

The Dipstick



“The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club”

www.mg.org

Volume XXXV, Issue 6

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

June 2008

MARQUE TIME

Surveying the scene at the April Tech Session was a visual feast for MG lovers. There must have been 30 cars there at one time or another. Bernie Imdahl remarked that he almost never sees other MGs (or British cars in general) driving around the area during the regular workweek. That sparked some good-natured discussion about daily drivers versus garage queens. But what it made me do was to think back to when I first became aware of British sports cars. I'm sure we all have a story to tell about the first time we saw one of these finicky gems that we pour so much attention (and cash!) into. For me it was the distinctive exhaust note that first turned my head. I was a fifth grade parochial school basketball leaguer, living out in Washington State. On the first day of practice, we heard the sound of a “hot sports car” long before our new coach pulled into the gymnasium parking lot. Coach was a volunteer college kid who played at Seattle University. To the kids on the team, this guy was a basketball “God”. But to me he was also the first MG owner I'd ever run into. This guy was cool! It was the mid-1960s, so coach's red MGB must've been similar to the 1965 B that Kathy and I drive today. As I remember it, he had the pack away top – that's because he wasn't bashful about stuffing several of us into the B to go for a quick spin for post-game ice cream. In the days before seatbelt laws, we could cram most of the team in and around the bucket seats, unobstructed by a folding soft top and frame. Even today, I really like the roominess of the early MGB cockpit when the pack away top is stowed away. Although I've never driven around with kids in the back, I have hauled some fairly large pieces of cargo from place to place. So this month, try to remember your very first LBC sighting. Think back through the years and recall what first captured your imagination. Then, consider which end of the “daily driver versus garage queen” spectrum your car currently represents. Finally, think about giving Bernie some company as he drives his red MGB all over the area on a daily basis. We all could use more MG sightings!

Cheers, Mark Davidoski

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check www.mg.org for the latest info!

- May 24 T-5, SCCA Roadrally,
www.odr-scca.org
- May 31-Jun 8 Drive Your British Car Week
www.britishcarweek.org
- June 1 Original British Car Day 30th
Anniversary Meet, Adamstown, MD
www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com
- June 3 Tuesday meeting at Bill & Renee
Olcheski's
- June 6-8 Gold Cup Historic Races, VIR at
Virginia International Raceway,
www.virclub.com
- June 12 Dipstick Deadline
- June 15 Brits on the Bay
www.tidewatertriumphs.org
- June 21 Surry Happiness, SCCA Roadrally,
www.odr-scca.org
- June 26-29 MG2008, Valley Forge PA,
www.mg2008.com
- July 2 (Wed) Mtg hosted by George & Peggy Craig

Upcoming Activities (continued)

July 6-10 GoF West, Monterey, CA

July 12 Dipstick Deadline

July 14-18 NAMGAR [GT-33](#), Seven Springs, PA

Aug 5 (Tue) Mtg hosted by TBD

Aug 12 Dipstick Deadline

AUG ? (Sun) Tech Session hosted by Linda & Jim Freeh



MAY MINUTES

Michele Peters

We began our May meeting at 8:03 PM on Wednesday, May 7, at Jim and Betty Villers' home, outside on the back deck on a beautiful night—one of those nights that makes you want to catch and hold every sensation, and be able to play it back, anytime you want. It was an evening, not only of sweet breezes and fragrant smells, but of contentment and camaraderie and smiles. A couple of hours of evening relaxation and friendship interposed in the middle of a hectic, non-stop week, that allows you to take a breathe, exhale deeply, and relax. Good stuff! And it's always good stuff with our group.

Betty put on a delectable feast for us, which we all enjoyed. In fact, the meeting itself only lasted 29 minutes, and it was off to sample food and hobnob with the friendly and knowledgeable folks of the TMGC. Yep, good stuff. You people that don't attend the meetings, you just don't know how much you are missing!

New Members and Guests: We welcomed Ken Johnson and his 76B, of which he has been the proud owner for a whopping two months, and Betty Davis with her 74GT (yes, and her BD eyes....).

