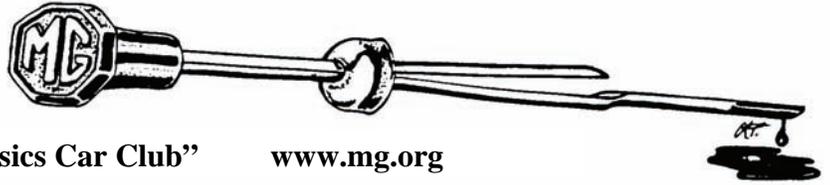


The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

www.mg.org

Volume XXXIII, Issue 3

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

March 2006

MARQUE TIME

Mr. Wilson would be proud. Mr. Wilson was my 6th grade Algebra teacher at Heathfield High School in Earl Shilton, Warwickshire. Algebra did not come easy to me when I was eleven years old, but I must have learned something, because after several weeks of clearing brush, I finally have my “Garage in a Box” assembled and up! (Had Mr. Wilson taught Japanese it would have been easier to read the instructions.) And yes, two MGBs do fit. The garage is 12’x 20’, and they overlap by about four feet, with a twelve inch clearance between them, so they are now protected from the elements--most of the elements. A certain feline that belongs to our Activities Coordinator has also learned that the garage protects from the weather, and looking at the paw print evidence clearly visible on the green ‘B (Colin, are you reading this?) I think I need to come up with some way to dissuade the cat from sleeping in the new garage. Look for updates in this article over the next couple of months. Currently: Cat-1, Alan-0.

I want to thank Craig and Joyce Cummings for stepping up at the last minute and volunteering to host the March meeting. I know Frankie’s is a favorite location for many members, but it is very hard to hold a meeting in competition with really tasty ribs, especially when half of the members present have to sit with their back towards you. Two months in a row was too much for this President. I also feel that it is a good idea to move our meetings around the Tidewater area. Joyce and Craig live in Williamsburg and we have a large number of Peninsula members who are not always able to attend our monthly meetings held in Norfolk and Virginia Beach.

I must say, I am ready for March and the start of what I consider the LBC season. Beckey and I have been working on the St. Patrick’s Day gimmick rallye, which I hope you will find enjoyable. The route is about 32 miles and should take just under an hour. See inside the “Dipstick” for more info. Then in April we have the CVBCC show at the Williamsburg Winery, and, hopefully, our fourth annual winery run. In May is the RTR car show at the Virginia Aviation Museum in Richmond; and in June, Brits on the Bay sponsored by our friends at the Tidewater Triumph Register. These are all great opportunities to get out and drive your LBC and enjoy socializing with friends who share our passion without having to drive great distances. Hopefully we will see you there!

Safety Fast,

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check www.mg.org for the latest info!

March 7 **Tuesday meeting at Craig & Joyce Cummings** (see back page)

March 11 TRAACA Swap Meet
www.aaca.org/tidewater

March 15 Dipstick Deadline

March 16 **St. Patrick’s Day Rallye** (see page 3)

March 26 SCCA Evolution Driving
www.odr-scca.org

April 1-2 SCCA Solo II
www.odr-scca.org

April 5 Wednesday meeting at John and Debbie Jones’

Apr 7-9 GoF MK 40, SOUTH Crystal River, FL , POC: Tony Roth, 671-6888 or
www.classicmgclub@att.net

April 15 Dipstick Deadline

April 16 SCCA TSD Tour
www.odr-scca.org

April 21-23 The Gathering, Shelton Vineyards, Dobson, NC, triumphclub.org/

April 23 CVBCC Show, Williamsburg
www.Williamsburg-bcc.com

April 28-30 Mitty '06 at Road Atlanta,

FEBRUARY MINUTES

Andy Wallach (standing in for Doug)

Approximately 50 hungry Club members crowded into Frankie's Place for Ribs meeting room to chow down and imbibe some spirits. MGF does stand for More Good Food. President Alan Watson called the meeting to some semblance of order at 8:13 pm. We welcomed back to membership Rafael De Echeandia (52TD), a member from the 70s who recently moved back into the area.

After approving the January minutes, Vice-President JD Hawthorne announced the very speedy arrival of a potential new member, Rocket. JD's wife, Lara, gave birth to Mitchell Carter after only laboring for an hour and a half. Treasurer Jim Villers reported receipts of \$157, disbursements of \$424 and a balance of \$2,013.

Activities Chairwoman Beckey Watson stated a need for a host for the March meeting. The following activities are coming up: Central Virginia Car Club is holding a Snowball Run, our Club is having a St. Patrick's Day Rallye on March 17th, Car show at Walsingham Academy on April 23rd, Williamsburg Winery on May 7th, and the Club Wine Tour will be the last weekend in April.

