

# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

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

Volume XXXVI, Issue 5

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

May 2009

## MARQUE TIME

Kudos to Ron and Anita for hosting a very well-attended April meeting. We always enjoy ourselves at their place, particularly after we adjourn and line up for Anita's superb cooking! Thanks guys!

Unseasonably cool weather did not deter a large number of members from bringing out their MGs for some serious car talk. The street was lined with LBCs, including a full driveway and overflow parking provided by a gracious next door neighbor. Frank Linse's Jag saloon added some RHD elegance to the gathering. Despite the chill in the air, many stalwarts had stowed their tops in a sure sign that Spring was somewhere in the offing.

With so many of us enjoying the tyre-kicking pre-meeting, it was great to see friends swapping stories and comparing notes on British cars. As I circulated about the driveway, garage and inside the house, I noted conversations ranging from carburetor setups, to windshield replacement tips, to body shop recommendations from satisfied customers. If you need answers to any question about MGs, our wide-ranging membership is sure to have the answer “in house” or know exactly where to get it! As the weather improves, be sure to stay on top of the activities calendar – lots of opportunities to share our MG addiction with others!

Safety Fast!  
Mark Davidoski



M.G. 18/80 Mk 1  
Speed Model Tourer  
1930



## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

- Apr. 24-26 - TMGC Winery Tour
- May 2 - NAMGAR “Drive Your MGA Day”
- May 3 - (Sun) British & European Car Show, Williamsburg, VA [www.wmbgbrit.com](http://www.wmbgbrit.com)
- May 6 - (Wed) Meeting hosted by Jim & Betty Villers
- May 12 - Dipstick inputs due.
- May 30 - Jun 7 - British Car Week
- Jun. 2 - (Tue) Meeting hosted by Bill & Issie Yoshida
- Jun. 6 - Historic Fredericksburg Region AACA Car Show, Fredericksburg, VA [www.aaca.org/hfrva.com](http://www.aaca.org/hfrva.com)
- Jun. 24-28 - MG 2009 Breckenridge, CO [www.mg2009.com](http://www.mg2009.com)
- Jul. 1 - (Wed) Meeting hosted by Bill & Renee Olcheski
- Jul. 13-17 - NAMGAR [www.gt-34.com](http://www.gt-34.com) Hot Springs, AR
- Aug. 4 - (Tue) Meeting hosted by Tad & Karen Carter
- Aug. 8 - Classics at Lee Hall, Newport News, VA [www.leehall.org/programs](http://www.leehall.org/programs)
- Aug. 23 - Fall Tech Session at Jim & Linda Freeh's
- Sep. 2 - (Wed) Meeting hosted by Marilyn & Roy Wiley
- Sep. 20 - Classics on the James, Richmond, VA [www.britishcarclub.com](http://www.britishcarclub.com)

## Upcoming Activities (continued)

- Oct. 6 - (Tue) Meeting hosted by Chuck & Becky Hassler
- Oct. 30 - Hilton Head / Savannah Historics (Track Event) [www.hhiconcours.com](http://www.hhiconcours.com)
- Oct. 31 - Hilton Head / Savannah Car Club Jamboree [www.hhiconcours.com](http://www.hhiconcours.com)
- Nov. 1 - Hilton Head Concours d'Elegance



## Activities

by Tad Carter

In addition to the regularly scheduled club meetings and selected events noted in this month's calendar, we are looking for volunteers to lead our summer Ice Cream Drive-Out nights in June, July and August. For those unfamiliar with these events, this is an opportunity for a mid-week gathering to take advantage of the extended light of a summer's evening and drive as a group to get a late dessert. The Drive-Out is typically a unique course, perhaps scenic or historic, that will lead us to our goal. Past destinations have included Doumar's Drive-In and Amalfi Ristorante in Norfolk and Handel's Ice Cream and Sonic Drive-In in Virginia Beach. I'm sure many of you know of other great places for dessert. If you are willing to host one of these events, please let me know. The good weather is almost here!



## APRIL MINUTES

Michele Peters

We began our April meeting at 8:04pm on April 7th at Ron and Anita Struewing's home (actually it belongs to the puppies, but we won't tell anyone!). Thanks for hosting, guys, and thank you, Anita, for another memorable feast! Our El Presidente was back among us. He reports that he is not quite up to speed, but slowly getting there. Maybe his engine needs a rebuild like Miss Green B's. Anyway, we were all glad to see him back. Now if we could just get Kathy back...

