

THE TIDEWATER MG T CLASSICS

THE DIPSTICK



JULY 1990

President..... Dave Bowling
Vice President Don Jones
Editor Chris Holcomb

Acting Secretary....John Wessel
Treasurer Frank Benson

Marque Time:

The June meeting was held at the Banvard's home. As usual Brenda out did herself in the gourmet department. She prepared everything from barbecued chicken to cheese and chili dips to exotic deserts. Thanks, Brenda!

We had a good turnout of both members and cars. Peggy Bradford made her final pitch for the Bowie weekend trip and reported about ten families were set to go. Butch Ballback sold a bunch of his new extra large Tidewater MG Classics T-shirts (pink and blue). Robert David displayed and sold a few newly fabricated rear tube shock absorber kits. These are inexpensive and will fit both T and B model MG's.

Our meetings still tend to get a little bogged down on procedural matters. With your help I'll try to cut discussion time of routine business matters and those areas already covered in the newsletter. Let's try to spend more time talking about individual car experiences and successful fixes.

See you on the road. Stay

Safety fast,

Dave

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

DUES ARE DUE !!!

THE RESPONSE HAS BEEN VERY GOOD TO OUR EFFORTS TO RENEW OUR MEMBERS BY AUGUST . THUS FAR , 24 FAMILIES HAVE MAILED IN THEIR DUES , THE REST OF US JUST NEED TO REMIND OURSELVES . IF YOUR MAILING LABEL SHOWS A 90 AT THE END OF YOUR NAME , MY RECORDS INDICATE 1991 DUES HAVE YET TO BE PAID . IF THERE APPEARS TO BE AN ERROR PLEASE CONTACT ME AT YOUR CONVENIENCE .

CRAIG BARBER MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

MINUTES OF MEETING

JUNE 5, 1990

After the usual car talk and socializing, the meeting was called to order by the President, Dave Bowling at 8:25. Dave thanked our hostess Brenda Banvard for her effort and hospitality.

The meeting was attended by Wes Maubin who is the President of the Shenandoah Triumph British Car Club. He was able to offer some advice on obtaining patches through the Boy Scouts.

Before the May minutes were approved, Jock McGrigor requested that the U.K. address be change to B.F.P.O. and it can only be used until Sept. 1990.

The Treasurer's report was given by Frank Benson and he stated our beginning balance was \$1303.17 with an income of \$41.00 and expenses of \$76.98 for printing and \$257.80 for Regalia supplies, leaving an end balance of \$1009.39.

The following committee reports were given:

Activities- Jennifer Ash misplaced her file so our major activity was looking in our area (??) for it.

Peggy Bradford discussed the final preparations for the Bowie Rally on June 23 & 24. Jennifer Ash made a motion to fund \$50 for prize money for the Rally. It was seconded by Ira Cantin and passed by the membership.

Butch Ballback mentioned that the Va. Beach Art Center will put on a concours at some future date. Cars entering must be previous concours winner.

Newsletter- Chris Holcomb stated his concern for the lack of a permanent secretary. Dave Bowling had concerns about non-members receiving the news letter. Both matters will be studied

Technical- Next session will be in August. It was suggested that each month's session concentrate on a particular subject which would announce in advance.

Regalia- T shirts are now available at \$9.00 each. Butch discussed patches and logos. It would cost \$150 to set of a tape

for use on clothing. Robert Davis motioned that the discussion be tabled to the next meeting and the membership concurred.

Spares- Robert presented his shock absorber bracket kit for tube shock conversion.

Cost: \$23 for brackets and hardware
\$20 for tube shocks
\$53 total (4 kits available)

Robert is planning to make up front shock kits later.

No old business was dicussed.

New Business: Jock wanted to know if he would get a rebate on his 1990 dues because he is leaving. He blamed this characteristic of being cheap on this place in England ??

Not many people bragging on their restoration work this month. Ira mentioned a new source of parts he had recently used.

