

# ***‘BRITISH’ AUG, 25***



**OK, ladies and gentlemen, I'd say the odds of any member being able to identify this luxury car by brand and model are zero. But the answer is inside.**

**Happy reading.**

# **‘BRITISH’**

>Well worth reading some of the time<

**July, 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.**

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## **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, July 10<sup>th</sup>:** Pretty easy driving tonight (afraid to complain). We made the ‘early bird’ menu by 1 minute by avoiding the 40<sup>th</sup> street construction and taking I49 down to Sunset directly. Nice big crowd tonight with 51½ (Elliott Lea) members. Rita Carney is still disposing of some cars, bikes and parts. Hess showed us a sample hand-crafted (with laser help) black walnut trophy, typical of which he will be making for our show in Sept. Very attractive. Elaine reported \$5603.xx in our piggy bank and that we now have 75 paid-up members. Bill Watkins again encouraged us to promote the show in every way possible. A tech session was scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup>. Bill also suggested (after giving Yrs. Trly a worried look?) that we should have another tech session soon, again explaining the Sun engine analyze and oscilloscope. I could do that. Greg Bunch promoted the fall retreat to Mt. Magazine on November 7, 8, & 9<sup>th</sup>. Shirley and Yr. Ed. are signed up to go for the first time. There were more meeting notes, but my ball point pen started running out of ink and some notes are indecipherable. Is this excuse as good as “The dog ate my homework”?

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**Tech session, July 19:** Aaron Tunnell brought in his beautifully restored Jaguar 2+2 coupe with a short list of faults – occasional disc brake dragging, apparently no battery charging, and a leak near the master cylinder. About 12 members showed up this morning, but there was a lot more talking than achievement while I was there. It was confirmed that the alternator wasn’t charging and we confirmed the brake fluid leak. Yrs. Trly left after an hour and at that time no actual repairs had been attempted. There seemed to be reluctance to jack up the car, which can be tricky on an E-type. But brake dragging cannot be investigated with the car on the ground.

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

Much as I hate to miss meetings, especially this close to the car show, I will have to miss this month. Several months ago, I scheduled another obligation out of town for this date without realizing it was club meeting night. One of the other knights of the realm will preside. I would ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE some sort of *coup d'état* in my absence!!!

Lots of work has been going on related to the car show and I am grateful that you all know what needs to be done and get it done without a lot of (or any) supervision. Many of you have stepped up to be \$250+ sponsors and many of you have secured other donors of stuff that we can use in goody bags and as auction items. I hope you have all given me the names of those sponsors so that we can recognize them appropriately.

Whoever is running the meeting will have signup sheets to pass around as always. Please sign up and help out where you can. Once again, the ALS Association folks will man the concessions stand and handle the cooking so we should not have to. The ALS folks are a whole new set of people this year so be prepared to step in and help if they get overwhelmed or are short-handed.

Brian Lea has set up an arrangement with Torchy's Tacos in west Rogers to be a part of our car shows activities. On Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, all sales to customers who mention our event will result in a 10% donation to the ALS Association. So, all of the drives on that day should lead, or at least direct, their participants to Torchy's for dinner. Also, (and Brian can confirm or fill in the gaps here as needed) Brian has created a flyer for this event that we can hand to complete strangers and, if they will mention our event, 10% of their bill will be donated. Therefore, I think we may need volunteers to staff the door of the restaurant that day to hand out flyers to customers (again, Brian can confirm).

This is just another example of why our event is a success: You all support the event, buy in, and get active. I get calls often from others who want to put on car show events and ask how we do it. I always tell that that our secret sauce is member buy-in and support. This event would not be what it is without that.

It was very sad to hear of the passing of Cathy Roe. Larry and Cathy have been in the club a very long time and were both very active. We watched them raise Colin in the club and he and his family are still involved when they are able to be. Cathy always stepped up to help prepare food for the Friday night car show party and, when she was actively working, would line up volunteers from the sorority she was affiliated with. She will be missed, and our hearts go out to Larry, Colin, and the rest of the family.

Sigh, the struggles with the Alvis continue. We had a tech session with it out at the shop a couple of weeks back and thoroughly went through the ignition system. This included removing the distributor and testing it on our Distributor test machine. It looked fine. The waves on the Sun machine oscilloscope were, in Wil's words, beautiful. Some tinkering with the setup of the points was done but that was really it for adjustments. The car ran great after the session but poorly again the next morning. This is not totally debilitating, but I just don't have the confidence to drive it much farther than across town. Theorizing continues.

