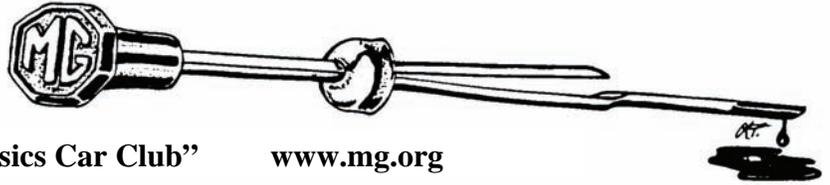


The Dipstick



"The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club"

www.mg.org

Volume XXXI, Issue 6

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

June 2003

MARQUE TIME

Thanks to Alan and Beckey for hosting the May meeting. Their little bit of country inside the city is a nice escape from all the traffic, congestion, and noise. I still think the club should hold an old-fashioned "barn-raising" and help them resurrect one of the old, long pig barns with the concrete floors. Alan could rent out space for a nominal (cheap) fee for all of our project cars that many of us don't have room for while they patiently wait their turn for re-birth.

Before the May meeting, some of us motored up to Richmond for the annual RTR British Car show at The Boulders. While the day started off rather gloomy and wet, it soon cleared up after we left Cosmo's Diner and it turned out to be a very nice day for a car show. Sue and Terry Bond, Robin Watson, and myself drove up together. At the show we met up with fellow members Frank Linse, Vince Groover and his grandson Jared, and Frank and Kerry Hurley. On the way home, Terry suggested that we stop at an antique store that a friend of his owns on Rt. 460, just east of Petersburg. You could spend hours in this place, but unfortunately we only had about 20 minutes before he closed. It didn't take long for me to find something though. Near the front door, hanging over our heads, were several old metal automotive signs. I noticed a Castrol sign, and Terry said I should buy it. How could I turn down such sage advice? The owner got it down, the price was right, and with the "never leave home without it" VISA card (my apologies to American Express), it now proudly hangs in my garage.

I'm writing this column the day after the club's 30th Anniversary Celebration, and all I can say is WOW! What a wonderful evening of fun and fellowship it was! Many thanks to Peggy Craig and Anna Worrell for all the hard work they did to put it all together. Those two sure know how to throw a party, as everything was perfect. I was amazed at the amount of door prizes they had managed to amass, and very nice prizes to boot. I think everyone managed to win something. They certainly know how to twist an arm or two. Many thanks to all the vendors and supporters who donated such nice items! The "goody bags" that Peggy made were a very nice touch, and the club magnet will take a prominent place among my

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check www.mg.org for the latest info!

- May 24-June 1 Drive Your British Car Week
users.arczip.com/zntech/britishcarweek.html
- May 29 Ice Cream Social Run**
(see page 3)
- June 1 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield
www.odr-scca.org
- June 1 "British Car Week in Maryland" Picnic and Rallye, St. Leonard, MD
www.chesapeake.net/~oritt/
- June 3 Tuesday Meeting at Ted Hughes**
(see map on back page)
- June 4-8 NEMGT GOF Mk-74, Stowe, VT
www.nemgt.org
- June 6 SCCA Solo II, Pungo Airfield
www.odr-scca.org
- June 6-8 Gold Cup Car Show and MG Vintage Racing at Virginia International Raceway www.virclub.com
(meet at Cosmos at 9 on Friday)
- June 7 Brits on the Bay, Virginia Beach
www.tidewatertriumphs.org
- June 12 Dipstick Deadline** (this is earlier than usual, I am going to MG2003)
- June 15 Tech Session at Frank Linse's**
(see page 3)

(continued on page 3)

collection of “refrigerator art”. The spark plug candy made by Beckey Watson and the funny British car sayings at each place setting was a very nice touch. It certainly is too nice to eat.

Thanks to Hank Giffin, Mike Ash, Roy Wiley, Robert Davis, and Roosevelt Moseley for sharing some reminiscences about the past 30 years of the club. I could have sat there all night listening to their MG “sea stories”. Our club not only has survived, but has grown and prospered because of the contributions of so many. The feeling of camaraderie and friendship among members was never more evident than at the Anniversary Dinner. May it last for many more years to come.