Scotland Yard
3101 E. 52nd Ave.
Denver, Colorado 80216
1-800-783-1415

The raffle was won by Rob Bell who just happened to pick his own name.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23

Acting Secretary


John Wessel

UP-COMING ACTIVITIES

- JULY 3 (Tue) MONTHLY MEETING at Craig & Beth Barber's (see map for directions): 7:30 p.m.
- 19 - 22 NAMGAR GT-15, Williamsburg. MGA Register members: hope you got your cars ready and your registrations in in time!
- AUG. 1 (Wed) MONTHLY MEETING at Cantins'; 7:30 p.m. (Please note this date is different from what is on 1990 schedule)
- 26 (Sun) TECH. SESSION at Ashes' 10 a.m.

BRITISH MOTOR HERITAGE MGB

THERE YOU ARE, OWNER of a 1968-1973 MGB, mourning the fate of your car. Oil changes and tuneups have kept the engine running fine, the all-synchro gearbox is still good, the brakes stop, the shocks damp and the steering steers.

Unfortunately, all these components are bolted onto a rusted-out body. Heroic efforts—welding and new steel panels—have probably kept the car on the road for a while, but one day you are forced to admit that nothing solid remains to which panels can be welded. You look at your faithful MGB and realize that what you have in your garage is, essentially, a parts car. So you strip off the valuable pieces and send the chassis to the crusher. Your old MG, with its history, title and registration numbers, is gone forever.

With more than a half-million MGBs produced from 1962 through 1980 and 130,000 of those cars still registered in the U.S., this has become a common scenario and a sad end to more than a few of these cars. So sad, in fact, that two Englishmen, Peter Mitchell and David Bishop, finally decided to do something about it. They discovered that about 1000 tons of original MG factory press dies and assembly jigs were still around. With the growing worldwide interest in the restoration of old MGBs, why not (they asked) revive production of the original bodyshells?

That's just what they did, forming British Motor Heritage in cooperation with Rover Group. The old tools were uncrated and refurbished, an assembly line was laid out at Faringdon in Oxfordshire, workers were hired (many from the old MG days), and new bodyshells began rolling off the line, those for export complete with doors, hood, fenders and trunklid.

The result was not a replica body, but an exact replacement for the original, built on the factory equipment, to factory standards, right down to the grade of steel and the type and number of welds.

To publicize the new American version, BMH imported a tired old 1972 MGB from the U.S., used it as a parts (and title) donor for a new BMH bodyshell and had a crew of four work around the clock to reconstruct a new car in just 16 days. They then air-freighted the MG to New York and drove it 3000 miles from coast to coast. This new/old MGB was left as a demonstrator with Moss Motors, Ltd. in Goleta, California. Moss is a specialist supplier of MG and other British parts, and a designated BMH dealer.

Ken Smith, public relations coordinator at Moss, invited us to borrow the red car for a road test, so I flew up to Santa Barbara, just south of Goleta. Smith picked me up at the airport in his own MGB and gave me a tour of the Moss facility, whose vast warehouse of British parts is enough to arouse latent kleptomania in the average English car buff. At the far end of the warehouse were stacked 12 new BMH bodyshells, in gray primer. We wheeled one out into the sunlight for a better look.

Still a lovely shape after all these years, the complete shell sells for \$3995 in the U.S. It is intended as a replacement for the chrome-bumpered (pre-rubber-nosed) cars built from 1968 through 1973, though owners of pre-1968 cars have reported that the earlier transmission and starter can be installed with minor modification (a few well-placed hammer blows) to the transmission tunnel. All chassis are coated with electropheretically applied primer, and all holes are drilled, except those for the trim strip on the door, which has to be aligned after final door-hinge adjustment.

The bodyshell looks so clean and immaculate that it's hard to imagine anyone transferring worn or dirty parts from an old donor car. The natural instinct will be to refurbish the old parts and buy a lot of new ones—an instinct on which both Moss and Rover Group are counting.

The British Motor Heritage car we tested was assembled by the MG specialist firm of Brown & Gammons in England. The car has chrome bumpers, two SU carburetors, an all-synchro 4-speed transmission with overdrive, chrome wire wheels, a Moto-Lita steering wheel, flawless red paint and a Moss black leather interior with red piping. The engine is a stock 1.8-liter unit, except for a mild street grind on the cam, and the detailing of hoses, lines and ancillary items in the engine compartment is of show quality.