Vice-President: El Presidente was absent, so El Vice-Presidente stepped into his shoes, and what a fine meeting he ran. Instead of a Vice-presidential report, we were supposed to get the Vice-First Lady Report, but Renee never got a proper introduction.

Treasurer: Jim Villers provided us with the report of our financial situation. Our current balance

has dropped to \$ 675.47, primarily due to the payment to the Hilton Hotel for the Anniversary Dinner. We added receipts from the Raffle & Regalia and dues, and had disbursements to our April and May hosts, for postage, and the anniversary dinner.

Activities: Beckey did not grace us with her presence, so a few of the activities were announced by several individuals, with an admonition from El Vice-Presidente to check *The Dipstick*. A couple of the items that were mentioned included:

Our 35th Anniversary dinner will take place on May 13 at the Airport Hilton. You had better get your money into Beckey for the tickets soon if you plan to go. Look for more information in this edition. George will write.

The Original British Car Day Annual Meet will convene on June 1st at the Lily Ponds Water Gardens in Adamstown, Maryland. Contact John Tokar at 410-775-0500 or by email at tokarj@erols.com. See their website at www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com.

Harry W. noted that the "Brits on the Bay" Car Show will be held on June 15 at Virginia Wesleyan. Go to www.tidewatertriumphs.org for further information.

Is anyone thinking about Ice Cream Social runs yet? 'Tis the season for it!!!

Clubs: Mike and Jennifer were present: Whoopee, we've missed you guys! Mike noted that he was passing out four back issues of the North American MGA Register for May. I think he also said there is a meeting for GT owners on July 4th in PA at Seven Springs, and also a "Gathering of the Faithful" (GOF) for members of the "T" Register May 29-Jun 1 at Ashworth By the Sea, Hampton Beach, NH. Mike was off in the distance, however, and I could barely hear him. Well, actually, I don't think I was getting down too much of what was said just at that time, as Jennifer and I were sucking down the bowl of nuts that someone placed on the stand in front of us. It's hard to listen and write while you are looking for almonds.

I was also much too involved listening to Jennifer describing their recent forays to Britain and Hawaii, etc. You know what, you guys? I really do think you need to take a secretary along with you to record your adventures...and please note that I photograph well...I mean, as well. What more could you ask for? Privacy, maybe?? Aw, shucks.

History: Susan brought two albums for viewing. Also, if you take digital pictures of our club events, please send copies to Susan or to Ron or Peggy, for consideration for inclusion in *The Dipstick*.

Newsletter: Ron Struewing asked for volunteers to write articles for *The Dipstick*. He also asks that those who do write should submit their articles as soon as they can, because he and Peggy need time to create the rag and send it off for printing for those

members who still receive a paper version of our *Dipstick*. Please have your articles and pictures submitted no later than the 12th of every month. Anita noted that putting *The Dipstick* together is keeping Ron busy, as her “Honey Do” list just keeps getting longer and longer....

Membership: Robin reported that with our new members, our total now stands at 98, soon to be 99. Robin would like those members who are receiving a paper copy of the newsletter to let him know if you would like to discontinue receiving it in this form and view it online. Please let him know as soon as possible.

Technical: Mark Childers was absent. Mark, oh Mark.....Susan mentioned that on the Wine Tour she had intermittent problems with her electrical system. She had no brake lights, so she fiddled and fiddled and finally checked the fuse. Her advice: Every ten years or so, replace your fuses, whether you need to or not.

Old Business: Vince was present. Now, Vince, don’t get mad at me. I am simply repeating the same old joke that was blurted out last month. Really, people (speaking on behalf of Vince), you need to get some new material....

New Business: Bill Yoshida mentioned that there is a British shop on Witchduck Road in Virginia Beach that we are negotiating with to provide door prizes for the Anniversary Dinner. In exchange, it was suggested that we could put their store on our website as a link. British stuff! Cool!

Marque Time: Andy mentioned that the TF’s 5-speed did him proud on the recent Wine Tour. He and Cynthia kept up with all of the Bs, the Midget, and the “other thing” (Austin Healey interloper) on the straightaways, but did slow down on the hills. Robert replied that Andy made him look good, and ask how that hand-brake was doing (Andy was still using his hand brake, like he did last year on the Wine Tour, because his real brakes are, let us say, on the fritz).