On the home front, I have been doing some small jobs on my ‘B, trying to get it in better shape for the upcoming long road trips. After rebuilding the front end and front brakes, I attacked the transmission mounts, which had turned to mush from oil contamination over the years, along with replacing the universal joints. What a miserable job that was, lying on your back, working under the car in impossible to reach places. It was all worth it though, as the whole drive train now feels tighter, with smoother shifts and fewer “clunks”.

June is shaping up to be a busy month. After the meeting, the first weekend in June is the local Brits on the Bay car show or the vintage races at VIR which some of us will be attending. Consider joining us to watch the MG races, which will include our own Hank Giffin. Frank Linse hosts the Summer Tech Session on the 15th. The following week some of us head west to St. Louis for the NAMGBR MG2003 convention for several days of MGB “heaven”.

Safety Fast! Mike

MAY MINUTES

Doug Kennedy

The meeting opened promptly at 8:06 Lucas Standard Time. After a delightful evening outside at the Watson Estate we retired inside at the rap of El Presidente’ Haag’s gavel. Mike thanked Becky and Alan for their hospitality. The secretary continued to consider how best to sneak some of the homemade chocolate chip cookies without anyone noticing.

Membership: 106 members were reported by Robin. He also mentioned the idea of recording the year joined on the renewal form. Various ideas and debate ensued.

Treasurer’s Report: In: \$147, Out: \$123.99, Left: \$1154.43

Newsletter: Another great effort. Sue announced that we are now an award winning publication! Old Cars Weekly has awarded us the Golden Quill! Well-deserved applause commenced. Great going Sue and Peggy!!!!!! Mark’s tribute to Bill Keeler and his other submissions were cited as well.

Minutes: Approved with the usual grumbling and wise-cracks. Good writing is apparently never appreciated by the masses.

Regalia: Frank has name tags. If you ordered one please call him.

Activities: The anniversary dinner is upcoming. Cool door prizes await and everyone was frenzied with anticipation. Mike will e-mail reminders so we reach our minimum. Alan discussed the upcoming ice cream run on the 29th of May. Plans are also underway for June and July. He is also working on a Heart of Virginia Wine Trail drive in July (perhaps the 12th) that would take place over a weekend with lodging. Brits on the Bay is June 7th. Harry passed out registration info. There will be an area for “project cars” as well. VIR has an event that day with a limited-space car show. MG2003 is in St. Louis June 19-22nd.

Archives: Being archived. Feel free to share your old info.

Clubs: Mike Ash wasn’t here but El Presidente’ Mike implored us all to join NAMGBR if you own a B. Vince almost blew a gasket when the issue was raised that the NAMGBR publication isn’t exactly produced in a timely manner.

Technical: Mark talked a bit about obtaining color information on-line complete with samples and codes. The information exists at a variety of sites.

Old Business: It was back from Florida.

New Business: None

Marque Time: Jim passed around plant sale information so Betty would allow him back in the house when he returned from the meeting. Suspicion was raised that he was working on commission.

Alan and Beckey have a competition regarding a particular piece of “seating” apparatus and whether people would be able to recognize it. There was a large amount of fairly double entendres that followed.

Jim Villers has an overdrive for a B available for \$500.

Robert Davis is building a racing B with a huge engine that will make 220 horsepower. The size is about 3 litres and will use a Camaro transmission. We all said our fond good-byes to Robert in case he finishes this project before the next meeting. Oh, no truth to the rumor that he will also be using an F-16 afterburner.

Mike has re-bushed his B and is very happy. He also snatched up a Castrol sign at an antique shop.

Frank's tech session will be the second weekend in June.

The raffle was held for a car badge and the Secretary kept his non-winning streak alive. We then ran to the food like the Watson's dog after a ball.

