books.

Hope to see you at the January meeting and look forward to working with you throughout 2005 to maintain the MG breed.

Andy Wallach

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check www.mg.org for the latest info!

- Dec. 29** Holiday Lights Tour, the Beach Pub at 7:30  
(see December *Dipstick*)
- Jan. 4** Tuesday meeting at Frankie’s Place  
for Ribs (see back page)
- Jan. 15** Dipstick Deadline
- Feb. 2** Wednesday meeting at Bill Seib and Leslie Paul’s
- Feb. 15** Dipstick Deadline

## 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



# Membership & New Members

Also the 2005 Directory  
Robin Watson

*Total membership 101*

By now you should have received your copy of the 2005 Directory, listing members that had renewed or joined before the end of August 2004. If you have not received one please let me know at 721-9277 or email wof101@aol.com.

Since my last report we have one new member that Mike & Jennifer Ash introduced to the TMGC. If you would like to add Richard to your new 2005 Directory here are the details:

Richard M. Leal  
2099 Bay Dune Chase  
Cape Charles, VA. 23310  
Phone (757) 331-8168  
Email richardleal@direcway.com  
He has a 1952 TD

We have had quite a year with membership. At the end of 2003 we had 102 members. At renewal time this year we had 16 members that did not renew. However, we have since January 2004 had 15 new members. (I think I will have to get out these next few days and see if we can find a new member to put us back at 102). Some of these new members have come with help from our members meeting up with them at club events or just being out and about in their MGs (thank you all). A new member found me one day when I stopped for a cup of coffee, with my MG in the car park and a MG magazine in my hands at the table inside, when a gentleman who just wanted to talk MGs found me. Just to let you know how the club is growing at the end of 2000, we had 85 members. Being an active and lively club with a year of activities to look forward to I hope to be able to report an increase at the end of 2005.

## Fall Tech Session at Sue and Terry's, November 21

Frank Hurley

I met Chuck and Becky Hassler early on Sunday morning as we were going to breakfast at Cosmos Diner on our way to the Bond's. As many of you know the food is great and just starts the day right. Before leaving I bought two pieces of Coconut cake to go--my wife's favorite--I need all the points I can get, you know one AH- S--t wipes out a thousand atta boy's.

We arrived right on time, Terry was finishing up a few lose ends and the coffee was almost done with a side of donuts.

About 10:30 AM things got going. Frank and Terry were looking at the windscreen on the GT with plans on removing it. The windscreen removal went without a problem. Frank and Terry discussed more about the car's weather stripping and the procedures to be followed before sending the car to the paint shop.



Chuck was having problems with the Weber automatic choke

on his B. The engine was hard to start when cold. Vince got involved and instructed Chuck on how to adjust it. Chuck adjusted it, started it, and re-adjusted it a few times before he was satisfied that it was closed when the engine was cold and opened slowly as it warmed up.

The big project for the day was going to be installing a windscreen on Phillip Ford's MGB. Early that morning he loaded the B on a trailer and tied it off. This was going to be a great day--



until he unwrapped the windscreen and found multiple cracks requiring a new glass. All was not lost as he was able to work on getting the screws out of



the frame with some help from Vince. Jim Villers



Back to the trailer discussed the glass replacement with Phillip. Glass replacement is not an easy task but Jim has a system that works great. I've used it on two windscreen glasses with no problems.



Finally, lunch time. Can you imagine we did all this before lunch? Terry was cooking hot dogs on the grill and the stew

was provided by Mark and Debbie Childers. The food was outstanding and, as usual, Terry had the reefer full of unique beers, all cold and wonderful.



We ate, talked and solved many problems but no more work was accomplished this day. How can you expect to work after good Roy Wiley's boot sale food, cold beer and really great people to talk to? There was more wonderful food than the twenty of us could eat. So why don't you plan on attending next year and view the world's best collection of vintage spark plugs.



Inspecting the orphan across the street

## Holiday Party

December 3

Our hosts, Andy Wallace and Cynthia Faschini



Alan Watson, Vince Groover, Paul Thiergardt, Janice Klasek, Carl Nagle outside on the deck



Mark Childers, Lara Hawthorne, Jane, Jennifer Ash, Marie Early with the appetizers



Betty Villers, George & Peggy Craig, Aldino Faschini (Cynthia's Dad)





Dinner is served!  
Bill Seib, Olive Watson, Ruth Nagle, Jim Villers



Barb Taychert,  
Pam Groover,  
Becky Hassler



Barry Tyson  
and Jane



Stevie Giffin, Jennifer Ash, Paul Thiergardt



Janice Klasek,  
Gary and Beth  
Campbell



Jim Goodwin (Debbie Childers' Dad) Kate  
Fisher, Mark Childers



Marie Early,  
Pam Groover,  
Tom Early



Carmen Thiergardt, Debbie  
Klages, Leslie Paul, Bill Seib



Carmen  
Thiergardt,  
Debbie  
Klages,  
Beckey  
Watson





Dessert! Kate Fisher, Mike Ash, Wendy Hiby, Debbie Childers



Vince Groover was given the President's Award by Andy Wallach



Certificates were presented to all contributors to *The Dipstick* in 2004

The Dipstick Award went to Robin Watson who contributed columns, articles and photos to almost every issue.



