

‘BRITISH’ SEPT / 25



‘BRITS IN THE OZARKS’ MONTH!

Part of the field - 2023. Photo by Dr. Steven Anagnost, forwarded by Dr. Hess



And this is our featured British car brand of the month. Well, OK, it isn't typical of their production. Don't recognize it? Shame! That means you've never been to the English 'National Motor Museum' in the UK. Whatever do you spend your money on? See page 4.

‘BRITISH’

>Well worth reading some of the time<

Sept, 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, Aug 14th: 52 folks tonight – Great! Terry Wilson introduced himself and we later set up a tech session for Saturday to replace his MG TF water pump. Our waitress was super helpful with pushing in our tall stools and cleaning up a spilled water glass – she earned her bonus tip. Mark Cory showed me his new/defective TD starter solenoid, opened up. And in the old days we thought Joe Lucas made crappy electrical parts... turns out those were the ‘good old days’. As Editor, my happiest moments were several members who came up and commented on the August issue. Which means they read it! That means a lot. Setting next to Hess, we exchanged many old British car war stories. Jim and Dena Peckham joined us tonight and also Robert Tschiemer; always nice to have some Little Rock area members show up. Yr. Ed. owes the Lea family an apology: Elliot is now a full-fledged member with her own name tag. No more counting her as ½ a member. Sorry! Elaine reported \$5613.xx in our treasury. I’m surprised it isn’t going down faster. Hess reported as of Aug 14th, we have 101 entries for our car show on Sept 20th – a new record for this date. Bill Watkins was out of town tonight. Brad Esslinger did an excellent job conducting the business session and thoroughly covered all the car show questions and work sheets needed. Thank you, Brad. I asked for member profile story contributions. Seemed to me that everyone enjoyed themselves tonight.

August seems like a very long, slow month, club-wise. Was it boring, or was that just me?

Hope everyone had an enjoyable Labor Day weekend.

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

Many thanks to Brad for running the meeting last month while I was away. Much as I appreciate him doing so, I see that he failed miserably in organizing the *coup d'état* I had hoped for. Oh well, maybe another time.

This is always such a busy time of year for us as Brits in the Ozarks rapidly approaches. I long ago started my annual prayers for good weather. I have in my possession the Castrol cloth goody bags for this year and a box of Castrol hats. I am told by an ALS Association representative that our own hats are on the way. I have ordered the t-shirts, and the vendor tells me we will have them by the time of the work party. I am not holding my breath but hope springs eternal. If that happens that would really help our registration team out. Cross your fingers. The vendor is in Butler, MO., so I may need someone to run up there and get them. More or this as I learn it. I know some of you have also gotten stuff from other sources. Just bring it all to the work party on the 14th.

Speaking of the work party (and I'll bring this up again at the meeting), we need to organize a team to assist Doug Schrantz and me with loading the trailer on Saturday the 13th. Doug and I will pick the trailer up from Robert and meet the crew at the shop on the West side by the door that leads to the 2nd floor. We can discuss scheduling at the meeting.

I have been studying pre-registrations, and it is interesting. As of September 1, we had 139 cars entered with several of interest. I counted 9 Morgans, 10 Lotuses (Loti???), two of which are Elites, 4 Aston Martins, a Rover P6 (which we have never had before) a Berkley, a Riley Kestrel, and MG PA racecar, oh and, yeah, a Jensen and an Alvis. With our usual walk-up registrations rate we should end up at around 160 as usual.

Sign-up sheets went around at the meeting and I'll send them out again before the next meeting so that you can see where you signed up or sign up if you did not have a chance to do so. Please sign up for something as it doesn't work without you all pitching in.

Big thanks again this year to Malcolm for (1) securing the park (2) arranging for a dumpster (3) being our photographer again, and (4) providing the sound system. That all sure makes my job a lot easier.

Mark Holzer and I had lunch last week with Staphanie Kruger who is with UAMS. UAMS is opening an ALS clinic in Fayetteville, and I thought it would be good to connect with her. They will provide us with some goodie bag items and, to be honest, be a backup for us as our charity if the relationship with the ALS Association should ever not work. I do have to give credit where it is due: I was concerned that with my ALS contacts now being in Little Rock and Tulsa, rather than here, that things would not work well. So far my fears have proven groundless.