June Tech Session
Sunday, June 15th - 10:00am till...
 at Frank Linse's
 301 E. McGinnis Circle
 (corner of McClure & E. McGinnis)
 Norfolk
 461-7783





May Ice Cream Social Run

Thursday, May 29th - 7:00pm

Meet at Greenbrier Mall in Sears' parking lot,
 Greenbrier Pkwy side. Follow simple route
 directions to Bergey's Dairy Farm, Mt. Pleasant Rd
 in Chesapeake.

Alan Watson's in charge - 426-2600



Activities

(continued)

June 15 Original British Car Day at Gaithersburg MD
 (formerly held at Bowie MD)
<http://www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub.com/>

June 19-22 NAMGBR, St. Louis, MO
www.mg2003.com

June 27 Ice Cream Social Run

June 28 Brits by the Bay, Anne Arundel, MD
www.tracltd.org

June 28 Lee Hall Car Show, Newport News
 757-249-3930 or w4acd@aol.com

July 2 Wednesday Meeting at Andy Wallach's

July 12-13 Heart of Virginia Winery Tour
 contact Alan Watson, 426-2600 or
 Beach723@aol.com

July 12 Car show at VA Hospital in Hampton, 10:00-2:00.
 For details call Carol Finlay, 484-8554

July 14-18 NAMGAR GT 28, Portland, OR
www.mgcars.org.uk/namgar

July 18 Dipstick Deadline

July 31 Ice Cream Social Run

Heart of Virginia Winery Tour
 Saturday and Sunday, July 12 and 13, 2003

Join us for a tour of 5 wineries in the Richmond area. Alan Watson is making the arrangements for a super weekend. There is even a (fabulous) prize for touring all 5 wineries! Please let him know if you are interested so he can let the Bed & Breakfast know. Details will be in the next *Dipstick*.



Be sure to put our June 27 Ice Cream Social Run on your calendar. We aren't sure of the venue yet, but it should be good!

Membership Renewal

Robin Watson

That time of year is here again and dues are due by June 30th. I already have 80% of the Anniversary Directory ready for printing and look forward to finishing it as soon as I get all the renewals in. The by-laws call for the membership list to be submitted to the President by the end of August. Please help me with the timing of the Directory by renewing on time. I hope to have all renewals in before going to the printers and have all our members listed.

Membership renewal form is enclosed with this June Dipstick issue!

Membership is still at 106

Notes from the Editors...

Susan Bond

I hope no one showed up at the wrong place for last month's meeting! It was a case of trying to do too many things at once and not doing any of them well. Fortunately Robin discovered the wrong map before he mailed them out. Thank you! I made sure I grabbed the right map this month so no one will have an excuse to miss the meeting.

We had a GREAT time at the 30th Anniversary Dinner!!! It was so great it will take 2 issues to cover it, so look for more pictures and articles in the July issue. Many thanks to Peggy, Anna and everyone who helped make it a memorable evening.

We can now truthfully say we have an "Award Winning Publication"! Last year's issues were submitted to *Old Cars Weekly* for its annual "Golden Quill Award" competition and *The Dipstick* was included in the mid-range class of Regional Winners. As their sidebar states:

1) The Golden Quill Award salutes the club and the editor.

2) Considered are professionalism, variety of articles (especially new material), journalistic command, use of visuals, design, good taste, creativity, and service to the members.

(*Old Cars Weekly*, May 8, 2003, p.18)

What an honor! And *The Dipstick* wouldn't have gotten it without all the great articles you have sent in. I kept saying we had some great writers in this club, and this proves it! I am sending in this year's issues too, so don't stop writing.

Brrrr -- But Yumm

George Craig

After a beautiful warm afternoon many of us attending the first of the new season Ice Cream Rallys were lulled into a sans jacket evening at the new Cold Stone Ice



Cream Parlor. In spite of the shivering and shaky hands aimed at open mouths I failed to hear a discouraging word urging a "stop to this foolishness".

This new addition to the Virginia Beach ice cream lovers list of "hang-outs" is bound to be a hit. Its unique refrigerated granite slab on which they mix gigantic globs of delicious ice cream with your choice of several dozen "goodies" is a real attraction.

