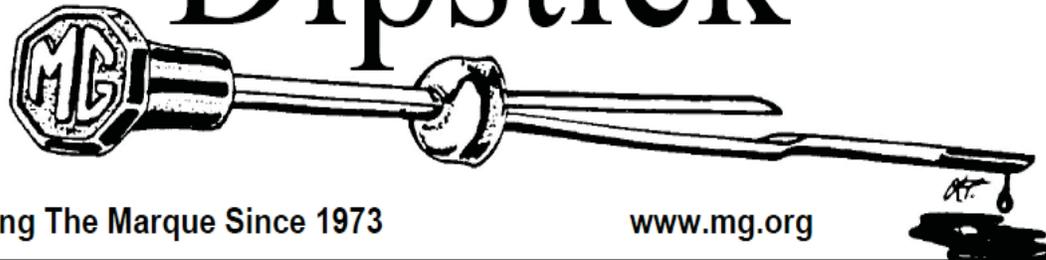




# The Dipstick



Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

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

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## Thank You TMGC!

By Geoff Haynes

Some of you may remember me showing up with my wife Liz, back in the Fall of 2019. I did a little self-introduction at our first meeting, outlining my hunt for a good Frogeye Sprite -it's NOT a Bugeye. I spoke of learning to drive in a beat-up one, bought for £195 back in 1972, in my college days in England. It had a scruffy, but comfortable, Mini-Cooper racing seat that I kept because it allowed me to lie back and slink down low, hopefully making me look cool.

At least I *thought* sports cars made me look cool. I returned to college expecting to create a boy-racer image, capable of luring the girls off into the night. However, at an early dance, I met a girl, telling her my car was parked outside, just waiting to spirit her away. In those days, this was very rare for an English student to be able to say that. It wasn't like in the American college movies. I escorted her outside to the car park, but remembered I'd left my scarf inside. I casually pointed her in the direction of the Sprite and said I'd be back in a few minutes. I returned to her, as she stood obediently by a nearby Morris Minor 1000.

"What are you standing here for?" I spluttered, my self-image crumbling.

"Isn't this your car? I thought you looked more like a Moggy-1000 bloke!"

I have never made assumptions about linking personalities and car types again.



Nearly fifty years later, I wanted to re-live those days, without the agonies of it being a daily driver that was parked outside, even in long, snowy winters. Who knows? Maybe, this time, I could find a bonnet badge and full grille that were almost impossible to buy, back then. I know this isn't a tale of an MG, but think of it as the father of all those Midgets.

I soon became aware that I knew comparatively NOTHING about buying a classic car as I mingled among all the wise club enthusiasts who had been there and done it with MGs for decades. I was amazed at the many tips and leads I got in the following months - even an email telling me of a green one, spotted in Virginia Beach that one of you had tried to follow and find out if it was for sale!

In November I finally found a 1960 in Pasadena, that had been rebuilt from scratch. Having spent all of its life in California, like many old cars that have survived, it had a history of being off the road for years. It was laid up in 1999 until 2008, before five years were spent on reviving it. After the restorer won his first show with it, sadly, he died, forcing the car to spend another six years in his garage while the will was fought over.

After flying to LA, I was actually nervous as I took it out for a test drive. I was already sold on it from my visual check and engineer's report - everything was either replaced or refurbished - but I balked when I found it was nearly undriveable, because of a poor 1-2 shift, plus no rubbers on the pedals, causing my slightly neuropathic feet to unknowingly slip off the shiny clutch. I wasn't about to learn to, 'double de-clutch it,' at this late stage in my life. The culprit was the original smooth-case box which the owner had kept to preserve its concours eligibility. I had already learned from Bob Perrone that a worn original transmission was difficult to repair and even find the right parts for. It had only needed first gear to get it onto the trailer for shows. His son-in-law, selling the car, couldn't believe I wanted to actually DRIVE it around the streets.

I returned home forlorn at such a near miss and reported in to the next MG Club meeting to bemoan my California findings. Several members quickly pointed out my foolishness, explaining that if the basic car was sound, then I should go ahead. I reduced my offer by \$4,000 which was, amazingly, accepted. In less than a week it was shipped over. A refurbished rib-case box from a 1275 Midget, a snazzy, wooden steering wheel, shift knob and red three-point belts definitely ruled it out of being concours any more, but the original bits were stored, in case the next owner wants to show it again. As soon as I went over 35 mph, I realised that the unused tires were 'square' from standing for so long, and even though the master cylinder and slave were new and hardly used since they were fitted, they had to be replaced for the same reason.

Tech historical point: Back in 1973, I bought two kits that allowed me to renew the rubber seals in the old ones and saved lots of money.