This coming weekend a small group of us will gather at the shop to create a video of Wil instructing on how to use the Sun diagnostics machine. We have the "film crew" lined up and really don't need any spectators in order to reduce background noise and distraction. Once this has been completed it will be uploaded onto our website so that we can learn from it and, hopefully, develop others in the club who know how to use it. Once - and if - Wil is comfortable with his presentation he may hold another "class" for a larger in-person audience. We will keep you posted, both as to the status of the video and if there will be a second presentation.

Sigh, the struggles with the Alvis continue. I have it set to go back to "my guy" as soon as he has a slot for me. I can drive it, but it is not confidence inspiring.

I hope you will all be there at the meeting on the 11th.

Bill Watkins

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2nd Vice President – **David Ferrell**
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Webmaster – **Brian Lea**
~~Editor – Wil Wing~~ briton4@cox.net ¶
Events Coordinator – **Marcy Denham**

Coming Events¶

Next monthly Meeting Night – ¶

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.¶

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Aug 16: Work session at the Brit Stop, Well, Terry brought in his MG TF, but it wasn't leaking now! It was placed on the lift, raised and then a small leak was found – but Terry needs to have a spare part in hand before starting that job. This reminds me of my business years – 1960 –'88. Some customers would make an appointment for a problem and then it wouldn't act up at my shop. *"But it was doing it last week!"* I was tempted to make up a sign '**Consistent problems fixed immediately. Inconsistent problems fix inconsistently**'. Bill Watkins put his Alvis on the scope to check the ignition at elevated rpms. Cylinders 2 and 4 required a couple thousand more volts, but the reason was not pursued. A new ignition wire set is planned. Bill corrected the float drop and his intermittent cut-out has not occurred – yet. To be continued?

Thanks to Robert Tschiemer and Lee Cowling for contributions this month.

Sept 6 – Morning school session at the Brit Stop: My filmed engine analyzer and scope lecture went OK. I think, but I haven't seen it and am not anxious to do so. The 'hands on' section, second part, we decided to repeat in the future when a 4-cylinder British car is available.

Sunbeam Motor Car Company Limited



A British automobile manufacturer in operation between 1905 and 1934. Its works were at Moorfields in Blakenhall, a suburb of Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, now West Midlands. The Sunbeam name had originally been registered by **John Marston** in 1888 for his bicycle manufacturing business. Sunbeam motor car manufacture began in 1901. The motor business was sold to a newly incorporated Sunbeam Motor Car Company Limited in 1905 to separate it from Marston's pedal bicycle business; Sunbeam motorcycles were not made until 1912.

In-house designer Louis Coatalen, had an enthusiasm for motor racing and accumulated expertise with engines. Sunbeam manufactured their own aero engines during the First World War and 647 aircraft to the designs of other manufacturers. Engines drew Sunbeam into Grand Prix racing and participation in the achievement of world land speed records.

In spite of its well-regarded cars and aero engines, by 1934 a long period of particularly slow sales had brought continuing losses. Sunbeam was unable to repay money borrowed for ten years in 1924 to fund its Grand Prix racing program, and a receiver was appointed. There was a forced sale, and Sunbeam was picked up by the Rootes brothers. Manufacture of Sunbeam's then old-fashioned cars did not resume under the new owners, but Sunbeam trolleybuses remained in production.



The two Rootes brothers had intended to sell luxury cars under the Sunbeam name, but by 1938 instead chose to add the name to their Talbot branded range of Rootes designs, calling them Sunbeam-Talbots. In 1954 they dropped Talbot from the name.

Sunbeam continued to appear as a marque name on new cars until 1976. It was then used as a model name, firstly for the Chrysler Sunbeam from 1977 to 1979, and, following the takeover of Chrysler Europe by PSA Group, for the Talbot Sunbeam from 1979 through to its discontinuation in 1981.



Louis Coatalen: Coatalen was particularly fond of racing as a way to drive excellence noting that "Racing improves the breed". After designing his 12/16 (left) he began to design advanced high-power engines combining overhead valves with a pressurized oil lubrication system.

By 1911 Sunbeam were building about 650 cars a year and were regarded as a substantial motor manufacturer. Wolseley sold 3,000 cars of similar quality in 1913. Ford sold 6,000 Model 'T's that same year assembled at Trafford Park, Manchester. In 1914 Ford switched on Britain's first moving assembly line for car production and it began its run at a rate of 21 cars an hour. *(You will recall that the Fords were taxed very heavily taxed)*

First World War – Aero engines: In 1912 they began to make aircraft engines introducing a series aircraft engines that were not a commercial success.

