

# The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

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

Volume XXXV, Issue 1

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

January 2008

## MARQUE TIME

This is being written as we “recover” from the 2007 edition of the TMGC Holiday Party, which was hosted by Betty and Jim Villers in their festive home. What a meal! What great company! We had over 75 on hand, representing the entire range of club members, from several founders of TMGC, to many of our most recent additions. The menu was extensive thanks to Betty’s hard work in her well-appointed kitchen, with lots of help from the many folks who contributed a tempting side dish. In addition to the seasonal decorations inside and outside the house, there was even a nice grouping of MGs in the driveway. Hats are off to Team Villers!

Hats off as well to everyone for making this year's charity drive a smashing success. Beckey Watson did a superlative job organizing TMGC's support to the Barry Robinson Center. A lot of appreciative folks had a brighter than expected Christmas, thanks to Beckey's leadership and the participation of so many generous club members!

This is the time of year when most of us take stock and figure out what we'll do better in the coming year. My list of “areas for improvement” seems to get longer each year. But this year it includes my trusty MGB. You see, I've been putting off some minor repairs for much too long, including such things as an annoying valve cover gasket leak, and some cracked and brittle vent window gaskets. But my specific MG-related goal for 2008 is the resolution of a nagging problem with my old nemesis – the speedometer.

My speedometer gauge has been rebuilt in recent months, yet I still can't figure out why it works intermittently. I've swapped cables several times and fiddled with the connections at both ends of the cable, yet the gauge is inoperative most of the time. On random occasions the odometer portion decides to stop turning. Another random occurrence is when the gauge actually seems to be within about 10 MPH of my actual speed. But most of the time the needle stays on the bottom peg and I use the rev counter to calculate my speed. So, by putting this into the public domain, I'm hoping that I'll motivate myself to see a functioning speedometer in my MGB in

2008. With a club like TMGC backing me up, this is one New Year's resolution I can actually keep!

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2008 and, as always,

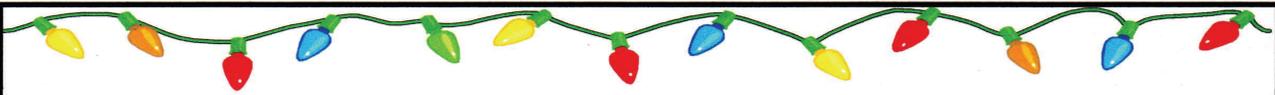
Cheers!

Mark Davidoski

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

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

- Dec. 27** Holiday Light Tour (see page 2)
- Jan. 2** Wednesday meeting at Craig & Joyce Cummings' (see map on back page)
- Jan. 12** Dipstick Deadline
- Feb. 5** Tuesday meeting at Frankie's Place for Ribs
- Feb. 12** Dipstick Deadline



**Garden of Lights Drive Out Info**

**Thursday, December 27th**

Wear mittens and scarves -- top down!

We'll depart at 7:30 p.m. from

Franco's Italian Restaurant

6200 North Military Hwy. in Norfolk (757-853-0177)

In the shopping center across the street from K-Mart

at the intersection of Norview Ave.

Come early to eat dinner there if you can!

Or join us in the parking lot by 7:30 to caravan to

Norfolk Botanical Garden

We will return to Franco's to warm up after touring the lights!

Alan or Beckey Watson  
Home: 426-2600  
Cell: 438-2328 or 615-4224



## Membership and New Members

Robin Watson

### Total Membership 95

Membership is up by one, Robert Davis renewed his membership at the annual party.



## Officers and Committees

President	Mark Davidoski	499-4647
Vice President	Bill Olcheski	467-4046
Secretary	Michele Peters	482-1012
Treasurer	Jim Villers	481-6398
Editors	Peggy Craig	226-7755
	Ronald Struewing	479-0084
Membership	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
Webmaster	Mike Haag	<a href="mailto:mikehmg@cox.net">mikehmg@cox.net</a>

## Sue and Terry Bond's Fall Tech Session.

Jim Freeh

Sunday, November 11th dawned with a bit of a chill, but not so cold that I felt compelled to put the top up for the drive over to the Bonds. Linda's '68 white MGB rose to occasion as I turned the key and heard the sputtering of the SU fuel pump deep within the bowels of the car. No need to use the special fuel pump tool this morning, it can continue to reside in the trunk awaiting use on the knock-offs in the future.