Thanks go to Bob West at Abacus Racing for running his gimlet eye over it when he changed the transmission, declaring it the, 'second best Frogeye,' he'd ever seen. After a few months of me begging, he promoted it to the number one spot. I'm pretty sure he was humoring me, but I like to pretend. He improved various bits and pieces, like cleaning up the tiny 1 1/8" SU carbs - my first one had them pulled out for a single, big Weber - tuning it up, swapping in a spin-on oil filter, and fitting a short tonneau to the already present stud posts. A six-blade radiator fan was to prove essential for the heights of mid-Summer.

The car was a life saver in a repressed 2020, as we went for spins from Newport News to Williamsburg, Smithfield, Yorktown and all local errands. Packed lunches kept us safely in the car, only threatened by the number of people who came up to us to examine it. "Please keep six feet back!" was the most used sentence in those times. It was amazing how many of them had owned a Healey, MG or Triumph in their youth and wanted to impress upon us that they were kindred souls. One man, in his eighties, spoke down from the height of his specially-designed camper van recounting how he, 'met his bride,' in a Sprite, bought brand new in 1959!

“She made me sell it when Junior came along,” he complained, with a secret wink.

“I think you played a part in Junior showing up, so don’t you blame me!” she fired back.

After about thirty minutes, they seemed reluctant to leave.

We were approaching 2,000 miles as Winter closed in, having initially crept through the first 500 without exceeding 3,000 revs. According to the manual, it can only be regarded as fully, ‘run-in,’ between 2,000 and 3,000. This wasn’t a problem as 60 mph was, and is, quite fast enough for us. Interstates can be terrifying and avoided, if possible.

The only issues we had were TWO consecutive tach gears (off the generator) simply wearing out. “Chinese crap!” was Bob West’s incisive diagnosis, as he peeled one open to reveal that they burn up the installed grease pretty quickly. I’ve now been taught how to open one and refill it, every 500 miles. Apparently, the original, more reliable Smiths part is now impossible to find. (Anyone?)

The only drawback was my diminishing relationship with the foot pedals. Even with them newly covered, I was becoming less impressed with my driving skills. Mystifyingly, I wasn’t braking as fast as Liz was. One day I looked down and saw that my foot wasn’t pressing on the actual pedal, but one-third of the way up the brake arm! Additionally, being six-foot tall, I was starting to feel a bit upright in the non-reclining seat. How long could I maintain this venture of, ‘returning to my youth?’

Miraculously, Liz - who had initially dragged her feet a little on the whole enterprise - found that the car fit her like a glove and soon became Number One Driver. At last, I can once again slouch down low, looking cool - just as long as no-one sees my cushionsupport. It seems quite fitting that I’m back on the right-hand side of a Sprite, just like I was in the seventies in England, as Liz changes gears at 4,500 revs, just because she loves the noise the exhaust makes.

I've been hoping, for a year, to bring it to a meeting to show it off, but I'm a Covid safety-firster. Maybe later this year? Thanks for all the advice. You emboldened me to go out and **DO IT**, rather than just dream about it





**21<sup>st</sup> Annual**  
Williamsburg British Car Club British & European Car Show  
To benefit **The ARC of Greater Williamsburg**  
**The Shops At High St.**  
High Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185

Saturday April 24th, 2021

Schedule: 9:00am show field opens – 11:00 am show field closes

Show: 10:00am to 2:00pm, food from on-site restaurants available

12:00 balloting closes, awards at 2:00pm or earlier if ready

**Preregistration Guidelines:**

Preregistration must be received by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. All registered cars will be placed in a class for judging and award purposes. Cars must be parked with their assigned class to be eligible for awards. Trailer parking available nearby. All cars must be driven onto the show field under their own power. Classes will be determined by preregistered entries. This is a popular vote car show. Balloting for best in class will be conducted by the registrants; judging for The Chairman's Best will be judged by three WBCC members. This is a rain or shine show -since the parking lot is a two-story structure, the bottom lot is dry. A portion of the proceeds will be given to **The Arc of Greater Williamsburg**. Door prizes will be awarded and there will be a 50-50 raffle. This year, our featured Marque is Mini. Email:

WBCC2021carshow@gmail.com, contact: Mark Caldwell 865-599-0294. Car show dash plaques will be distributed to all preregistered vehicles. Kit cars allowed for display only.