Clubs Correspondent Mike Ash stated that he had a casual inquiry from the MGA Register asking if we wanted to host a national MGA gathering in July in a future year. He mused that July is not a great month for Virginia Beach and that if we wanted to do something in 2008, there might be help from the Richmond Club.

Historian Susan Bond presented the latest Yearly Album of Club Activities and stated that she needed some copies of older Dipsticks. Mike Ash offered her his collection. Susan plans on putting some historical articles in the Dipstick when space allows. Membership Chairman Robin Watson reported that our numbers stand at 108 ... but then he got Rafael's check and changed that to 109. Robin has contacted Scott Emerson who lives in Suffolk near Harry Watson about becoming a member.

Susan Bond, wearing her Dipstick Editor Cap, stated that she is looking for articles. She wants members to write about what they are doing on their car. Deadlines are in the Dipstick calendar. Being home sick, Becky Hassler reported in abstentia about Regalia. She will pick up and mail special-order clothing items later in the week. If you need anything, shoot me an e-mail.

There was no Old Business. Under New Business, the local Antique Car Club is holding its annual flea market on March 11th. Members approved our attendance and Susan Bond is looking for volunteers to

man our table.

Under Marque Time, Terry Bond stated that Delegate Wardrup is a "jerk" concerning the proposed state legislation dealing with antique license plates. House Bill 288 is dead because of the flurry of calls and e-mails. The watch dogs are in place and we should be okay for this year. All present thanked Terry for his successful efforts in defeating attempts to further restrict the use of antique-registered vehicles. Kate Fisher mentioned that The Old Coast Guard Station museum in Virginia Beach currently has an exhibit on African Americans in the Coast Guard. See Kate in a short video covering the exhibit at www.hamptonroadstv.com Alan Watson stated that his father and mother-in-law gave him a Cold Heat Soldering Iron and it works great. Mike and Jennifer Ash reported that their visit to Kaunakaki Hawaii was great. Jim Villers reported that he rebuilt his B steering rack buying all sorts of new parts, only to find out later that Victoria British sells a brand new rack including inner ball joints and tie rods ready for installation for only \$200.

Raffle was held. The winners won \$15, a license plate surround, or a refrigerator magnet.



Membership and New Members

Robin Watson

Total membership 110

Membership this month is now at 110. At the February meeting Rafael & Diane de Echeandia re-joined (they were members back in 1978). If you wish to make a note in your new Directory:

Rafael & Diane de Echeandia

10 Knodishall Way

Hampton, VA 23664

Ph . 757-850-6625, E-mail

rafael282@hotmail.com

and they have a **1952 TD**.

Also, I was contacted by Alan & Kim Hardesty who have just bought a **1979 B** and joined our club. They live at:

Alan & Kim Hardesty

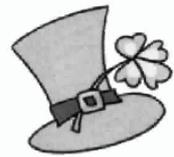
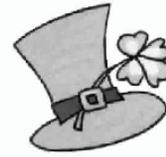
201 Oxford St.

Norfolk, VA 23505

Ph. 757-963-9368

E-mail alan4x4@cox.net or

kimmk@hotmail.com



Join Us for a Shamrock Rallye



Sunday, March 12 at 2:00 pm

1st car off soon after that for about a 30-mile (one hour) route

We'll meet at Walgreens (get it, Wal GREENs?) at the intersection of Indian River Rd & Kempsville Rd in Va Beach

This is a gimmick rallye with clues and challenges along the way;
a navigator is highly recommended!

Or join us at Kelly's at Greenbriar around 3:30 if you can't participate in the rallye but still want to hoist a beer to celebrate "The Green".



Contact Beckey with any questions at 426-2600 or email: MGactivities@gmail.com



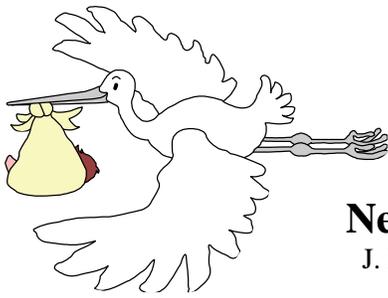
Officers and Committees

President	Alan Watson	426-2600
Vice President	J.D. Hawthorne	723-0630
Secretary	Doug Kennedy	460-5037
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	226-7755
	Susan Bond	482-5222
Membership	Robin Watson	721-9277
Activities	Beckey Watson	426-2600
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Becky Hassler	874-1477
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307

Member News

Immediate past-president Andy Wallach must have enjoyed his term as our fearless leader — he is now running for the City Council in Ward 2 in Norfolk! Best of luck, Andy!