**New Members and Guests:** Al Hazlett with a

'66 MG (cool), Dave & Angela Bettis, and James Bettis (see, we even bring together long-lost cousins... what else can you ask of a car club?)

**Vice-President:** A few choice witticisms, as usual.

**Treasurer:** Jim V. reported that we are still solvent!

**Activities:** Please see Tad's activities section for a complete run-down. Be thinking about hosting an Ice Cream Run this summer...

**Clubs:** Mike and Jennifer let us know about "Drive Your MG" Day at the end of May...well, maybe it is really "Drive Your British Classic Car Day" – doesn't matter...it's all good.

**History:** Susan finally found some albums, and brought them for our viewing pleasure. She reminded us that Donald Ladd has put all the *Dipsticks* on a CD – for sale at \$5 each. We even have them from the "Hell-raising" days of the 1970's.

**Newsletter:** Ron Struewing thanked those individuals writing for the newsletter and noted that we are getting more club members writing. We need writers for the Williamsburg show: Maybe "super-charged Dave Bettis or "Team Bettis" (Dave & Angela) could throw in a few paragraphs...I'm thinkin' "Puppy Breath" might write something, too...(you know who you are, 'Breath!)

**Membership:** Bill wasn't here, but El Presidente reported for him that we stand at 102 members. Way to go, Bill!

**Technical:** Mark was absent. John T. reported that NAPA's new brake/fuel line can bend in knots but it won't kink on you. It's made of a new composition metal with fittings on the ends. Good stuff, according to John. He is going to put an informational piece about this in an upcoming issue of *The Dipstick*, so look for it if you are interested.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Thanks for the reminders, Peggy! Keep 'em comin'.

**Marque Time:** A Jazzy powered-wheelchair is available. Anita's aunt needed it for a short time – it's even fitted with an oxygen holder on the back. Originally purchased last fall for \$3500, they're looking to sell for a "best offer" price or to donate it to a worthy cause. Contact Ron or Anita if you can help or provide suggestions. Susan reports that we made some money at the Flea Market table this year. Mark Childers brought some things that sold, so thanks, Mark. Donald Ladd's new leaf spring on the back of his Midget was ordered from Moss, but be careful – before you take the springs off, set them down next to each other to make sure the holes are in the same place. Terry noted that Sue drove 700 miles in her MG and received a preservation award; Bob Stein got first place for his new TC.

**Raffle and Regalia:** We had winners of a magnet, 1960 MGA model, 1936 MG Midget key-chain, 2 license plate holders, *MG Enthusiast* magazine, MG Patch, *Dipstick* CD, and first-in-line. Everyone was well-pleased with Tad's duty (we still miss you, Becky). We adjourned at 8:37 to dig into Anita's feast...yeah!



## Membership and New Members

Bill Yoshida

Thanks to Mark Davidoski for covering for me at the April meeting. I regret that I was out of town on business and it appears I missed a really good meeting with lots of MGs out and about for the get-together.

Since the last newsletter, there have been three new memberships. I received Allen Hazlett's membership in the mail before the April meeting. Allen resides in Virginia Beach and owns a 1966 B [Roadster](#). Mark and I got together briefly on Easter Sunday afternoon and he passed to me the two membership registrations from the new members who signed up at the April meeting. Welcome to Dave and Angela Bettis of Norfolk, VA who own a 1975 MG Midget. The other new membership is James and Iboyla Bettis of Virginia Beach, VA, who own both a 1979 MGB and a 1980 MGB. Mark indicated that the two Bettis families were not related (at least to their knowledge), but there was discussion among them to see if their roots crossed somewhere in the past. Welcome to all the new members. I look forward to meeting each of you.

A reminder for current members: June is registration month for all members. For those members who joined the club in January or later, and chose the \$10.00 fee (1/2 year fee), then your annual fee of \$20.00 for the upcoming year's membership is due in June. Those members that recently joined and paid a full year's dues of \$20.00 are good through June 2010. Registration forms are located on the TMGC web site. Please fill one out and submit it along with your dues as early as possible in June. There are a few members that are already paid up through June 2010 and I will give each one a call in May to let them know that their dues are already paid for 2010.