Raffle and Regalia: Becky was in Alaska with her daughter, so Chuck had the honor of conducting the raffle. Our prizes this week included the venerable license plate holder, the April edition of the MGOC magazine, a TMGC coffee cup, a 2003 Anniversary edition Tote Bag, and a bound copy of the 1994 MG Enthusiast. I was so enthralled by Chuck’s rendition of the raffle, however, that I completely forgot to write down who won the prizes. And yes, I am true to my word, and am publicly declaring my \$5 debt for raffle tickets that I bought on credit, that did me absolutely no good.

On someone’s (your informative secretary at work) motion to eat, we were adjourned at 8:32. And before

I sign off, I will leave you with what Mr. Hassler apparently thinks passes for humor: Picture an attorney in his office at his desk, talking on the phone. Here is the quote: “Act of God? Not a problem – we sue God.” Now I don’t know what’s so funny about that. There must be a legal treatise or a statute somewhere that describes how that is to be done in Virginia..... Wait a minute; on the other hand, maybe I’ve been in MY office a bit too long tonight.....



Membership and New Members

Robin Watson

Total Membership 98

We have one new member since last months Dipstick. Betty F. Davis from Newport News with a 1974 MGB-GT and a 1980 MGB- LE.

2009 MEMBERSHIP DUES

It is now that time of year for renewing membership and I will be mailing a renewal form to all members. However, if you wish, you can print your own form from the web site. Please forward to TMGC c/o Robin Watson, 4300 Charity Neck Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23457.

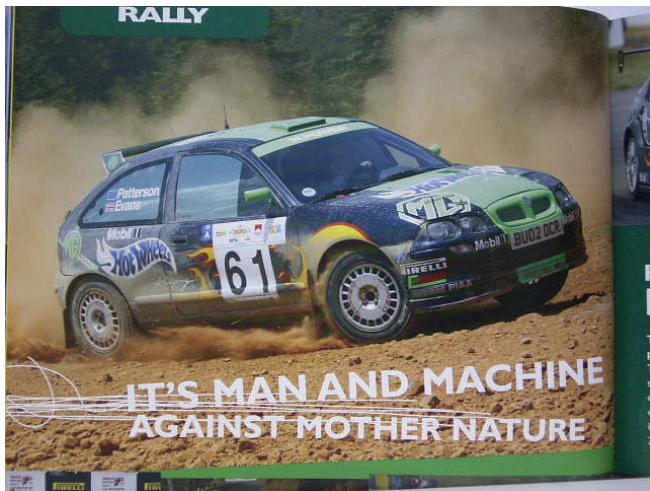


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DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

Robin Watson
Answer on page 7



The MG Wet Wine Tour

By Jim Villers

Becky Watson focused on Bedford County for this year's wine tour, a part of the state that had not seen MGs for a while and Allan discovered roads that made our LBCs purr up and down the rolling hills with sweeping vistas and tight turns. It was wonderful.

Bedford County is more than an afternoon drive from the low lands here along the bay. We departed early Friday morning from the Suffolk Hardee's for a run up to Blandford Church in Petersburg to meet Becky and Allan, who have recently relocated to Beaverdam,

just north of Ashland. What a surprise, the thick brick walls of Blandford Church were con-



Confederate Memorial at Blandford Church

constructed on the high ground in 1735 by Peter Jefferson, the father of Thomas Jefferson. The church was abandoned in 1806 and languished until 1901 when it was

restored as The Confederate Memorial with genuine Tiffany glass windows representing the states of the Confederacy. The textured art glass beautifully formed the flowing robes and glorious backgrounds of these historic windows.

We then drove to the Petersburg historic district, turning on Cockade Alley, a undulating cobble stone "road", for a group picture



South Depot train station in historic Petersburg

in front of the octagonal South Side Train Depot (Becky always finds an octagonal building for a picture) and lunch at the Brick House Run, a VERY British pub serving "fish and chips" and "bangers and mash".