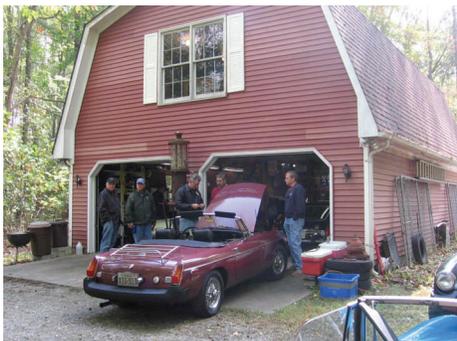
A semi-early arrival nabbed a parking spot inside the Bonds' shop, which paid dividends later as Vince Groover assisted me in diagnosing a broken speedometer. It certainly was much more pleasant sliding under the car whilst on concrete!



With Vince's expert help, we discovered that a nub had broken off the speedometer end of the cable and that was causing the speedometer to jump around. Thanks a lot for the experienced eye, Vince!

Walking around the Bond compound, I noted that John Terschak was getting assistance on his yellow late model MGB. Looks like the members were balancing carbs and checking the timing on his car.

A beautiful chrome wire-wheeled MGB was also in triage, and I was mesmerized by the wheels. So pretty, so hard to keep clean. I want some! Bill Yoshida had a very unique paint color on his chrome wire-wheeled MGB (which I noticed after I managed to subdue the covetous glances at the wheels), a sort of mauve color. Very unique and striking on a roadster! He was under the hood with the other gurus working on a general tune-up.



Vince Groover had his green late MGB outside the shop and was working on the heater. Good move, Vince, the winter season is coming! Does Vince ever put his top down? Don Ladd had his blue midget, and the troops were busily working on

a rubber gasket on his car. Tad Carter brought his white MGB, but it must have been in fine fettle, as I did not notice anyone working on the car. Might have been distracted by the smell of the vittles.....

Sue Bond had the ex-Wiley Black B-GT (which surely must rank as the most driven, most well known car in the TMGC) up for some brake light switch work. Small item, but a very important one if we want to keep our Abingdon tin from getting hurt! Sue also talked the crew into replacing the gasket on the hatch window of the beautiful maroon B-GT she and Terry have restored. Sure, give us food and drink and we'll follow you everywhere.



Another notable part of this tech session was the appearance of not one, but four (!) 40-year members of the club... Roosevelt Greer, Roy Wiley, Bob Pellerin, and Richard Hall. Congrats, 67 years, why that's a year older than Linda's "B"!

Other members offering advice or kibitzing were Mark and Debbie Childers, Frank Linse, Craig Cummings, Jim Villers, Richard Hall, Chuck Hassler, Jack Pavlidis, the

evergreen Robin Watson, and Russ Ripp.

Shortly before noon the troops got wind of the feast prepared by Sue in the house garage, and descended to sample the abundant platters. Great stuff, only topped by the discovery of the coolers of drinks out by the shop afterwards.

Fun cars, great people, good weather, and lots of food and drink, thanks a bunch Sue and Terry!



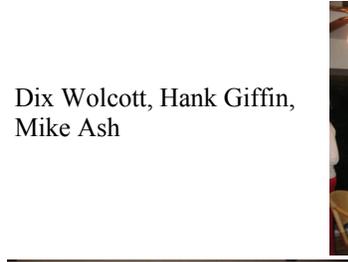


# Holiday Party

December 14, 2007  
At the home of  
Jim and Betty Villers  
Photos by Susan Bond



