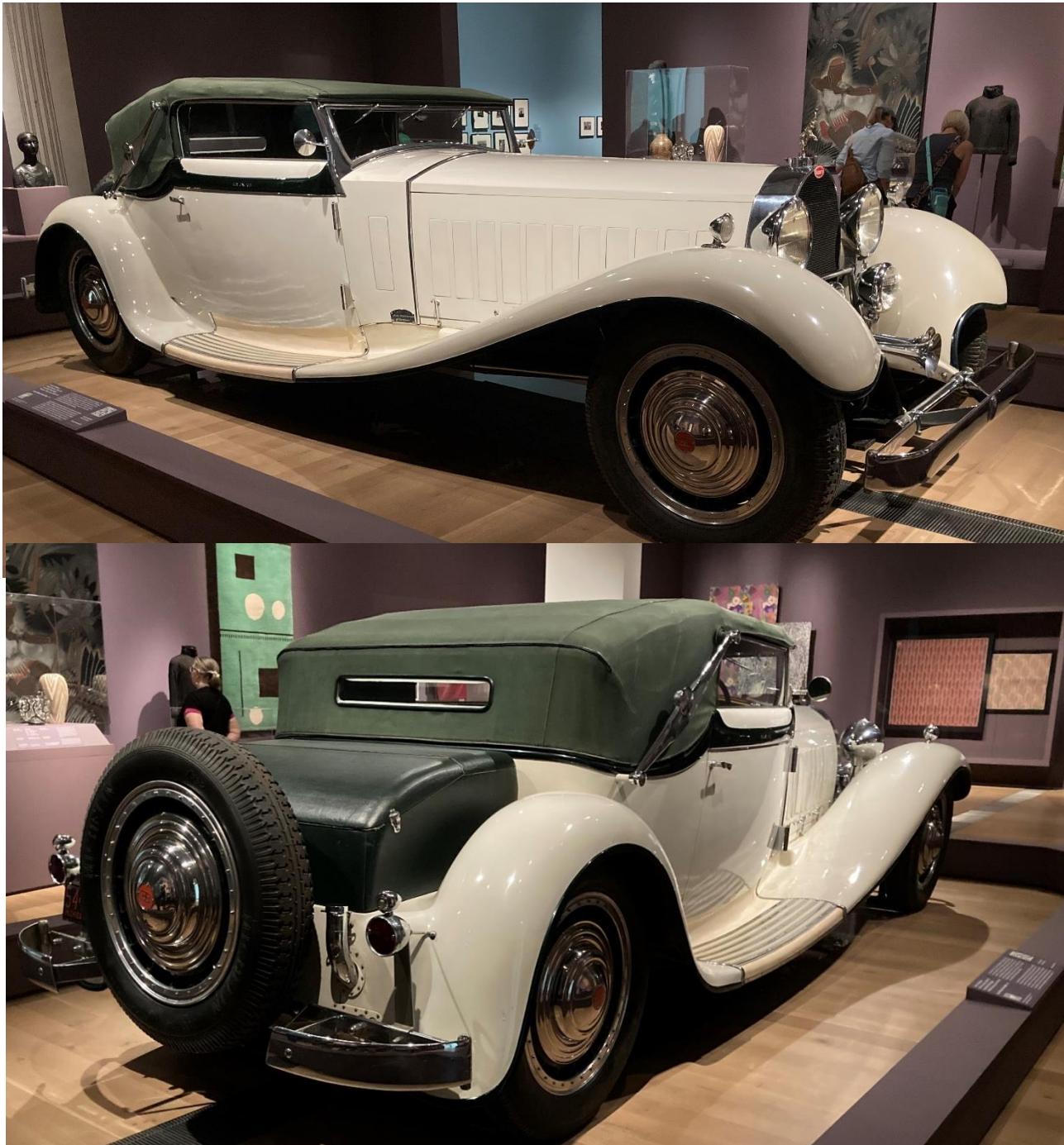


# ***'FRENCH' JUNE, 2025***

*But only for this month*

On various visits to southern California we have visited the Peterson auto museum and the Nethercutt auto museum. But we never got to the late Peter Mullin's museum to see his outstanding collection of French cars, and now it is too late for Yr. Ed. Fortunately, the St. Louis Museum of Art came to my rescue with their special show 'Roaring' featuring the era of 1918 – 1939; French fashions, style and cars. The show runs until July 27, 2025. This special edition of 'BRITISH' may save you a trip or inspire you to go!