New hope for the

MG

America

loved last

BY PETER EGAN

On the drive down the coast to Newport Beach, the car's mechanical integrity proved to be as good as its appearance. While I've never driven a brand-new MGB (being on my third used one), the BMH car feels as I imagine a showroom-new 1972 MGB must have felt. New Armstrong lever dampers, taut steering, fresh springs and new suspension bushings all work to accentuate the traditional, basic charm of the MGB, which is a feeling of solidness and mechanical neatness.

Ride is excellent over a variety of road surfaces—not quite as harsh or

stiff as our shorter-wheelbase Miata, which drew many natural comparisons from the staff during our test. Steering is slightly heavy by current standards, but with good road feel through the wheel. In hard cornering the car initially exhibits a fair amount of body roll, then takes a set and motors through predictably, with mild understeer. Grip is good with the Uniroyal Rallye 185/70HR-14 tires, the car generating a creditable 0.80g of lateral load on the skidpad.

One of the most pleasant aspects of the BMH car is its overdrive. Flick the wiper stalk toward you in 3rd or

MANY THANKS TO
KEN BOND FOR
SENDING THIS FOR
PUBLICATION.

4th gear and the Laycock de Normanville overdrive unit gently shifts up, dropping highway revs to a less hectic level. In 4th gear at 65 mph, the tach falls from 3400 rpm to about 2700, and the relaxation factor in losing those 700 revs is astounding. The BMH MGB drones along without commotion at 75 mph, while my own 1973 roadster, without overdrive, sounds as if it's consuming its innards at that speed.

Instruments are nicely laid out: round faces, all visible through the steering-wheel rim, with a rectangular oil-pressure gauge in the center. Passenger leg room is so good that short people can't reach the end of the footwell, while the driver's side is about right for this 6-ft. 1-in. driver with the seat all the way back, at full rear tilt. With the top up, the windshield seems rather short, and you have the sense of driving along with a cap pulled down low over your eyes. Visors are almost redundant. Rotating heater controls are the usual stiff, dumb design, and they often work when they are new. These did. Cold starting is done with the lock-

ing choke cable fully pulled, and the knob has to be eased in by stages until the engine is warm. While acceleration is leisurely by modern standards (0-60 mph in 12.8 seconds), the engine accelerates with a pleasant deep, mellow note. Midrange torque is excellent, giving the car real-world driveability in traffic maneuvers. Brakes are medium good, if not world-class, stoppers, requiring more leg muscle than most current cars.

Everyone on the staff who drove the MGB was impressed and charmed by it, and more than one found himself wondering if a new/used MGB might not be a rational alternative to a brand-new current sports car. Combine a rusty, used MGB with a new \$3995 British Motor Heritage bodyshell, and you have a project starting point of around \$5500.

With paint, wheels, top, tires, chrome, interior kit, a drivetrain rebuild and a few careless moments with the Shiny New Parts Catalog, it's not hard to imagine that an owner could spend another \$10,000 completing the project, not to mention some long hours of labor.

Which makes the brand-new rebuilt MGB—as several people have pointed out—about as expensive as a new Miata. Neither car, however, is really a replacement for the other. A Miata is a modern, competent sports car that you can buy now and drive hard with little need for hands-on mechanical involvement. A British Motor Heritage MGB is a labor of love that just happens to work quite nicely as an automobile. It is also a sports car whose character and subtle charms have to be experienced before you can understand why so many people have worked with such enthusiasm to save it. ☐