Andy Wallach outside looking in the Brickhouse Run restaurant

With everyone fed and looking for a nap, we headed west on US-460 for the long drive. As we paused for gas in Crew, we saw clouds beginning to gather.

We drove on to LeoGrande Winery, south west of Lynchburg. Arriving at the winery, we were greeted by the loud complaints of a rooster who must have thought that the little cars were trespassing on his space. While most enjoyed the wine and cheese, Tad Carter found a comfortable Adirondack chair with a view of the vineyard and the dark clouds approaching the Peaks of Otter in the distance.



Under darkening skies, the cars exercised their engines and suspensions on roads among

manicured fields with large new homes. Then the rains came, we paused in a church parking lot to secure our waterproof covers; except for Andy Wallach, who didn't want to get his

Becky Watson trying for that "special picture" at the LeoGrande Winery



Robert Perrone & Michele Peters assembling the Bugeye top just before the downpour

want to get his

TF's canvas top wet. So, Cynthia cinched up her waterproof hood as the showers elevated into a drenching storm. Snug in our LBC cocoons, we found our way up the steep mountain road to the Peaks of Otter Lodge on the Blue Ridge Parkway, arriving just in time for our dinner reservations.

The Peaks of Otter Lodge, without TV, telephone, internet or even cell phone coverage, was a perfect place to relax with wine and good company. Did I mention how well one sleeps to the sound of heavy rain on the roof?

Blue skies Saturday morning were encouraging as we were joined by two Austin Healys and an MG from Lynchburg. We began our tasting at the Peaks of Otter "Winery". I



Tasting bar at the Peaks of Otter "winery"

put winery in quotes as I doubt that the facility has ever seen a grape. Their wine was made from apples, pears, blackberries and even chili peppers. Most of us quit tasting before the time "Kiss of the Devil" chili pepper "wine" was offered (it was not wine but liquid fire).



White Rock winery owner sharing his fruits; excellent

White Rock Vineyards, a true personal winery, was our next stop. Such a pleasure to drive up to a home, meet the owner and see the rows of vines in his backyard. He truly enjoyed nurturing his plants and personally coaching his wine to fruition. We gathered on his expanded porch to taste his success with a sandwich lunch. Lunch ended with the sound: "rain; tops up" and we were on our way again with RainX and windshield wipers.

Driving beyond the showers, we found the Emerson Creek Pottery shop down a gravel road, past an iron cattle gate and located in an 1825 "un-restored" cabin. The rustic setting complimented the primitive hand painted pottery. With the showers finding us again, we headed off searching for dry.

The D-Day Memorial, outside of Bedford is a moving, spectacular tribute to the men of Bedford and all who went onto the beaches of Normandy in 1944 and did not return. The showers had past and, walking in the moist air, we were drawn by the symbolic beach,



A moving tour of the impressive D-Day memorial in Bedford

the jets of air and water depicting the danger in the water and the bronze soldiers struggling in the water, on the beach and climbing the cliffs to a victory arch. A

must see highlight of any tour.

With security closing the Memorial and rain beginning to fall again, we drove through downtown Bedford to a truly excellent restaurant, Liberty Station, located in the old train station. Arriving in heavy rain, we were seated near to a contingent of Confederate re-enactor soldiers. This was excellent an setting with great food. Heading back up the hill in a heavy drizzle, we arrived back at our Lodge, finishing the evening with wine, snacks and good company on the lower floor of the Lodge.

The sun rose Sunday morning; the tops came down and sun-screen was liberally applied to exposed skin. We enjoyed a beautiful morning drive through the country to Hickory Hill, another family winery in an old farmhouse, close to the shores of Smith Mountain Lake.



Sunday morning at the Peaks of Otter Lodge, lowering tops and applying sun-screen



Lunch stop at Lago Pizza, with our Columbian host and her son

Becky and Allan can find fun places. Lunch was at Lago Pizza, a strip mall eatery run by a very enthusiastic Columbian woman and her son, who reserved the entire premises for our visit and served us Chicago stuffed pizza which was out of this

world. Before leaving, she gathered with us and Andy's TF for a picture in front of her store. Very special.