Vehicles and aircraft

During the First World War Sunbeam built trucks and ambulances. Sunbeam also produced 15 Short Bombers powered by their own Sunbeam Gurkha engines, 20 Short Type 827s, 50 Short 310s, and others including Avro 504 trainers. Sunbeam had produced 647 aircraft of various types by the time the lines shut down in early 1919.

S.T.D. Motors (Sunbeam, Talbot & Darracq)

In 1919, following the First World War, Darracq had bought a London motor manufacturer, Clément-Talbot. The Sunbeam Talbot and Darracq businesses retained their separate identities. The Sunbeam car would continue to be made at Moorfield Works, Wolverhampton, the Talbot in North Kensington and the Darracq at with central buying, selling, administration and advertising departments with S T D in Britain. On 13 August 1920 Darracq changed its name to S T D Motors Limited.

Again, Sunbeam did not survive the Great Depression and they were acquired by Rootes in 1935. Here are a couple of their attractive cars before bankruptcy.



Far left: 1927 3-liter Super Sports open tourer.
Left: 1930 20 sports saloon.

World land speed record cars

Top: Sunbeam 350 HP 1922

Bottom: Sunbeam 1000HP 1927

1922 Sunbeam 350HP on display at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. 1927 Sunbeam 1000hp displayed at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. A Brooklands racer with a purpose-built V12 18.3-litre engine whose design was a hybrid of the Sunbeam Manitou and the Sunbeam Arab aero engines. This engine had four blocks of three cylinders arranged in two banks set at 60 degrees (unlike the Arab which were set at 90 degrees). Each cylinder had one inlet and two exhaust valves actuated by a single overhead camshaft. The two camshafts were driven by a complex set of 16 gears from the front of the crankshaft – a similar arrangement to that used on the Maori engine which had two OHC per bank of cylinders. This famous car (Sunbeam 350HP) established three Land Speed Records, the first achieved by Kenelm Lee Guinness at Brooklands in 1922 with a speed of 133.75 mph. Malcolm Campbell then purchased the car, had it painted in his distinctive color scheme, named it Blue Bird and in September 1924 achieved a new record speed of 146.16 mph at Pendine Sands in South Wales, raising it the following year to 150.76 mph. The same year Coatalen new 3-litre Super Sports came 2nd at Le Mans, beating Bentley – this was the first production twin-cam car in the world. In 1926 Segrave captured the LSR in a new 4-litre V12 Sunbeam racer originally named Ladybird and later renamed Tiger. Coatalen decided to re-enter the LSR field himself, building the truly gigantic Sunbeam 1000HP powered by two 450 hp (340 kW) Matabele engines. On 29 March 1927 the car captured the speed record at 203.792 mph (327.971 km/h). The car is now at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, UK.



*(Note again that when the English adopt a foreign word it is then theirs and no effort is made to use the original pronunciation. The English say **BEW**- rhymes with 'few' - **LEE**)*

Sunbeam Badged Vehicles – Rootes Group

Sunbeam Rapier



Sunbeam Alpine



Sunbeam Tiger



Sunbeam Rapier Fastback



Sunbeam-Talbot



There is loads more about Sunbeam cars available from Wikipedia and a Google search. This article was shortened severely. I hope Ron Shrum will have his Sunbeam Alpine finished in time for our car show on Sept 20th. I think it has been a long time since an Alpine came around to ‘Brits in the

Ozarks’. Personally, I’ve only serviced the Rootes Sunbeams.

Thanks again to Wikipedia.

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Driving a vintage British sports car in autocross

By Robert S. Tschiemer

Racing a British sports car with the likes of Porsches, Lotuses, Corvettes, and others is a daunting challenge but it shows the little cars can on a hot day in July 2025 in searing 100-degree plus heat. This writer recently drove his 1977 MGB in an autocross event sponsored by the Sports Car Club of America. The timed cone-event was held on a closed runway at the Stuttgart municipal airport, which the club is allowed to use for yearly events on preselected dates. This writer used land there in his cross-country pilot training flying a Cessna 150, a two-seat airplane, on occasion but this time it was a ground adventure.



I attended an eight-hour driver’s school sponsored by the SCCA and open to all cars, including the vintage sports cars that we own and love. It is not “racing” in the true sense of the word, because you are not going at great speeds, or at least my car was incapable of that, but drivers are maneuvering through a winding course of cones laid out on a closed airport runway, with a graveyard of abandoned commercial jets from this and other countries lying on the side of the airport. Perhaps spirited driving is a better phrase.