New Member

J. D. Hawthorne

Mitchell Carter Hawthorne was born Jan 23, 2006 at 8:59, weighing in at 6 lbs. 14 oz. and 19" long. Everybody is fine. We went in at 4:00. The nurses "registered" labor at about 7:30 and about 1 hour 10 minutes of labor and 3 pushes later....



I thought we should call him Mitchell "Rocket" Hawthorne.

Meeting

February 1, 2006 at Frankie's Place for Ribs



Paul & Carmen Thiergardt



J.D. Hawthorne



Susan & Terry Bond



Andy Wallach



Cynthia & Aldino Faschini



Olive & Robin Watson



Jack & Linda Pavlidis



Pam & Vince Groover



Bob & Barbara Ross



Jim & Linda Freeh



President Alan & Beckey Watson



Bob & Pam McClaren



Roy & Marilyn Wiley



Kate Fisher



Mike Jones



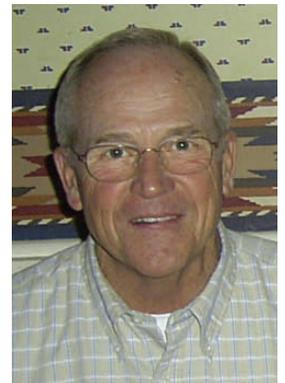
Jim & Betty Villers



Robert Perrone & Michelle Peters



Frank Worrell



Harry Watson



John & Lesley Terschak



Wendy & Mark Hiby



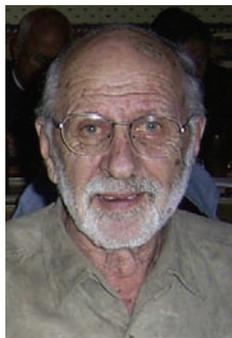
Mark & Debbie Childers



Denise Starke & Mike Haag



Mike & Jennifer Ash



Carl Nagle

HB-288 (Or, How Disease Spreads!)

Terry Bond

Reading my last article on HB-288 one would be left with the impression that it was a fairly benign piece of legislation. Well, that's the way it looked, until Del Wardrup of Virginia Beach got hold of it!

Yes, it seems one of our local reps (and his administrative assistant, Jack Hilgers, who professes to be a "friend" of the old car hobby) decided the way to prevent antique tag abuse was to eliminate the reason why abusers sought to use the tags to begin with. Their amendment to the proposed legislation would require annual safety inspection of some antique vehicles, based on their expressed thoughts that antique vehicles represent a safety issue on the roads.

For some strange reason, they chose the year 1960 as a cut-off, despite the fact that most manufacturers of domestic autos didn't even make seat belts standard fare until 1964. It showed me not only how ignorant they were, but how difficult annual inspections

would be. It also would further compound enforcement, since most police officers would not know which vehicles would need an inspection sticker and which would not. In an email to one car enthusiasts who contacted Wardrup's office, Hilgers stated "**We also have contacted several antique car clubs to get their input.**" When pressed for specifics, Hilgers did not reveal who those clubs were, and follow-up questions to all major known hobby organizations reveals that no official contact has been made by Hilgers or Wardrup's office. Caught in what seems to be an outright false statement, Hilgers was reported to be condescending, curt, and disrespectful by several enthusiasts who spoke with him personally.

In a flurry (no, blizzard!) of activity, auto enthusiasts from every corner of the state descended upon Richmond and local offices with a flood of email, letters, phone calls, and probably even some smoke signals, registering their absolute outrage at this attempt to swat flies with a sledge-hammer!

The fortunate result was that HB-288 didn't survive committee. (Breathe deeply!). The unfortunate result is that we stand a good chance that something on the subject will surface next session. Exactly what will hatch from the twisted minds of Wardrup and Hilgers is unknown at this time. Perhaps their intent is to learn more about the car hobby, although according to everyone who spoke with Hilgers he is already the world's foremost authority on what's good for us!

Ok--so what is the problem? Yes, there is abuse. It is a small number of individuals who are using the antique tags to (1) save money on registration fees, and (2) avoid annual safety or emissions inspections.

The problem is caused by several factors. DMV just hands the tags over the counter upon request. In some cases, I am aware of them actually "recommending" the tags to vehicles that are age-eligible. DMV does not inspect vehicles (not their job). I'm not sure I'd even want them placed in a position to inspect, or "certify" vehicles for eligibility – you can imagine the problems arising from that!

