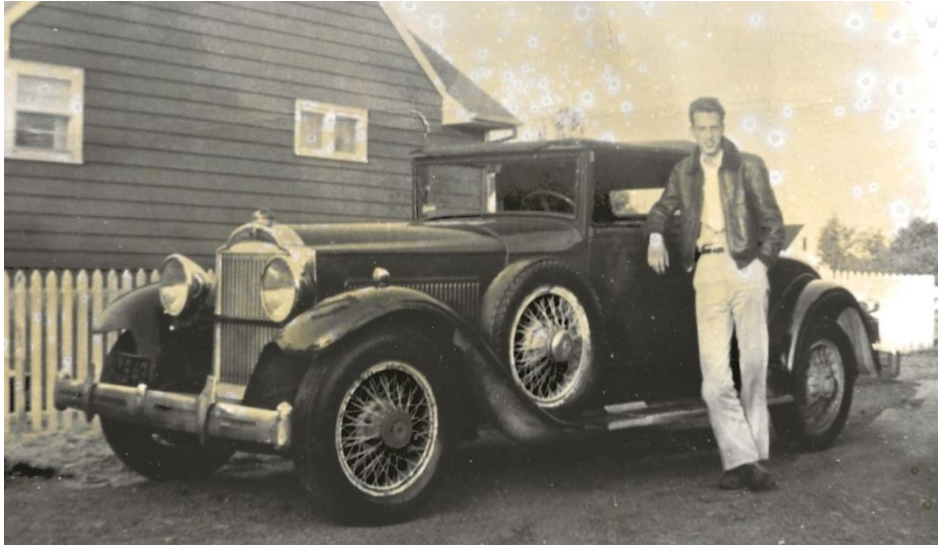


*Heearrrrrrrs...*

## ***BRITISH!***

**Bringing back an old Editor for his third serving of indifference, neglect and despair?  
Nah, Hope Springs Etern... sometimes.**



**First car, a 1930 Packard Convertible Coupe w rumble seat, bought for the winter of 1951-52. The Harley was stored away. Packard was bought and sold for just over \$100. Straight-eight cylinder, four speed transmission (a low-low, not overdrive), old hard tires, horrible gas mileage (but only 17.9 cents per gallon) and almost one quart of oil per day on the long round trip to work. The car was old enough to vote when purchased, but still loveable. The Packard and the Harley provided the down payment for a new 1952 MG TD MK II in the spring.**



**My realistic (slightly rusty wire wheels and not too shiny bodywork) model of the Packard. In my dotage, I'd much rather have the Packard back, not the TD. Could that confession be dangerous? The car had its original blue over black paint. If observant, you noticed that it was garbage collection day in Bella Vista.**

**OK, NOW IT IS YOUR TURN!**

# **BRITISH**

>Well worth reading some of the time<

**March 2024 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.**

**The BITC of NWA\* was started so long ago that no one can confidently offer a specific date of founding.  
Or else they just won't tell your editor.**

## **Contact Us**

Our website is temporarily down [www.britishironnwa.org](http://www.britishironnwa.org)]

-To contact our President: [bwatkins@bwatkinslawoffice.com](mailto:bwatkins@bwatkinslawoffice.com)

-To contact the editor: 479-202-3235 or [briton4@cox.net](mailto:briton4@cox.net)

## **Members staying in touch:**

We have our own club email List-Server – contact Jim Carney: [carney1081@cox.net](mailto:carney1081@cox.net) to sign up.

Membership **checks, etc., to Jim Carney**, 11565 Oak Hills Dr, Bentonville, AR, 72712

## **Our electronic newsletter**

Sent monthly by email to members and also on our website when restored.