In spite of almost a dozen MG carloads (along with several domestics) arriving with clientele already lined up to the front door, the wait was minimal because of Alan Watson's usual attention to planning minutia and earlier warning to management to "stand by for a ram".



Prior to a beautiful evening tour of the near Pungo countryside every one met at the rendezvous point of Kellum High School to enjoy a kick of the tires and the war stories such as Paul Thiergardt's misbehaving brakes and the mysterious crack in Peggy's "B" windshield. Although Peggy had another commitment for the evening, she allowed your author (after a bit of groveling from him) to solo in her "pride and joy".
4 My, ain't love grand! I now need advice as to how to

explain a mysterious unprovoked clutch failure to a skeptical wife. Honest Peggy - it just broke and the dog ate my homework.



But, back to ice cream. It was great to see Ceit Fisher active again. She seemed to enjoy her mound of delicacies while Dad

Carl opted, perhaps wisely considering the weather, for the near-by Starbucks steaming cappuccino. Betty Villers was overheard to claim she wasn't very hungry while working on her coffee mug size "single scoop".

So, all in all, a really great evening was had by all. If you don't come to these affairs because you don't like or perhaps are allergic to ice cream - that's no excuse. Come on out anyway. You are guaranteed, thanks to Alan, a very enjoyable excuse to "take a drive".

The Boulders

May 3, 2003

By Frank Hurley

As we traveled the route on our annual trek, it started to rain. Thank goodness it was fairly short lived. Besides, it gave us something to do when we arrived. Instead of just kicking back and visiting with everyone we had the pleasure of spit shining the MGs again. The weather was overcast and chilly, but everyone made the best of it. You all know how the Boulders is, you either fry or freeze, so we prepared to freeze. As luck would have it though, the sun broke through and it turned into a most pleasant afternoon--especially when we found out it was only 52 degrees in VA Beach!

Vince Groover and Frank Linse were there trying



to find new owners for assorted and sundry MG parts. Vince's grandson Jared Church came along. Sue and Terry Bond made the trip with the GT and Terry's 1912 Triumph M/C. A large group surrounded the bike, and Terry was kind enough to start it up for everyone. Sue had a brand new prop for the 72 BGT which she unveiled at this show. It was a furry white battery-operated cat



who meowed and turned his (or her) head frequently. Officially the cat belongs to granddaughter Taylor Sumner, but it drew such a crowd I'm sure Sue will want to take it to all the shows. Of course, she

will want to remove the batteries as every time they hit a bump it meowed!

Frank and Kerry Hurley were there with the bright yellow 71 B. Frank has participated in two shows this year since he has completed the restoration on this car. He has taken first place in his class at both shows. Let's hope that's a trend.



Mike Haag brought his 79 B, Robin Watson came in his 74 B, Bruce and Carol Woodson were also in attendance and J.D. Hawthorn stopped by.

The weather was great,

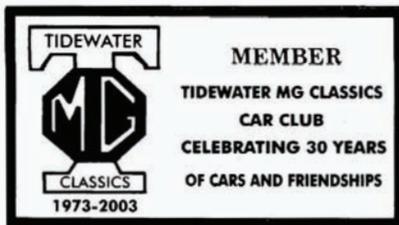
and we all had the opportunity to visit with each other.

The food vendors were quite good this year with something to satisfy everyone. Now if we could just do something about the restrooms!



Robin Watson





30th Anniversary!

**Thank You...Thank You...
Thank You...Thank You**

Peggy Craig

We wish to thank the following members who helped make our Birthday Celebration such a great evening:

Alan and Becky Watson made the unique MG hose flower vases, supplied the flowers, and decorated the tables and Alan obtained all the fantastic funny British quips that were attached to Beckey's chocolate spark plug favors at each plate. Beckey also greeted members as they arrived.

Frank Worrell obtained a source for the helium--even picked up the tank and blew up the balloons.

