

The Dipstick



"The Newsletter of the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club"

www.mg.org

Volume XXXVI, Issue 1

Dedicated To Preserving The Marque Since 1973

January 2009

MARQUE TIME

A Tale of Two Presidents.....or.....how your car of choice just might determine your legacy!

The other day I needed to get my mind off of "The Economy" and the impending demise of the American Automobile Industry. So I thought I'd reflect on how much fun I've been having as TMGC's "Dear Leader." This led me to thinking of other notable Presidents that occasionally make the news. Many of these characters spend a lot of time shaping their images and positioning themselves for the record books. A recent book inspired me to compare myself with a world leader who, it turns out, owns a car similar to my own. So let's compare two typical (?) Chief Executives.....

President #1: Recently re-elected, with a majority of the votes. (No one ran against him!) Leads an organization with a treasury that's always in the black. Eagerly awaiting the day when a carefully groomed replacement is elected. Has never been indicted or convicted of anything. Owns an LBC

President #2: Recently re-elected with 100% of the ballot. (Jailed the other candidates.) Leads an organization whose treasury reports inflation of several thousand million percent. Presides over a cholera epidemic of epic proportions. Is determined to die in office! Has earned world renown as a pariah who should be before the World Court. Owns an LBC.

This is a cautionary tale. Despite all the similarities, there is ONE THING that really sets these two fellows apart. That's right! #1 owns an MG, while #2 is a Triumph man. What's that you say...."It's just a coincidence that TMGC is not in the same boat as Zimbabwe!" Perhaps.....but just to be on the safe side of history, my advice to you is, has always been, and will forever remain: "Drive an Octagon!"

Happy New Year everyone. We'll need plenty of good luck and good fellowship in the months ahead. TMGC is just the place to find both.

Cheers,
Mark Davidoski

Postscript: Thank you, thank you, thank you Cynthia and Andy for hosting TMGC's Holiday Party! Everyone enjoyed a memorable evening of friendship and culinary bliss. The Silent Auction generated an impressive sum for *The Dwelling Place*. And everyone contributed to the huge assortment of gifts for the children who reside there. Thanks to Beckey Watson for arranging our sponsorship of *The Dwelling Place*, and to Becky Hassler for encouraging all of those bids during the auction. TMGC is fortunate to be able to count Cynthia, Andy, Beckey and Becky in our ranks!



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Check www.mg.org for the latest info!

Dec. 30 Holiday Lights Drive

Jan. 07 Meeting at Frankie's Place for Ribs

Jan. 12 Dipstick Deadline

Feb 03 Meeting at Craig & Joyce Cummings'



Membership and New Members

Bill Yoshida

The TMGC Club still stands at 97 memberships as of 10 December. I guess we are in slow times for a few months. There is still hope for a friend of mine who used to be a member, Chris Fisher, that I hope will be joining again once he gets his engine repaired and has his MG back on the road.

We did have one renewal this month; however it was for an already current membership; Ed and Marion Adams. Ed, your membership is now extended through June 2010. Vince Grover was kind enough to drop by our home and drop off your dues last Saturday. Thanks Vince.



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	Bill Yoshida	554-0402
Activities	Becky Watson	804-227-3807
Historian	Susan Bond	482-5222
Technical	Mark Childers	432-9155
Regalia	Becky Hassler	874-1477
Clubs	Mike Ash	495-0307
Webmaster	Mike Haag	mikehmg@cox.net

Note from the Editors

by Peggy Craig & Ron Struewing

This is the time of year when we discover how many people helped us write the *Dipstick* each month throughout the year. Last year we had 24 contributors who received award certificates, with a total of 126 contributions. We thank each and every one of you and encourage those who haven't contributed yet to make an effort to do it this coming year. We don't write the newsletter; it's all done by the members. We only edit and arrange it. So, all you who contributed give yourselves a big pat on the back. We wouldn't have a *Dipstick* without you. Thank you from all of us.

When submitting articles, please email them to both editors, Peggy balloon1@cox.net, and Ron rstruewing@cox.net. When submitting photos, with or without an article, please send them to Ron and our historian, Susan Bond sue007@infionline.net. This will ensure that not only we get them for our newsletter, but Susan gets them for the archives. Please label the photos either by saving the file name as the caption or putting a note about each photo the email.