## **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 having supper,

## **Other Meetings:**

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

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting Night:** To avoid possible confusion, and this will only be mentioned once, a cursory viewing of the TV sets in the Steak House 'Sports Theater' revealed games, not sports. But that needn't spoil our evening. To business: Our website has crashed and Malcolm Williamson tells us he isn't getting much help from the host. He is investigating other possible hosts. Hess is working on replacing the clutch in their Lotus Elise. Mark Holzer is working on converting his '77 MGB from Zenith-Stromberg to dual SU carbs and is locating small missing hardware. Good move, Mark! We had about 45 members show up this evening! – great turnout. Yr. Ed. had two newsletter articles offered before his appointment was officially announced this evening and before he had a chance to beg! Robert Storey missed the meeting, but was reported to be headed home after picking up a 'new' 1956 Daimler – don't know which model yet. Doug Schrantz has lined up a guest speaker for our September car show. Bill Watkins started the business part of the evening a little early and he/we thrashed out a calendar for our 2024 club activities. See page 3. Brad Esslinger has investigated wire wheel balancers and there are several options, starting from about \$400 up. This service is a problem in our area and having our own is worth considering. A follow up is scheduled for the March Meeting Night. A comment on the I 49 traffic from Rogers to Springdale is required: the designated idiot driver, required to crash his car and cause a complete stoppage, never showed up this afternoon. So, without an accident there was only about four miles of stop-and-go traffic from near the Mercy Hospital in Rogers southward. Two cars were parked -broken down, apparently - on the left-hand shoulder. Attention Arkansas Department of Transportation – I think you need yet another lane, both north and south, between Rogers and Springdale.

\*Monthly tip: Our club initials could be phonetically pronounced '**bitsee-on-wha**', but that sounds really stupid. **Don't do that!**

## BEHIND THE WHEEL (from the right hand side)

As announced at the last meeting (and referenced in this column last month) Diana Gallagher has resigned as newsletter editor after, I think, five years in that position. I repeat my thanks to Diana and deputy editor Jim for this important work for the club over the years. Wil Wing has volunteered to step back in for a third stint as editor and we welcome him back and thank him for his willingness to serve the club. As always, if you have a story to tell please do and get it to Wil for publication. The rest of us are interested in what you have to say or your experiences so don't be shy.

Since the last meeting we have met twice at the club shop in Prairie Creek to work on Clay Chenault's MGB.

This work amounted to installing a new fuel tank and going through the fuel system.

By the time I had to leave last Saturday it had been confirmed that the engine would run but fuel was pouring out of the Weber carburetor. After removal and cleaning the float system the leaking seemed to have stopped. I am told that after some spluttering and smoke the engine ran OK and was being hooked up to our Sun Diagnostics machine for fine tuning. Looking forward to hear a final report.

I think I can speak for those in attendance when I say it is very enjoyable to get together as a group at our shop to work on a project like Clay's car. If you need help, there are lots of folks in the club who are more than happy to provide it and our shop is a nice place to gather for that purpose. Let us know if you want to have a tech session on your car. We are not just wrenching club. We also have had a drive to Flat Creek restaurant on Table Rock Lake a few weeks back. It was a nice drive up, the setting was nice and the food was good and PLENTIFUL. Plus, Mark Brewer and Greg Bunch have been organizing spur of the moment fun runs each of the last two weekends. These guys love to drive and would welcome you. Let one of them know if you want to be included on the notice list. But you'd better be able to keep up with that crew!!

Our next event is a drive over to Hallett Motor Racing Circuit just past Tulsa on March 16<sup>th</sup> to watch the vintage racing. More details at the meeting.

I've been involved in two recent semi-barn find adventures lately. A large group of us accompanied Doug Schrantz and Lee Cowling on a trip to Russellville to retrieve and drag back home their latest acquisitions. Doug now owns an 85% (my estimate) finished XK 150 fixed head and Lee now owns a 5% finished (again my estimate) MGB GT project. That was a fun trip.

Last week I accompanied a friend of mine to Ft. Smith to look at an E-Type that he had restored 20 years ago then sold. The owner has died but instructed his wife to give my friend the first shot at buying it back. The car has sat in a storage unit for five years and, of course, has a dead battery, but was otherwise in surprisingly good condition. The gas tank smelled like turpentine so the fuel system will require attention. Otherwise, the only issue was a frozen clutch pedal which probably means a seized slave cylinder. Another inspection is planned and if that goes well, I expect him to re-purchase the car. Recommissioning will be in order.

I'm waiting for consistent nice weather so I can back my Jag saloon out and take another run through the cooling system. Once I get that sorted it goes on the market for real. If you have an interest in a wonderful old Jag sedan let me know. Priced to sell.