I intend to begin building the Tidewater MG Classics 2010 Directory in July and continue into August once the registrations have been received. If you have a new photo that you would like to have included in this year's directory, please e-mail it to me at: [william-ryoshida@verizon.net](mailto:william-ryoshida@verizon.net). I will do my best to include it.

I hope to see you soon at an upcoming event.

## Officers and Committees

President	Mark Davidoski	499-4647
Vice President	Bill Olcheski	467-4046
Secretary	Michele Peters	482-1012
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	226-7755
	Ronald Struewing	479-0084
Membership	Bill Yoshida	554-0402
Activities	Tad Carter	496-9847
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Becky Hassler	874-1477
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307
Webmaster	Mike Haag	<a href="mailto:mikehmg@cox.net">mikehmg@cox.net</a>



## Note From the Editors

by Ron Struewing

We have a great club and a great newsletter. Okay, perhaps being an editor, I'm a bit biased but, it is good to see more than the "regulars" writing articles. It not only gives a broader variety of articles to pull from but, having a larger pool of writers can put a different perspective on some of the articles we receive. This is especially true of the annual events.

When submitting articles, please email them to both editors, Peggy Craig [balloon1@cox.net](mailto:balloon1@cox.net), and me [rstruewing@cox.net](mailto:rstruewing@cox.net). When submitting photos, with or without an article, please send them to me and our historian, Susan Bond [sue007@infionline.net](mailto:sue007@infionline.net). This will ensure that not only do I get them for our newsletter, but Susan gets them for the archives. Please label the photos either by saving the file name as the caption or putting a note in the email.

Thanks, and keep writing!



Here's something you don't see everyday!

# Connections (#41)

## Horseshoes and Headlights

by Mark Childers

Remember the PBS show “*Connections*” hosted by James Burke? Over a period of ten years, he produced forty episodes that demonstrated how seemingly unrelated and innocuous events, often hundreds of years apart, conspired to change the course of human events.

In this forty-first presentation, with or without Mr. Burke’s tacit approval, we’ll explore the connection that inextricably links a sporty red MGB’s brush with a ditch to the unique use of the horseshoe, and a clever York miner’s invention that literally changed the world overnight. Approval for journalist licensure pending and in spite of what you may have read in the past, bear with me.

“Wow, what’s that?” blew through my mind as the shadowy shape of something in the road ahead never quite came into view. And with both right side wheels way up on the berm, I missed whatever it was. How nice it would be, I thought years ago, to have night vision in a LBC. Or even headlights tending at least one shade more towards the blue spectrum than yellow-brown.

Short of designing a BMW Z3-style projector system to fit in those little seven-inch holes, there are a few things that can be done to improve not only the headlights, but all the electrics in any LBC. But first, a short history lesson in how “the connection” was made....

In 1827, Georg Ohm, a high school teacher with a self-learned flair for the study of the newfangled notion of electricity, was shooting the breeze with the local blacksmith who was fabricating a horseshoe. George picked it up, flipped it up and exclaimed “Mein Gott, Eureka!  $E = I \times R$ , and  $I = R \div E$ !” Immediately followed by “Mein Gott, dat’s hot!!!” And in that very instant, he not only understood the relationship between Voltage, Resistance and Current, but that of Current and Heat, as well. The shape of the glowing horseshoe seemed strangely familiar to him. “Hmmm... horseshoe, my brother in law, “Lucky Nicky” Papadopulus, he’s Greek, I’m Greek. My watch is an Omega,  $\Omega$ , my name ees Ohm, zere must be a connection...” Poor Geor!. While he never did finish that thought, he did publish his well-known treatise on the relationships between voltage, current, and resistance ( $E$ ,  $I$ , and  $R$  respectively) that sadly enough, made him the laughingstock of academia. But he resisted their taunts and worked hard to prove his colleagues wrong. Twenty-seven years went by before a big shot at his college exclaimed “Mein Gott, he vas right!” In appreciation for his work, Ohm became the universal term for elec-

trical resistance, symbolized by  $\Omega$ . And, for the rest of his life, Georg suffered a bout of déjà vu every time he passed a blacksmith shop....

Fast forward to 1898. Frederick Baldwin figures out how to regulate the flow of water over calcium carbide to produce acetylene gas. Two years and three apartment explosions later, he finally gets it mostly right. Not yet having earned the *Prince of Darkness* moniker, “Smokey Joe” Lucas picks up on the process, improves and patents the best lamps in the business beginning with gas headlights, and ending with the legendary Lucas Flamethrowers of rally fame. Too bad he didn’t expend the same effort on the REST of his electrical innovations.

