

'BRITISH' APR '25



This is a very sporty car for 1930. We're not so sure about the white wire wheels, but they do make a startling contrast to the deep red coachwork. Can you think of anything like this offered in the US back in 1930? Neither can I. Think of a 1930s American car and most will think 'Ford Model A'. The British are known for their appealing, sporty cars (well, they had a large output of ugly ducklings as well). This model was named the 'Brooklands' model and looks appropriate for zooming around that old racetrack. OK, how many of you know the manufacturer's name? Ten out of seventy members? That's all right. You will know a lot more after reading this month's newsletter.

General local car shows available:

> 'Black Top Sunday' is held on the first Sunday of the month at 5102 W Pauline Whitaker Parkway, Rogers. (Mornings)

> 'Cruisin' the Ozarks Cars and Coffee', the last Sunday of each month at the Harley Davidson dealership on Hwy 102 in Rogers . (Mornings)

‘BRITISH’

>Well worth reading some of the time<

April, 2025 Issue

**The monthly publication of the British Iron Touring Club of North West Arkansas.
Dedicated to the preservation, touring, towing, racing and discussion of British cars.**

Contact Us

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-Membership and Treasurer: Elaine Briggs eb88cs@cox.net

-To contact the editor: 479-202-3235 or briton4@cox.net

Monthly Meetings:

At the *All American Steak House and Sports Theater* at 3492W Sunset in Springdale. The second Thursday of every month except for December. Business at 7:00, but arrive near 6:00 for socializing and supper.

Other Meetings:

As announced on Meeting Nights or on our BI-List email server.

Meeting night, March 13: Wow! Heading south on I 49, our first full stop was at the exit for Rt. 62/Hudson – 5 miles? And it was very slow all the way after that. One explanation; we had about 56 members and guests tonight! In the parking lot there was a Ferrari parked next to an Alvis. Are we getting classy or not! Charlie Collins BMCA President and new member Robert Tschiemer visited. Bob Eft from GOBMC in Missouri updated us on their annual car show set for June 28th in Springfield. I asked Robert Storey about An old car reroofing project he is working on at home, but he said that their cabin on Beaver Lake burned – a total loss- and he has been busy with cleanup work there. The Leas were here tonight and their baby girl was the center of attention at our table, naturally. A March 22nd Tech Session at the Brit Stop was scheduled. At this date the Club April event was canceled. Our fall retreat will be at Mt. Magazine. I thanked Elaine for emailing the newsletters and asked for newsletter input from the gals in the club. I regret that with the big, noisy crowd this evening, Yrs. Trly missed a lot. Hearing aids help keep domestic tranquility at home when listening to a soft older voice. But in a noisy (bedlam?) environment you just get louder garbled noises. ‘We’ may be forced to consider a ‘recording secretary’ (who never heard of Roberts Rules) if this continues.

BEHIND THE WHEEL (from the right-hand side) by Bill Watkins

I really enjoyed the March Tech Session. Elias was there with his newly acquired MGB – formerly a part of the Carney stable. Elias brought with him a friend and employee with him to observe and participate. It was clear that both Elias and his friend had no experience with mechanical work, but equally clear was their enthusiasm, curiosity, and willingness to learn. It was a pleasure to watch them work (mostly under Brad and Wil's guidance) and learn.

I know we have said this many times before, but we need to take more advantage and make more use of our shop facilities. Those facilities, combined with the knowledge pool within the club, are together a huge resource that we should all be benefiting from.

Progress has been made on the matter of a guest speaker for our car show. While Tim Suddard's schedule is just too full to make his appearance realistic, he did re-connect me with Andy Reid who writes a column for Classic Motorsports. Andy has been our guest once before – the year we had to hold the show across the street at the Whitaker Equine Center – and offered to come back again this year. I have told him that I will take him up on his offer and I am just awaiting confirmation.

At the car show last year many of you will have met our presenting sponsor, Lisa Kellogg. Lisa has told me that her mother, who resides in California, has suffered a stroke. Lisa has been back and forth between her home in Utah and California many times dealing with this situation. As a result, she and her husband Jeff have not yet talked about their level of support for our event this year. While I am not aware of any reason that would cause them to stop supporting us, we need to be prepared for that possibility. Especially given the current level of uncertainty and turmoil in the economy. So, if you know of any potential large donors, PLEASE reach out to them and let me know how I can help. Meanwhile, keep Lisa and her mother in your thoughts.