Type 41 Bugatti Royale Convertible, 1931 (huge)



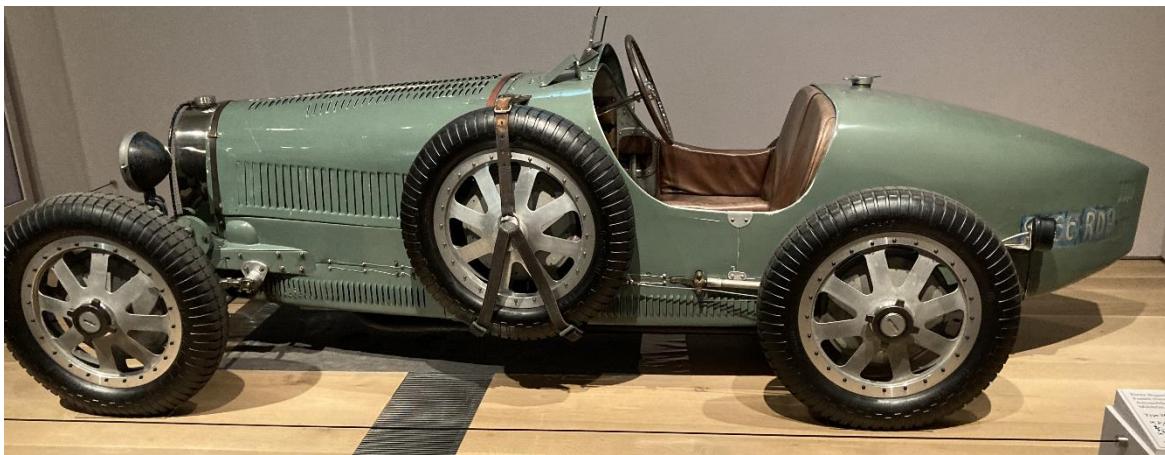
1938 Delage D8-120S Chapron Cabriolet



1937 Delahaye 135 MS Figoni et Falaschi Competition Court



1927 Bugatti Type 35B Helle-Nice Grand Prix



1937 Voisin Type C28 Aerosport Coupe



1938 Talbot-Lago T150C SS Figoni et Falaschi Coupe



# **‘BRITISH’**

>Well worth reading some of the time<

**June, 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, May 8<sup>th</sup>:** Hey, who cares how badly the Interstate traffic is jammed up? The destination is worth the aggravation. Be happy! (Sound of grinding teeth) Don Wiseman reported this was his last meeting night, as he and Susan will be moved to Houston, TX, before next month. We are sorry to lose these folks. We talked with new potential member Ryan McCormick, who is working on a TR6 restoration and needs a little tuning help. But Elaine wasn't with us tonight to handle membership. (He since joined) She sent word that the piggy bank has \$5429 - just like R-R horsepower, adequate. At our table folks were reminiscing about former homes, but I didn't hear anyone say they would rather be there than here. We heard Bill Watkins (well, I only half-heard) announce that two new people joined us tonight; Carl --- and Nancy Mills with a TR3. Welcome, and I apologize for omissions and misspellings. We discussed some activities coming up, but Bill will probably have reminders on the BI-List. Wil commented that people with big-buck cars want expensive trophies and suggested we create one or two car categories to accommodate them. With the money we are raising at our show these days, we can afford to attract some REAL Classic cars. But Wil's idea that Brit chrome headlight surrounds could be used a picture frames was a flop, so why should we listen to him?