*Happy New Years
from Your Editors!*

I Can Dream, Can't I?

by Geoff Wheatley

I enjoy my MGs, even the mass-produced MGB that had a production run of almost eighteen years, not many cars can say that! However, if I had a wish and money was no object what would I add to my collection? Well there is only one classic vehicle that I really lust after but doubt that I will never own: The 1931 eight-liter Bentley. As far as we know, the total production of this unique car was around one hundred, and many had various bodies apart from the standard Vanden Plas as fitted to the four and a half liter Bentley and its predecessors. The actual production period of the Bentley Company was short little more than ten years, from 1921 through to mid 1932. We think of these cars as monster green vehicles with an equally over-large blower sticking out of the front winning races all over Europe and even in North Amer-



Garden of Lights Drive-out to

Norfolk Botanical Gardens

Tuesday, December 30th

We will depart from Franco's Italian Restaurant at **7:30pm**

6200 North Military Highway, Norfolk

(corner of Military Highway & Norview)

If you'd like to eat prior to departure, recommend you arrive at Franco's by 6:30pm

POC: Mark Davidoski: 831-4196 (cell), 499-4647 (home)



ica.

Despite this impressive record, the company never made any real money and like the pre-war MG Company, managed to struggle along with one foot in the red for most of its short life. The idea of a super-powered vehicle had been around in Britain from the moment Rolls and Royce decided to produce a luxury motor car. However, no one was keen to throw their hat into the ring as the financial investment and expected return did not balance out. In Europe there were various small companies producing vehicles that could be called competitive in the sense that they did win the major motor race events of the day but none were strictly designed to burn up the rubber and show a clean pair of heels to any contender. They were modified versions of custom production cars made for the rich and famous to parade around the streets of Paris Rome or Berlin. The Brits were years behind the Europeans when it came to motor vehicle production and the use of such contraptions on Britain's unpaved roads. It took years to get the speed limit raised to twenty miles an hour and it only hit thirty-five after the end of the First World War. Mr. W.O Bentley was born in 1888 and at the ripe old age of sixteen went to work as an apprentice at the engineering works of the Great Northern Railway Company. It is interesting to note that many of the British vehicle manufacturers from the turn

of the century started their engineering life in and with the British Railway industry. The development of the steam locomotive was at its peak in the late nineteenth century and the technology was certainly on the cutting edge of the time. Bentley finished his apprenticeship in 1910 and decided that he would try and join a motor vehicle manufacturer as a development engineer. As already indicated, there were not that many people gainfully employed in that specialty in 1910. Sure, we had Austin and Morris fighting each other to get a major foothold in the UK and Ford swamping the American market with his cheap vehicles, but design and/or development was not an important ingredient to the success of these corporations. Rolls Royce trained their own engineers who guarded their positions like pots of gold which in reality they were, and the other quality manufacturers and their employees did much the same thing. To get his foot into the door, Bentley obtained a post as a supervisor for the maintenance of a fleet of London Motor Cabs, most imported from France who had a booming motor cab industry and proved to be the salvation of Paris in the First World War when they were mobilized to move troops to the front line to repel a major German attack. After two years, looking after Taxi Cabs, Bentley teamed up with his brother, raised some cash and opened a Motor sales showroom in Hanover Street, London, an up-market

area with wealthy neighbors. They imported the popular French D.F.P vehicles powered by a fifteen horsepower engine that served its purpose but was never enhanced to create a better performance. (This was the policy of the day, make a basic sturdy engine and use it until the casting blocks wore out.)

WO Bentley decided that he could improve the performance and at the same time make the engine more flexible. His modifications were so successful that the redesigned two-liter engine not only pushed the performance to over 50% of its original but when fitted into a sports style chassis won various events at the then new Brooklands race track. By the time the First World War commenced Bentley was recognized as a leading motor engineer and later as a development engineer for British aero engines. The famous Bentley piston for aero engines was used by several manufacturers both in the UK and overseas. Another famous power unit designed by Bentley was the Rotary Aero engine where the engine went round in company with the propeller! About 30,000 of these were produced during and after the war. Obviously this power unit produced a financial return to its designer who invested this in company with a few other speculators into the Bentley Motor Company. The idea was to produce a high speed, sports car that would hold the road at sixty miles an hour and stop when required. (Not always a standing feature with cars produced at this time!)

