

ABCS Newsletter



April 2006 **Volume 15 Issue 4**

NEXT MEETING – May 11, 2006 – RUSH STREET GRILL

Minutes of the ABCS Meeting For April 13, 2006

After a leisure meal and some camaraderie, the meeting got started, with President, Paul Kern, presiding.

The Treasurer Report by Bill Wilson, showed \$1113.00 in the saving account. Bill also mentioned the new shirts, either denim or polo, will have the ABCS emblem embroidered. He will have sign up sheet for ordering items at the next meeting.

Bill Wilson designed and presented to the membership and invitation for membership to be displayed at the MG 2006 gathering at Gatlinburg next month.

Paul Kern talked about the opportunity of having a display/flea market set up at MG2006. This would give us a tremendous exposure in the surrounding areas. He will check with the National Registry.

The East Tennessee MG Drivers Club (ETMGDC) poster is finally finished, and is really a work of art. Anybody not going to the MG2006 gathering and interested in a poster, please see Paul or myself and we will get them for you.

Allen Calcotte is looking for a replacement for his position as Program Chairman. Allen has done a tremendous job, but now would like to rest awhile. If you are interested see Allen and/or Paul Kern.

Virginia Leamon will be presenting the program at the next meeting. The presentation should be of particular interest to the ladies in the club.

During British Car Week, we will be gathering, as usual, at the Gourmet & Co. on May 31. This date conflicts with the monthly Board meeting; therefore the Board meeting has

been moved to the following Wednesday, June 7, and the membership meeting to Thursday, June 15.

Upcoming Events:

May 13 – Drive to Townsend – Meet at Burger King in Gray at 8:00 AM.

May 20 – SMJC Concourse Show, Gatlinburg.

May 31 – Meet at Gourmet & Co. in Johnson City at 6:00 PM. Call for reservations if staying for dinner.

June 10 – Drive on the Blue Ridge Parkway

June 21 – Retirees Drive.

June 15 – Visit to Ben's Garage at 6:30 PM.

June 21-25 – MG2006 at Gatlinburg.

Eddie Penland was able fix the projector, a broken cable, and entertained us with slides from their cruise to Alaska, The cruise consisted of 5 days by land/train and 7 days at sea. Some of the places they visited are very unique and the scenery is like no other place. Thank you Eddie for sharing your trip with us.

OLD STAGE AND ISLAND ROAD DRIVE – APRIL 15, 2006

By Gerry Mitchell

The Weather Channel had predicted thunder showers for that day. But when Saturday dawned, it was a beautiful, bright, sunny morning. So, we decided to take a chance and drive our open 1958 Jaguar XK-150 Roadster instead.

We met the group at Rush Street Grill in Kingsport at 9:00 AM. The assembled club members there included Margaret and Allen Calcotte in their 1954 MG TD, Ben Bailey in his 1981 Jaguar XJ6, Ann and Paul Kern and canine member George in their 1963 MGB, Peter Davis in his 1956 Austin-Healy 100M, and Becky and I with our 1958 Jaguar XK-150 OTS. Ken Hampton in his 1966 MGB joined us a little while latter.

Island Road was the first wagon road built in Tennessee. It was built by Colonial Militia in 1761, following old Indian trails from Chilhowie, VA to "The Long Island of the Holston", hence the name, "Island Road". Its purpose was to move soldiers and ship supplies from Fort Chiswell, VA to Fort Robinson on the banks of the Holston River in what is now Kingsport. The road also served as a route for settlers. It was the first wagon road in Tennessee, and purportedly the second oldest

military-built road in the US. The Island Road was subsequently extended to Fort Loudoun west of Knoxville. Portions of the road are still in use today.

Our sports-car caravan, led by Allen and Margaret Calcotte departed Rush Street Grill and headed east on US11W towards Bristol. We soon turned south on Island Road, where we set our trip odometers at zero. Many of the old houses built along this road between 1761 and 1850 are long gone, but there are several that remain and are worth being aware of as we encountered them. Margaret and Allen had provided the participants with a printed list of these old houses and their distances from the starting point on Island Road. All of them are log houses but which have been covered with “fashionable” board siding and which one would not pay much attention to unless pointed out.

At 12.5 miles, we reached “Yancey’s Tavern” and “Spahr Barn”. Yancey’s Tavern was constructed by James Hollis on Island Road next to a spring, which still flows. It is one of the three oldest remaining homes in Tennessee. The second meeting of the Sullivan County Court was held here and met here several times until Blountville was designated the County Seat in 1792. In 1784, the building was bought by John Yancey,

Sr. who operated it as a tavern from 1784 to 1801. In 1801, the tavern became Shaver’s Inn, a 19th century stage stop between Blountville’s Deery Inn and Kingsport’s Nettherland Inn. In 1889, the property (230 acres) was bought by John Spahr who constructed the barn in the 1890’s. The barn rests on a stone foundation and contains hand-hewn logs from an earlier era. A segment of the original Island Road runs next to the barn and continues to the tavern.

In 2005, after standing empty for many years, the Tavern was put up for auction and was purchased by Rann Vaulx. This valuable historic landmark thusly barely escaped demolition. We are fortunate that Rann has now restored the building and makes it available for tours and special events. Rann was kind enough to be present and to provide a personal guided tour for those of us on the drive. Eleanor de Nobriga, a long time volunteer involved in the restoration at Exchange Place, also met and joined us at Yancey’s Tavern.

When the group completed its visit to Yancey’s Tavern, Margaret and Allen led us onward, staying as much as possible on the path of the old Island Road even though the names of some of the roads have changed over the years on parts of it. This

route brought us to Exchange Place, a restored 1826 frontier homestead just east of Kingsport. It was once the center of a more-than-2000-acre plantation which also served as the stop for nineteenth-century travelers along the Old Stage Road where tired stagecoach horses could be replaced with fresh ones. This, of course, is how Exchange Place acquired its name.

Original buildings from 1816 to 1861 including the main house have been restored. During the Civil War the schoolroom was used as an infirmary for Confederate Soldiers. Other restored structures on the grounds include two two-story cabins, spring house, smokehouse, large double-crib, log, cow-barn, blacksmith shop, store and post office, cook's cabin, granary, and kitchen. Eleanor and Margaret and Allen, long time volunteers at Exchange Place, provided us with a very fascinating guided tour of the restored buildings and grounds which are now a working farm.

The living farm at Exchange Place participates as a minor-breeds conservancy, raising livestock of the 1850 period: Tunis and Cotswold sheep, leghorn chickens, milking shorthorn cattle, Poland China pigs and Suffolk draft horses. Exchange Place also hosts a great many appropriate to the period special

events throughout the year. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Following our visit to Exchange Place, our convoy continued through Kingsport onto Netherland Inn Road to a park beside the confluence of the North Fork and the South Fork of the Holston River. It was here that Island Road travelers had to ford the river until a bridge was built. It was then that we were led to the nearby Boat Yard Diner for lunch. We were pleased that Rann Vaulx and Eleanor de Nobriga had joined us for the latter half of the drive and to have lunch with us at this quaint restaurant beside the Holston River.

We were fortunate that the predicted thundershowers did not materialize. It turned out to be a beautiful sunny day that we all enjoyed. After we had all enjoyed the very good lunch and good fellowship, we went our separate ways home. Margaret and Allen did a wonderful job creating a very enjoyable car-club drive for those who participated and the weather helped quite a bit, too.