Our last winery was Savoy-Lee, and as usual, one of the best was saved for last. Everyone enjoyed the wines and most were seen trying to squeeze in just



Andy Wallach enjoys the final tasting of the tour at Savoy-Lee winery

one more bottle. Oh the joy of driving a spacious GT! As with most every winery we've ever visited, there is a "winery dog." When asked "where's the dog" the call immediately went out to the farmhouse – "Bring the dog!" And

sure enough, the official Savoy Lee Winery Dog was chauffeured down to the tasting room for our petting pleasure.

From there, the trek back to Tidewater was back down some of the same roads through Crew and down 460. Some sprinkles and the threat of heavier rain caused some concern for Mike as his windscreen wipers continued to act up. Still, one more stop was in order at a gas station south of Petersburg. We managed to tape



on a spare fuse box and using a circuit on the spare, got

Andy Wallach's TF with Tad Carter's B enjoying the beautiful roads

the wipers functioning again. While fiddling around, we were treated to one of those sites that you occasionally see on the internet – and wonder if it is really true. We were witness to some guys loading two cars onto a one car open trailer. They stacked them one on top of the other by using a floor jack and a simple hand operated come-along. Once stacked, the whole lot was secured (and I use the word loosely) with a single web tie-down strap through the rear windows of the top car on the pile. We discretely snapped some pictures and decided to leave well ahead of that load. When last seen, they were in the quick-stop purchasing all the bungies available. You never know when you'll need one!

While mentioning the rain, I would like to comment that it never dampened our spirits or inconvenienced us in the least. It just added interest.

Also of interest and not to be overlooked were the constant mechanical gremlins that followed some of us. The Lucus gods again infected Susan Bond's black GT as her taillights and instrument cluster operated randomly. Mike Haag must have parked next to Susan's car as his white roadster soon exhibited similar symptoms. The darkness of Alan Watson's brake light was solved with a new bulb while the random engine performance of Barb Taychert's car was soon corrected by Bernie Imdahl fully seating her distributor into the

clinch clamp. It is nice to note that both Susan's and Mike's electrical gremlins were disinfected before arriving back in Tidewater.



Bernie Imdahl tightened Barb Taychert's distributor

Thank you again to Beckey and Alan for another memorable outing. The

members of the tour were: Bernie Imdahl with Nancy, Jim & Betty Villers, Chuck and Becky Hassler, Michele Peters & Robert Perrone, Vince Groover, Mike Haag with Denise, Andy Wallach and Cynthia Faschini, Sue & Terry Bond, Mike Knepler & Barb Taychert, Ted & Karen Carter, Russ Ripp and Donald & Rose Ladd.



HAPPY 35th ANNIVERSARY TMGC!