My use of the term "Sports Car" may be misleading as the advertisements of the day described the car as a Speed Tourer, which covered a multitude of functions. It also helped when a new owner wanted to obtain insurance. The fact that the car could travel in excess of sixty miles an hour on roads that were designed for carts and cattle in most of the country made the insurance industry nervous. Therefore, the term Tourer was more reassuring than Sports.

This same analogy applied to the MG Sports car in later years, if you study the advertising of the 1930s you will seldom see the word sports or speed used. Also, if you study the settings of most advertisements, they are always in an up market location where furs and diamonds abound. Typical is the famous 1933 advertisement for the tiny MGJ2 set against a British country house shooting party or the equally inexpensive fabric M-Type parked outside a five-star hotel complete with five star guests. Marketing then was as important as it is today, perhaps more so.

Back to Mr. W.O Bentley; by the fall of 1919 Bentley has designed a three-liter power unit that would become the symbol of the Bentley name. It was shown at the first post-war Motor Show too much acclaim, but production of the actual car did not get under way until early in 1921. Why? The answer was money or rather a shortage of the stuff.

The car had to prove itself that year or the com-

pany would simply fade away as so many others had done before the war. The car and its four-cylinder engine did not let the investors down. That year it won three major British events and in 1922 entered the world famous Tourist Trophy Race held on the Isle of Man. Three cars were entered and took second, fourth and fifth. Such a performance had never been seen before from a company that was only eighteen months old. The Germans and the French got a further shock the next year when a private entry driven by John Duff won the LeMans, a first if ever there was one! The three-liter series was in production until 1927 and proved its worth all over the world. Total production was just under 1700 so it is easy to see that no fortunes were made during this period. The price of the car was by any standards expensive. In today's dollars you could expect to pay \$50,00 for the vehicle without the body so the entire car could run you into a six-figure purchase but so can many other high performance cars today. You had to have a few extra bucks to buy a Bentley in 1927 but if you did there was not much on the road that could out perform your vehicle with reliability and comfort thrown in for good measure.

On hairpin bends you could out drive any other car and with the blower at full blast nothing would pass you. On top of all, that the car would stop when required with four wheel anti-lock, all Bentleys after 1927, a unique feature at that time. The famous big six was launched in the summer of 1927 and had a waiting list for orders by Christmas. It has been described as a sports-type limousine and I guess that's not a bad description when you look at the bodies that were fitted. You could have a two-seater or four made to your own dimensions with whatever item of comfort you desired. The car would do a guaranteed 85-mph, some did more as we saw on the race tracks of Europe where this car dominated these events. Most entries were private, as the company did not have the money to support a works team.

In the 1927 LeMans the new four and a half six-cylinder set a standard of design and production quality that has never been equaled. It was early into the night with the cars entering the second half of the twenty-four hour race. At a location called "White House Corner", in France six competitors were involved in a crash, a truly nasty pile-up. By some miracle one of the three Bentleys entered managed to get out of the mess of the crash and returned to the race. Today we would have walked away and called it a day with the twisted axle, defected steering, loss of breaks, only one working headlight and various other items of the car either falling off or simply left behind after the crash. On top of all that it was raining cats and dogs with a side wind to help things along. Thirty miles ahead was the leader, a French entry that looked like it could take a fifteen minute rest and still cruise home to

the winning post. The Bentley driven first by Sam Davis then by his co-driver J.D. Banjafield forced this broken heap of a car to keep going and even managed to catch up with the leader about three miles from the finish. In a desperate burst of speed with the blower going at full blast and both men holding the steering wheel, the Bentley passed the finishing line fifteen seconds ahead of the French Aries much to the surprise of the driver! What a recommendation of quality and design not to mention sheer bloody guts!