Lastly, I had a Ziplock bag full of name tags of people who rarely showed up at meetings that I carried around for over a year. I have now stashed it somewhere and cannot find it, so, if you believe you paid for but never received a name tag let me know and I'll order - and pay for - a replacement. Be sure to tell me how you want your name to appear.

See you at the regular meeting on March 14th.

*Bill Watkins*

## Ye Olde Staff

President - **Bill Watkins**  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - **Doug Schrantz**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - **David Ferrell**  
Treasurer - **Jim Carney**  
Web Master - **Malcolm Williamson**  
Editor – **Wil Wing**

### First appeal of the Editor:

It is sometimes difficult to drag articles from the membership. However, you needn't sit down and struggle for days putting something together. Either an old photo or a new car interests us and is very welcome. Please contribute something! Hint: photos of your first and newest car would go over very well.

**Page three formerly was (years ago) two columns, filled with very short items and observations. That format policy may or may not be resumed depending on membership generosity with personal tidbits. Clarification: You are the membership.**

**Surprise!** Your hearing does not improve with age. Yr. Ed wants to resume brief, **informal** notes on Meeting Nights, but this is getting difficult. When Bill W. calls on someone for a report or viewpoint, please don't respond as if you were talking quietly to the person sitting next to you. Give us a break.

**Threat!** If this continues to be a problem, we will need a younger (no problem there) club **Secretary** to take notes during Meeting Nights and then email them to Yr. Ed. Let's see how it goes.

**Apologies to the firms running business card ads in our newsletter if we missed you this month. That will be sorted out and corrected by April.**



## CLUB CALENDAR

- FEB 10** – We went to the Flat Creek Restaurant in Cape Fair, MO, See pg.5
- FEB 17** – We had a Tech session; Clay Chenualt's MGB at the Brit Stop in Prairie Creek. See page
- MAR 16** – Hallett races. Details, departure, TBA
- APR 20** – Ride to Oark General Store for lunch. A club favorite.
- MAY 18** – Club Ride to Tahlequah, OK, for a pizza lunch
- JUN** - A choice of two out of state car shows to support – they support us!
- JUL 8-13** A chance to join the British V-8 Club For a week of activities. Our club in invited. More later.
- AUG 25** - Car Show work Party at the Storey's
- SEP 5,6,7-** Our Brits in the Ozarks show at Agri Park, F'ville
- OCT 26** - Halloween Party at the Storey's
- NOV** - To Be Announced
- DEC – 7** Christmas Party at the Storey's

### British Iron Membership Function is Changing!

Starting in April, the duties of treasurer and membership chair are splitting. I will be taking over all the membership duties including new member applications, receiving dues, getting badges made and keeping the membership email list up to date.

We have created a new membership application which will be loaded onto the British Iron web site in the near future.

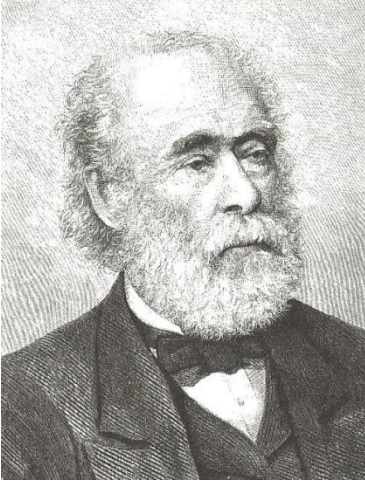
Jim Carney has done a great job trying to manage all the duties! Now, he can concentrate on just being the treasurer and managing the books.

If you haven't paid your dues by the end of March, you will no longer receive the newsletter or any of the tech hints that Wil Wing will be sending out. If you are not sure if you have paid your dues, please contact either me, [eb88cs@cox.net](mailto:eb88cs@cox.net), or Jim Carney, [carney1081@cox.net](mailto:carney1081@cox.net) to find out.