I drove the Alvis to the March car club meeting and it ran very well most of the time and behaved oddly at other times. Sitting at an intersection, the idle suddenly dropped from around 1000 (where it should be) to around 500 and required some attention to just keep it idling. Driving home on I-49 after the meeting it would occasionally just sort of miss a beat. This sounds like an intermittent fuel starvation problem to me and I ran the issue by Wil who concurred. I don't think that the fuel system has a filter – just a sediment bowl – so I need to find somewhere to install one.

Speaking of driving it home on I-49, the 5-speed in the Alvis (which it had from the factory, though the transmission is not original) makes 70MPH+ so much nicer than it was in the Jaguar sedan that the Alvis replaced. Around 72MPH equated to around 2700 RPM. Much calmer than the 3400 or so at 65MPH in the Jaguar.

Here is an idea to think about: In one of the classic car magazines, I read – I think one of the British ones – I recently read a story about a club that set up an event to expose younger people to these old cars. The event was set up at some sort of big open space like an airfield or industrial facility and the teenage students present were allowed to drive – with the owners in the cars as well – the cars of their choosing. Many of them had to be taught how to use a stick shift. This seems like a brilliant idea to me. How can we hope to interest another generation in our cars if they are never exposed to them? I'd like for us to consider doing something like this if we can (a) find a suitable location, and (b) identify a group or groups of teenagers to involve. Expect to hear more from me on this.

Lisa and I are leaving for vacation Tuesday the 8th, so I will miss the meeting Thursday. David Ferrell will run the meeting in my place. Should a *coup d'état* take place it would not break my heart!!

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Coming Events

Next monthly Meeting Night – April 11th

APR – -- Ride to Oak Mountain View Bistro
For lunch. ~~Canceled~~

May 17: Ride to Jasper for lunch

JUN 28: GOBMC Show at Springfield

JUL 12: Ride to Tahlequah - Sam & Ella for
pizza

AUG: Too hot?

SEP 14: Work party at the Storey's

SEP 18,19,20: Our 'Brits in the Ozarks' show,
party and drives.

OCT 25: Halloween Party at the Storey's

NOV ?: Greg's annual overnight retreat

DEC 6: Christmas Party at the Store's

JAN 1: Annual gathering at the Steakhouse

March 15th car show in Cedarville: Brenda checks out a muscle car. Nice! Our group below. Overcast morning, but a good ride to a new location for most of us. Everything from Greg's Morgan to a Model T. Yup, a blue Ferrari.



***"And now Ladies and Gentlemen, we bring you 'The Life of Riley',
starring William Bendix!"***

Actually, it is very unlikely that William Bendix ever owned a Riley automobile. During the years he appeared in that TV role – 1953-1958 – he was making enough money to drive a Cadillac or whatever he wanted. OK, we'll have to do the life of Riley without William Bendix. Except for his famous comment.

Riley Cycle Co. Ltd. (1896 – 1912)

Riley (Coventry) Ltd. (1912 – 1950)

Riley Motors Ltd. (1950 – 1960)
the 1907

History: 1938 Acquired by William Morris (Morris Motors, Ltd.)
1958 Merged with British Leland (incomplete history)

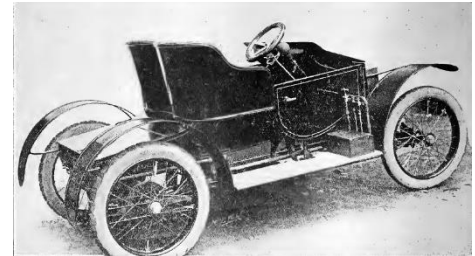
In 1912, the Riley Cycle Company changed its name to Riley (Coventry) Limited as William Riley focused it on becoming a wire-spoked wheel supplier for the burgeoning motor industry, the detachable wheel having been invented (and patented) by son Percy and distributed to over 180 motor manufacturers, and by 1912 the father's business had also dropped automobile manufacture in order to concentrate capacity and resources on the wheels.

In early 1913, Percy was joined by three of his brothers (Victor, Stanley, and Allan) to focus on manufacturing entire automobiles. The works was located near Percy's Riley Engine Company.