Driving at night, or in the fog, regardless of the old saw about proper gentlemen not motoring about in the dark, was inevitable. As early as 1908, dissertations were published on the huge socio-economic impact of headlights on both American and English lifestyles. Once the motoring world became nocturnally mobile, an entirely new economy developed, including second and third shifts, longer working hours for family-owned businesses, higher electric bills and in turn, the need to make more money to pay those bills.

Thus, by making all that extra discretionary income, we bought LBCs. And that’s how we find ourselves in the Skinned Knuckle Garage, messing about with a bundle of wires on an old MGB, ruminating on the venerable Mr. Ohm.

While most electric gadgets -bulbs, motors and solenoids, for example - rely on a pre-engineered amount of resistance to do their intended job, it’s that unnecessary parasitic resistance in a circuit that competes for the available electron supply (battery and charging circuit) and dims bulbs and slows motors.

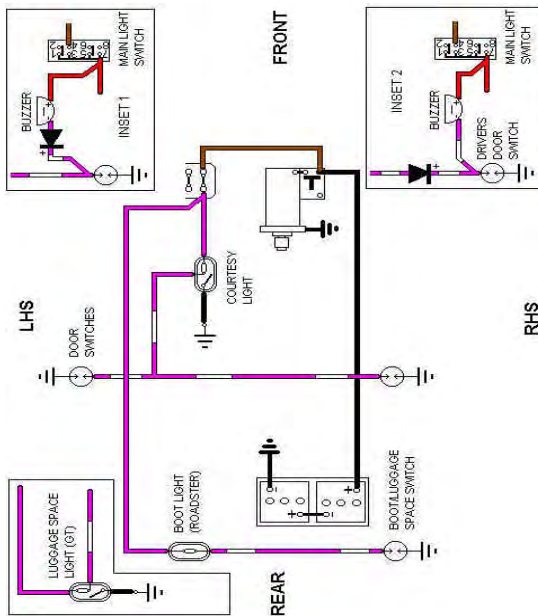
Ohm’s law, and a number of its derivatives, finds its way into old-school wiring, poor connections, years of microscopic dust, and ozone-coating switch contacts.

The most rudimentary explanation for Ohm’s Law is that when a measured electromotive force (“ $E$ ,” expressed as volts) from a battery in our case, is impressed across a resistance (“ $R$ ,” expressed as ohms) such as a light bulb, it generates current (“ $I$ ,” expressed as amps). The combination of the three elements result in photons emanating from a light bulb, an electromagnetic field running a solenoid, relay or motor, or controlled heat such as from the Zenith Stromberg warming element found on original ‘75 and later MGBs. When a “connection” is not perfect,  $E=I \times R$  and its derivatives go to work on the circuit. One of the derivatives of “ $I$ ” is Mo-heat.

Take a circuit as simple as a courtesy lamp. With few exceptions, every other circuit in an MG is comprised of one or more of these simple circuits connected together, either in serial, or in parallel to each

other (but that's Ohm 102).

Open the door and the switch closes, completing a circuit from the battery's positive cable, through a purple wire, into the door switch, then out through the other side of the switch through a purple and white wire to the bulb holder into one end of the filament of a light bulb, then out the other through a black wire connected to the metal chassis. The chassis, being a big metal conductor itself, is connected by a short wire back at the battery's negative terminal and the circuit is completed.



(Courtesy of, and permission from, Paul Hunt, <http://www.mgb-stuff.org.uk/>. A GREAT MG SITE to visit!!!)

Since wire itself, along with all of the connections and switch contacts, has some degree of resistance to the flow of electrons, the bulb is not the only potential "drain" on the circuit. Without tearing things apart, the internal resistance of the wire, the specified bulb and the sealed door switch contacts are, generally, "what they are." However, the bullet connectors can be cleaned of oxides, the metal "bayonet" and lead tab on the bulb can be scraped, and the result will generally lead to a brighter light, with less heat. Why? Because less resistance at the same voltage produces less current, thus less heat. Heat produces greater resistance, which in turn increases resistance in an endless cycle. Endless, that is, until the power source expires.