The problem is compounded by lack of enforcement. Improper tag use isn't a primary violation, and to ask our police officers to stop someone without reasonable suspicion that a crime has been committed isn't likely to help solve our problems. I don't know if reporting violators would be a solution or if it would simply call attention to us – resulting in outright harassment!

The solutions are varied, and between now and next legislative session, we've got a concerned group of car folks working to help.

There are several Car Club Councils in Virginia, all of whom are getting together to prepare a "battle plan." As a result of all this, there is a new

council being formed in Northern Virginia, and renewed interest among existing council member clubs in carrying forward a proactive campaign to prepare for the next round.

The Antique Automobile Club of America is very strong in Virginia! The Old Dominion Meet Association, made up of member regions of the AACA, has a great network and is able to respond quickly on issues like this. We are blessed with two strong members – Fred Fann in the Petersburg area, and Tom Cox in Roanoke. Both are well known hobby advocates and are as close to lobbyists as we'll ever have. This group will be sitting down with DMV, State Police, and some legislators to help draft appropriate measures to reduce abuse while protecting our hobby.

In the meantime, you can do a couple of things. If you contacted your representatives on HB-288, a brief "Thanks" would help. I'll keep the club updated as we learn more, and as we prepare our "notes" for possible future use next season.

Most importantly, as an individual, please respect those antique tags and use them conscientiously and appropriately. Remember, you can use them for any club related activities (including travel to and from) with no mileage restrictions at all. You can use them any time to test vehicle operability, for maintenance, etc. You can use them for occasional pleasure purposes within a 250 mile radius from your home. You cannot use them to go back and forth to work on a routine basis, nor can you use them for daily transportation.

If you know of someone who is abusing antique tags, remember, they are placing your ability to continue using them in danger. Remind them if you are comfortable.

Should a vehicle with antique tags ever be involved in an incident resulting in civil or criminal litigation, you can be certain that improper use of the vehicle would be a big factor in the outcome.

We'll keep you posted!

Notes from the Editors . . .

Susan Bond

Thought it was about time to finish writing about MG2005 since I have already registered for MG2006. If you are on the fence about going all the way to Gatlinburg, please land on the going side — if we can drive to St. Louis I am sure you can make it to Tennessee!

Thanks go to Geoff Wheatley who sent in an article on the demise of the motor industry in Britain. We were in Scotland when some of this was playing out, and didn't know why it was happening. Now we do. It is a shame that history keeps repeating itself.

MG2005-Part 3

Susan Bond and Mike Haag

Part 3

Day 7 – Saturday, July 9

Show Day! Did we mention that it rained on Friday? Buckets! Even tho the grassy show field behind the hotel was on a hill, it was unusable. But, on Saturday, the organizers were prepared and put Plan B into action. They had all the entries drive down behind the hotel for pictures and then put them in the proper classes in the front parking lot when they returned. Clever! So was the view of the parade from our rooms. Having the show at the hotel was really nice since we didn't have cars to stash stuff in, we just went back to the room whenever we wanted. So we spent the day wandering around looking at cars and talking to owners. Met some really nice people. And it is always nice to find out that we aren't the only nuts who like these little cars! There were more GTs than we've seen in



one place since MG2001. There were 2 1100's, one of which had been customized with a way paint job and Astroturf in the back. Many beautiful roadsters to look at, some customized, and the workmanship was really



impressive. The matt-black roadster with the orange and yellow flame paint job was there, possibly the most photographed car of the day. A few T-series, A's, a Y and a Model A delivery

truck (owned by a vendor) completed the field. The weather was perfect, the hotel laid on a great lunch, and owners were easy to talk to. What a great day!

That evening the banquet started with an en-

semble of high school students playing music – they were very good! – and 2 MGs in the banquet hall. We sat with Mike and Jennifer and enjoyed an excellent meal. Then came the awards and, since none of us had cars there, we didn't expect to win anything. And then Mike Haag's name was called to receive the longest distance award! Chagrined that he finally won some-



Mike Haag, Barry Tyson, Susan Bond, Jennifer and Mike Ash presented it to Paul Hanley from Maryland for having the courage to drive his 2-time concourse winning B roadster across the country to attend. We finished the evening as usual in the hospitality suite and were among the last to leave, also as usual.