Introduced in 1926 in a modest but innovatively-designed fabric bodied saloon, Percy Riley's small capacity Riley 9 engine was a high revving unit; ground-breaking and ahead of its time in many respects. It has been called the most significant engine development of the 1920s. It has hemispherical combustion chambers and inclined overhead valves, with twin camshafts set high in the cylinder block, and valves operated by short pushrods. This provided power and efficiency without the servicing complexity of an overhead camshaft layout. It soon attracted the attention of tuners and builders of 'specials' for sporting purposes

9 hp Riley 4-wheeler prototype at

**Birmingham Show.
Riley Cycle Co.**



1930 Riley Biarritz



Riley Nine Lynx – 1934, next to a '50s black saloon

*For more info on the early cars,
go to Wikipedia, from which
this is gratefully plagiarized,
stolen, lifted, borrowed. Let's
move to the 'thirties.*



Left column, top down:

1 ½-liter Sprite TT Replica of 1935
9 hp Brooklands open 2-seater of 931
Everyone knows that when the British
talk about ‘4-light’ or ‘6-light’ they
are referring to the total number of side
windows, right? You see that although of
modest displacement, Riley was active in
sporty cars and competition.

Right column down: 1934 14/6 Lincoln coupe.
1936 Riley 12/4 Sprite six-light saloon.

1938 was a year for financial collapse and searching for a merger with a larger British car company. Eventually it was announced that the Nuffield Organization had purchased Riley. This is a very simplified version of Riley’s financial troubles. Riley refocused on two 4-cylinder engines; a 1 ½-liter and their “Big Four”, a 2 1/2 – liter. The RAC ratings were 12 hp and 16 hp. Only a few cars were assembled before the start of WW II. Now we can move on to post-war, when their cars were of more interest to Americans.



The 1.5-liter engine was installed in the RMA car and the RMB used the 2.5-liter engine. These are the slightly more familiar fabric-topped models. This is a perplexing to Yrs. Trly, who always thought the upholstery should be *inside* the car. Note the front headlamps are faired in much like he Jaguar Mk V.

It is just after this period when stylist Gerald Palmer designed the post-war MG Magnette and Riley Pathfinder. Palmer was a car designer who worked for the Nuffield Group, which owned MG, Riley, and Wolseley. Although no one

would mistake Palmer for Pinin Farina, many admire his handsome and tasteful designs of that time. Here is the Riley Pathfinder below. What do you think?



Ignoring the bent-down front bumper boo-boo, from an American perspective it seems big enough and conservatively nice looking for the 'fifties. (Note the British road sign – they say “Give Way”, rather than Yield) The Wolseley had virtually identical styling. The Pathfinder was produced from 1953 to 1957. It was first presented at the London Motor Show in October 1953 and replaced the RMF as Riley’s top-line model.

It used Riley's 110 bhp 2.5-litre — (149.1 cu in) — twin-cam (high in the block with short pushrods), "Big Four" straight-4 engine fitted with twin SU carburetors and had a separate all-steel chassis with coil spring rear (this was changed to leaf springs towards the end of production) and front torsion bar independent suspension. From 1956, an overdrive gearbox became optional. 12 in. Girling drum brakes.

At this time the Wolseley’s look-alike version, the 6/90 used a six-cylinder BMC ‘C’ engine, but it had no more power than the ‘Big Four’. Nevertheless, Wolseley was the top of the line, with more luxury. Riley tried to improve their ride with a coil rear suspension; the handling was so vague that the car soon picked up the nickname “The Ditchfinder”! Riley then went back to leaf rear springs. We can laugh about this engineering misstep, but think of our postwar Buicks, which held the crown for ill-handling – for decades.

The end came in the late-fifties – the last of the full sized Rileys. From then on the name was used on a number of small economy cars unsuitable for the US market. ***“Whada revoltin’ development dis is!”***

We remind you that at this time England held the World Land Speed record, the Water Speed record, had the world’s fastest production sedan record, and they made endless sporting and interesting cars. The English could make anything but a profit. ++++

FINDING, RESTORING AND MAINTAINING, AND OPERATING A VINTAGE BRITISH CAR

Robert S. Tschiemer

Part 1, Where to buy a car (continuing)

Perhaps one of the most common ways to obtain a classic British car is buying a car from a private seller. These sales typically occur at a car show, directly from a club member, or through a public site such as Facebook Marketplace. In this writer’s opinion, the safest way to do so is through a car show or your local club.

How to buy a car

Private sales

The two Arkansas car clubs are excellent ways to locate a car. Both have car shows yearly. The British Motoring Club of Arkansas has its show at Petit Jean Mountain in the summers in conjunction with Mid-America Old Time Automobile Association, and British Iron Touring Club of Northwest Arkansas has a show each fall in Fayetteville at the Fairgrounds. Private sales also occur from contact with club members. Finally, some buy theirs from a private sale as Facebook.