The entire editorial staff thanks Bill Watkins for his kind words about our newsletter tonight. We must also thank Bill for the appellation “OEE”; ‘our esteemed editor’. We hope that members will, in time, accept this in their minds and hearts instead of “TOF”.

If anyone is inspired to go see the show at the St. Louis Art Museum, please ask Yr. Ed. for some tips and hotel recommendations in the Forest Park area. The show and museum are first class.

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

It was again a pleasure to attend a tech session at our club shop a few weeks back. New member Ryan McCormick trailered his project TR6 up (in the rain) for us to play with. The engine in his car appears to be strong with solid and consistent compression across all 6 cylinders. We hooked the car up to our Sun machine and worked on the carburetors. I had to leave before the work was finished (or declared finished) so I don't know what the final outcome was, but I felt like Ryan and the rest of us knew more than we did when we arrived. Thanks as always to Wil for being the Great Guru.

I received word just this afternoon that the hotel has a competing event on the weekend of our car show, so there will be a few deviations from our usual operations. Mainly, it amounts to us being moved north to the adjacent Convention Center. Our parking area and Friday night party will take place in front of the Convention Center instead of the usual location beside the hotel. Our banquet will be in the Convention Center as well instead of in the hotel. So, a little bit of a change and a small percentage of hassle for our participants staying in the hotel, but not that big of a deal. We will still have registration in the hotel lobby. Oh, and we will have access to the Convention Center restrooms!!

I don't recall if we established a publicity committee for the car show at our January committee meeting or not. You can remind me if you know. If we did not, I want to do so NOW. I would like for this team to start reaching out to regional clubs to promote our show in whatever way they think works best. Also, help Brian with his social media work (what a huge asset he is!). The ALS office will send out a mass mailer of the registration packet and June is when we usually get that out. I'll get with them about this next week. I would also like to find someone with a connection to an area TV station so we can get some PSAs run. KFSM did it in past years but charged us \$1000 to do so. I don't think we should have to pay for this (and the ALS folks agree). Can you help?? Anyway, PROMOTE, PROMOTE, PROMOTE!!!

Speaking of promotion, we have welcomed new members to our club recently just by showing up at area car shows and talking to other owners of British cars that we see. Perfect way to grow the club. We have club business cards to hand out and I'll bring them to the next meeting.

Thanks to Greg for leading our club drive to Jasper. I drove the Alvis on its longest outing to date and learned that I have a fuel delivery problem. The car does not like going uphill and will sputter and almost die when doing so. After working on it with Wil it was determined that the fuel pump was only producing 1.5 pounds of pressure when 4 or so are needed. We blew out the lines to no real effect and suspect that the mechanical fuel pump is the culprit; however, (more to the story) there is some sort of device on the top of the fuel tank that does not appear in the parts catalogue. I am guessing it is an old supplemental electric pump that may have died. Could that dead pump be obstructing the fuel flow? I hope to figure that out in the next few days.

The tach on the Alvis also died on the Jasper trip. It is a mechanical drive, so I need to determine if the problem is the instrument, the cable, or the drive box. I am praying it is not the drive box (but suspect that it is) as it appears to be a huge pain to get to. The tach may stay broken for a while.

Safety. How often do you think about safety when you are working on one of your cars? A friend that several of us know recently got hurt while crawling under one of his cars and having it start to roll. One arm got briefly pinned under a wheel of this very heavy vehicle. No bones were broken but there was a lot of soft tissue damage. He was lucky and he will readily tell you that he knew better. The more you do something the more complacent you get. Don't fall into that trap. Be careful.

Goodbye and good luck to long-time members Don and Susan Wiseman who have moved to the Houston area to be nearer family. We will miss them.

## Club Staff

President – **Bill Watkins**

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

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

Membership and

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## Coming Events

### Next monthly Meeting Night – June 12

**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 Storey's.

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

We thank Robert Tschiemer for another offering in his series of finding, purchasing and restoring British sports cars. They are well written, very well thought out and completely logical. We wonder how much logic goes into the average Brit car purchase. As much as when we chose our wives... or when they chose us?