Day 8 – Sunday, July 10



Sunday we were back to sightseeing. We had booked tickets for Sunday brunch on the Spirit of Washington Dinner Train, which left from Renton, WA. Once we found the train station it was an enjoyable trip

on the top deck of the antique dome car and we saw the Boeing plant, Lake Washington, and some great scenery and went over the Wilburton Trestle, “the longest wooden trestle in the Northwest...measures 102 feet in height and is 975 feet long...constructed in 1891.” Don't look down!!! At the end of the line we held up lots of car traffic while backing into the Columbia Winery siding.

Off for a tour of the winery, we were impressed by the Victorian style architecture and the size of it. Mike bought another bottle for his collection and we were off for the return trip. Once we were off the siding, the train was in reverse all the way to Renton. We went past one building with mirrored panels and saw ourselves!



It rained briefly but was dry when we got back, so we wandered around Renton for a while but nothing was open. It was too early to quit for the day so we



headed for the Museum of Flight, next to the Boeing plant. An excellent museum; it had

galleries of exhibits from the beginnings of Boeing, WWII fighter planes, more modern fighter planes, and a huge hall with all types of planes hanging from the ceiling. The documents were very willing



to talk about them and we could have spent all day in there. But, we had arrived late and had to leave too soon when they closed. We wandered around the outside exhibits, a Concorde, Air Force One, an Intruder, and then called it quits. We found a motel near SeaTac airport and ate at Sharps Roaster, which was all non-smoking, the first place we tried was all smoking. I guess they divide up the restaurants instead of the areas inside of them. They did have some good local beers.

Day 9 – Monday, July 11

We took the Seattle Express shuttle in to downtown Seattle and left the driving to them. Dropped off near the waterfront, we hiked up hill to the monorail and rode it to the Space Needle. The view was wonderful! It was clear so we could see the whole area, watched a sea plane land, saw roof





top gardens on high rise buildings, and could see Mt. Rainier amongst the clouds on the horizon. We spent a lot of time up there. Down the elevator and a wander through the gift shop and we were back to the street – and rain was coming down! Where did that come from? Back to the monorail station only to find that it wasn't running. After getting our money back on our round trip tickets, we ducked into a museum to see an exhibit of rock stars' stage clothes, then took a very crowded bus back

to the main part of town, we weren't the only ones stranded.

We toured the Pike Place Market to watch the fishmongers throwing their wares around, and ate lunch at the Pike Pub and Brewery. It was almost a museum as well as a good place to eat. We tried their sampler which included "Kilt Lifter Scotch Ale" and "Pike Naughty Nellie's Ale." We spent the afternoon hiking up and down real hills to Pioneer Square, taking pictures of trolley cars and neat old buildings. We tried to take the Underground Tour but it was full, so we stopped at a pub instead. Deciding it was time for dinner, we headed back to the waterfront and Ivar's Acres of Clams, chosen because it offered the



planked Salmon Mike had been looking forward to, only to find that it was no longer on the menu. But the seafood and beer were good and we were finished in time to catch the shuttle back to the motel.



Day 10 – Tuesday, July 12

The trip home was uneventful. We think we saw Mt. Rainier and Mt. Hood on the way out of SeaTac, then there were no landmarks we knew till the Mississippi River. The eastern US was covered by the remnants of a hurricane so there wasn't much to see there. It was almost dark when we landed in New Jersey, and the lights of Hampton Roads were a welcome sight. Home at last, we were soon making plans to attend MG 2006 in Gatlinburg, TN. These events are way too much fun to miss!

What Went Wrong?

Part One

Geoff Wheatley, Public Relations Director,
New England MG T Register

In America, it's Hershey, in Europe it's Beaulieu. I'm talking about motor auctions, vendors and 150,000 classic car enthusiasts assembled in one location twice a year. Beaulieu is situated on the south coast of England, a few miles from the sea. About two hours by road from London, assuming you don't visit when the motor show is on! Like Hershey, it can take a few hours to arrive and even longer to depart, but who cares, the prospect of 2000 vendors and at least 500 cars up for sale makes it all worth while. I try to visit Beaulieu at least every three years and have managed to maintain this routine since I came to North America back in 1976. Sure, it's a 6,000 mile trip each way with a visit to my relatives, after doing the important things like looking for spare parts and negotiating with vendors. Like most expatriots, I can always find an excuse to return, and I am pleased to say that the beer tastes as good today as it ever did! On my last visit in 2003 I managed to pick up a few trinkets, including a 1952 "Earles Court Motor Show" catalogue.

