

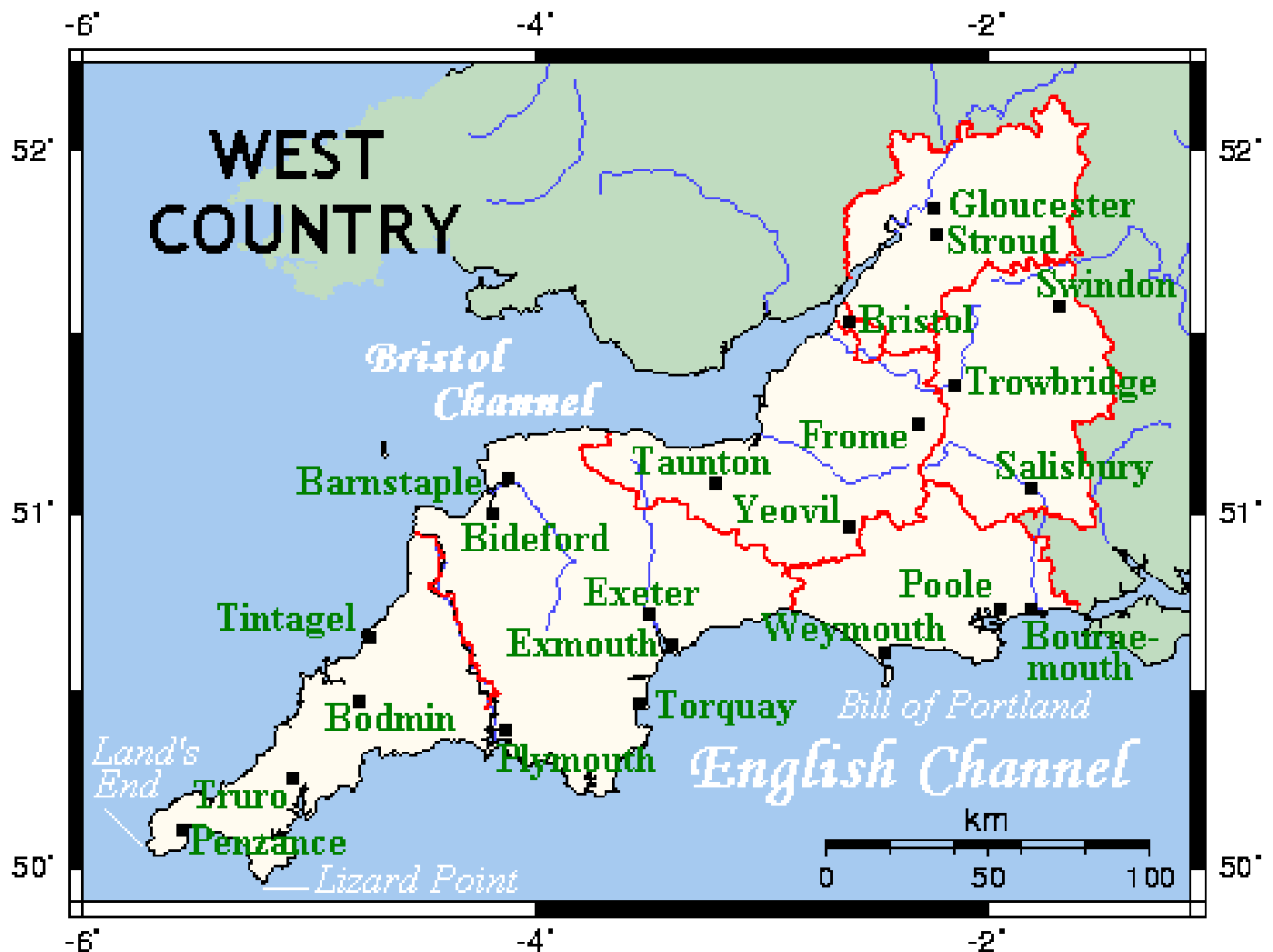
## ***‘BRITISH’ July ‘25***

What does our newsletter need most? (Besides a proofreader)

**Diversity!**

So this month we will add what everyone likes best:

**GEOGRAPHY!**



**Ve haf our reasons**

# **‘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.**

## **Contact Us**

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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, June 12<sup>th</sup>:** Yrs. Trly has occasionally written, and more frequently thought that folks who constantly complain about driving and driving conditions are most likely poor drivers. We had no problems getting to the A.A. Steakhouse tonight... well, except that 40<sup>th</sup> Street is closed between Elm Springs Rd. and Sunset – the detour brings you right back to Elm Springs Rd! At our table we were talking about health and heart problems. No healthy person wants to hear about that! Our Pres. handed out new Club business cards, which is a great way to help get new members when you meet someone with a British car. Several visitors tonight prove that theory, and our membership is steadily growing. We had about 48 folks tonight, which is a nice turnout. Elaine reported \$5581.xx in our treasury and that there are still a few car badges available – they are really good quality. Bill Watkins got several volunteers to contact car clubs in neighboring states to help promote our ‘Brits in the Ozarks’ show in September. Bill also reported a new ‘people’s choice ‘show winner’ prize. A pleasant evening.