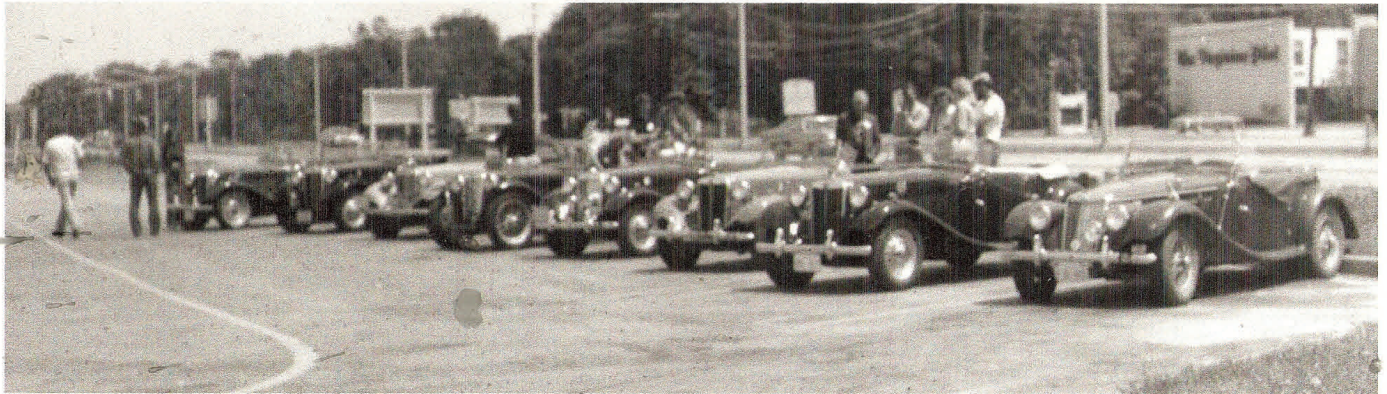


NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Ron Struewing

As you know, May marked the 35th anniversary of the Tidewater MG Classics. This issue and the next few issues will feature a series of articles and pictures from the early years of the club. The July issue will contain the article and pictures from the May 13th celebration at the Airport Hilton.

Start of the MG Club May 6, 1973, Pembroke Mall



Cars, left to right: Bob Kenny, Hank Giffin, Jack Manherz, Rusty Lamade, Chuck Souder, Dick Darazzo, Dave Barrows, Mike Ash.

THE START OF THE TMGC

On May 6, 1973, eight MG enthusiasts met in their MG's in the Sears parking lot at Pembroke Mall. After the gathering at the mall, they drove down to Jim Banvard's house to have a meeting, establishing the "Tidewater MG 'T' Classics" car club. About twenty people were in attendance at the first meeting.

The notes from that first meeting indicate that the "Purpose of the club will be to help one another."

It is without a doubt that the original members' desire for the purpose of the club has been accomplished in so many ways!



MG AND MORRIS

By Geoff Wheatley

January 2007

Ed. Note: This is Part One of a Two-Part Article

Most people who own an MG will know that the MG badge on the front of their car represents "Morris Garage", however how many of such owners are aware what "Morris Garage" was and why it existed? Billy Morris who started The Morris Motor Company in a garden shed in the rear of his parent's

home was, by any standards, a shrewd business man who saw the development of the motor vehicle as a mass market product, not simply a toy for the rich and famous. He left school at the age of twelve and was apprenticed to a bicycle repair shop in Oxford, England. Bicycles were the most popular means of independent transport at that time, both in Europe and America. They were as popular as the computer is in today's world. When Morris finished his apprenticeship at the age of sixteen, he asked the owner of the business for a twenty-five cent raise. He was refused. So he left and started his own business building and selling bicycles at home. Through some arrangement that was never made clear, he used the front room of his parents' house as his sales area and they moved to the upstairs floor. Within three years he had moved to other premises and was also producing motorcycles, employing 26 men by the time he reached the age twenty-one. He was a great admirer of Henry Ford and visited Ford early in his career. They became good friends, a friendship that lasted for many decades. Ford introduced him to several American suppliers who gave Morris a distinct advantage over his UK competitors. In return, he agreed to feature selected American vehicles in his new showroom being built in central Oxford. He also took Ford's idea of assembly line production and adopted it to meet British requirements. Ford was the first manufacturer to deal directly with the public rather than through agents. This gave the manufacturer flexibility in production and more important, control over the price of the car. Morris liked this idea and upon returning to England he ended all existing contracts with agents and started his own distribution center called "Morris Garage". In reality it was his origi-

nal new building with a different name and more show space. He also sold other manufacturers' cars, including certain quality American products. I recall as a small boy looking into the windows of this establishment standing on the doorstep which consisted of a large stone slab about ten feet by six with the picture of an ox crossing a Ford imprinted on the top surface in red and blue. This is the city of Oxford coat of arms taken from a Saxon engraving of around 850ad.

The challenge to any small boy was to jump from the head of the ox to the tip of his tail in one go. When the showrooms were closed in 1970 this famous front step was thrown on the local scrap heap along with many other artifacts that some of us would give their life saving to have today. By chance, a local scrap merchant saw the step and despite the fact that it was broken during the demolition, purchased it for about twenty US dollars then presented it to the MG Owners Club who had it repaired. It now greets MG owners at their club headquarters.