Earls Court was the premier car show of the year back in the 1950's. Every British manufacturer introduced their new model at this annual event in company with a few American and European companies with an eye on the British Commonwealth market. Buyers from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand attended in company with dealers from South Africa, India, Pakistan, Kenya etc... Looking through this faded publication, I was struck by the number of British manufacturers there were back in 1952. "Austin, Morris, Vauxhall, Singer, Hillman, Armstrong, Bristol, Lagonda, Triumph, Rover, Riley, M.G., Sunbeam, Bentley, A.C. Motors, Jowett, Daimler, Rolls, Morgan, Allard, C.V.R., Standard, Jaguar, Bond, Healey, Lancia ", etc. Today, only Morgan and TRV still survive as British companies; the others have either been taken over with companies like Rolls Royce, now part of BMW and Bentley the VW Group. (Who would have ever believed that back in 1952!) Jaguar is now part of Ford who also owns the Range Rover name, while the rest have simply just faded away, never to be seen again, except at Classic British car show events where we dedicated idiots still spend time and money trying to keep these lost names alive.

Why did this happen? The answer is not that easy to find but a brief review of the antique management structures, coupled with government interference, including a total lack of vision, mixed with poor labor relations and antiquated production techniques leading to virtually no quality control of the end product, may provide the answer! Let me hasten to add that the latter was not exclusive to the British Motor industry as Detroit managed to produce a few examples of "Rust Buckets" during the same time period. In reality, the British motor industry was given a world market in the post-"World War Two" years. Europe was in ruins and would take at least twenty years to get back into real consumer production. The American post-war car market faced a serious supply problem as did most other industrial countries and Detroit was never able to meet the US demand until

the 1960's. There was only the US and the U.K producing private vehicles during this period so almost anything that Britain could make with either two or four wheels sold. Obviously, America was the prime market, and the British government, who were broke after six years of war, encouraged sales to countries with a hard currency. Government controls were placed on all basic materials to ensure that production went overseas, especially to the USA. Britain had a major debt to the USA for war supplies and needed to export anything and everything in order to clear this commitment. This export drive by the British government of the day put some companies out of business including certain motor manufacturers who were forced to export knowing that their products would not succeed. (More on this later.)

The vast majority of the British cars were too small and underpowered for the US market yet people purchased these vehicles and put up with poor service facilities, pre-war designs and a general lack of the comfort usually found in the American automobile. Heaters and radios were considered luxury extras by the British manufactures who never understood that such things were a standard feature this side of the water. Nevertheless these small private vehicles did find a ready market, a market that Detroit had simply ignored for reasons that even today are still unclear. In the so-called sports car market the situation was even more astounding. The small British sports car was certainly known in the USA prior to the war but imports were minimal and usually went to the rich and famous. Lord Nuffield, head of the Morris Empire, did give Edsel Ford an MG for his birthday as a token of his esteem for his father, and I believe the car still rests in the Ford Museum. Several film stars of the day had British sports cars including the humble MG but it was not a serious sales situation and no British Sales Manager lost any sleep over export figures in the 1930s. But by 1948 with the forced export of the MGTC, a pre-war sports car design with the steering wheel on the wrong side made by the Nuffield Group, things had certainly changed. By 1948, seeing the potential of MG and others, Britain started to design cars for the US market and by 1950 MG had produced a modern version of the TC built for the export market called the MG TD. Jaguar had set the motor world on its heels with the launch of the XK120 which had more orders in its first six weeks of promotion than any other sports car in the world. The Standard Motor Company who had purchased the Triumph name when the company went under a few years earlier came out with an equally modern sports car that was a success on American roads, while Healey, with the personal knowledge of its founder on prewar racing developed the now famous Healey 3000.

To understand the situation in Britain during this period it is important to reflect on the political change that had taken place immediately after the war. The Conservative government led by Winston Churchill had been defeated by a strong Labor Party, dedicated to the idea of state ownership. The Railways, Coal Mines, Road Haulage, Steel Industry, Fuel Production, and Health Service were now under government control. Industry had to do as it was told or supplies of basic materials were withheld. Example, if the motor industry did not export at least 65% of its production, which included tractors, buses, coaches, motorcycles, trucks as well as private cars, they did not get adequate steel supplies, coal or oil for their boilers, guaranteed road transport or easy rail-

way access. Yes, it was "Export or Die", as the government slogan proclaimed but it could also mean a slow death for a manufacturing company who did not meet the government export requirements. Some companies resorted to producing cars in alloy as this was not rationed but these cars were not that successful. The Singer Company was one such corporation. Once the third largest motor producer in Britain, it suffered the slow death being forced into bankruptcy by 1954 simply because they did not meet government export quotas. Standard Motors who had a modern production plant at Coventry that once produced tractors and some of the most attractive cars on British roads suffered the same fate but the Triumph Motor Company which Standard had revamped after the war continued under new ownership through to the 1980s.