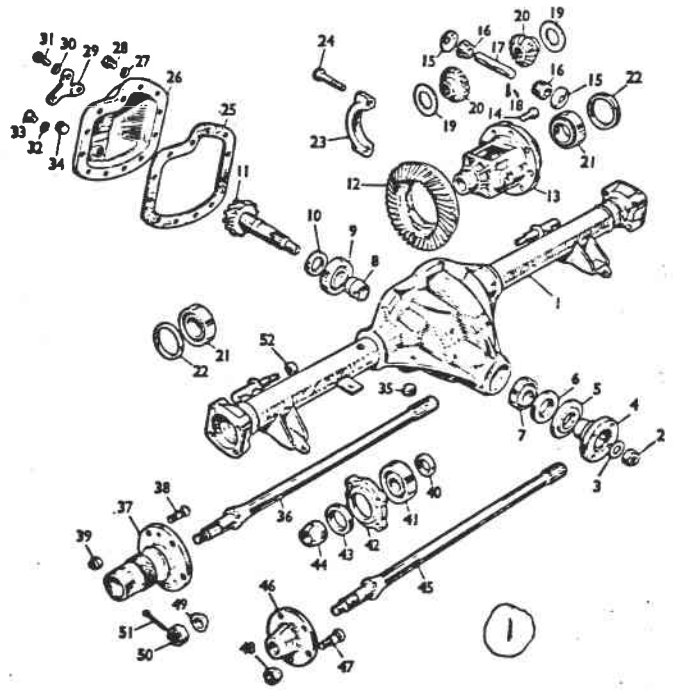
FOR THOSE WHO BUY
THE MAGAZINE FOR
THE PICTURES NOT
THE PRICE SEE

ROAD & TRACK JUNE 90.

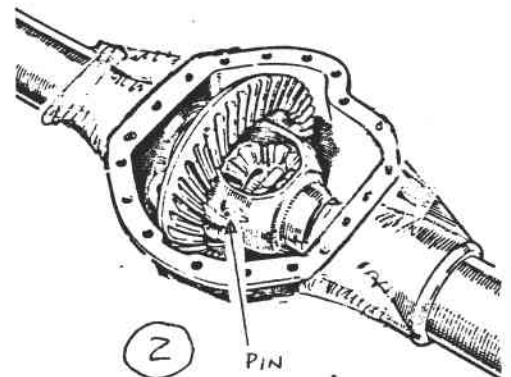
This month, in the absence of any requested topics, I thought I would talk about a job I performed on my MGB last Saturday. For some time now (about a couple of years, actually) I have had a "clunk" in the rear axle that was particularly noticeable when pulling away after backing up. I knew that the cause was wear in the differential pinion thrust washers. I have had new rear springs for the car for some time and, with a tube shock kit from Robert, I decided to install new springs and shocks at the same time. I also decided to fix the differential without removing the axle from the car. The operation was successfully performed and, although tricky in a couple of places, was not difficult.

The axle in my 1969 MGB is the "tube" type, and the only access to the internals of the differential assembly is by removing the cover plate on the back. The earlier MGB and the MGA have a "banjo" type axle, from which the entire differential unit can be removed; which makes the replacement of the thrust washers much easier. I do not know how many miles had been put on the differential unit, probably about 150,000, but I found the thrust washers quite badly worn, although not enough to cause any other damage. Replacement of the thrust washers is also one of the few services that can be performed on the differential that does not change the precise set-up of the unit. So, with the aid of the accompanying diagrams, here is the procedure for any MGB with the tube-type axle; performed without the necessity of removing the axle from the car.

First jack up the rear of the car as high as you can, and support the body on jackstands so that the axle drops down to the full extent of the check straps. Remove the rear wheels. Drain the oil from the axle, and then remove one of the half axles, item 36 or 45 in figure 1. To remove the half axle, first remove the brake drum and disconnect the parking brake cable and hydraulic brake line from the back of the brake plate. Remove the hub by removing the nut (50) and washer (49) and pulling the hub (37 or 46) off the shaft. Remove the four bolts that secure the brake plate and the bearing hub cap (42) to the end of the axle housing, and remove the brake plate assembly. Place the hub (37 or 46) back on the shaft and secure it, finger tight, with the nut (50) and washer (49). With a soft hammer, gently tap the back of the hub to withdraw the shaft, with its bearing (41), from the axle. With one shaft removed, you can now start on the differential assembly.