A peculiarity of the English is that they (it seems to me) make no effort to pronounce foreign words correctly. Educated Brits still say 'Porsh', for instance. So this brings me to the French Voisin car in this issue. Only recently I found that the correct way to say it is something like "Whah-sohn"!

BTW, there are a few more cars in the "Roaring" show in St. Louis than shown here.

**Computer dolt to more knowledgeable members:** when you send me photos embedded in text or even just on blank face page of emails, I cannot 'Copy and Paste'. Right clicking on 'Copy' yields a tiny image of a magnifying glass with an 'X' on the lens. But it never Pastes. Yet if sent as an attachment, 'Copy and Paste' works fine with the same image. Normal? Or am I missing something? **Please send an email with the answer or stop by on 'Meeting Night'.**

**Rolls-Royce cars of the early 1930s should have black-wall tires.** *Explanation:* In the process of cleaning out our home garage, I've taken the framed photo of my ex-1931 R-R PII Continental and hung it in at the Brit Stop. If you see it there you will notice the wide white-wall tires. As the restoration was nearing completion, my only thought was to sell it as fast as possible – working 5 or 6 days a week on cars and then working on the Rolls on my day off was no longer fun. At the time it seemed the RROC guys were slapping white-walls on everything, so I ordered 6 expensive white-walls from a custom tire builder in Pennsylvania. I sold the car to a NJ Mercedes/VW dealer/owner. Almost the first thing he said was "That car should have black-wall tires. I'm getting rid of those white-walls." Sigh

## Part 2, Restoring a British Car

By Robert S. Tschiemer

Restoration has a dictionary meaning -- the act of returning something to a former condition -- however, in practice, an understanding of the original condition varies from person to person. Some want their newly acquired vintage car to be showroom new, as it was forty-five years or so ago, and they may rarely if ever drive it; others want it restored to a safe driving condition and to be aesthetically pleasing and comfortable, whether driven weekly, monthly, or even in some cases, daily, perhaps in rotation with others. Most of us are somewhere in between the case of never driving the car to those who drive them daily.

Perhaps those considering a restoration project should remember that, unless money is "no object", our budget affects the extent of restoration of our prize motor vehicles. One thing is certain, and it is often heard, if you are going to do it, do it right. If you undertake a job, make it a job well done. This is especially true concerning restoration of a vintage car. If you do not make it better, you may make it worse, so think before tackling the job. If you are going to do anything to your car, make it as original as possible but there are improvements which may be considered as well, as noted below.

While anyone "can" learn the necessary restoration skills, in most cases, it is best to hire professionals, because some of these applications take many years to hone, and one painter, who is now retired but continues restoring his own collectible cars, told this writer that he still learns things after forty years. There continue to be advances in both paints, whether a single stage or two-stage process. Some use a single stage process, and others paint first and letting it dry and then may add clearcoat. One paint has clearcoat in the paint, and another has UV protection in the paint formula. The changes, and prices, are bewildering for the lay person who is not in this business. There are also improvements in restoration tools.

### **Body work and painting**

If a car is an antique, there will be imperfections no matter how well it was cared for, some which may be fixed and others not. In walking up to a car before buying it and bringing it home, as discussed in a previous article, look at its lines and see if they are straight, and if there are minor imperfections, it is not a "deal-breaker", but they should be considered in negotiating a price. Check the fuel filter for signs of rust which may have traveled from a rusty gas tank.

In some cases, the gasoline tank can be acid-blasted to remove rust, and in others, it is easier simply to replace it. Moss and other vendors can help if you do not have access to that model locally with salvage central Arkansas, one source for original parts is Ronnie McLeod, who has owned McLeod's British Cars in Maumelle for more than forty years and has over a hundred cars on his property. If you can obtain an original fender, bonnet or boot lid, which are in good condition, this is an option. If you must order the part, McLeod's British Cars is a dealer and has many things in stock, and it has several other sources, including ordering from Great Britain if necessary.

Look closely at the engine and the condition of all fluids and hoses. Has there been any indication of water in either the gas or oil? Water is heavier than petroleum, so it will sink to the bottom. If a wrench has been "turned" on a car, normally, you can see that with a proper examination, especially looking at its underside on a lift.