Anna Worrell did a great job setting up the door prize table and announcing winners with George Craig getting everyone to take part in drawing names.

The three speakers were just great. Hank Giffin and Mike Ash, both charter members, were joined by Roy Wiley, a near charter member. Before they were done, Roosevelt Moseley and Robert Davis joined in to make it a wonderful tribute to the friendship we all enjoy in this organization.

Susan Bond brought the scrapbooks she's been working on so hard the past few years for everyone to look through during the social hour. Ceit Fisher, Dave Barrow's granddaughter, supplied some very early minutes and photographs of the club. Mike Ash also provided some early documentation which was distributed to each table.

Jim Villers and Susan Bond worked together to provide the Scrapbook CDs.

Robin and Olive Watson, Alan and Beckey Watson, Harry Watson, and Anna Worrell helped obtain local door prizes

A big "Thank You" to each of these people for helping to make this evening so enjoyable!

We wish to thank the following businesses that supported our Birthday Celebration:

Aberdeen Barn Restaurant
Abingdon Spares LLC
Apple Hydraulics, Inc
Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar
AutoZone, Military Highway
AutoZone, Suffolk
Best of British
British Wire Wheel
Car Talk
Castrol
Cracker Barrel
Driver's Road
Fourth Gear Ltd.
Frankie's Place for Ribs
Golden Corral
Gunk (Radiator Specialty Company)
Hemmings Motor News
Hendrix Wire Wheels
Honey Bee Golf Club
Jasper Engines and Transmissions
Knells Ridge Car Wash
Little British Car Company
Mr. Gasket Co. - Performance Group
Moss Motors
Passport Transport
Pleasant Ridge Auto Parts
Robbins Auto Tops
Ruby Tuesday, Greenbrier
J. C. Taylor Auto Insurance Agency, Inc
The Roadster Factory
Tidewater Tire Centers
Valvoline Company
Victoria British LTD
Virginia Wine Marketing Office
WD-40
White Post Restorations

Roy Wiley,
Hank Giffin



Ed. Note: Here are a few items from and about the anniversary dinner, held on May 17, 2003. There will be more, along with more pictures, next month. Several of the vendors who donated door prizes asked that, in exchange, we run an ad for them in our newsletter. These are companies which help us keep our cars running and supply all the little extras that make them fun. They supported us and we support them.



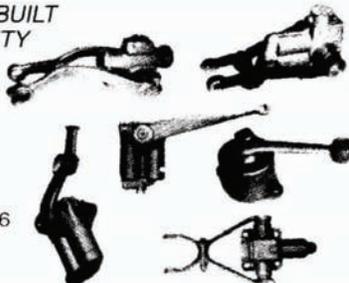
Anna and Frank Worrell



George and Peggy Craig

LEVER TYPE SHOCK ABSORBERS

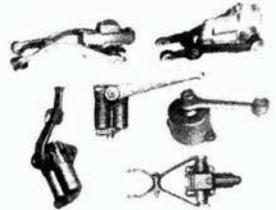
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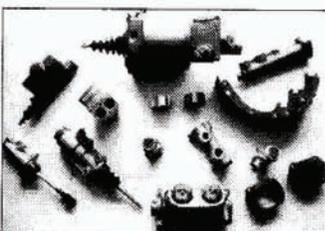
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A Wonderful Evening!

Jennifer Ash

Mike and I want to thank Peggy Craig and all her committee for an evening of great fun and nostalgia; seeing old friends that our busy lives prevent us from meeting up with as much as we would like, and just re-living old times and feeling the years drop away for a couple of hours.

The work you all put in was phenomenal--the chocolate spark plugs from Becky Watson; all the door prizes, which must have taken weeks of solicitation; the great bonk-bags full of goodies which must have taken hours to assemble, and the bags themselves--all made by Peggy. Then the CDs full of photos and newsletters from the past ten or twelve years put together by Sue Bond and burned into CDs by Jim Villers--what an outstanding job! It made for a very pleasant rainy Sunday morning just to browse through a couple of those years; you both have brought so much pleasure to us.