The two pairs thrust washers to be replaced are items 15 and 19 in the diagram of figure 1, and they act as thrust washers for the two pairs of pinions 16 and 20. The new thrust washers can be obtained from Moss and some of the other suppliers, and fit the MA and MGB through 1980. Also, buy a new cover gasket (25) before you start the job. Remove the rear cover (26) to gain access to the differential unit, and figure 2 shows what you will see inside the housing. The pinions live inside the cage (13), and the large pinions (20) are splined on the inside to accept the half-shafts (36/45). The smaller pinions (16) are idlers and rotate on the pinion shaft (17). To get to the thrust washers, the pinions must be removed from the cage by removing the pinion shaft (17). The pinion shaft is secured by a roll pin (18), which passes through a hole in the cage and a hole in the end of the



pinion shaft. The cross-section diagram of figure 3 shows the location of the pin and other components. Rotate the differential unit until you have identified all of the parts.

Rotate the differential to the approximate position shown in figure 2 so that you can gain access to the roll pin (18). The pin can be gently tapped out with a hammer and suitable punch. The roll pin is hollow, so be sure the punch is about the same diameter as the hole. I did not have a small punch that was long enough to push the pin all the way out, and finished the job with an old drill bit! With the roll pin removed, the next step, removal of the pinion shaft (17), is one of the tricky parts. So follow this carefully. Rotate the differential so that you are looking at the opposite end of the pinion shaft (17), that is, not the end through which the roll pin was inserted. Gently press or tap on the end of the shaft, to push it out of the cage, but not more than half an inch.

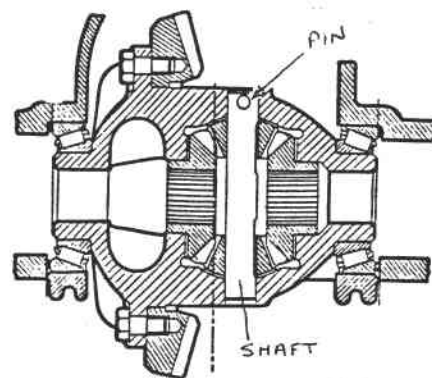
Now rotate the differential through 180 degrees so that you can see the end of the shaft protruding from the cage. If you pushed the pin too far it will hit the casing and prevent the differential from rotating! Grab the protruding end of the shaft with vise grips or channel lock pliers, and pull it all the way out.

With the pinion shaft (17) removed, the smaller pinions (16) will now rotate around the larger pinions (20) and can be removed from the cage together with their thrust washers (15). With those pinions out of the way, the larger pinions can be removed from the cage, together with their thrust washers (19). Remove the larger pinion from the side without the half axle first.

Re-assembly, as they say in the shop manual, is in the reverse order to dis-assembly. Put a coating of lithium grease on the surfaces of the pinions and on both sides of the new thrust washers to provide initial lubrication and to make the washers stick to the pinions to aid in re-assembly. Put the new large thrust washers (19) on the large pinions (20), and replace the pinions in the cage, putting in the pinion on the side with the axle first. "Stick" the new small thrust washers (15) onto the small pinions (16) and mesh the teeth of the small pinions with the teeth of the large pinions on opposite sides of the cage. Rotate the small pinions back into their original position in the cage, making sure that the thrust washers do not fall off in the process. Align the small pinions in the cage so that the pinion shaft (17) can be replaced. This is the second tricky part, and it may take couple of attempts to get the pinions meshed correctly so that everything is aligned. Be sure that the small pinions and their thrust washers are aligned with each other and with the holes in the cage, before attempting to insert the shaft.

Put the pinion shaft in so that the securing pin hole aligns with the hole in the cage. If everything is installed correctly, insert the securing pin (18), and the internal job is complete. Install the cover (26), with a new gasket (25), and install the half axle. Now is a good time to replace the oil seal (43) if it needs it; which mine did. Install the brake backing plate, securing it with the four bolts. Reconnect the parking brake cable and the hydraulic brake line. Install the hub, but leave the final tightening until the car is back on the ground. Re-fill the axle with gear oil, and bleed the rear brake on the side that was disconnected.