We've all experienced or heard about "glow in the dark" headlight switches that all but erupt in flame. Intermittent gages sound familiar? How about brake lights that can't be seen in the daytime? Some folks say that it's all part of the joy of owning a British car. Well, it's a cliché that gives good cars a bad name. While there are a few challenges to overcome in your quest for a completely reliable, no-surprises fun car or

daily driver, it's actually a process that can be done in small steps and without reducing the originality or aesthetic value of your car. And, you can hide many upgrades, rendering them virtually invisible, leaving the vehicle easily restorable to its original unmolested condition. Shouldn't that be the whole point of building a "pleasure driver"? And, thanks to Old Georg, you can get there from here...

Simple things you can do to see and be seen:

1. Clean up the battery connections. Remove the ground terminal first, then the positive. If you have old cheap replacement terminals, remove and clean up the wire until it's shiny.

2. Use bulb grease (available in a \$1.99 pouch from any car-parts store), on *every* contact.

3. Clean and tighten the grounding bundle under the hood adjacent to the fuse block. Remove the screw holding the half dozen or so black wires to the inner fender. Scrape the contact area until it's clean and shiny, and polish the eyelets. Wire brush the screw until it's shiny, or replace with a new 8 x 32 x 1/2".

4. Clean the fuse block. Draw a simple diagram and note that the upper two fuses are joined together so as not to reinstall upside down. Clean the fuse ends and spade terminals with brass wool or fine paper. I use a cheap, bent 0.22 caliber bore brush to clean the fuse cradles. If any of the spade terminals on the fuse block are loose, gently peen its rivet with a small hammer and drift, with the other side of the rivet also backed by a drift.

5. Clean all the visible engine and trunk compartment bullet connectors one at a time. A 0.177 cal bore brush fits the female end of the bullet connectors. If you don't disconnect power, be wary of both brown and purple wires, as they are always hot. The plate lights are grounded on the rear body panel.

6. Remove all bulbs from the front and rear, and clean up the metal contact areas. Remember to wash and dry lenses. Replacing old tail and turn bulbs with new ones, whether halogen or incandescent, can make a world of difference in the daytime. <http://www.classicautoleds.com/index.html> Really cool (\$200+) LED taillight upgrades

7. Consider installing a set of headlight relays. That way, you can not only maximize available lighting with any headlights, but can also install a set of the latest 7" headlamps from Hella with replacement module style bulbs.

- Relay kits are available from <http://www.advanceautowire.com/> among other suppliers.

- Hella 7" headlamp conversions are available from a number of suppliers at wildly varying prices, but many under \$100 shipped. Google *hella 7" conversion*.

• Relays can also be fitted to brake lights.

8. If you can't see your instrument lights at night, and the rheostat is in good order, try <http://www.lbcarco.com/> for LED lamps, which according to on-line commentary are brighter than the originals, albeit at a premium price. Simply bypassing the rheostat will also brighten things up a bit if you leave it full-on all the time anyway.

9. If you still can't see at night, schedule an appointment with Dr. Chris Holcomb on Mount Pleasant Rd in Chesapeake. He owns an MGA and speaks fluent LBC.

Safety Faster (& Brighter)!



## Spring Has Sprung

by Donald Ladd

As sometimes happens with MGs, the leaf springs will need to be replaced. As with most things, we the "Grand Mechanics" will do the replacement ourselves. Unfortunately some of us (who will remain nameless) will not listen to the more learned of his compadres and only replace one leaf spring because "the other one is only 3 years old". It will become very obvious (after an hour of grease and grime) that he is not the "Grand Mechanic" he thought and that his Midget is seriously showing its disapproval by having a severe port list of 15 degrees (looks like it has a jack under the passenger side). So, with the disapproval of Bridget (my Midget) and the internet up, I order another leaf spring. Of course, after I have done so I will have to check my email for verification and see if the owner of the company (Northwest Import Parts, [northwestimportparts.com](http://northwestimportparts.com)) has sent me a personal email to YES, remind me that he also asked when I ordered the first one if I was sure I didn't need two (whew I'm out of breath). So there is no end to the beating I'm taking on this (hence my article).