Dipstick Certificate of Appreciation recipients: Terry Bond, Becky Hassler, Wendy Hiby, Mark Childers, Mark Hiby, Andy Wallach, Dipstick Award Winner Robin Watson, Editors Susan Bond & Peggy Craig, Jennifer Ash, J.D. Hawthorne, George Craig, Beckey & Alan Watson.

Not present: Doug Wilson, Frank Linse, Kerry Hurley, Chuck Hudson, Mike Haag, Roosevelt Moseley, Frank D'Angelo, Doug Kennedy, Geoff Wheatley.

## THE MG DIP-STICK

Was William Morris really the first to import the dip-stick from the USA?

When William Morris went over to the USA in the early years of the last century to confirm orders for the Continental Red-Seal engine which he needed for his factory, he imported more than he bargained for. The USA company would build engines and send them by sea to the factory in Cowley, Oxford, for almost half of the cost of a similar British made unit. These early Morris cars in the shape of the pre-WWI Morris Cowley, had a very unusual method for checking the sump oil quantity. Today we accept the system as the norm, but for a light car of those times, a dip-stick was very unusual. It was so simple, as all good ideas are; you simply opened the bonnet and pulled up the dip-stick, to read off the flattened edge the depth of oil in the sump. Other UK manufacturers quickly followed suit, and copied the American dip-stick. Was it thus William Morris who imported the dip-stick to the UK?

By the time Cecil Kimber came onto the scene, when he began modifying the bull-nose Morris Oxford and the smaller Cowley, all Morris engines had a dip-stick to assist the owner to monitor the car's oil consumption. The MG 14/28 and 14/40 used what was basically a Morris engine, slightly tuned and with better bodywork.

The years rolled by, and MGs used overhead-camshaft engines, then the slump of the late 1920s arrived. By the mid-1930s Morris production had dropped from its 1500 cars a week, (it took MG a year to make that many cars), to below 900. So William Morris put Leonard Lord in charge of production. He quite correctly slim-lined the number of differing models. In two years he had Morris cars hitting record numbers again, whilst others went to the wall.

One of the results of this harsh regime was the ending of individual models of MGs being made in small numbers. By 1935 MG were to use parts from the corporate parts bin, and the new MG TA Midget found itself based on the current Morris 10/4 and Wolseley 10/40 model. Quite a number of MGs used dip-sticks to measure both oil and petrol.

The TA gave way to the TB, when MG were given permission to upgrade the new 1140cc Morris Ten/4 series 'M' 'X' series engine, into the well known 1250cc 'XPAG'. From 1939 to 1955 MG used this 1250cc engine almost exclusively. However, it also found its way into Wolseley models, the 'Brockhouse' tractor engine and the 'Navigator' marine unit. Most of these were the 1140cc version, but the Wolseley used a 1250cc copy

of the MG 'YB' SC2 unit.

Here, the dip-stick comes into its own. In MGs the dip-stick was always on the nearside (on RHD examples,) just behind the oil filter. Other uses of the same cylinder-block led to the dip-stick hole being on the other side of the engine, particularly in the Wolseley 4/44.

At the 2004 MG Spares Day at Stoneleigh there were many stalls with second-hand spares. One stall had a 1250cc 'X' series engine for sale, with a note saying that it was a TD2 unit. This simply means it is the second series of that engine, with an eight inch clutch and an oil filter in unit with the oil pump (ie no external pipes). The equivalent 'Y' series used it as a SC2. TD2 is not a tuned TD Mk2 engine. But upon inspection this engine for sale had no less than two dip-stick holes. The engine identity plate was an aluminium one, about 1.5" square, stamped with a four figure number. I wonder if anyone purchased it? The dip-stick hole on the off-side gave it away as an ex-Wolseley 4/44 engine. But someone had drilled out the boss on the other 'MG' side, so it probably was removed from a TD, but began its life in a 1952-1956 Wolseley 4/44 saloon. There is nothing wrong with a 4/44 engine, but to advertise it as a TD2 unit is quite frankly, against the Trades Description law. No car fitted with twin carburetters and manifolds is going to hide its dip-stick underneath them, making it all but impossible to withdraw the stick. The 4/44 had its dip-stick thus as the car was very wide and high, and in the current MG position it would have meant literally diving into the engine bay head first to find it. With only a single carburetter, moving the dip-stick to the other side, nearer the front, was the cure. Note that many later engine cylinder blocks have the boss for both MG and Wolseley (and some Marine uses) as part of the casting. But only one of them will be drilled for use.