Anna Worrell made a terrific choice in getting The Aberdeen Barn; the room was ideal for our group and the food was very good. I know Peggy had lots of help to put on this shindig, but she also did a tremendous amount of work herself --all the old motor-car song sheets on the tables, and the Burma-Shave ditties and so much fun and so much to bring home and read over the breakfast table. Hank Giffin, Roy Wiley and Mike did a great job of reminding us of our beginnings and progression from an all T-type club to an all MG Club; Roosevelt Moseley and Robert Davis telling us what influence this Club and its members have had on their lives was very touching. This Club still has the power to influence lives because we now have second and third generation members--people who have inherited their cars and are continuing to "maintain the breed".

It was a WONDERFUL evening, and thank you to all of you who helped make it possible. Roll on the next ten years--but not too fast!



The NEW ENGLAND  'T' REGISTER, LTD.

H. A. Rippert
Chairman

The Tidewater MG Classics Car Club
Peggy Craig
1417 Shenandoah Parkway
Chesapeake, Virginia 23320-8138

1 May 2003

Dear Peggy and Tidewater Chapter Members,

Happy 30th Anniversary!!

Your Chapter of *The Register* has been a great resource for local owners of Pre-War and T-Series M.G.s and now, later examples of the Marque that we all love and enjoy.

Over the 37 years that I've been caretaker to TD8888, I've always thought of local Chapters as therapy or support groups for those of us afflicted with this special attraction to the Sports Car That America Loved First! We've all had a few less than favorable experiences and each of those have been outweighed by the joy of ownership and the fellowship that we've found at the local Chapter level. Tidewater Chapter meetings and events have provided you with the opportunity to share those experiences, good and bad, with like minded enthusiasts of the Marque.

On behalf of the Board and the membership of *The Register*, our congratulations on this historic time frame in the Tidewater history book and our best wishes for another 30 years of ***Safety Fast!***

Kindest personal regards,

Hank Rippert



9904 Park Springs Court
Charlotte, NC 28210-7921
704/544-1253
fairwind@carolma rr.com

Britain on the Green

Doug Wilson

Here are a few pictures from "Britain On The Green", held 4 May, at Collingwood Library and Museum located a short way from Mt.Vernon. There were over 120 cars on the field. Craig Cummings got first and I got second place.



Craig receiving his trophy



Craig and Doug with Craig's GT



Doug's B

Officers and Committees

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

Keep Your Cool

Mike Haag

For those of us gauge watchers out there (you know who you are), the approaching hot weather brings even more excitement to our drives in LBCs as we sit in traffic jams in 95 degree heat, hoping the temperature gauge stops it's worrying climb to the H or Red region. For the late model MGB with thermostatically controlled fans, we hope they eventually kick in, and keep the needle from pegging in the Red. Even the chrome bumper cars with metal or plastic fans sometimes exhibit this preponderance for running hot while sitting in traffic. Mostly we just sit there, hoping the traffic starts moving again quickly so our needles can start their downward swing, only to start the whole process over again one-quarter mile down the road at the next light.

I've often wondered why these cars seem to be so quick to "rise to the occasion". Is it poor cooling system design? A buildup of crud that even normal flushing won't fix? Conversely, I notice that my two "modern" vehicles exhibit none of these traits. They can sit in traffic all day long, with the AC blasting away, and the temperature gauge never moves beyond the halfway mark. Is this due to 40 years of advancements in cooling system design, better materials, or more efficient antifreeze?

A small article in the *Tech Tidbits* column in the March issue of *Road & Track* magazine may provide the answer for some vehicles. It's not the answer that I wanted to read about. It seems that many automotive gauges are now electronically damped. For example, the needle on the temperature gauge may rise to one-half and stay there unless the temperature actually rises to two-thirds or greater, which then it would jump to the higher reading. In other words, things are ok if the needles are halfway, but may not be a true reading of what is actually going on under the hood. Sort of like the "ignorance is bliss" theory. Maybe our modern cars don't run quite so cool as we once thought? Just one more thing for us gauge watchers to think about while we sit wasting time at stoplights.