Now, on to the second leaf spring experience. I bought the springs through Northwest Import Parts because they were \$70 cheaper than Moss or Victoria British, so I was quite surprised when my second spring came shipped directly from Moss (who would know?). So I'm jumping with joy (more like shuffling) and the Midget is shining brightly, it is 9 o'clock in the morning and I am an "experienced" mechanic in the art of replacing leaf springs. This should take me no time and a minimum amount of grease and sweat, right? I have the Midget up and the old spring off in 20 minutes (I thought it was a good time). I put the new spring on

by bolting up the front of the leaf first (because it has the preinstalled bushing), I lift the spring up to match it to the axle and, surprise, it does not align with the "preinstalled" alignment pin (pin is actually 3 inches behind the axle). What? Could they have sent me the wrong spring or could I have ordered the wrong one (nah never happen)? Of course I took the spring off and, no, I did not order the wrong one and comparing the tags on both new springs they were the same. So who in Lucas transferred to leaf spring manufacturing? By now my race to a happy ending has turned into Rose asking me "What did you do now?" Bridget is moaning (but reminding me softly that I am the master of my own universe), and I'm sitting on a tire debating whether to cover the Midget up so that it would look like it has all its tires on or just grab a beer and wait for it to fix itself. After several minutes (beers), I put both



the new and the old spring next to each other and discovered that Moss has Lucas techs working for them also, as some knucklehead pressed the front bushing into the rear end of the leaf. Ha, the glory of finally finding that I am a "grand mechanic" and all my troubles are caused by "those" people who obviously cannot figure out which end is up. I even did a little shuffle in the driveway until Rose, hearing all the noise, came out and gave me "the look" (you guys know which one). That brought me back down to the "real" world and I spent 5 minutes removing the bushing and reinstalling it into the proper (front-end) section of the spring. Thus reassembling Bridget (moaning gratefully, shining brightly) and on to the next project (front coils). And, yes I ordered 2 and I will not put them in upside down.

P.S. I don't care; it was entirely their fault and I am a "grand mechanic".



## Spring Tech Session

by Stephen Daniel

Well our Spring Tech Session was a big success as always!! I would like to first thank our hosts Frank and Debbie Linse for hosting this fine tech session. Upon entering the neighborhood, I observed two Norfolk Po-

lice cars at the end of the street. I learned this was due to the fact that Frank had police food in the garage (coffee and doughnuts); this always seems to attract police or any other law enforcement .



When I arrived at 10 am. there were a few members already starting to do some work. Vince Groover was busy helping Philip Ford get his windscreen adjusted correctly on his newly painted B. John Terschak and Russ Ripp were already there too and assisted in any way they could. Ron Struewing even drove Anita's LE over to get some assistance with the heater – no heat these past two winters has been inconvenient, at the least. Frank had some suggestions for remedying the problem. Shortly after my arrival, Cynthia arrived driving HER TD; she also had her trusty navigator Andy



riding as co-pilot. So everyone stopped what they were doing and came over to check out her TD, which is a beautiful ride indeed. Way to go, Cynthia !!. Andy did some final adjustments to the TD with assistance from Frank . During the next two hours, several members arrived. Sue and Terry Bond drove the red GT, since Sue's other one is still in pieces in the garage. Terry did a distributor exchange and carburetor adjustment on the GT; several members also did some tweaking and ad-



justments on their vehicles for the upcoming Winery Tour at the end of the month.

Lunch was served at approximately 1 o'clock, consisting of several different types of pizza and salad. During the lunch break everyone chatted about different things and upcoming events, as well as swapping ideas.



There were several MGBs present, along with 3 MGTDs, 4 MGB-GTs, 2 MGAs , a Morgan; there was even a supercharged Midget. What a site it was to see all those different British cars in one neighborhood!

Those who were at the tech session were: Frank & Deb Linse, Vince Groover, Sue & Terry Bond ,Betty Davis ,Andy Wallach & Cynthia Faschini, Jack Pavlidis ,Frank Worrell, John Terschak ., Jim Villers, Richard Hall, Russ Ripp, Bruce Easley, Ron Struewing & Anita Edwards-Struewing, Roy Wiley, Al Hazlett, Bernie Imdahl, Robert Perrone, Tad Carter, Philip Ford, Mark Childers, Barb Taychert & Mike Knepler, Paul & Carmen Thiergardt, Bob





Ross, Donald Ladd, Harry Watson, Mike Lalli, Josh Robertson, James Bettis, and Dave Bettis.

On a scale of 1 to 10, this tech session was a 10!! For those who were there, it was great to see everyone and for those who could not make it, you missed a fantastic time - sorry. We all hope to see you at the next event/club meeting. Until then, "Safety Fast!"