Denise Starke, Mike Haag



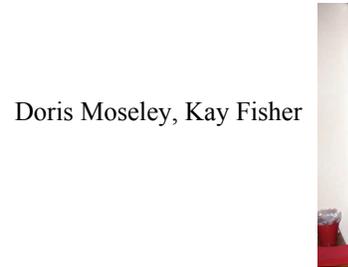
Dix Wolcott, Hank Giffin,  
Mike Ash



Donald & Rose Ladd



Bill & Renee  
Olcheski



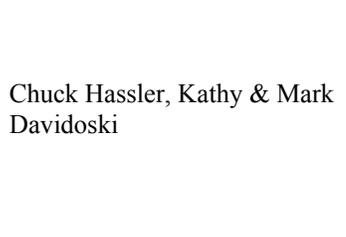
Doris Moseley, Kay Fisher



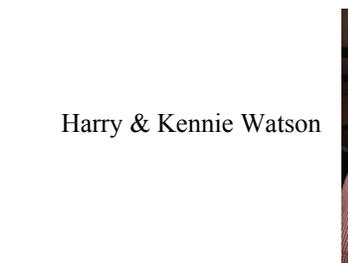
Carl Fisher, Chuck Hudson



Florence & Butch  
Ballback



Chuck Hassler, Kathy & Mark  
Davidoski



Harry & Kennie Watson



George Craig, Debbie  
Linse, Peggy Craig



George Craig, Becky  
Hassler





Ron Struewing & Anita Edwards-Struewing



Mike Knepler, Barb Taychert



Michele Peters, Robert Perrone

Olive & Robin Watson



Lara & J.D. Hawthorne



Susan & Terry Bond



Kate, Carl & Kay Fisher

Beckey & Alan Watson



Linda Pellerin, Sandy Hal



Becky & Jack Dawson



Joyce Cummings, Marilyn Wiley

Jim & Linda Freeh



Jessica Zarkowski, Josh Robertson



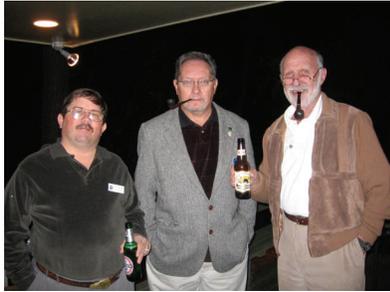


Sandy Hall,  
Bob & Linda  
Pellerin,  
Terry Bond



Pete Olsen,  
Tad Carter

Stephen Daniels, Frank  
Linse, Carl Nagle



Craig Cummings



Barb Taychert, Betty  
Villers, Stevie Giffin



Debbie Childers

Roosevelt Moseley



Richard Hall, Marilyn &  
Pam Wiley



Russ Ripp, Tad Carter



Norma Nagle, Kennie  
Watson, Jennifer Ash

Jane & Dix Wolcott



Our Host and  
Hostess

Jim & Betty  
Villers





## Jaguar and MG.

The battle for the market.

By Geoff Wheatley  
July 2007

Thank you to Betty and Jim for hosting another wonderful Christmas party! And thank you for all the gifts that were brought to be donated to The Barry Robinson Center. As always, club members were VERY generous and thoughtful with the gifts they chose for the foster families in the Center's Community Living Program. In addition, over \$500 in gift cards were given, and \$197.00 cash was collected from donations and the Silent Auction that Becky Hassler arranged! It is such a pleasure and honor for Alan and me to represent TMGC when we delivered the gifts to The Barry Robinson Center.

Becky Watson



Pictures of the gifts for The Barry Robinson Center under the Villers' tree.



A few weeks ago I gave a presentation on the Jaguar Company and was asked why that name was chosen for the car. I did not know so I did some serious research and found a connection between MG and Jaguar. You may find it as interesting as I did.

2006 was the 75th Anniversary of the SS Jaguar Company although the name Jaguar was not featured on their cars until 1936. The Famous SS1 was simply known as the SS1 Coupe, a very stylish design that looked more expensive than it was. The secret of William Lyons success was to build cars that looked like they were created for the French Riviera and the millionaires who resided there. In reality the SS1 featured a side valve power unit made by the Standard Motor Company for Lyons and a basic chassis also made by Standard. However, the body was totally the creation of the Lyons factory who had achieved quite a reputation for producing stylish custom sidecars for motor bikes. Their ability to shape and mold metal and wood was the secret behind the success of the SS range. If it was speed you were looking for this was not your car. The SS1 might, with the wind behind it, touch 70 mph but it took a long time to get there. By 1933 the top speed had been increased to around 75 with a larger engine but it was still a side valve unit that would take 25 seconds to hit the top speed.

At the same time as the launch of the SS range, the MG factory were producing the famous SA and VA saloon cars with a two liter OHV power unit that gave the car an impressive performance. Sleek and structured like the SS range the two companies were virtually direct competitors in the middle market except for one important thing. Price. The MG range was at least twenty percent more expensive than the SS range although to look at and admire it would be difficult to choose one over the other.

In 1935, virtually out of the blue, SS Cars launched the stunning SS90, a car that was guaranteed to reach ninety miles an hour. At first it was in open sports car design but by 1936 a saloon was offered with virtually the same performance. This move hit the MG SA and VA models right where it mattered, in their sales department!. Again the price was the key factor and MG certainly suffered for the next eighteen months.

Lyons wanted to create the image of a sleek fast and desirable vehicle if only to overcome the poor performance record of the previous SS range. He knew that the SS logo needed something extra to

make it stand out from the crowd. Something fast and elegant.

MG had Safety Fast which was a success for all their vehicles. To endorse this image MG or rather Morris Motors closed down the racing department at Abingdon and instructed all dealers not to promote the MG Range as a car that could be raced. Safety was the order of the day coupled with speed. They even produced promotional material that made it quite clear that the very term racing had no part in the development of MG. Of course this did not stop individual owners from putting their MGs on such race tracks but they were never officially endorsed by Abingdon after 1936.