The Mushroom Factor

Susan Bond

If you don't know what the Mushroom Factor is, you haven't worked on a B lately. In its extreme form, simple maintenance results in a ground-up restoration. In its usual form, one job turns into many jobs, taking far longer than originally expected.

The whole April tech session attendance tried to diagnose and fix the vibration in my B that was driving me nuts. Mark Childers said the only things left to check were the fly wheel and the clutch, tho he held little hope that either could be the source. I was desperate so, 2 weeks later, with Mark as head mechanic and me as clueless go-fer, we devastated his garage while pulling the engine.

First mushroom: the exhaust manifold was permanently attached to the exhaust pipe. Freeing the engine was easy but getting it out around the pipes was something else. Getting it back in was even worse. Mushroom number 2: I had been worried that the engine seals leaked. They were fine, but every other place the engine could leak it did. New gaskets installed. Mushroom number 3: this car never would have made it to St. Louis. The clutch and throw out bearing were worn to nothing and the cleavis pin was worn half way thru. Replaced them all. Amazingly, one of the clutch bolts was found on the floor after we got the engine out. Evidently it had fallen out of the clutch plate and landed in the bottom of the bell housing without doing any damage. Mushroom number 4: we didn't put anything back in without cleaning it up--that engine has leaked oil since I got it so the crud was pretty thick--and Mark even dressed it up with some spray paint.

Mark said he had never made such a mess or used so many tools to pull one engine. But the vibration was gone! You don't want to know how long it took. I went back the next day to help clean up.

Thank you Mark!!! The B is fun to drive again. And thank you Debbie for letting me drive your car home so I wouldn't have to test-drive the B at midnight in the wilds of Chesapeake.

Link of the Month

submitted by Mark Childers

Did you know there is a vintage car club in Kenya? Well there is and it publishes a newsletter. Some of the articles are on the web at <http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/Flats/2014/newslett.html>

I only had time to read "An Informal History of Motoring in Kenya" but it was a hoot – try it, you'll like it!

EX234 and ADO 21: Doomed Replacements for the MGB

(continued from last month)

Mark Childers

The team quickly developed a complete rolling chassis, and shipped it off to Pininfarina for body styling. The final rendition was nicely executed, with the MGB's unmistakable headlight treatment and a foreshortened version of the classic eggcrate grille, complete with full-sized MG shield-style grille badge. Overall, EX234 bore a passing resemblance to the Fiat Spyder, retaining just enough MG heritage as to not look dated. The interior was pure period Ital-design, with padded console, mirror-imaged Ferrari instrument panel (rhd) and a floorpan just 7.5 inches off the ground. The top of the seat cushion was flush with door sill, no doubt giving the feel of sitting in a gocart. Rear treatment was simple, with individual amber and red cones similar to MGA front parking lights, and a low, center mounted reverse light was located directly above a rectangular, center ducted tailpipe. The canvas hood appears to have been taken directly from the MGB with a few minor alterations to the side window surround.

Dark clouds of discontent blanketed the British car industry in 1968 with the infamous BMC-Leyland marriage made in hell. Many Triumph execs had been with Leyland Group since 1961; from a management perspective, BMC had merged into Leyland, and the legendary MG design office took a backseat to the myopic visionaries of the wedge-shaped garage at the end of every driveway. The EX234 project was summarily cancelled with nothing new on the horizon.



Sideview of operational mule sporting what appears to be production MGB quarter windows and headlight recesses. Chrome "moon" hubcaps with blackout center would have looked more at home on a 53 Packard.

And, that's how the MGB got its stay of execution until 1980. A few cosmetic improvements ("deprovements" perhaps?), along with performance killing engine changes to suit tightening EPA/DOT standards kept MGBs (and Midgets) rolling off the line to a new generation of eager buyers, befuddling the marketing staff who were convinced that there was absolutely no future for a 2-seater MG in the American market.