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

I've spent a lot of time lately working on the Alvis. If you recall my column last month, the drive to Jasper revealed a fuel delivery problem that would cause the car to lose power and nearly die if under load going up hill. Wil came over to diagnose with me and we determined that the fuel pump was not providing adequate pressure. The pump is an old fashioned mechanical AC branded item like you used to see on old American cars. The TR4 I used to have had a similar pump. The Interceptor does as well, but without the sediment bowl or primer lever.

Since I was unable to find a new pump to replace the current one – not even the Alvis specialist in England carries it – I decided to rebuild it. A US supplier assured me that he had a kit for it and sent me one for \$88. That was a bust in that the kit provided didn't include the two valves located in the roof of the diaphragm chamber and the new replacement diaphragm was just that – only the diaphragm – and not the metal post it is attached to. It is not possible to replace the diaphragm in that the original post is "peened" to retain the cups that hold the diaphragm in place. So if anybody wants an AC fuel pump rebuild kit I have one available for half price!!

The next move was to contact the Alvis folks in the UK – Red Triangle Alvis. They offered the correct rebuild kit. The cost of shipping was more than the kit itself but, amazingly, it arrived from England in 3 days. This kit has the replacement valves and the diaphragm was mounted on a new post. Rebuild was very simple and it all came apart and went back together very quickly. Putting the pump back on was another story!! Access to the mounting nuts is very difficult, requiring at least a dozen swear words to get each nut started and then another dozen to get a wrench on them enough to get a "bite". Good thing no children were present.

All is not rosy just yet, though, as the rebuilt pump is not yet causing fuel to flow. It has output pressure but no input vacuum. The folks on the Alvis Owner Club Facebook page tell me that I need to prime the pump in order for it to work, so that will be the next thing I do.

The other issue was a flat tire that required new bands to cover the spoke ends. After some investigation and input from the club I went with Gorilla Tape around the inside of the wheel over both lines of spoke heads. Discount Tire in Bentonville dismounted, mounted, and balanced the tire and wire wheel for me without complaint. Recommended.

I'm looking forward to getting that car back on the road – but not for long as it is on the waiting list for "my guy" to get it in his shop and remedy the "to do" list I have been creating since I took possession. I'm looking forward to having that list completed.

While the Alvis has been down I've been driving the Jensen. I had the AC charged before the trip to Springfield for the GOBMC All British Show and it worked fine until we got about to Avoca on the return trip home. Clearly there is a refrigerant leak somewhere, and I fear it may be the evaporator behind the dash. Ugh.

The Jensen is a great road car – comfortable, fast, and effortless at modern highway speeds over long distances. The ability to play music from my phone through the modernized 8-track player is a real plus. Just don't calculate the fuel mileage!

Speaking of the GOBMC show in Springfield, they hosted a nice event, as usual, and the venue is *almost* as good as our park!! The weather was a mixed bag with an ominous forecast affecting attendance and rain for about 45 minutes during the event. But the rain and clouds kept it cooler. I would guess 75 cars, but didn't count them. Most interesting was a gorgeous red Lotus Elite from 1962 or so with a Coventry Climax engine you could have eaten lunch off of. Tiny but very nice. Our show is fast approaching, so please get out there and promote!! See you on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Club Staff

President – **Bill Watkins**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – **Doug Schrantz**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – **David Ferrell**

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### Coming Events

#### Next monthly Meeting Night – **July 10**

**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 7 - 9:** Our annual overnight retreat.

**DEC 6:** Christmas Party at the Storey's.

**JAN 1:** Annual gathering at the Steakhouse.

Phil Warner recalls two favorite VW Beetle ads from the 1950s (the 'Ruined by excellent advertising' story from last month): *'It makes your house look bigger.'* And, *'The Volkswagen will definitely float, but it will not float indefinitely.'* Phil says: "I can still picture the Bug sinking slowly down in the second one which I think was a follow up to an ad that touted the fact that it was so well sealed that it would float. When I was at Ohio State a roommate had a Bug and we were driving it around after a heavy rain storm in the community above campus to see what the storm had caused when we approached an intersection where a guy was paddling a cardboard box in the flooded intersection. One of the guys said, "Go ahead. It will float!" and my roommate gunned it and hit the water and it did in fact float across the intersection but we didn't think about the sun roof being open and the water came up over the hood and windshield and drenched us in the back seat." *Thanks, Phil!*

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The Austin Counties info this month was mostly borrowed from Wikipedia, with thanks.