Sad to say, the Bentley Motor Company went out of business in 1932 but the name still lives on purchased by various companies over the years and now in the hands of a European group. The Bentley eight, my dream car, was capable of speeds in excess of 140 mph and it is said that you can take your hands off the steering wheel at that speed and it won't move an inch--don't think I would like to try that or do 140 in a car that's seventy five years old but to simply sit in that bucket seat and watch the road disappear under the front wheels would be my idea of ecstasy.



NEW YEARS RESOLUTION

I will not allow my MG to end up like this!



Scene from the 2005 movie *Constantine*

Lost and Found

Someone left a jacket hanging in Ron and Anita's garage after the November meeting. It is a MED REG size, grayish colored jacket made by TOWNE with a zipper pocket on the left sleeve. If it is yours please contact Ron and Anita at 479-0084 to arrange return. If not claimed, we will bring it to the January meeting in an effort to make a last attempt to return it to its owner.

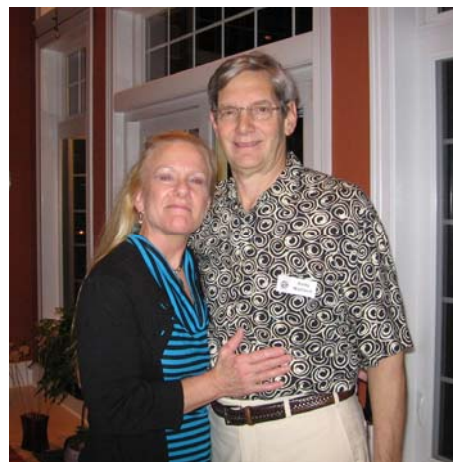


Holiday Party

December 19, 2008

At the home of
Cynthia Faschini and Andy Wallach

Photos by Susan Bond



Hosts Cynthia Faschini and Andy Wallach



Bob & Linda Pellerin

Aaron Johnson, Roy Wiley, Debie Johnson



Jim & Betty Villers



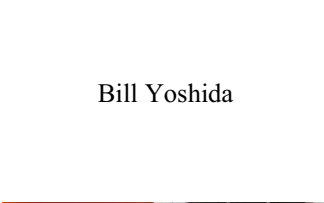
Becky and Alan Watson



Charlie Rice & Betty Davis



Craig & Joyce Cummings



Bill Yoshida



Bob & Dana Reisse



Becky Hassler ensures the silent auction items are ready.



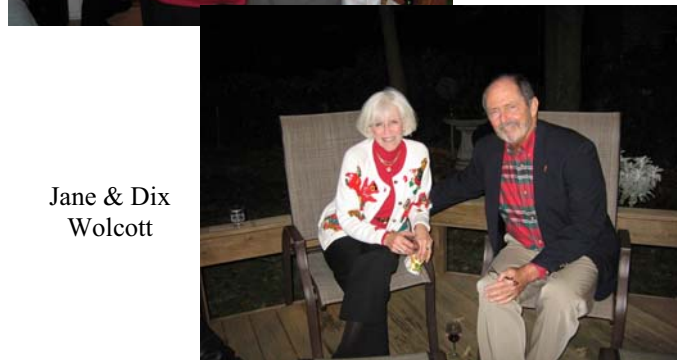
Bob & Missy McKenna



Denise & Mike Haag



Bruce & Jayne Easley



Jane & Dix Wolcott



Chris Fisher



Chuck & Becky Hassler



Doug & Eiko Wilson

Frank & Morris
Worrell



Hank & Stevie Giffin



Frosty standing guard during the party.

Lauren, Linda &
Jim Freeh



Josh Robertson



Dinner is served !



Ken & Karen
Johnson



Kennie & Harry
Watson



Activities Director, Beck
Watson, discusses the
coming year's activities
and monthly meetings.



Lara and J.D. Hawthorne





Dipstick Certificate of Appreciation Winners: Back row: Bill Yoshida, Doug Wilson, George Craig, Chuck & Becky Hassler, Sandy Hall, Mike Haag, Stephen Daniel, Craig Cummings, Joyce Cummings, Terry Bond, & Anita Edwards-Struewing. Middle left: Editors Ron Struewing & Peggy Craig, Donald Ladd. Front row: Jim & Betty Villers, Michele Peters, Beckey Watson, Mark Davidoski, & Mike Ash. Not pictured: Geoff Wheatley, Barry Tyson, & Robin Watson.