In 1970, following an extremely trying two-year honeymoon, Triumph and MG made an attempt at reconciling. All involved believed that none of the existing BL models would make it to the middle of the new decade given the rate of changes and demands by the US EPA. Thought was given to resurrecting the EX234 to EPA/DOT standards as an alternative to continued reengineering and de-tuning of the MGB. Even the most contrary executives were finally convinced that the only way the struggling UK car industry could survive was with a steady infusion of American cash. Volkswagen/Porsche's 914 and the Lotus Europa put relatively inexpensive 2-seaters on the market in 68 and 69 respectively, and were taking a bite out of the MGB's market share. Something had to be done, and in a hurry.

British Leyland's corporate Austin Design Office (ADO) managers set up a competition between Triumph and MG. Triumph was given a front engine project, and the MG team was tasked with designing a mid-engined concept coded ADO-21. The MG team was given more latitude with respect to suspension design; but were charged with using as many production parts as possible.

There is little doubt that on day one the design team realized this was one tough assignment. A brainstorming session produced the desired features: mid-engine, 50/50 weight distribution, independent rear suspension, the basic "wedge" shape that produced the stunning looks of the 206 Dino, the Bizzarini, and other design-house exotics, with adequate if not blistering performance. Roadblock number one, the mid-engine layout, dictated a two-seat design, and led to the choice of a closed 2+2 body to comply with proposed DOT legislation regarding a possible ban on roadsters that could not meet stringent rollover protection requirements. The engine team considered both the Austin Maxi OHC 1798cc 4-cylinder and the 2230cc 6-cyl, transverse-mounted out of the box. The four was an easy fit, but the six was too large to remain completely within the cramped midships engine bay without additional surgery, although the six was included in the final proposal as a touring option. Gearbox linkages were problematic, and required additional machining of the transmission housing but could have been easily accommodated using special castings. The strut front suspension was from the Triumph TR7 which was the final stages of development. In the rear was a very clever and elegant combination of a DeDion rearend suspended by Watts linkage and transverse monoleaf spring, with disc brakes front and rear from the TR parts bin.

The project mockup was submitted for approval in November 1970, but rumor has it that the TR7 was already the foregone choice to lead BL into the future. The

team never finished before the cooling system and fuel tank were installed, and the project was dismantled.



Grille, badge. Headlamp treatment, wipers, and marker lights appear to be off the shelf MGB pieces. Windshield looks like a B clone, and EX234's stance and lines give it an Italian flavor not too far removed from the Alfa/Fiat Spyder.

(Ed. Note: Robert sent me this and I decided to share it, even tho LBC's were not involved. And the music is good!)

On Stage

Robert Davis

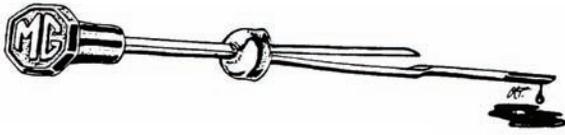
On April 5th I appeared on stage with the Celtic band Clann An Drumma. The band members are good friends of my 2 cousins: Frank & Tom Blanton of Richmond, VA. Clann An Drumma played parts of the soundtrack for the Mel Gibson Movie 'We Were Soldiers' and have appeared in various BBC specials. They are becoming one of the top Scottish bands.



My cousin called Friday and asked if I had the full kit for a W.W.I member of the Seaforth Mackenzie Highland Regiment, which I was able to locate. I had met the members of Clann An Drumma at the Richmond Highland Games in October 2002 and one of the members, Joe, said that I looked very much like a portrait of his grandfather who was killed on the Western Front during W.W.I. while serving with the Seaforth Mackenzies. I use to collect W.W.I - W.W.II 'stuff' years ago and have sold or given away most of my collection over the years, but was able to 'dig up' the right goods for the occasion.

My cousin knew about my collection and thus the call. Joe is the singer...

The Dipstick



The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond
541 Forest Road
Chesapeake, VA 23322

FIRST CLASS

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

7:30 - Kick Tyres
8:00 - Meeting