Carol Crump submitted a story this month, just when I thought the membership was running dry. Thank you, Carol, and a big CONGRATULATIONS from us all! See page 7.

Robert Tschiemer has submitted an article on maintaining your British car, but too late for this month – coming in August.

"How can you tell a really good mechanic?" We like the 'Click and Clack' answer best; "By the size of his boat".

‘New Yorker’, ‘Sierra’, ‘Riviera’, ‘Saratoga’ and ‘Park Lane’ have been all used on American cars because they indicate prestigious places and the car manufacturers hope those classy locations will impress the public by association. I guarantee no car will ever be named the ‘Hackensack’ (New Jersey).

In the 1950s, Austin of England produced what are called the ‘County Cars’, but where are those counties and what image did they carry to UK customers? Let’s find out. Oh, I guess we should also look at the cars.



Here we have the South West tip of England. Note that (in red) Somerset, Dorset and Devon are adjacent. Below, in blue, is the English Channel and above is the Bristol Channel. Above that is Wales.

### Somerset County

Somerset is a predominantly rural county, especially to the south and west, with an area of 1,610 sq. mi. and a population of just less than one million. The center of Somerset is dominated by the Levels,



a coastal plain and wetland. The north-east contains part of the Cotswolds uplands



and all of the Mendip Hills, which are both national landscapes.

There are many more views available of Somerset, but you can see that the rural areas, at least, are lovely. Bath offers history from the Roman occupation.



The Austin A40 Somerset, built from 1952 to 1954, had a 1,200cc A-Series engine, producing 42 bhp. It featured a four-speed column-change gearbox and reached 60 mph.



Going to the south east of Somerset, we have Dorset. **Austin A40 Dorset**

Dorset is a county in southwest England. It's known for the Jurassic Coast, a long stretch on the English Channel where the cliffs contain many fossils, and rock formations show millions of years of geological history. Two prominent natural landmarks are Durdle Door, an ancient stone arch, and the layered cliffs at nearby Lulworth Cove. The towns of Poole, Weymouth and Swanage are popular for their sandy beaches. The county has an area of 1,024 sq mi and a population of 772,268. Around half of the population lives in the South East, which contains three of the county's largest settlements: Bournemouth (184,000), Poole (152,000), and Christchurch (32,000). The remainder of the county is largely rural. Loads of history to go with the scenic beauty.



The **Austin A40 Dorset**, produced from 1947 to 1949, and was dropped as it wasn't as successful as the four-door Devon. It shared its chassis and engine with the A40 Devon, but featured a slightly different body style, including a two-door saloon configuration. The engine was a 1.2-liter, 4-cylinder, straight-4 OHV unit producing 40 bhp at 4200 rpm. The Dorset also had a large rear luggage compartment. Acceleration (0-60 mph): 37.2 seconds!! OK, the scenery is better than the car.



## Austin Devon car

South West of Somerset, we have Devon.

It is sometimes called by its historical name *Devonshire*. Devon is the fourth largest county in England by area, and has the longest road network of any county in England. It encompasses sandy beaches, fossil cliffs, medieval towns and moorland national parks. The English Riviera is a series of picturesque, south-coast harbor towns including Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. The county has an area of 2,590 sq mi.



Left: Clovelly village, North Devon.



Also at Clovelly. Tides in this part of England are about 12 feet. Some areas of the UK west coast are even higher. Small fishing boats shown at low tide.

Below: Salcombe, Devon



Below: East Portlemouth



Austin A40 Devon, made from 1947- 1952. Also an A40 Sports, which isn't worth showing. A sliding sunroof and heater were extra cost options on the UK market. The Countryman estate was produced through 1956. Equipped as a six-seater, its folding rear seat enabled it to be converted into a two-seater able to carry a half-ton load. A van and pickup truck were also produced. Years ago Bill Fitzgerald had a very nice Somerset, but he tired of the weak engine and some other issues.