The first thing to do after you bring the prize automobile home on a flatbed trailer is to have your British car mechanics examine it from bonnet to boot and start the car to confirm all is right. Are the tires of recent vintage? Tread may be fine to the eye, but if the tires are sometimes twenty years old, which means they are unsafe. Tires can overheat and a blow-out may occur at highway speed, which is no fun, especially in a Midget going 70 miles per hour, as happened to this writer.

Experts will see things, following their decades of experience, things that the average person would never notice. If this is a car that has not been regularly driven, it is critical for safety to have this examination before driving it. Remember the basics of not only a working engine but include the tires and brakes. "Safety fast", as the MGB motto reminds us.

### **Should you restore it yourself?**

"The best way to buy a car is to find one you like and that someone has already restored and kept in a garage, with an owner who died or just wants to sell it", explained retired body shop painter Don Franklin, owner of Franklin Painting and Body. Mr. Franklin reminisced about a Bug Eye Sprite, a Morgan, and the undersigned's MGB, which he had painted. Mr. Franklin said that it is better to use the original rubber strips and chrome because they will fit, but sometimes they need to be replaced. Aftermarket substitutes are acceptable if you cannot find the original parts, but the factory ones are preferable to after-market versions.

It is not advisable, even if mechanically inclined, to take on too great of a project, as one which is rusty, but it is best to find one that has been taken care of, parked, and may need to be repainted or overhauled. It is a lot less expensive, and if you want it, to be completed in your lifetime, hire the professionals, Mr. Franklin recommended.

### **Is it original?**

About fifteen years ago, this writer bought a 1979 Jeep CJ-7 and was told it had been in a barn for many years, and the owner then drove it offroad along the power lines in Faulkner County over the course of a year. The VIN number on the frame and body indicated it was from different years, so it was likely rebuilt. It had no title, so this writer obtained what is called a "bonded title" under Arkansas law and ultimately was issued a title. The jeep had no doors that came with it, and while the factory door which went on fine on the left side, it would not fit on the right. A body shop near Sheridan helped, using a hydraulic tool, a porta-power, to widen the door frame on the right, and the factory door would then fit. He also welded rust damage on the passenger floor next to the frame. Most body shops use a MIG welder on a project as this. A TIG welder might be used on newer, clean metal, at times. That jeep is still in our family after fifteen years now and we just put its first engine rebuild in it, from Rebel Engine Rebuilders. But a British car is not a jeep.

### **How Rust is Removed?**

Use a wire brush to remove rust to the extent possible and then use a neutralizing compound. Several are available at places as Home Depot or Lowes. Muriatic acid will stop the rusting process. Leave it on your car from about 2 hours to eight hours, and if it is a part, ideally sub-merge it in the solution. Otherwise coat it. Muriatic acid must be rinsed off the metal, and the metal will then be shiny. Once this is done, the restorer can use Rust-Mort, which sells for about \$120 a gallon and is a good compound that will bond with the metal, and it will turn the rust black. There are many others, including POR-15. Stop the rusting process before going further.

Whether you want to deal with rust or body work is a decision only the buyer can make,

how- ever, if so, there are floor pans, for the front and back and trunk, and generally a car may be repaired with enough time and money. This writer recently traveled to look at a Midget that was for sale and originally listed for \$1,300, and when there, the owner was willing to drop the price to \$1,100, yet there was significant rust on both floors, and I noted rust in the trunk, so I did not buy it. Be ready to walk away if a "project" may be too much.

Rust damage is a very difficult and time-consuming defect to repair, and at times the cost to do so may be exceed what the owner may want to spend and take too much time to repair. On our 1979 jeep, there was rust on the rocker panels, and the south Arkansas body shop owner taught me how to treat it. I neutralized the rust with an acid compound, which I then washed with water to remove after sitting overnight, and then sprayed the areas with rust free primer and ultimately painted with rust resistant paint, before Mud Connection of Little Rock added body armor all around the jeep. One would never know there had been rust under it.