There is no one-on-one competition because each car goes one car at a time, and at the finish line, a large timer displays the results. The goal is to improve timing

during each run, which this car succeeded in despite much more experienced drivers and powerful cars. The MGB times were half those of the others.

In interviewing one of the presenters of this “Starting Line” class, which takes place nationally, my question was: what makes a good autocross driver -- good reflexes and car? He thoughtfully replied, yes that helps, but the main thing is being able to “see the course”. This is a true statement, as the autocross course was laid out with orange traffic cones as far as the eye could see on the runway that day. If one is pointing one way, the driver is to turn that direction. A memorable section required the driver to go as fast as the car allowed and then slam on the brakes and turn sharply and then go into a series of “S” curves, and another straight stretch. The cars with the big engines took the day in time on the straight stretches, although I venture the sports car I was driving would do well in slow speeds on the S curves. Overall, on a timed run, as an example, my best times were 77 seconds and others would be 35 seconds.

Many of the cars that day were finely tuned for competition but otherwise they were legal street cars as far as this writer could tell, yet their drivers were extraordinary. One, with many decals on the car and sporting Louisiana license plates, would spray down his tires with a portable tank he carried to try to cool them after each event.

Before entering the race, several conduct a pre-race inspection to ensure safety, and they gathered around the MGB, checking under the hood, bouncing it up and down front and rear, and checking shocks and suspension. One asked where the battery was, and when I said under the rear seat, that inspection was deferred. One requirement is to remove everything from the car’s interior and trunk, which included the jack, spare tire and all that can slide around. It was refreshing not hearing anything but your squealing tires and revved up engine.

Driving the MGB on short stretches of the course, I ran in second gear at up to 5500 rpm, but as the course sections lengthened, I began to use third gear to gain speed in the longer stretches.

The importance of participating in SCCA events is not to win, as the goal is to improve your ability with your car. Comparing cars, perhaps the most common element was each person cares about getting the most performance out of their cars and improving their driving skill. This attitude seems to be one that is not limited to regions or countries. In the last year, this writer spoke with the organizer of a three-week race in Italy that is open to British sports cars and others.

When I mentioned the word race, he quickly corrected me and said, you mean “challenge”, adding “we call it a challenge because racing on the streets is illegal in Italy.” The enthusiasm was evident, much as those participating in the SCCA driver’s school. It is a good thing.

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Following is a copy of an old misfiled article from about 25 years ago, when Yr. Ed. did a series called ‘THAT REMINDS ME’. *Wil*

TEST, DON’T GUESS

That was the motto of the Sun Electric Co., the pioneer of automotive test equipment. It was a sales slogan that had enormous appeal to me.

That reminds me that movie actor Vincent Price was also an antiques collector and authority. He popularized a convolution on the common expression, “I don’t know much about... (fill in the blank), but I know what I like”. Mr. Price’s improved version, and the title of his book was, “I like what I know”. Exactly! And I don’t like what I don’t know.

As kids, my best friends and I lived in a semi-rural area of small farms, which were quickly yielding their land to residential developments. Not destined for athletic prowess, we took our pleasure from car mechanics and off-road antics. Still several years away from legal driving age, we had junkers acquired from farmers by begging or 5 to 10 dollars. We drove them around farms and through the woods. That is, when we could get them running! I remember such beauties as '33 and '34 Chevys and a '30 Essex – or was it a Willys Whippet? These heaps were great fun for age group 13-14, but in the beginning more time was spent tinkering with engines that ran poorly or not at all. The conversations surrounding these efforts were an early indication that I was from a different planet. Herbie might say, “I think it is the fuel pump.” Joe disagreed. “It’s probably the coil or head gasket.” Fred tapped the distributor thoughtfully and said, “Maybe the gas is no good.” Yup, we didn’t have a clue. My pals were happy to experiment, but not knowing how to figure this stuff out drove me nuts. I read and learned. The thing to note here is that my chums were perfectly happy with their own style. Herbie later had a gas station. Many small garages fixed cars by the ‘shotgun’ method and lots of people seemed content to pay someone else to change parts until they stumbled onto the real problem! It’s a personality-type thing.