Ron Struewing & Anita Edwards-Struewing



Richard & Sandy Hall



Mark & Kathy Davidoski



Tad & Karen Carter



Mike & Jennifer Ash



Rose & Donald Ladd



Renee and Bill Olcheski



Roy & Marilyn Wiley



The 2008 Dipstick Award



Winner of the Dipstick Award, Susan Bond, with editors Peggy Craig and Ron Struewing



Sabrina & Mark Childers

The annual *Dipstick Award* was first awarded in 2003 and is given by *The Dipstick* editors to recognize one member's outstanding contributions to the newsletter for the year. Your editors could not produce such an excellent publication without the photographs, articles and columns contributed by the club members. The content of this newsletter is by you, for you, and about you, the Tidewater MG Classics Car Club members.

One member in particular has significantly impacted our newsletter this year. While fulfilling her position as club Historian, Susan found the time to write many articles and take numerous photographs for all the events she attended, as well as gather other interesting information, submitting an input for almost every issue. Her contributions and continued dedication to our newsletter continue to make *The Dipstick* an award-winning publication and a valuable source of information and entertainment for our members.

Susan, we editors thank you for your continued support which enables us to keep our newsletter pages full and our readers informed!

December 19, 2008

Susan & Terry Bond



Steve & Mitzi LaPaugh



Stephen Daniel, Terry Bond, John Terschak, Harry Watson, Leslie Terschak





Winner of the President's Award, Ron Struewing and President Mark Davidoski

The 2008 President's Award

The annual Tidewater MG Classics President's Award is presented annually to a club member whose contributions to the club are consistently "above and beyond." This year, we recognize the person who has been instrumental in communicating the TMGC image so effectively, both within the club and among the larger universe of British sports car enthusiasts worldwide.

Ron Struewing has been an active member for several years. With his spouse Anita, he is a fixture at scheduled meetings, special events, and technical sessions. But Ron's major contribution to TMGC and its membership is his stewardship of The Dipstick, which is recognized far and wide as one of the very best club newsletters in the collector car world. Ron actively solicits material for each month's issue and works closely with contributors to adjust deadlines as needed. He uses his graphics skills liberally, resulting in eye-catching effects. Now that the distribution of The Dipstick is 99% electronic, Ron has reduced the club's carbon footprint enough to more than offset the greenhouse gases produced at club functions. The club's postage expenses have also seen a significant reduction. In addition to Ron's aforementioned publishing skills, he is a regular at monthly meetings and has also collaborated with Anita in hosting several. Ron leads a busy sea-going life in his "day job" with the Navy. In order to accomplish his Dipstick publishing duties, he frequently works at odd hours and from aboard ship in order to beat publication deadlines. Ron, thanks from your friends at Tidewater MG Classics for all you do!

December 19, 2008



Michelle Peters & Robert Perrone



George & Peggy Craig



MG's Future ??

By Richard Miller

Reprinted from "Meshing Gears" with permission

Already the "nay sayers" are singing the refrain, "Any MG produced under Chinese ownership can never be a real MG". This same cry-slightly varied was first sung in 1929 when MG moved from its Edmunds Road factory in Oxford to the former Pavlova Leather Works site in Abingdon On Thames. "Now MG's would be mass produced at the "huge" new Abingdon works-not carefully hand assembled as at Edmunds Road", said many.

Again in 1955 the cry was, "MG has died with the final MG TF". The streamlined aero dynamic MGA could not possibly be a "real" MG with its sleek lines and non-square rigged appearance.

Fast Forward to October 1980 and the last MGB leaving the Abingdon line as the legendary MG works closed forever! Then the cry was, "MG is dead. Any car that might in the future wear the Octagon badge-but not produced in Abingdon-was not and could not be a real MG". Of course this was forgetting that many real MG's had not been built in Abingdon. All of the pre 1929 MG's were built in Oxford and models like the 31,000 Farina Magnettes of 1959-68 were constructed at the Morris Cowley works and the 158,000 MG 1100 and 1300's of 1962-73 were built at Cowley & Longbridge. Yet each of these cars are considered real MG's are they not?