## MGB Sandia Crest Run

by Chuck Hassler

Hi Guys,

We finally made it to New Mexico with the MGB on the car hauler behind the truck. What a trip! I pulled that little car through thunderstorms in GA, heavy rain in



LA, and thunderstorms and very high winds all the way across TX. New Mexico weather wasn't much better. The weather on the second night in Albuquerque produced winds over 70 mph with hail. The poor MGB took a beating. The factory hardtop kept the dust and dirt out of the passenger compartment, but the engine compartment was loaded. It's all cleaned up again and running well.

I spent the last six weeks prior to leaving for New Mexico working on the MGB non-stop. The work paid off. The car received a new windshield, new dash pad (all of the instruments and electrical connections were cleaned), new black interior panel kit, and a set of striped orange and brown British home-market seat covers. The tappet cover seals were replaced to stop the annoying leaks, and I ran a thorough checklist on all-important areas like brakes, fluids, suspension, exhaust, and tires. Items needing attention were fixed. The most important improvement was the addition of a stock 1974 exhaust manifold for the car's HIF-4 carburetor setup. Vince Groover graciously provided the manifold, and a new down pipe was installed. Now, the exhaust and intake manifolds mate at the gasket. The free-flow exhaust manifold that I took off did not mate with the intake manifold and had a potential to leak.

The seat covers were original equipment on the 423 British market Bronze Metallic MGB LE roadsters. We obtained the seat covers through Ebay UK. Shipping was going to be expensive, so a friend from my service years, who lives in England, mailed the seat covers through the USPS system. Total cost was fifteen pounds for the used seat covers plus \$10 for mailing. The covers had 28 years of dirt embedded into the fibers. It took multiple bathtub washes in Woolite to get the dirt out. Once clean, the covers showed no real wear. We don't know what the fabric is, but it wears like iron. Here's a picture of the seat covers.

One bit of bad news was that a crack developed in the new windshield about 300 miles into the trip. This was the second piece



of glass purchased to replace the car's pitted windshield. Craig Cummings, Doug Wilson, and I attempted to install a Moss Triplex brand windshield, but it cracked during installation. We also attempted to install a second windshield, also a Moss purchase that had only two glass layers. Both of these windshields

appeared to be too large for the MGB frame. We tried two windshield frames with the same outcome, and two windshield seals, one from Moss and one from MacGregor. Not wanting to break another piece of glass, Doug Wilson suggested that I take the windshield and frame to Danny's Auto Glass and have them assemble the windshield. The technicians at Danny's spent a day muscling the glass into the frame. They said they had done around 200 MGB windshields over the years, but never had problems like they had with this one. They also said that the Moss seal was unusable, and they used the high quality MacGregor seal. After arriving in Albuquerque, I had a glass technician drill and fill the crack to prevent further damage. The crack is still visible, but the windshield won't require replacement until the car returns to VA. Once the car gets home, I'll have Danny's replace the windshield glass with one of their windshields. If anyone needs MGB windshield work done, Danny's is willing and has experience. The manager quoted me around \$200 to provide the glass and do the installation. I think you'd have to bring him the old windshield and frame removed from the car for that price. Here's their information: Danny's Glass, Inc. with shops in Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Newport News (where my work was done), Hampton, and Williamsburg. If you call any of the shops, they can forward your call to the nearest shop to you. A good number is 1-800-296-1007 or 757-565-1383.

The MGB LE made a Sandia Crest, NM <http://www.byways.org/explore/byways/2086/> run today. The Crest tops out at around 10,400 feet, and this run was made to ensure that the MGB could handle the high altitude driving events at MG 2009 at Breckenridge, CO in June. The B did fine. It climbed the hill in third gear... except second gear was required for the 25-mph hairpin curves. The car idled low after reaching the top--it was probably running rich since there are far less oxygen molecules at that altitude. Here's a picture of the MGB LE at the parking lot at the top looking northeast.

If you like, I'll send updates of significant MG experiences as this five-month trip unfolds.



Becky and I are looking forward to many Rocky Mountain adventures over the next few months.

Take care,

Chuck & Becky

# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

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Affiliated with



## FIRST CLASS

### Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, May 6th

Jim & Betty Villers

3133 Inlet Rd

Virginia Beach

481-6398



7:30-8:00 pm - Kick Tyres

8:00 Meeting