So, my first business had a tiny Sun engine analyzer oscilloscope when they were still relatively rare. 28 years later, the shop was loaded with engine analyzers, exhaust gas analyzers, electrical test equipment, a dynamometer, etc., and all in constant use. It was mostly great; interesting cars, loyal customers, busy, and satisfying work. I especially enjoyed figuring out problems that other garages and new car dealers had given up on. That those cars frequently came through my doors with more money spent on misdiagnosed repairs and wrong parts than I was going to charge to fix them properly bothered me only a little. O.K., maybe more than a little. Even a few of my customers, though, preferred to use me as the “garage of last resort”.

Mr. S. was a perfect example of the “You can’t convince everyone” principle. Mr. S. was a fabric salesman and a successful one, I’d bet, but a reluctant customer. Over 15 years or so he had an occasional tune-up, but more often I’d be fixing someone else’s mistakes for him. He once said, “I wish you would just fix my car and not charge me for all that equipment”! On the day after my official retirement he showed up at the shop, which was empty. The machines were sold, Shirley was sweeping the floor, and a concrete truck had had its chute into the building, filling the dyno pit. Mr. S. wanted had a misfiring engine and wanted it fixed. At first I thought he was kidding me. Nope, he meant it, and he wasn’t buying my ‘excuse’ of an empty shop. With a wry smile to let me know that I wasn’t putting anything over on him, he said, “Come on. I know you can tell what’s wrong without all that stuff.” It dawned on me that he lived by his wits and glib talk (BS) and thought I did as well.

So ended half a lifetime of fixing cars and serving the public. The cars were easier.

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Two Men and Their British Cars – by Lee Cowling Art Henderson – 1957 Triumph TR3

I recently met a man that has owned a 1957 Triumph TR3 ‘wide mouth’ since it was purchased new. Art received the car from his uncle as a gift when he was 16 years old. Art had never even heard of a Triumph automobile but as a young man the car gave him two things. Transportation and freedom. The road systems in Northwest Arkansas in the 50’s were primarily gravel and dirt so it’s hard to imagine a young man driving “as a young man would do” on these roads with a little British car but that’s exactly what Art did. He would use it to go quail hunting with his buddy and his bird dog Prince. Prince would ride in the space behind the front seats. He also liked to drive to Eureka Springs to go fishing. I would imagine driving to Eureka Springs was an all-day journey. Life was good. Things changed when Art had a calling to join the Army. He was placed in an

artillery division for 2 years then he spent 4 more in the reserves. Art came home after 6 years and decided he needed a bigger car, so he bought a Chevy Impala. The Triumph was put away in storage. He stored it in a



chicken house “no chickens” for many, many years. One day he pulled it out of a storage and trailered the car to a man in Springdale that did car restoration. The car was completely restored with new paint, upholstery, and mechanical work done by Wade Whitaker in Rogers. The car now looked and ran like new. Its color was originally powder blue but now it is a beautiful yellow. The car has 31,000 original miles and as Art would say “it never left me stranded.” It’s been a pleasure meeting Art and hearing his stories about the TR3. To own a car for 68 years is something to say but to resurrect a vehicle to be as it once was as new takes a passion and a love that I truly admire. Arts car will be in the 2025 Brits in the Ozark car show, and I hope you all can drop by and give it a look. I hope Art will be there “health permitting” to tell some of his great

stories about a young man and his little British car.

Terry Wilson – 1955 MGTF1500

I met Terry through our car club and Alan Meyer. Great guy and to be perfectly honest Terry landed the whale. Terry recently purchased a 1955 MGTF that is in very good condition and totally un-molested. What a find. A



true time capsule. I have seen this car up close and personal at a tech succession and all I can say is this is a once-in-a-lifetime find. Let me tell you the story of how Terry came across this fantastic car. Terry was a medic in Vietnam in the 101st airborne. Remember that! After Terry got out of the service he did like all of us, he had to find a way to make a living. It turns out that Terry was a good businessman and very successful with his company. Years passed and Terry retired like a lot of us do. Terry always loved the British roadster. He wanted one so he started his search on the internet. As luck would have it, he found a red 1955 TF1500 on Autotrader. He started corresponding with a gentleman in Kentucky about the car. A retired colonel. Hint, hint! The colonel told Terry there were 2 others interested in the car but when the colonel found out that they were both in the 101st the deal was done. Good job Terry.

You have a true time capsule. Terry’s car will be at the show. Please come by and look at an undisturbed vintage MG.

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