## Joseph Whitworth 1803 - 1887

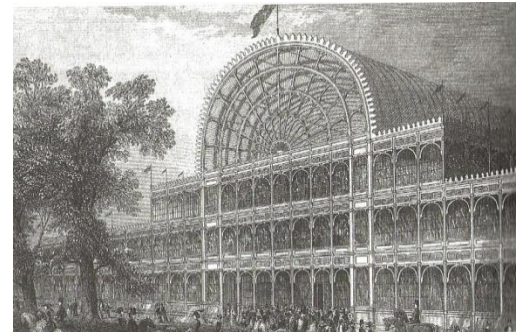
*And you thought he only made odd-sized wrenches*

Much of this information is taken from Simon Winchester's book *"The Perfectionists"* – Harper Collins 2018



Although there had been a few small industrial exhibitions on the Continent earlier, they were nothing compared to the 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations of 1851', championed by Albert, the Prince Consort, and staged in London's Hyde Park. After all, the British were leading the Industrial Revolution and they rightly and proudly wanted to show the world the extent of their advancement. Crystal Palace was built in only six months to house the entire display. It was 1,851 feet long, to celebrate the year, and 108 feet tall. It had nearly a million square feet of glass, and as you can see, looked much like a gigantic greenhouse.

The exhibits were arranged in various classes for the visitors – Mining and Mineral Products, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Products, Carriages, Railway and Marine Mechanisms, etc.



Under Manufacturing Machines and Tools, at Stall No. 201, was the Manchester based firm of 'Whitworth, J & Co.' The catalog read, **"Self-acting lathes, planing, slotting, drilling and boring, screwing, cutting and dividing, punching and shearing machines. Patent knitting machine. Patent screw stocks, with dies and taps. Measuring machine."** Remember that last one.

America has been recently and reluctantly dragged into the Metric system of measurement (well, partly, at least). A standard one-inch micrometer is calibrated to read in one one-thousandth of an inch per division. If the mic has a Vernier scale, it is possible to read down to one ten-thousandth of an inch. Joseph Whitworth exhibited a measuring machine, created in 1860, capable of measuring one millionth of an inch – 0.000,000,001! Here is how: On a mic, one turn of the wheel advances the screw 0.025 of an inch. But on Mr. Whitworth's device, it only advances 1/4000 of an inch. Whitworth then incised 250 divisions on the turning wheel's circumference, which meant that the operator of the machine, by turning the wheel just one division, could advance or retard the screw and its attached plane plate by one millionth of an inch – 1/250 of 1/4000 of an inch. Obviously, this was a machine to demonstrate what was possible, not a pocket tool.

Screws: Not just the screws that advanced measuring instruments or microscopes or telescopes, or elevated naval cannons, but screws that together all the manufactured goods then made. Until Whitworth, each screw and nut was unique to itself, and the chance that any random 1/4" nut would fit any 1/4" bolt was very slight. Whitworth championed the idea of standardizing all screws: the threads should all have the same angle (fifty-five degrees), and a pitch that should be in a fixed relationship to the radius of the screw and the depth of the thread. It took a while, but by midcentury the standard had been accepted throughout Britain and her empire, and the screw-measuring notation BSW, for "British Standard Whitworth," memorializes him still.

Nine years after the Crystal Palace exhibition, Whitworth had expanded his obsession for precision to firearms. In July of 1860, her Majesty Queen Victoria opened the international contest run by Britain's National Rifle Association by pulling a silk string attached to a trigger. It discharged a solidly mounted .45 caliber Whitworth rifle aimed at a target 400 yards away. Bullseye! Mr. Whitworth was mightily relieved.

Ironically, the British government failed to order large quantities of Whitworth rifles because they initially thought that .45 caliber was too small! At the outset of our civil war in the States, the Union army rejected the Whitworth

Sharpshooter as too expensive. The South, with a smaller budget, bought as many as they could afford. This gun was famously employed with lethal effect at the 1864 Battle of Spotsylvania. Union General John Sedgwick, seeing the Confederate troops in the far-off distance, famously rode in front of his men and loudly declared that “they couldn’t kill an elephant at this distance.” A single shot from a Whitworth rifle then promptly rang out and the bullet hit him in the head, killing him instantly.



Joseph Whitworth was created a baronet by Queen Victoria in 1869.