The reason this writer recommends purchases from a car show or your local club is there is a greater variety of cars and it is easier to “vet” both the car and the seller. I have included some photographs here showing some of the variety seen in car shows from both clubs, which have been shared with me by Charlie Collins, as well as some that I have taken, showing the huge selection of pristine cars displayed at some of the club shows. Only a small number may be for sale, but generally the selection is more than a child could hope for in his first visit to a “candy store”, as they were called in years past.

What to look for

The buyer should approach any potential car with caution, and each model has points to be aware of. Generally speaking, attention should be paid to the overall appearance as you walk up to the car.

- *Has it been wrecked? Are the lines straight? Are there any gaps in the space between the door and door frame, or the bonnet or boot? Do they open and close without binding. Do the VIN numbers match on the engine and the car frame? Look at the engine bay and see if the colors match or has the car been repainted?

- *Is it original? Examine the engine carefully, hopefully with the assistance of a mechanic who can look at photos. Look at the interior of the car and check its condition and originality. Looking at more than one car with the assistance of Ronnie McLeod, he has noted things I would have never known, as -- the seat came from an earlier model, this or that in the engine have been changed. The battery is not secured, so probably this car is not being driven much, and many more. There is a lifetime of information that those of us who are new to these classics would never know.

- *Look for rust. Is there any indication under the floormats or in the trunk for rust? When you get it up on a lift, you can see more. Beware of bubbles in the paint, indicating there is rust underneath. Is there evidence of repair? Be careful because the British classics are notorious for rust. If your car is from California or Florida, this is a wonderful thing. A UCLA student sticker on my wife's MGB was a great sight when we bought it in Tennessee, because likely it means there was no rust. Her car won a trophy in the Toad Suck Car Show a few years ago.

- *Who has been maintaining the car? If the seller is reluctant to give this information, beware.

- *Beware of statements, often seen in Facebook ads, that the car ran well until it was stored – taken apart – or whatever reason is given, but it is not starting now. Beware of comments as it only needs, this or that, and it will be a great car. If that is the case, why does the seller not do it themselves and adjust their price accordingly. Beware of short ownership, as a seller who admits he has had the car only a year. Why is that? Perhaps, it is because they do not know how to work on it, whether it is tuning a carburetor or a set of carburetors, to other issues as the notorious wiring issues some will dis-

play.

- *Check the fluids in the car. Note that if there is rust, as from an old gas tank, or from the brake fluid reservoir, that carries throughout the car's system. A rusted gas tank may cause rust in your lines or even your carburetor. Check the fuel filter. Check the gas tank.
- *Shocks and springs. Put the car up on a lift, or if the owner is an individual go to a garage or preferably British car mechanic, and get it up off the ground so you can see things as rust, body damage, leaking shocks, sagging springs, wheel bearing issues which are evident if your wheels will wobble as you push on them while lifted, and many other issues.
- *Tires may be out-of-date. Learn to read the date codes on the tires. There are many internet articles on how to do so, and we had an excellent presentation in the Little Rock club this year on the topic in the monthly tech talks that members give. This writer had a tire blow out at 70 mph in a Midget that had been in a barn for years. It is not a fun experience but fortunately there was no injury. If the tires are 5 years old, take a hard look at them. Most recommend replacing your tires every 6 years. If cracked or dried out, beware. If a vehicle has been in a garage, they will last longer. Check your tire dealer's recommendations. Remember tires are made with petroleum products and will dry out with exposure to the sun.
- *Battery and wiring issues. Check the date of the battery. If it is over four or five years old, replace it. Check the connectors on the battery for corrosion and put dielectric compound on the connectors.
- *The engine bears close examination and preferably once a car is narrowed down, you can have a mechanic either consulting or with you. How does it sound? Is it missing or are there any obvious problems?
- *Fluids and belts. The first thing you will want to do is have a mechanic look at your recent purchase, tune it up, and replace all fluids and belts, if the car has been sitting.
- *Questions to ask of the seller. How has this car been used? If it is a daily or monthly driver, so much the better. As Ronnie McLeod and various mechanics have said, the worst thing you can do is let a car sit. Ideally, the car should be driven at least every couple of weeks. Personally, this writer tries to drive the car at least weekly, long enough so it warms up as a short drive may not be enough, but if you get the car up to speed and the temperature to normal operating levels, it is much better.
- *Finally, does the seller have copies of receipts you can examine? If a mechanic has been caring for the car, get the seller's authorization for the mechanic to let you see them.