Beware in treating rust because if you do not neutralize it before painting, it will keep eating the metal. Some body repair people will paint over a problem, without removing the rust, and it and will have disastrous consequences later. Stewart Cancimilla, of Black Out Speed Shop, in May- flower, who primarily handles vintage restoration painting, noted as he showed this writer a panel from one that he was working on where someone had painted without removing the rust. It was now having to be redone correctly.

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### **Ruined by excellent advertising**

Some of you might remember the VW ads from the mid-late 'fifties. VW signed up with the best advertising firm in New York and boy, did they get their money's worth. The ads were simple, humorous and effective, not just in selling new cars, but in establishing in the mind of the public an image of reliability and low maintenance costs. At that time Volkswagen was the clear leader in imported cars and Detroit was scrabbling, as they had practically nothing then to offer in the small, economy class.

For the benefit of non-ancient members, I'll make up an ad example. A large photo of a standard Beetle in black (I think all ads black and white) and print that might say something like "THE NEW 1959 VOLKSWAGEN. JUST LIKE THE 1958, WITH SOME SMALL IMPROVEMENTS. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE TO IMPROVE." You get the idea. Completely out of step with Detroit advertising and refreshingly so.

My partner and I moved out of his Linden, NJ, Shell station and opened Woodside Foreign Auto Service in 1960, working on only imported cars. We had no problem keeping busy and soon had a good following. So how many of the ubiquitous Beetles would you guess we serviced in our shop during those years?

It was either two or three. I only remember two for sure. The first job went OK and we were lucky to have a VW dealer just a few blocks away, so odd parts were no problem. But when the customer came in to get his car, we heard, "*Your labor charge is almost as much as the dealer! How can you charge \$1.25 for a set of ignition points? Outrageous! What's the meaning of this 20 cent washer?*" Etc. After he left my partner and I said 'what the heck was that?'

Next a Beetle was towed in with a broken clutch cable. To repair, you had to lift the floor mat, unscrew a lid in the floor, disconnect the cable from the bottom of the clutch lever down in a little well and then get under the car to disconnect the rear end of the cable at the back of the car – not that hard really. Then a quick trip down the street for a new cable. The cable had to be fed into a steel tube in the pedal well and then pushed through the tube to the rear of the car. But it would only go a few feet before stopping. What the heck? I lifted the rear mat to see the tube, which had several curves, tack welded to the floor. I eased the steel tube into a larger radius, which allowed the cable to go another inch or two before sticking again. I suppose I wasted an hour before giving up and returning to the dealer with the new cable. After explaining, the parts man said, “Oh, you must have an older Beetle and I gave you the newer cable, which is 2 mm larger diameter.” A deliberate error to discourage independent shops? Who knows?

Darn! Not only did the advertising mislead owners into thinking they would never have to spend any money on their Beetles, it fooled me into thinking they were all the same mechanically.

We might have had one other owner complaint session about costs before deciding we just didn’t need this car or their chea... cost conscious owners in our lives.

By the way, we worked on sports cars primarily, but the most common economy box we serviced was the Renault Dauphine – a popular car with lots of problems and agreeable owners. *Wil*

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**5/17/25 Ride to Jasper for lunch: A happy (small) group poses on a beautiful summer morning before leaving the Springdale Holiday Inn. Seven cars and 11 folks participated. The pace was moderate and there should have been more members.**

Greg Bunch had a great route laid out for us – although Yr. Ed. had motorcycled and gone on club rides in that area many times, Greg found scenic connections that were new to me. Fickle Finger incident – I had my Civic Si serviced for the ride on Friday. Saturday morning everything was ready to go except the battery was completely dead! So Shirley’s car was appropriated and she had to put off her shopping until the next day.

No incidents on the trip and the food at the Ozark Café was good, if oversized. Bill Watkins and Yrs. Trly left Jasper a few minutes ahead of the gang and took a more direct route home. Thank you for a nice event, Greg! BTW, Bill’s Alvis looks spectacular on the road, with the gold glittering in the sunlight.