This Government involvement with private industry continued for several decades with disastrous results and in many ways can be blamed for the decline of several industries throughout the United Kingdom. It should also be understood that the British Motor Industry was never that keen on serving an export market. The whole idea of setting up dealerships overseas and maintaining a supply of spare parts for these outlets was almost beyond their comprehension especially when, without government restrictions, they could sell everything they produced to the home market with a few cars left over for Australia and the other far flung outposts of the gone but not forgotten British Empire.

The idea of setting up and dealing with American retailers who sold monster cars with equally monster-size power units covered with Christmas Tree chrome horrified the average British export manager, they would expect him to start chewing gum next! In consequence, when the British cars hit the American shores dealers were hard to obtain and effective service was even more difficult to establish especially when most of the technology employed in these cars was pre-war, i.e. side valve engines, three-speed gear shift and starter handles just in case the Lucas system failed, need I say more!

However, by 1953 most of the successful export vehicles had moved into the 20th century and a few years later some were ahead of anything else in the world, as illustrated by the Jaguar range or the Lagonda, Rolls Royce, Daimler etc., but even at the other end of the financial scale cars such as the 1950s MGA set a standard that few other inexpensive vehicles could match. Add the Triumph TR3 and the Healey 3000, the MGA Twin Cam, and the Sunbeam in the sports range. Now look at the Rover Turbo and successful 2000, the Triumph Stag, the Lancia and of course the incredible Mini that first saw the light of day in 1959. Who can ever think of James Bond without an Aston Martin by his side? Not a cheap car but one that most of us would love to find in our Christmas stocking even if it was thirty years old. The ability was certainly there but a few other important features always seemed to be missing like an adequate supply of spare parts for the limited number of service outlets!

One interesting story out of this period was the fate of the Riley Motor Company. In the 1930s they produced some excellent cars both on the track and, of course for the general public, and were at one time a strong rival to MG. However, as an independent and small company it was difficult to keep the operation in the black (as was the case with MG in the prewar years but MG always had Billy Mor-

ris to bail them out as and when required). In 1938 just prior to the Second World War Billy Morris, or to be correct Lord Nuffield, as he was then took over the company and merged it within the Morris Empire. With the end of the war Morris personally took control of Riley and started to make the 1.5 liter and 2.5 liter saloon cars which were a true semi-sports classic in their own right. They sold well both at home and overseas and Morris decided that they should be made at Abingdon, the home of the MG of course! The MG people were not that pleased to hear the news as this would mean that part of their production ability would be taken up with these fancy Riley vehicles. Later it was revealed that certain of the Nuffield Directors had wanted to move the MG production to the old Riley works in Coventry and merge Abingdon with main Morris Cowley production center. This could have restricted the growth of MG and mass produced vehicles like the MGB would never have developed. Add to this the fact that the Mini was also made at Abingdon in its early days!

Thank goodness very few people ever argued with Billy Morris, who was pro-Abingdon or the MG may well have had a stunted career! By 1959 Riley production had moved to the main Morris works where it remained until the marque ended. A nice car, especially the Riley Pathfinder, that was launched in 1953. The 2.5 power unit did much to sell the car in the USA where it was the darling of the social set as the wife's vehicle.

Equally interesting is the story of Jaguar who in 1932 was a small company producing a sports car with a Standard Motors engine and various bits from other manufacturers. The company started by making sidecars for motor bikes but by the mid 30s they had moved into sports cars with the now famous hand produced Jaguar SS. (The term SS was removed after the war for obvious reasons). Production was small and as previously mentioned, the power unit was a two liter Standard Motors engine. Standard Motors was a leading manufacturer of engines at that time and sold to many small private companies. This particular engine was ahead of its day and was used in the post war years in the Triumph 1800 and 2000 Roadster GT, another expensive classic hand-built vehicle that was killed by the post-war Jaguar XK 120 which out sold everything in its class. The secret of Jaguar was simple, a small company with dedicated workers and great leadership. Whilst the other guys were trying to out maneuver the government regulations in 1947/52 and go for the easy home market, Jaguar saw the export potential and went after it (with government support of course), based on their incredible export record. The introduction of the XK 140 and its magnificent win at Lemans sealed the future of this company until it was taken over and virtually micro-managed to death, but that's another story for another time!