Back to SS Cars, what new image could they create to indicate both a luxury car and a fast one. Their advertising agency came up with a series of suggestions one of which was Cheetah, the fastest animal on four legs. This was seriously considered but eventually rejected as the term could also indicate that the customer could be cheated with his or her purchase. It is said, although no one can ever be sure, that it was one of Lyons children who suggested Jaguar after a visit to the zoo. Fast, elegant and classic in every meaning of the words.

The first SS Jaguar name was introduced in 1936 as Saloon vehicle however it still had either the 1.5 or 2.5 liter side valve engine so any idea that this car would reach 90 miles an hour was a little optimistic. To be fair it was not promoted with the same theme as the SS90 which truly was a fast sports car.

However, when Jaguar introduced the SS 100 "Jaguar" a year later both the name and the vehicle became virtually household words even if you only had a Baby Austin Seven in the garage!

MG tried to come back with a new version of their Saloon range the WA 2.6 Liter luxury car again priced about 25 % above the SS Jaguar 2.5 Liter Salon but it was an OHV unit that did give the car better performance. Regretfully, at this time there was a drastic overhaul of the MG Abingdon company by Morris Motors Cowley who, in 1936, became the owners of MG. Until that time Abingdon was under the direct control of Billy Morris, "Lord Nuffield", who looked upon the venture as his personal baby. However, MG virtually lost money every year and it was Nuffield who wiped out the red ink from his own fortune which was considerable! For tax reasons and I suspect a desire to step out of the main picture, Nuffield sold his share in MG to Morris Motors, appointed a Chief Executive Officer, and stepped into the role of Chairman of the Morris Empire. His first action was to take a world cruise with Lady Nuffield that lasted about nine months.

Kimber, the Director of MG Abingdon was reduced to General Manager with the option to take it or leave. The design dept was closed, all future MG design would be under the control of Cowley. Half the sales staff were let go in company with the once

famous race department. The work force was reduced with the offer that they could relocate to Cowley, Oxford which was no big deal as the distance between the two factories was only a matter of a few miles. Where ever possible only Morris parts would be used in the production of any MG and the power units would be supplied by the Morris engine factory. No special high performance units purchased from outside. No leather interiors unless the customer was willing to pay extra and many did. Price was the main consideration and there would be no Santa Clause to bale them out if they remained in the red. The first T Series produced in 1936 was the TA, a product of this policy with a engine designed for the Morris Ten family saloon that might reach 60 mph on a fine day.

Other body parts were taken from the Morris production line and the eventual product was simply a shadow of MGs former glory.

When the SS Jaguar Saloon hit the market and the open SS 90 soon to become the SS 100 hit the show rooms MG faced a serious problem both from within and from its competitors. I would not have wished to be in Kimber's shoes at that time, his boss off on a world cruise, the man that he had worked with ever since MG was born. A hostile new CEO who had no desire to see MG survive and only saw it as a drain on the profits of Morris Motors. A reduced staff including his once very successful sales force and companies like SS Cars eating away at his market with their SS 100 and the Elegant Jaguar Saloon. However, by 1937 the Morris empire had reverted back to Billy Morris control, (another story for another time), Kimber was back in his old job and a new Luxury MG Saloon was almost on the dealers floor, the WA 2.6 liter, certainly the very best in the series. Still expensive compared with Jaguar but also a very beautiful car.

The introduction of the WA forced Jaguar to introduce a OHV power unit in 1938 for their saloons. The future looked a little brighter and the depression was starting to end mainly due to war production. Most people believed that war was inevitable but they felt that it would be in four or five more years.

When Chamblin came back from his meeting with Hitler in the summer of 1938 crying, "Peace in our Time", everyone breathed a sigh of relief and cars sales literally took off from the previous six years of depression. Wages were increasing, unemployment was now confined to the coal mines and shipbuilding and even the latter was looking better with the investment in new ships for the Royal Navy. Morris Motors had contracts for military vehicles in company with others and Abingdon was already being approached to look into aircraft component production in company with other locations throughout the country.

One thing that Abingdon had over SS Jaguar was its long association with such small but excellent

companies such as Tickford who turned a nice car into a beautiful work of art.

Then there were the Charlesworth company who made hand crafted bodies and turned such cars as the WA into a handsome and of course rare vehicle. The best example of this is the WA Open Tourer with the Charlesworth body. A total of only nine were built and one survives in a private collection. To get some measure of the power and speed of the WA saloon the Glasgow Police Force ordered eight, also a Charlesworth Open Tourer.