**Car Show Registration:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE OF CAR \_\_\_\_\_ MODEL \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

Waiver of Liability: Neither I nor my heirs will hold Williamsburg British Car Club nor The Shops of High Street liable for any injury, death or damages occurring while engaged in or traveling to or from this event.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (Must be signed to enter the show)

Pre-registration \$25.00 by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021      Late Registration at the show \$30.00

Make check payable to WBCC

Mail to WBCC, c/o Mark Caldwell 5406 Beverly Ln, Williamsburg, VA 23188

**A word about COVID**

The organizers of the Williamsburg British Car Club British & European Car Show will follow the Virginia governor's COVID-19 guidelines. A final decision to proceed with the 2021 car show will be made based crowd size or other pertinent restrictions as they exist on March 26<sup>th</sup>. If the show is canceled, pre-registrants will have the option to receive a full refund or apply 100% of their registration fee as a donation to **The Arc of Greater Williamsburg**.

For information about COVID-19 in Virginia, visit [vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus](http://vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus).



## *Marque Time*

Another month, another edition of Marque Time. And again, I face a challenge in what to write about. I have to have something for my faithful readers (both of them).

Since we haven't had any recent meetings or other TMGC-related events, such as drives, there isn't much in the way of club news to write about. I don't even have any juicy gossip or rumors to spread around.

I considered doing a little "recycling" of some of my past literary gems, but I couldn't find any. If you've read any of these before, I'm sure you know what I mean.

As I said a couple of months ago, I think that we're all ready to get back to normal this year. This past year started to get to me, so I went to see a psychiatrist. I told the psychiatrist that everyone hates me. He said I was being ridiculous, give it time; everyone hasn't met me yet.

I've used so many of those lines someone called me Rodney the other day. I took it as a compliment.

Well, thankfully this monthly column is generally very short. And if you're reading this, you probably are thankful too. I really can't blame you.

*Safety Fast,*  
Robert

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### **TMGC Officers and Committees**

President	Robert Perrone	574-3233
Vice President	Mike Haag	Mikehmg@cox.net
Secretary	Vacant	
Treasurer	Jim Villers	822-9182
Editors	Mark and Kathy Davidoski	499-4647
Membership	Mike Ash	678-0963
Webmaster	Mike Haag	Mikehmg@cox.net
Historian	Susan Bond	403-1169
Technical	Terry Bond	403-4614
Activities	Bruce Easley	570-2042
Clubs	Mike Ash	678-0963
Regalia	Rose Ladd	737-2468

TMGC Activities Report  
20 Feb 2021

What's up with all the rain??? Well, I suppose it's better than glare ice and freezing rain. Also, it provides a Great Opportunity to do leak checks! Hopefully leak checks are not needed. In terms of activities, not much new to report. The March meeting is cancelled as of this time, and the cold wet weather doesn't make for an attractive outside gathering, and social distancing issues make inside gathering problematic as well. When the weather warms, we'll look for opportunities to take a flash drive for a park picnic or other such outing. In the meantime, we can look forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Williamsburg British and European car show on Saturday, April 24, then the club's annual Spring Tour on April 30-May 1. Here's hoping you are all well and finding opportunities for Road Tests.

*Safety Fast!!*

*Bruce*



TMGC Calendar  
As of Feb 2021

***Local TMGC events for 2021 are TBA at this time due to the Covid-19 situation.***

Mar 2 (Tue) – Meeting Cancelled

Mar ? (Sat) – TRAACA Swap Meet, tentative

Apr 7 (Wed) – Meeting TBA

Apr ? – Spring Tech Session (TBA)

Apr 24 - Williamsburg Club Car Show

Apr 30 - May 2 – Mini-GOF  
Founders' Inn, Virginia Beach

**Apr 30 – May 2 – TMGC Spring Tour (TBA)**

May ?? (Sat) – Drive your MGA Day

**May 4 (Tue) – Tentative meeting, hosted by Cynthia & Andy, 545 Mayflower Road, Norfolk, VA**

**May 26 (Wed) – Peninsula Desert Drive (tentative)**

**May 27 (Thu) – Southside Desert Drive (tentative)**

June 14 – 17 MG2021  
Atlantic City, NJ

*A bit of British automotive humor from Jennifer Ash!.....*

Conjoined twins walk into a bar in Canada and park themselves on a bar stool. One of them says to the bartender, "Don't mind us; we're joined at the hip. I'm John, he's Jim. Two Molson Canadian beers, draft please." The bartender, feeling slightly awkward, tries to make polite conversation while pouring the beers. "Been on vacation yet, fellas?" "Off to England next month," says John. "We go to England every year, rent a car, and drive for miles and miles, don't we, Jim?" Jim nods. "Ah, England!" says the bartender. "Wonderful country...the history, the culture, and especially the beer" "Nah, we don't like that British crap," says John. "Hamburgers and Molson's beer, that's for us, eh Jim? And we can't stand the English people, they're so arrogant and rude." "So why keep going to England?" asks the bartender. =====  
John replies: "Gives Jim a chance to drive."



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October 17, 1956

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