One simple example of how to win friends, etc., was the Jaguar policy of training overseas service staff. If you were a Jaguar dealer your service staff was invited to come to the factory and work with the people who made the cars, inspected the cars and tested the cars. However, if you were the dealership for any other British manufacturer at this time the best you could hope for was a training film and a couple of books. If you were a big outlet a guy might visit for a week and tell you the secrets of service success but don't count on it. Even if he did, the chances of you getting a

steady supply of spare parts to make up for poor quality control was slim. This did eventually change but it took too long and only came about because the Japanese and Germans were after the same markets as the British.

From 1950 through to the early 1960s the British sports car manufacturers had no real competition. The MG and Triumph vehicles had the low end of the market, Jaguar, the top and Healey/Sunbeam/Riley most of the middle price range while a few other British manufacturers picked up what was left. Detroit seemed either blind or simply not interested in sports cars even as this market grew each year. Add to this the small British cars that became the second family vehicle and it was obvious that the Brits had it made even with all of their production and service problems.

Economists will tell you that competition is the secret of success, and I think they are right, but this message never seemed to get through to either the British government or the British motor industry. Did they expand this unique hold on the American market with better cars, better service and better quality control...? ANSWER...NO! Why not? They saw no need.

To be continued

Found on the internet:

If My Body Were a Car

If my body were a car, this is the time I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model. I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish and my paint job is getting a little dull, but that's not the worst of it.

My fenders are too wide to be considered stylish. They were once as sleek as a little MG; now they look more like an old Buick.

My seat cushions have split open at the seams. My seats are sagging. Seat belts? I gave up all belts when Krispy Kremes opened a shop in my neighborhood.!

Air bag's? Forget it. The only bags I have these days are under my eyes. Not counting the saddlebags, of course.

I have soooooo many miles on my odometer. Sure, I've been many places and seen many things, but when's the last time an appraiser factored life experiences against depreciation?

My headlights are out of focus and it's especially hard to see things up close.

My traction is not as graceful as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather.

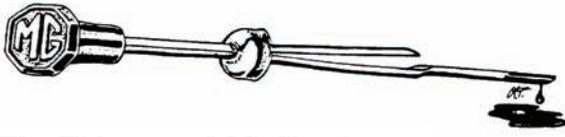
My whitewalls are stained with varicose veins.

It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed.

My fuel burns inefficiently.

But here's the worst of it — almost every time I sneeze, cough or sputter ... either my radiator leaks or my exhaust backfires.

The Dipstick



The Tidewater MG Classics

Susan Bond
541 Forest Road
Chesapeake, VA 23322

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register

Winner of *Old Cars Weekly*
"Golden Quill Award"

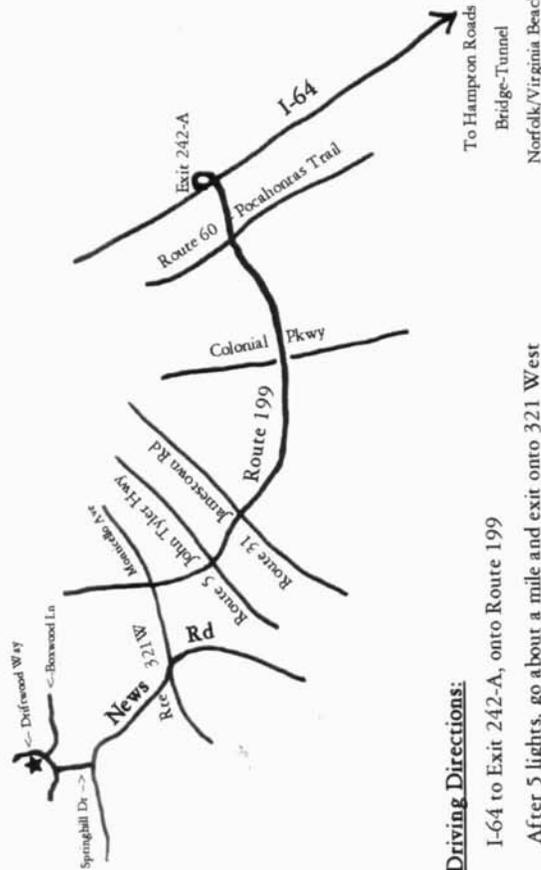
FIRST CLASS

March Meeting
Tuesday, March 7th

Craig & Joyce Cummings
4017 Driftwood Way
Williamsburg
757-254-8087



7:30 - Kick Tyres
8:00 - Meeting



Driving Directions:

I-64 to Exit 242-A, onto Route 199

After 5 lights, go about a mile and exit onto 321 West
(Monticello Ave)

At 4th light turn right onto News Rd (at Burger King)

About 1-1/2 miles turn right onto Springhill

Right at stop sign sign onto Driftwood

3rd house on the left