The First World War created a demand for motor vehicles and manufacturers like Morris and, of course, Ford who now had a UK factory simply grew in size year by year. When the war ended Morris had built a large production plant outside of Oxford in the village of Cowley to support his war effort. The same applied to Ford who also expanded his UK production plant. However, both Ford and Morris almost lost everything due to an unforeseen situation. The general feeling by the allied governments was that the war would not end until 1919 or even 1920. In America the forecast was even longer after economic evaluation was made of the exhausted state of both Britain and France. The allied manufacturing plants were encouraged to continue peak production through 1918 and into 1919. When Germany collapsed in the fall of 1918 and the war came to a sudden end, Morris and Ford had at least six months production waiting to be shipped to the war zones. Governments in those days did not pay in advance. It was considered your duty to provide credit to the war effort.

The Ford Company shipped most of their war production back to the Ford plants in the US and somehow managed to absorb the loss. However, Henry Ford directed his UK operation to send about 15% of their war production to the white Russians fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia. It was a gift from a devoted capitalist. However, the vast majority of these vehicles never saw action as they were not designed for the Russian climate and simply froze before they could be unloaded. Morris was not that political and sold his vehicles at production cost to anyone who had the money to buy, and yet he survived. But others went to the wall. The war boom was over and companies who had mortgaged their future in war production went bust.

Until 1925 the "Morris Garage" operation carried a number of other brand names sold on a commission basis. A visit to the showrooms would enable you to view the latest American Hudson Super Six or its less expensive, Hudson Essex. You might also find a couple of Dodge vehicles in company with a British Hillman, Sunbeam or Daimler. The ever-popular bull nose Morris and the Morris Oxford would be on show in company with a luxury Wolseley. The latter was being one of the manufacturers who went under in 1919. Morris purchased the company at auction; an action that became the basis of intense rivalry between Herbert Austin and Billy Morris that continued until Austin passed away in 1968. Herbert Austin had been the general manager of the new Wolseley Carriage Company when it started in 1899. He considered it his personal creation--almost like a first-born child. In 1906, he resigned his position as general manager to start his own company, which in time would become the competitive rival to the Morris empire, especially in the popular small car market that boomed in Britain after the first World War. Austin never forgave Morris for buying Wolseley before he could raise the money to bid for the company and often referred to Morris as "that back street upstart". I don't think Morris was ever upset by this as his wealth simply grew year by year and he continued to buy companies that could supply his production needs. Like Ford, he was one of the few manufacturers who produced his own engines, bodies and wheels. Most of the other car companies purchased from independent suppliers and consequently were at the mercy of the market when sales increased or declined.

In 1926, a new direction was adopted at "Morris Garages". The new general manager, Cecil Kimber, who was certainly the godfather, if not the father, of the MG sports car, persuaded Morris to concentrate on selling only Morris products. The profit was better and it established the location as the showcase of the Morris empire. Until Kimber joined the Morris Company, Billy had his main office on the second floor of the showrooms and was available to discuss and converse with his customers. Never a born salesman, Morris tended to be serious and his interests were practical. In his youth, he had wanted to study medicine and only started his bicycle business to raise enough money to attend medical school. His lack of formal education blocked this desire. Instead he was destined to become one of the wealthiest men in the world, giving millions of dollars to both Oxford University and its world famous hospital. He built the first woman's college in Oxford named after his wife, Kathleen. Followed by Nuffield College, the first international establishment of the university. I had the pleasure of attending Nuffield College and even met Morris at a college garden party a couple of years before he died in 1963.

Needless to say, I was impressed with the man. At that time his total wealth was estimated at around eight billion 1960 dollars. Sad to say, the government took most of it in death duties.

He left no children and gave at least half of his fortune away. Kimber, his new general manager, must have been a good choice since within eighteen months Morris had vacated his upstairs office and moved to the production plant at Cowley. He installed a new office and a small apartment where he spent most of his working and private life. (This may be why there were no heirs to the Morris fortune as his wife preferred to reside at their country home at "Nuffield", the name that Morris chose when he became a "Lord of the Realm". Kathleen entertained quite lavishly with weekend parties while Morris played around with his toys back at the factory, usually making a nuisance of himself with the production staff by changing designs or stopping production to inspect a certain procedure. In short, a micro-manager par excellence!