Back in June an attempt was made to host a small car show at The Gardens at Osage Terrace, an assisted living facility in Bentonville. Bad weather, or the forecast for same, scared us off and they have now rescheduled the event for Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, from 11:30 to 1:30. They are not looking for a big event, just a dozen or fifteen total cars and they would like to have some from our club. Please let me know if you can attend and I'll pass on a number to the events coordinator for the facility. Tuesday is a work day for me, so I can't make it.

I hope you will all be there at the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Bill Watkins

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### Coming Events

Next monthly Meeting Night – July 10

JUL 12: Ride to Tahlequah – Sam & Ella for  
Pizza. Canceled 7/10

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 7 - 9: Our annual overnight retreat.

DEC 6: Christmas Party at the Storey's.

JAN 1: Annual gathering at the Steakhouse.

Jan 18<sup>th</sup> – Roaring River brunch



**Sunday, July 6th at Cold Stone Creamery:**

We like ice cream. Besides that, featured attractions this evening were Elliot Lea (foreground left) aged 10-½ months and Greg's new puppy, (age unknown) held by Sue Storey (center).

The 'strawberry blonde' mix was delicious.

*Photo lightened for clarity. Shirley Wing photo.*

**We extend our sympathy to Larry Roe and family on the passing of his wife, Kathy, on August 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Since we frequently forget to ask for the Brit Stop small usage fees, they are now posted on the side of the Sun Machine.**

**Two big Austin flops,  
but they don't look that bad now. To me, at least.**  
Wil

Austin aimed the great majority of their production at the lower end of the market, as we saw last month. That practical business philosophy went back to the very beginning. Yet Austin management also felt obligated to offer a large car for the more affluent public – profitable for Austin or not.

This month we will look at two of the 'big' Austins offer during the BMC era. Incidentally, the first big (very big) Austin I could find was 1908. Early after WW II their large car was the 'Sheerline'.

**PRINCESS IV DS7 Limousine, 1956-59:** (instrument panel on cover)



If you needed a limo in the late 1950s, what is wrong with this car? (We'll get back to that). Austin thought they could compete in the Bentley/Rolls-Royce market. **Some specs:** 199 were built. Being aimed at the owner-driver market they had power steering. 3995 cc engine @ 150 hp. General Motors automatic transmission. Wheelbase 122 in. Weight 4,450 lbs. Coachwork by Vanden Plas, at that time an Austin subsidiary. It was tested by a Brit motor magazine at 98.5 mph.

Personally, I think the car shown would cause quite a stir, if driven up to the pavilion on the morning of our show. However, in Britain there were complaints about the styling. The boot lid was sloped (too radical?). And although there were earlier similar cars, the reaction was the like VW producing the hugely expensive Maybach some years ago. (Who wants a luxury car made by a company that makes inexpensive cars?)

I wouldn't now want to own any huge car – including this one - but think it is handsome and worthy.

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**AUSTIN 3-LITER ADO Saloon** was introduced at the London Motor Show in 1967. It was intended to be BMC's offering in the 3-litre executive class and was originally designed in the early 1960s, before the British Leyland era. Unlike the visually similar (but smaller) front-wheel drive Morris 1800/2200 range, the 3-liter had a 125 bhp (a 7-bearing modification of the BMC C-Series with twin SU carburetors) and drove the rear wheels through a conventional 4-speed gearbox.

The car used Hydrolastic suspension with self-levelling hydraulic rams at the rear and was praised for its excellent ride and handling. Alec Issigonis, who designed the front-wheel drive cars, had no part in the 3-Litre, which he was reportedly keen to point out!



The interior was luxurious, featuring wood veneers and cloth headlining (but leather upholstery was not available, being replaced with a good-quality vinyl). A small number of estate models (station wagons) were built, converted by Crayford.

It became apparent that BMC were initially not geared up to producing the car: few were sold in 1967, but by July 1968, it was reported that the cars had begun to leave the factory. By that time, the square headlights seen at the 1967 motor show had been replaced by conventional round twin headlamp units, and by the time of the October 1968 show the car had also acquired front quarter lights, as seen here.

In the early days of British Leyland, proposals for a Rover-branded version were considered to replace the Rover P5 3-Litre but these did not progress beyond the drawing board.