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# **The Little Sprite that Could**

By Carol Crump

National Austin Healey Conclave Event, Chateau on the Lake, Branson MO, May 18-22

A delightful showing of around 150 Austin - Healey's, mostly big Healey's. (Please refer back to May newsletter, Wil's excellent article describing all makes of Healey's). There were about 20 Sprites, Bugeyes, Sprites, and two Jensens. I looked for some of our club's tribe, if you were there, hope you had as much fun as I did. Everyone I met, I mentioned our show in September, and gave them details.

So - three weeks later, I am still on cloud 19, as I won 1<sup>st</sup> in Sprite class. I was so amazed! '64 Mk III Sprite. My brother, Richard Crump did all the restoration work, I just drive it and take the credit. Actually, we pretty much co-own it. We are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> owners of the car. He bought it in 1977. I bought it from him in 1980 and just drove the smithereens out of it. Neither one of us could part with it, so we did the completely logical thing of restoring it.

Back to the show- after a 4 1/2 hour banquet, (just sayin') the president of the club said "Now, what you all have been waiting for, (huge round of applause) Best of Show". Just like the TV shows, he spoke very slowly and paused between each word, "Sprite", (I'm thinking, wow- big Healeys usually win, it must be one of the Bugeyes). "Carol" (I'm thinking, hum, I don't remember meeting any Carols' with a Bugeye). "Crump". I could barely get to the podium, was so completely stunned! Still grinning, see you in September!

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## **Weird things that go wrong, II**

Wil

Although I had a very good batting average as a garage owner, I think the things that went badly make for more interesting reading. Here is one from that category.

By the mid-seventies I had changed my mind and was now working on American cars. An 8 or 10 year old Ford station wagon came in with an unusual problem, but one that should have been easy to analyze with the equipment I had. The customer complained of difficulty in hot starting his Ford, fitted with a V-8 engine. More often it is the opposite temperatures, but he said cold starting was never a problem.

I soon found that it was the hot cranking speed that was the problem; it would vary from slow to zero, depending on engine temperature and 'hot soak' time. OK, that should be easy; it was an electrical problem concerning the battery, starter motor or cables. Our trusty and heavy duty Sun VAT 40 tester to the rescue! Except that the battery load test was excellent when hot. Maybe a cheesy hot cable to the starter? Well, there was a little voltage drop from the battery to the starter motor when cranking, but if the starter had a short circuit when hot that would be expected. I installed a new starter motor... this wouldn't be a story if that had worked.

I had the car for a day or two and exhausted every possibility I could think of. Frankly, the problem defeated me. Bad for me and the customer both.



During my working years I subscribed to two garage-trade magazines. Perhaps a year later I read an article about a recent Ford service bulletin that covered the problem above. Ford announced that one of their engines (my customer's) had a problem with the block castings (how very English of them! - see foot note) and if the coolant was allowed to become rusty, the excessively narrow water passages at the back of the block could plug up. Running, apparently there was enough circulation to manage (through the head and upper block) , but during a 'hot soak' period the back of the block and pistons got so hot that the piston skirt clearance were lost and the rear pistons were seized in the cylinder bores!

Geez. I don't know if I should be ashamed of myself or not. I'd never heard of American cars with that problem. On the other hand, if I'd tried to rotate the engine with the crank pulley nut, I'd have immediately found that the problem was internal, not electrical at all. And, yes, my customer was firmly in the '**If it ain't broke, don't fix it**' camp. His battery terminals were always covered with lead sulfate and eaten away, and it is very unlikely he had ever changed his anti-freeze. Rusty or not.

Footnote: I've often since read of this problem on older English cars or motorcycles with hot engines – they called it "Nipping up", a term from mostly back in the 1920s or 1930s. It results from poor cooling or inadequate piston skirt clearance. However, poor casting control seems to have lasted much longer. After I installed a 1275cc Sprite engine in my A40 Farina, it frequently seemed to be on the verge of boiling. For that and other reasons, I contacted Pierce Manifolds in California and bought one of their aluminum 1275 cylinder heads. The owner of PM told me that they had cut standard iron 'A' series Austin cylinder heads into sections with a band saw and in many places the water coolant passages were so tight that hardly any water could pass through. Happily, the new aluminum head allowed the A40 to sit idling on hot summer days for long periods with no rise in coolant temperatures.  
(Moral: it ain't always the radiator's fault)

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**June 12, GOBMC show, Springfield, MO, with thanks to Shannon Lewis:**



BL Fleet Service with spares. Clever.

More on next page.



A-H 100, Morgan or Lotus Elan? Tough choice.



Two TRs and a view of part of the field.



From here it looks like the MGA black roadster has a Rolls-Royce paint job!

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