Whether one is a mechanic servicing British or American cars, or buying them, there is a lot to learn. Buying a vintage whether British or American has certain similarities. In speaking with George Covington, Sr., who has been buying cars for forty years, the issue of rust is a deal-breaker. Look for bubbles in the paint, especially in the rocker panels, but it can also appear at the top of the car. Repairing rust can be very expensive and many body shops will not want to deal with those types of repairs. Mr. Covington primarily collects Corvettes, Mustangs, and other 1955-1957 vintage American cars, none of his cars will have rust issues. When examining a car, Mr. Covington said it is best to not have to go through a learning curve but to be familiar with that model. One should not focus on the cosmetics alone, as paint or tires, but look to the fundamentals, putting the car on a rack to examine its underside.

Personal inspection is best, and Mr. Covington has driven 1,000 miles to look at a car. It is ideal to do a personal inspection, and if there is any question before buying, get someone who can help you on the phone and have a camera so you can email photographs. Above all, do not be afraid to walk away if you see something that is amiss or more expensive to repair than you can justify.



About the author: Robert S. Tschiemer, is a member of the British Motoring Club of Arkansas and co-chair of the Triumph Marque for 2025, and a member of the British Iron Touring Club. Robert has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and a Juris Doctor degree in law and has been a practicing attorney since 1984. His web site is www.tschiemerlegalbriefing.com



Robert Tschiemer

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March 22nd Tech Session at the Brit Stop: A cool morning quickly warming and about 10-11 members turned out to chat and see Elias Constantine's (ex-Jim Carney's) MGB. We did basic engine condition and tuning checks and the car seems in good mechanical condition. Elias says his is making contact to get a quote for painting and having the infamous "crack of doom" (door split) fixed. Brad Esslinger led in performing – or explaining to Elias and his friend Steve what to do – various tests and adjustments. Brad again proved himself one of our essential members. Thank you, Brad. Our 'shop library' was needed this morning for timing settings on the MGB. Doug Schrantz loaned us two more shop manuals. A pleasant morning!

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"You can't cheat ME!" A rehash

One of the interesting things about running a service business is all the personality types and temperaments you meet. I think only a tiny part of the population goes through life angry and full of hate. I recall only one such scary, threatening customer, who probably should have been institutionalized. Or re-institutionalized. More often you meet someone who may dislike confrontation, but works himself up emotionally to face a conflict. For instance:

A college guy had his newish non-running TR2 or TR3 towed into our shop early in my career. It had little to no fuel pressure. It turned out that the fuel had been contaminated with debris – you remember that the fuel filler cap was right out there on top and the cap was not lockable. The fuel was a mess.

We ended up having to remove and flush the gas tank, blow out the fuel lines, remove and then replace the fuel pump. Also partly disassemble the carbs in place and blow out the jets and clean the float bowls. Before starting we had called the kid and told him it was going to be a big job, but we couldn't give him an estimate beforehand, because we'd never before removed a Triumph gas tank. (No flat-rate manuals in the early 'sixties for Triumphs)

So in a day or two it was finished and road tested and we called to say it was now fine and give him the total bill. He was soon in with his father, who was really steaming. He started out by telling us that maybe we thought we could cheat a young boy, but he was paying the bill, so pay attention: He knew that it was impossible for a new car to need all that service and he wasn't going to pay for it and he'd see us in court before... his insulting rant went on for some time. Finally, we got a chance to explain. "Apparently, one of your son's so-called friends thought it would be funny to drop a condom into his gas tank. It came apart." We opened a paper towel loaded with bits of rubber particles. "This stuff was everywhere in the fuel system and to guarantee no more stoppages it involved many hours of labor. We did the job as efficiently as possible, but we had to do a complete job so it won't happen again."

Which resulted in a very small “Oh.” Red-faced, he paid without further comment, but I bet the son got some harsh words. We did advise the son to ask the dealer about a locking gas cap.

There are times all of us might feel cheated and angry. Personally, I grit my teeth and start by asking “Please explain these charges to me.” First of all, I hate to look like a fool. Equally, I remember from childhood that I’m unlikely to win a fistfight. *Wil*

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