On the post-BMC MGs where the 'B' series engine is used, it is the position of the sump that dictated the dip-stick's position. On ZA & ZB Midgets, the sump is very forward, but it is also forward on the Wolseley 15/50, and the Morris-Commercial 10cwt 'J Type' vans as well. On these models the dip-stick lives under the dynamo, at a slight angle. On those cars with the rear facing sump, such as virtually all Austin/Morris and post 1959 Wolseley/Riley models, as well as the MGA, MGB and Farina Midgets the dip stick is upright, just after of the dynamo or alternator. As this engine's cylinder block was so widely used from 1952 to 1981, permutations are very numerous. In such cases you can only go by the engine number prefix. But this is often chiselled off so you cannot argue that the MGA 1600 Mk2 1622cc engine for sale is in fact one from an Austin A60.

Knowing a bit about dip-sticks can be very useful.

Neil Cairns



## MGs China Venture

From LBCarCo Chatter, November 28, 2004

One final note, a press release that our contact sent me on the 23rd from MG Rover which states in part:

"MG Rover chairman John Towers has said the joint venture struck with a leading Chinese car company could lead to MGs and Rovers being sold in America for the first time in 14 years. According to the Daily Telegraph, Towers also said that jobs at the Longbridge plant in Birmingham would be safeguarded, but the facility would come to be seen as the European manufacturing plant of the joint venture. He reportedly said that a move into America was now an option for the joint venture with Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC), in which MG Rover will have a minority stake. MG Rover stopped selling cars in the US under the "Sterling" brand in 1990. "That is a valid item of value - you do get a lot of inquiries through the MG Rover brand name," Towers told the Daily Telegraph. "We get countless letters asking when we are going back to the US again. As part of the deal, it is an item of value that does not go unnoticed." Towers reportedly said the size of MG Rover's stake in the joint venture had not yet been determined - the deal is due to be agreed in February."

This could be good news for many folks on the North American side of the market in Canada and the USA. The cars are presently sold in Mexico as many of you know, but cannot be imported into its two northern neighbors.

Ed. Note: Read the full story at:  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2004/11/23/cnrover23.xml>

And more info is at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4027839.stm>  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4031671.stm>

I also found, while looking for the above links, that MG is introducing a GT model. Read all about it at:

[http://www3.mg-rover.com/mg\\_GB\\_en/static/node14888.html](http://www3.mg-rover.com/mg_GB_en/static/node14888.html)



Chuck Hassler found this on the Enthusiasts BBS, posted by Robert Browning, Georgia, USA, [rlbipi@aol.com](mailto:rlbipi@aol.com).

Dashing through the snow  
In my rusty MGB  
Down the road I go  
Sliding past a tree  
I need new piston rings  
I need some new snow tires  
My car is held together  
By a piece of chicken wire

Oh, rust and smoke  
The heater's broke  
The door just blew away  
I light a match to see the dash  
And then I start to pray...  
The frame is bent  
The muffler went  
The shifter just broke free  
Oh, what fun it is to drive  
My rusty MGB

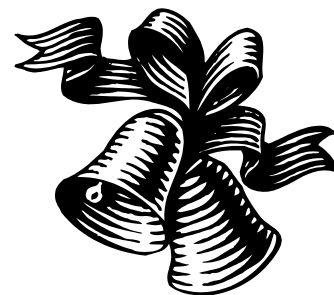
I went to IGA  
To get some Christmas cheer  
I just patched up my left front tire  
And it's gettin' hard to steer  
Speeding down the highway  
Right past the county cops  
I have to drag my swampers  
Just to get the car to stop

Oh, rust and smoke  
The heater's broke  
The door just blew away  
I light a match to see the dash  
And then I start to pray...  
The frame is bent  
The muffler went  
The shifter just broke free  
Oh, what fun it is to drive  
My rusty MGB

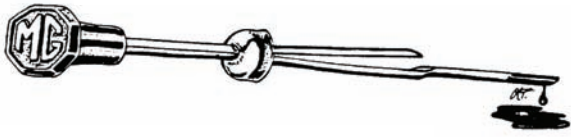
Bouncing through the snow drifts  
In a big, blue cloud of smoke  
People laugh as I drive by  
I wonder what's the joke  
I have to get to Wal-Mart  
To pick up my layaway  
'Cause Santa's comin' soon  
In his big, old, rusty sleigh

Oh, rust and smoke  
The heater's broke  
The door just blew away  
I light a match to see the dash  
And then I start to pray...  
The frame is bent  
The muffler went  
The shifter just broke free  
Oh, what fun it is to drive  
My rusty MGB

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# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond  
541 Forest Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register

## FIRST CLASS



### January Meeting

Tue, Jan 4th

Frankie's Place for Ribs

5200 Fairfield Shopping Center

495-7427