So, should all post October 1980 MG's be dismissed as not real MG's? What of the 1,983 MG RV8s,

142,165 MG Metros, 48,418 MG Maestros, 41,752 MG Montegos, 205 MG Metro 6R4 Rally Cars, 117,149 MGF/TFs, and 136,777 MG ZR, ZS, ZT and ZTTs? That is a total of 488,449 post Abingdon cars.

In December 2007 Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC) who owned the intellectual property rights to the former MG and Rover designs and Nanning Automotive Corporation (NAC) who owned the Longbridge plant and the tooling to produce the former MG models agreed to merge. SAIC is the largest and most profitable car company in China. Never in its 84 year history had MG had this kind of financing behind it!

Spring 2007 had seen the dedication of a totally new MG plant in Nanjing. Its tooling and production lined had once been installed at Longbridge but thousands of shipping containers had brought all of it to China. The Nanjing factory was soon turning out a revised version of the MG ZT large sedan renamed the MG 7. Shortly afterward a revised edition of the modern MG TF sports car took to the roads of Asia.

But what of the historic Longbridge factory founded in 1905 by Herbert Austin and the oldest auto production facility in the UK? Due to lack of funds NAC had failed to resume its promised auto production on the remaining 40 acres of the site still dedicated to auto production (the other 225 acres are being redeveloped as offices, housing, retail, park land and even a college campus). Enter SAIC with buckets of money at their disposal. On August 1, 2008 the Longbridge works

came back to life as the first batch of new MG TF LE 500 body shells entered the paint shop. Car production, at a rate of 40 cars per week, soon followed. These modern TF's are being hand built from kits fabricated in Nanjing. Every major component comes from China (body shells, engine, transmission, etc). In terms of content the MG TF LE 500 is 60% from China and 40 % from the European Union.

Reviews of the LE 500 have been unanimous raves from the UK's motoring press and all of the 500 cars in this limited edition run have been sold out at MG's 55 UK dealers. At the end of the year the regular MG TF will begin production at Longbridge without the air conditioning, hard top, leather interior of the LE 500 (but these are available as options). On the SAIC drawing boards are a new compact MG sedan, a sub compact and a new rear wheel drive-front engine sports car. All of these will be designed in the UK at SAIC's design center soon to move to Longbridge for the world market and will meet all impact and emissions rules for the EU, USA, Canada, etc.

It may surprise some that the new MG 7 sedan and MG TF sports car are already on sale in America. That is South America, Chile in particular. As of October 13th these latest MG's could be purchased at your local friendly MG dealer in Santiago, just in time for Spring in the southern hemisphere!

So are the MG's of 2008 and beyond real MG's?

Let the debate continue!!



Club Activities Coordinator Needed

We know it's going to be hard, if not impossible, to fill Beckey's shoes but we sure need someone or a couple to step up and try. The work involved is not all that difficult. Here is a list of the most important things that you would be responsible for:

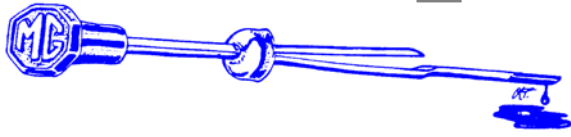
1. Sign up hosts for monthly meetings, tech sessions, and December party.
2. Find a charity to support for the Christmas party, coordinate gift-giving.
3. Look for places for the club to go: parades, car shows, gardens, historical places, etc. Plan trips, or ask for a volunteer to plan trip to that event, especially Ice-Cream Runs during June, July & August
4. Report upcoming events at monthly meetings (monitor TMGC calendar)
5. Send e-mail to Virginian-Pilot with monthly meeting location, for publication in Friday's Car Calendar section.

See, it's not that difficult! If you are interested in helping your club to keep our activities going, please email Beckey or email/call our President, Mark Davidoski. Beckey will be happy to answer any questions you might have about what this involves.

Beckey: email: Mgactivities@aol.com

Mark Davidoski: 499-4647, davidoskicrew@cox.net

The Dipstick



The Tidewater MG Classics

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North American MGB Register
“Newsletter of the Year”

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