## Weird things that go wrong

Wil

The day before our May Jasper ride, I took my British-made 2002 Civic Si to Walmart for an oil change and to have the tires checked, etc. It seems to me that dealers today think you owe them \$300 to just walk in.

Saturday morning I hopped in, ready to head for the Holiday Inn departure point. But the battery was completely dead – not even enough juice for the ignition lights. So I had to drive the grocery-getter.

Sunday I hooked up a trickle charger to the Si. After a few hours a check showed that the brake lights were on. I'd come home from Walmart in the daylight and didn't walk behind the car, so had no clue of this problem. Grabbing the brake pedal and pulling up on it caused the brake lights to go out, but the movement was very tiny and lights came back on upon releasing the pedal. Three possibilities, I thought:

- 1) There is a mechanical brake light switch that bears on the pedal linkage and it has come loose and lost its clearance.
- 2) There is a hydraulic switch on the master cylinder or hydraulic lines that has failed (broken internal spring).
- 3) Or – worst scenario – the master cylinder has failed; a stuck piston or failed internal spring which retains hydraulic pressure even with the foot brake released.

Well, crawling under the dash to look for a mechanical brake switch is a monumental challenge at age 92... no, sorry, getting up afterward is the real challenge. I didn't see a mechanical switch on the brake pedal.

This is the second failure of the car in 23 years – you might recall that the first failure was the front oxygen sensor after 17 years, which I repaired myself. But I was younger then! We dropped the car off at the Honda dealer.

The three possibilities above are listed from the most minor of faults to the most complicated/expensive. Which do you think was the culprit?

- 1) At least #1 comes closest. A rubber plunger for the brake switch broke off and had to be replaced. And I had the brake fluid changed, which I do every five years or so. And they recommended that I have the original serpentine belt replaced. Well, after 89,000 miles and 23 years I guess that isn't too unreasonable... although it still looks fine.

See why I like this car? Plus it is still fun to drive.

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**Tech Session, May 24:** Despite the rain, new member Ryan McCormick arrived on time with a rental trailer and his TR6, and we also had a nice turnout of members. The threatened lightning storm did not materialize. Ryan has done a lot of mechanical work in this restoration, but needed help with fine-tuning. The compression test was excellent, but the new plugs were all sooty and fouled – no wonder the car wouldn't run! Ryan was taught how to use our Champion spark plug cleaner. Helping this morning were Bill Watkins, Lee, Brad, Todd, Larry Goodsell, Brian, Terry, and Wil... I've forgotten someone. We scope checked the ignition and found that the dwell (points gap) was way off and reset it. **Thinking later, I may have misspoke about the relationship of points gap and dwell, so let's review: Dwell time is when the points are closed and the coil is grounded. Grounded, the coil creates the magnetic field essential to turn low voltage to high voltage. If the points gap is too large – Less Dwell. If the points gap is too small, the dwell time increases – this is what normally happens when the points rubbing block wears down after thousands of miles.**

Anyway, we made it right. There was more cylinder to cylinder timing variation than wanted (4 to 6 degrees at the crankshaft), but this probably would never be noticed on a road car. The timing was now 'on' or very close. Last, the @#\* Zenith-Stromberg carbs. They were set so slow that the engine would not idle. We fixed the idle speed. However, there was lots of slop in the throttle linkage, plus binding. The linkage design is so pathetic as to be indescribable (This is why I'll never understand purists who insist every item on their car should be just as it left the factory – no matter how crappy the design). Ryan is looking into a Moss after-market throttle linkage. Summary: We made some good progress but also found a few things that couldn't be solved today. About normal. Also normal, I can't remember if we turned off the air compressor and will run back to the Brit Stop tomorrow to check. Perhaps the most valuable lesson for Ryan is 'don't ever use more choke than absolutely necessary and don't let the engine idle so slowly that it is on the verge of stalling'. Thanks to Bill W. for providing the photo. Ryan on left.



Still having fun at the Brit Stop!