(I suspect that this car was never out chasing bandits!) In total 265 Wa Saloon vehicles were built between 1938 and the start of the war in September 1939. There is an interesting story about the design of both the less expensive SA and the WA range. At some point during the austerity period at Abingdon, Morris Motors Cowley proposed that the expensive sliding roof be dropped from the MG range of Saloons.

Kimber countered with a memo both to Morris Motors and the Morris Dealers who sold the Saloon range that he had personally conducted a survey of both owners and potential owners to see if they would accept a standard roof design. The information indicated that although most owners seldom if ever opened the sliding roof they considered it a must on any luxury car such as the SA and WA. This policy was maintained right through into the post war years and even as late as the 1970s this feature was offered in the UK. It was the introduction of Air Conditioning for luxury vehicles that eventually ended the not very practical Sun Roof that blew your head off when opened or leaked in a good rain storm!

The SS Car Company sold more saloon vehicles from 1936 to 1939 than MG. The Price advantage was the key to this achievement however, they never managed to be competitive on the race track not even with the SS Jaguar 100. Jaguar had to wait until the 1950s to win this battle. MGs despite the set back in 1936 through the Morris Motors take over, still managed to pass the finishing line a head of any thing in their class but not with the then new MGTA. It was the tried and true pre 1936 cars that burnt up the rubber at Brooklands, entered by private owners. However, there is one interesting observation worthy of note: Although Morris Motors had banned any support for racing, the 1938 Junior at Brooklands was won by two MGs and the trophy ended up in Billy Morris office! How it got there is anyone's guess. Again in the Empire race at the Doncaster track in the north of England in 1939 a MGPA won the junior award and the trophy ended up next to the Brooklands award. So much for the ban on supporting competitive activity!



## Presentation of the 2007 TMGC President's Award

The annual Tidewater MG Classics President's Award is presented to a club member whose contributions to the club are consistently "above and beyond." This year, we recognize an individual whose actions have had significant impact on the health of TMGC in a number of areas.

Becky Hassler has been an active member of the club since early 2004. As Regalia Manager, she has searched far and wide for the best quality logo merchandise for the use of club members. Thanks to Becky, TMGC members are routinely turned out in high quality clothing that announces their MG affiliation with style. In addition to clothing sales, Becky's ability to hawk large numbers of raffle tickets at monthly meetings has had a positive effect on the TMGC balance sheet.

Becky and her husband Chuck host at least one monthly meeting per year, in addition to participating in an impressive list of other club activities, such as Wine Outings and Tech Sessions. The Hassler's can be counted on for mechanical assistance at the drop of a hat and for needed spares in emergencies. Perhaps Becky's single most notable contribution to TMGC is her skillful production of large numbers of her signature apple pies. Indeed, it is the promise of Becky's apple pie that guarantees a huge turnout at Hassler-hosted meetings!

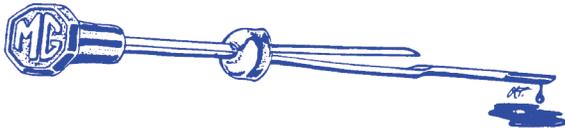
Becky, for all you do for TMGC and for each of us, thanks for driving an MG. And thanks for bringing Chuck along to so many functions!

December 14, 2007



Honoree Becky and President Mark Davidoski

# The Dipstick



## The Tidewater MG Classics

Ronald Struewing

5483 Doon St.

Virginia Beach, VA 23464-7732

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register

“Newsletter of the Year”

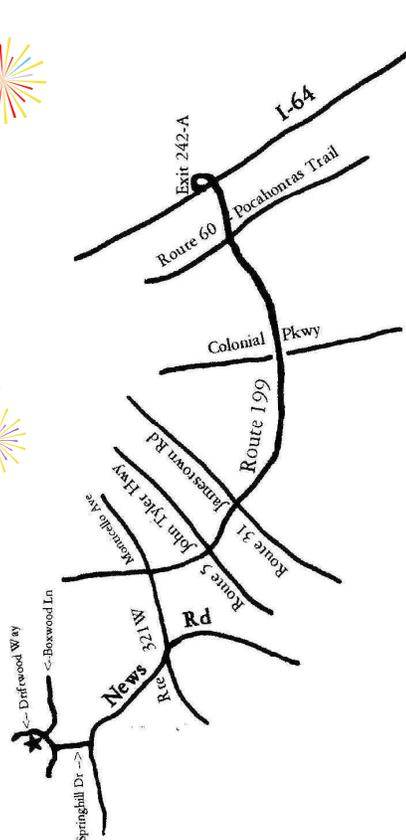
## FIRST CLASS

**January Meeting**  
**Wed, Jan 2nd**

**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 onto Driftwood

3rd house on the left