**Time for a few specs:** Class – executive car. 2912 cc straight six engine, C Series six. Rear wheel drive.

Does it seem ugly or revolting to you? Me either. But read on.

Sales were fairly poor. The standard version had been withdrawn by 1969, while the de-luxe version soldiered on until the model was discontinued completely in May 1971, after fewer than 10,000 had been produced. It suffered from a perception that it was merely an enlarged Morris "Landcrab" (Morris 'ADO17' 1800/2200) as it shared the same doors. (It gained the nickname "Land-lobster").

The 3-Litre also arrived on the market just as BMC had taken over Jaguar and had merged with Leyland Motors to create British Leyland. Within the new conglomerate, the 3-Litre was now being sold alongside similarly sized rivals from Jaguar, Rover and Triumph – all perceived as genuine performance/luxury brands compared to Austin, which was seen as a down-market mainstream brand. For this reason the 3-Litre was not directly replaced, and ultimately Rover and Jaguar models fulfilled the 3-Litre's role in BL's portfolio.

**Conclusion:** We see here two Austin cars that were unsuccessful, yet appear more worthy than some other better selling Austin cars. Perhaps you, like me, have never even seen one on the States?

As members of a British car club, we know much more about Brit cars than most, but what big holes there are in our knowledge!

*Information taken largely from Wikipedia, with thanks.*

## Can one car have two factory records?

Don Wiseman

Susan and I have owned our Bugeye since early 1971 (it was registered as a 1961 because it apparently was first sold that year, which was then legal and common) when we bought it from the used car lot of Atlanta's Baker Motors. We drove it to Columbus (Fort Benning) GA and registered it as AN543828. Subsequent Alabama, Tennessee, and Arkansas titles carried on that year and number.

I have been aware of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust since at least July 2002, when it issued me a Certified Copy of a Factory Record for AN5-L/43828. AN5 meaning Austin Healey Sprite, L meaning left-hand drive North American Export, and a chassis build sequence number of 43828. The certificate further certified a build completion date of 19 July 1960, Iris Blue paint, black vinyl hood and seats, and dispatched the following day to the US. All of this was consistent with my knowledge of the car.

During 2008-2010 the car was completely disassembled and restored and modified at The Motorway, a British restoration shop in Fort Collins CO, to the condition it's in today.

In anticipation of our relocation to a Houston area suburb, I contacted Hemmings about selling it through their auction process. In addition to the regular glamour shots, they asked for a photo of the chassis identification plate and the title, which I supplied. What I did NOT know was that the chassis plate number and the title number did not agree! Sorry sir, we can't help you. What to do?!

More research! First stop: Bugeyeguys.com and their YouTube channel video describing Sprite identification number locations: the chassis plate located on the left chassis rail, a smaller tag on the driver's door pillar, and a body number tag on the passenger door pillar. The chassis plate - the most important of the three - did not match the certificate or the driver door tag. It showed chassis number AN5-L / 44685!

More research! After calling the 'Bugeyeguy', I learned - unsurprisingly - that a new chassis plate is commonly needed for restoration. I now have one that coincides with the car's title history. I also ordered another BMIHT certificate for chassis ID number AN5-L / 44685, which shows a build date of 9 August 1960, a dispatch date of 11 August to St Louis, and a body number (the passenger door tag previously mentioned) that coincides with the tag on my car. And Iris Blue paint.

What did I do? Installed the new replacement tag, with my 2002 Certificate in support, disregarded the body number since it's not relied on for titling, and kept the second Heritage Certificate for curiosity and explanation.

How this could have happened is anybody's guess, but I suspect it happened when the car first entered the US, at a time of paper records and no modern VIN tags, and sloppy or non-existent titling laws and procedures.

I encourage everyone to check out the British Motor Museum website for the archival services they offer for most common marques and the years that are covered.

Don

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## PART 3 OF A SERIES, RESTORING, MAINTAINING AND OPERATING A VINTAGE BRITISH CAR

By Robert S. Tschiemer,

Maintaining and operating a vintage British car is a full-time job. If a car is driven daily or weekly, that is probably the best maintenance one can give, because the worst thing you can do is not drive the car, according to multiple mechanics who all agree on this point. Driving a vintage car leads to problems that can be potentially prevented, or at least lessened, and because it is a decades old car, if not a half-century old, components will fail. Problems can be "sorted out" as Ronnie McLeod of McLeod's British Cars explained, one at a time, but the most critical come first.