At this point, the car is ready for the wheels and lowering to the ground. But it might be a good opportunity to check the oil seal and brakes on the other side as well. I replaced both oil seals and the rear brake shoes, as well installing new rear springs and the tube shock kit. Incidentally, Robert's shock kit worked well, except that the holes in the mounting brackets needed opening up to a full seven sixteenths of an inch. My entire job took about five hours on a Saturday, including going to Phase 1 for the new oil seals and brake shoes.



3

RALLY TO BOWIE

25 Members and Family Participated

Joining thousands of other British car enthusiasts in Bowie, Md., June 24 may have been the highlight of the weekend for most of the Tidewater MG "T" Classics Car Club members attending the 13th annual British Car Day.

But not for Vince Groover.

With wife Pam as navigator, Vince negotiated 195 miles of Virginia and Maryland countryside well enough to win first place in the club's rally to Solomans Island, Md June 23. The team of Chris and Shelley Holcomb, and family shared second place with Andy Wallach and Cynthia Faschini.

They were joined for the all-day rally by the teams of Paul Speaks and Bryan Massey, Dave and Joan Bowling, Terry and Kenny Bond, Sue and Lindsey Bond, Bob and Kay Bell, Peggy Bradford and mom Evelyn West, and Robert and Faye Davis.

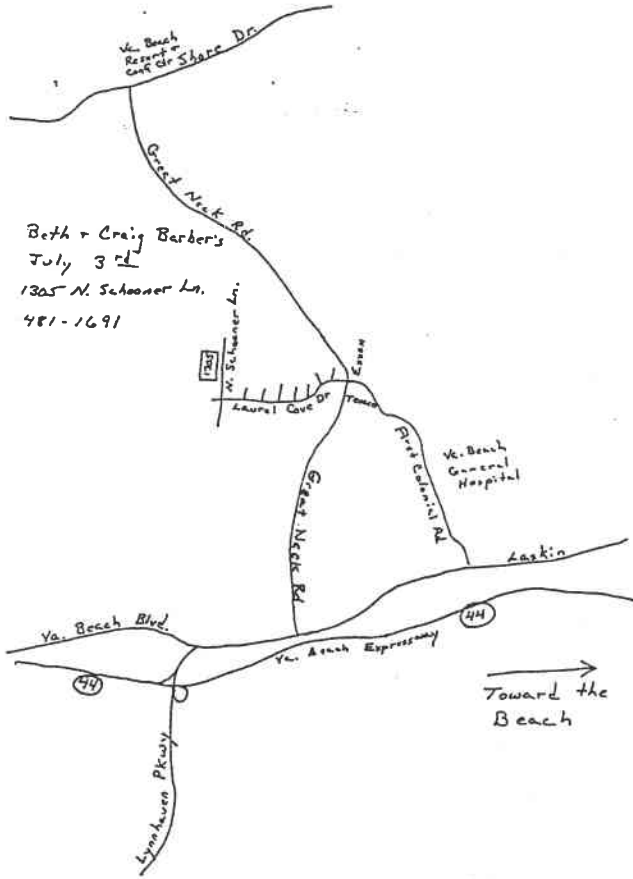
Several club members entered their cars in the festival competition. Among them were Paul Speaks and Sue and Kenny Bond in their MGB-GTs and Mike Ash, who missed the rally but drove up for the Bowie Show, in his MGB. Robert and Faye Davis entered their ZB Magnette and Bob and Kay Bell showed their MGB.

During a dinner for rally participants the night before British Car Day, members congratulated coordinator Peggy Bradford for the rally's success.

Well done, every agreed.

--end--

Submitted by Brian Massey



JULY MEETING

TUESDAY

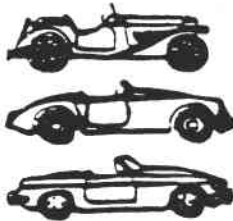
JULY 3, 1990

7:30 PM.

HOSTED BY:

CRAIG & BETH BARBER
 1305 N. SCHOONER LA.
 VA. BEACH

481-1691



FIRST CLASS