The Morris Garage complex consisted of a main showroom with various minor display centers in and around Oxfordshire. It also had its own workshop and eventually a crew of about ten workers. In the early days Kimber had to borrow workers from Cowley when he wanted to put together a special car for a special customer. This was seen by Cowley as an infringement on their domain and it was only because Kimber had a sound relationship with Morris that this type of backroom construction ever took place. Old number one, the first MG ever made was produced under these circumstances with three men borrowed from Cowley. To be honest, they were hijacked from the Morris Works on the grounds that the "boss", wanted Kimber to create a car that could be entered in a London to Lands End national event to obtain publicity. The fact that Kimber actually won this event with this car was a surprise to all concerned, and I suspect even Kimber himself! Morris Garages were one of the largest advertisers in the UK. In 1921 they spent in excess of \$30,000 on advertising which resulted in a turnover in sales in excess of two million 1922 dollars. Morris took a leaf out of his mentor Henry Ford who also spent large sums on promotional advertising. Morris believed in advertising and made several short promotional films to advertise his cars long before any competitor even thought of this promotional activity. I have one that was made in the 1920's--silent of course. The competition saw sales as simply a display operation. Put the cars in the showroom and the public would do the rest.

Morris believed that you had to get them into the showroom first and did his with advertisements and any other promotional activity that he could devise. When Morris started his humble cycle shop the first thing he did was build a bicycle and enter it in the na-

tional races that were popular around the turn of the 1900s. He became a regular competitor and even managed to win a couple of national awards. The same policy applied when he started to make motorcycles. He became a competitive rider and even supported a three-man team riding Morris motorcycles with his name plastered all over the crew. Kimber was also competitive; he was an active rally driver and certainly made a name for himself in hill-climbing events, winning the British Cup no less than three times in various vehicles. All this despite the fact that he was disabled due to a motorcycle accident in his youth.

In today's terms they were both excellent marketing people, selling an equally excellent product. When the market was booming, Morris reduced his prices while his competitors increased theirs to make a quick buck. When sales were low, Morris maintained his workforce and stockpiled his vehicles while others laid off workers and reduced production. If things got really bad, as they did in 1924-25 when there were more cars than buyers, Morris sold his vehicles at cost plus 5% and turned over his production every three months. This short depression may have been one of the deciding factors in dropping other vehicles sold in his showrooms on commission and concentrating on only Morris vehicles.

We do know that as early as December 1923 the newspaper in Oxford featured an advertisement for the Super Sports Morris and the letters MG were featured in the advertisement for the first time. A similar version was featured in the Morris Owner in May 1924. These are the first recorded use of the now famous octagon and the letters MG.



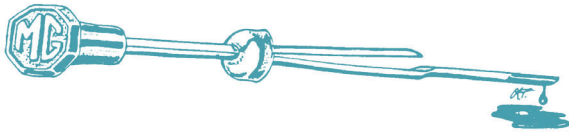
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

from page 4



THIS IS A MG ZR

The Dipstick



The Tidewater MG Classics


Ronald Struewing
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Virginia Beach, VA 23464-7732

Affiliated with



North American MGB Register
“Newsletter of the Year”

FIRST CLASS



7:30 - Kick Tyres
8:00 - Meeting Starts

June Meeting
Tuesday, June 3rd
Bill and Renee Olcheski
1409 Edgartown Court
Virginia Beach
467-4046

Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard

Edgartown Ct
Clarendon Dr
Willow Dr
Pisarro Dr
Pisarro Cir
Edgartown Rd
Lyons Rd

I-264
I-64
Indian River Rd
Ferrell Rd
Indian River Rd
Princess Anne Rd
Blvd
Independence
Holland Rd
Sa. Plaza Trail
Lynnhaven Pkwy
Salem Rd
Elbow Rd
Kempsville/Witchduck Roads