## WEEKLY DRIVING

The most important thing in operating your vintage car is to pay attention to any changes in its operation. If there something different, investigate it sooner than later, when on the side of the road waiting for a wrecker. Incidentally, in operating these cars, you will develop a close relationship with your wrecker company.

This writer's towing company sends him a large Christmas basket every year, gives heavy towing discounts, and created an account just as large businesses because of the number of tows. Driving five British cars over the last few years, with breakdowns. This writer's tow bill may be \$100, instead of the \$300 that many tow companies charge for a stranded motorist. The ownership of British cars compels a longstanding relationship with your tow truck company.

Picking up your British car from the seller in a land far away, as it seems at times, is an exciting experience, and some drive the car home. Others wisely trailer it. Driving this writer's first MGB from Memphis proved an adventure, breaking down in a subjectively unfriendly-feeling part of town, with people standing on street corners, apparently loitering, in groups. Ultimately, the trip resumed and thanks to Bill Helton of Helton's Wrecker in Conway, the problem was sorted out diagnosed as a short under the dash, and repaired, so the car no longer unexplainably would stop running. Other problems occurred over the years which give practical insight into some issues vintage car owners will face.

## OIL

Change your oil and filter in vintage cars no more than 3000 miles, and hopefully sooner. Regularly check the oil and keep it filled. Pay attention to oil loss either by leaks or consumption. If you see any temperature rise over normal, investigate as it may be a fan belt that is loose reducing engine cooling, but beware of any froth or milky-looking residue on the oil stick or cap as it may indicate you have a potential blown head gasket, allowing coolant or antifreeze to enter the engine oil, and destroying your engine.

## GASOLINE

Use only high octane non-ethanol gas because these older engines and rubber components in the fuel system and carburetor are not intended for the modern fuels which may contain alcohol. I used only high octane non-ethanol fuel unless necessary to avoid running out of gas! Add Seafoam to your gasoline occasionally of about 1 ounce per gallon of gas for cleaning the fuel system, carburetor, and subjectively seems to make a difference, and mechanics seem in agreement on its use.

## DASHPOT

Checking the dashpot oil should be done monthly. Do not overfill the dashpot reservoir, which is entirely within the hollow piston spindle; allow room for the head of the check-valve. Over-filling just results in the excess oil being sucked into the engine. Oil should be added while the engine is off. When offering the dashpot plunger to the top of the carb, if resistance is felt before the threads are engaged, there is sufficient oil present. 20-50 oil works well. If your air filters are off, test that there is free movement of the pistons with the check valves out – there should be no binding.

## *RPMS*

The engines normally idle at about 1000 RPM. The carburetor may have to be adjusted to maintain this. Weather-related issues as heat affect the RPMs. Mechanics may need to rebuild the carburetors in these cars as parts wear and adjustment is needed. Whether your car is an earlier one with two SU carburetors or a later version with one carburetor, these must be maintained. For those with Weber carburetors one may not have to do all these steps, but you will note an increased gasoline smell particularly in hot weather as the fuel is aerated.

## *REBUILDING AN ENGINE*

The average vintage British cars were intended to run under 100,000--125,000 miles before having the engine rebuilt, and they are unlike modern engines that may get 200,000 miles or more, as a Cadillac Northstar engine. We want to do all we can to maintain our engines to avoid prematurely having to rebuild them. A complete rebuild may run \$10,000. This writer has had two engines replaced over the years at an average cost of over \$6,000, but your cost depends on what has to be done, whether the crankshaft is also damaged, whether it is an upper and lower repair, just one part, and a multitude of considerations.

Find the best mechanics for our cars that you can and look for those in the business a long time. There are many engine rebuilders, and many in central Arkansas choose Rebel Engine Rebuilders for one.

Does your engine smoke? Black smoke indicates unburned fuel. White smoke may indicate unburned water vapor. Blue smoke generally means burning oil. Is the engine missing? There may be a timing issue, or spark plugs may be fouled. Pull the spark plugs and if dark, it indicates unburned fuel which may be too rich. If white, the spark plugs are not getting fuel. Check the fuel filter. If there is rust, it may indicate a bad gas tank that should be replaced. Are your wires and connectors good? Is there rust or corrosion?

Does your engine need rebuilding, as opposed to tuning? Look for smoke, a significant loss of oil, less power, and less compression. If there is an oil leak, replace the seals, or if it is burning oil, consider a heavier weight oil as 20W-50. At some point, there is no choice but to rebuild the engine, but things can be delayed at times.

## *FUEL GAUGES AND BRAKES*

Remember the fuel gauges are not precise and each may show slightly different levels, so learn your car. Problems can occur as that of the float getting hung up or a bad sending unit which must be replaced.

The brakes should be examined from the beginning and throughout the life of the car on a regular basis. Check the brake fluid level, and if it is low, there is a reason. Your mechanics will look for obvious things as leaking in addition to pads and operation to ensure a safe operating car. Look for leaks weekly during the life of your car and routinely look at the wheels as it is parked and pay attention to any slight or major leaks. The same is true of wheel cylinders, because as McLeod explained, if you see fluid leaking out of your wheel centers, it indicates a bad seal.

## *IN SUMMARY*

Regular maintenance is the key to having a dependable British car and perhaps the most important thing is to start doing the basic maintenance and give weekly attention. Doing so will

allow you to operate your car for many years of British car motoring.

*Thanks to Robert for this article, but he has had much worse luck than the editor and, I suspect, most members. I have always had AAA's Premier card (200 miles free towing) and used it once, I think, for British car failures in 25 years. Yr. Ed.*

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## **"What baby crying?" Oblivious**

There are men who can totally withdraw from what is going on around them. Not too many, perhaps, but I did know one. Self-centered? Intense focus? Lack of normal human responses? I don't know.

In one episode of 'Inspector Morse', Morse stopped by Sergeant Lewis's house. Once inside, there was a baby screaming its head off in another room. Morse, a bachelor, said, "How can you stand that noise?" Sergeant Lewis had to explain the obvious: "You're not supposed to 'stand' it, Sir, you're supposed to get up off your backside and do something."

Well, I don't intend to pick on men only.

There is a female equivalent to being oblivious to distress noises. Some ladies are deaf, or easily ignore the screeching/grinding of mechanical devices, and then small problems become major expenses.

In the early 1960s a lady walked into our shop and told me her car, a Renault Dauphine, was making a loud noise and had no power. I'm thinking "a muffler affecting power?" By the way, in those days Americans did not use the French pronunciation of Renault – at least not on the East coast. I asked one of our mechanics to go for a ride with her and see what was going on. It took him longer to get back than I had expected. When he got back, he was doing a zombie imitation, walking stiffly, eyes wide open and fingers splayed – a signal to me that something was horribly wrong.

Her 'noise' was the poor engine literally screaming at full rpm while the car was barely moving! It turned out that the lady had completely 'fried' her clutch on the Renault. After a short distance my mechanic told her to turn around and go back to the garage. But she couldn't. The slight crown in the road, to allow rain water to run into the curbs and then the storm sewers, was too much of a hill for the failed clutch. He had to get out, wait for a break in the traffic, and then push her car over the crown to the other side of the road.

When I asked, she told me, "Oh, it has been going on for several weeks now." *Wow!*

The flywheel was blue and ruined by overheating with many 'hard spots'.

In a way, things like this are kind of funny, unless, of course, you are the one who has to pay for neglected problems. *Wil*

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**Sat, 7/26 Tech Session (sort of):** Bill W. brought in his '64 Alvis in the continued search for a cure to the occasional momentary power loss, especially when going uphill. Bill's rebuilding the AC fuel pump was first



thought to have solved the problem, but then it acted up once again. Fortunately, he has never gotten stuck with the car. Today, Todd, Brad, David Ferrell, Wil and Michael Graves came by to help and or spectate. We first spent some time trying to locate 10 degrees BTDC on the pulley and then pulled the distributor – which looks new, with new points, rotor and condenser. But the points had closed up. This gave us a chance to test the unit thoroughly in our Allen distributor machine. After reinstalling and setting the timing, we did a scope check on the ignition – looked perfect.

As a final inspection, we checked the rebuilt fuel pump output and for possible bubbles, but that also looked just as it should.

With noon approaching, we called it quits and Bill went off on a little test ride. We'll see in his page 2 column if the car is finally cured of momentary power losses – or not. Otherwise, off with the carb float bowls.

**Bill ripped the distributor right out of his engine!** *Thanks to Brad Esslinger for the photo.*

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