*My condensed chapter from “The Perfectionists” doesn’t do the book justice. There are 10 chapters on such subjects as the development of steam engines, highways and cars, time and space. Any self-proclaimed gearhead or anyone with an interest in science will find the book very enjoyable. It is available on Amazon or at your library.*

*This material was used without the consent of the author or publisher. Reproduce at your own risk. Wil*

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**Feb 10<sup>th</sup> Club ride to Flat Creek Restaurant, Cape Fair, MO:** This event replaced our usual ‘season opener’ of brunch at Roaring River State Park, although we did go right past there. It was an overcast and brisk morning, but, hey, it is winter – it could have been much worse. We had about 13 people and 9 cars in convoy and some of the cars were British! Former member Kate Williams (blue Lotus) and a friend joined us – welcome back. The roads are suitably winding and for much of the way we were in part of Missouri’s extensive Mark Twain National Park. As ‘first-timers’ we found the restaurant to be much larger than expected and from all the comments heard, the food is very good, with large servings. Worth visiting again. Colin Roe had power failures with his MGB both going and coming home, which slowed things down a bit, but that sort of thing is part of the game. Bill Watkins and Lisa led us both ways in their Jensen Interceptor. Event instigators, Greg Bunch and David Ferrell both had to cancel out of the Saturday ride. Lee Cowling and Bill Watkins were especially helpful with Colin’s engine problems.



## The Nethercutt Museum (a bit) and the Rolls-Royce Phantom II (mainly)

Wil

I always watch the weekly *Jay Leno's Garage* shows on YouTube, unless it is about a new electric vehicle. The one released on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2024 was of special interest. One of Jay's pals, a young guy who is a vice-president of the Nethercutt collection, brought over a smashing looking Rolls-Royce Phantom II, a Brewster bodied 'town car' (Sedan de Ville, in the UK). Since I owned a Phantom II Continental for 14 years – the restoration took me that long – I know those cars very well. I should explain the 'Continental' designation: During 1929- 1935, R-R built approximately 1,681



Phantom II chassis in England on either a 144-inch wheelbase or 150 inches. The Continentals chassis was slightly redesigned to receive lower, sportier coachwork – the steering wheel column was lowered to a more rakish angle, they frequently had supplemental adjustable friction (knobs under the dashboard) shock absorbers fitted to all wheels, and they had an exhaust cut-out lever on the floor near the driver – it was labeled “To be used on the Continent only”. The cut-out was louder, but not raucous. About 70 Continentals were made, out of that 1,681 total, so you can see that they are rare and are now very desirable, usually with attractive, sporting coachwork fitted. During the early

1930s the big limos mostly got the long chassis and most Continentals were on the shorter chassis. *Photo by Bob Rolle, taken at 'The Stable' in New Jersey about 8 years after my ownership.*

OK, we have an unexplained curiosity with the car on Jay's show.



Brewster Coachwork, on Long Island, NY, designed and built the best-looking cars from the R-R Springfield, Mass. assembly plant, which shut down in 1931. Here's the catch; all the Springfield plant production was on the R-R Phantom I chassis (originally called the “New Phantom”). The Phantom II cars never passed through the Mass. factory. The car shown by Leno must have been rebodied by Brewster (1935?), but this wasn't explained. Of course, a P II chassis might have been shipped to the States and bodied by Brewster originally, except this car had red letters on the radiator.

Rolls-Royce chassis were sold with the radiator. A mid-thirties chassis would have been carrying black letters. Either they reused an earlier Springfield radiator or... I don't know. **And one more time**; Rolls-Royce did **NOT** switch to black R-R logos because/after Henry Royce died. He died in 1933 and my 1931 P II had black lettering, like all the early British-built cars I've seen.

Anyway, the car was a PII and I wished I could have been there with Jay to point out all the unusual and wonderful features that were ignored. For instance:

- 1) **How did you clean the oil filter?** Step on the clutch pedal! The oil filter was a vertical edge-type metal filter and linkage rotated a scraper blade around the outside surface a few degrees every time the clutch was used. Particles dropping from the outside of the filter collected into a recess below the filter body until removed.

- 2) **How was the R-R P II Auto-Vac fuel 'pump' different from other Rolls cars of the time?** Auto-Vac was used on many 'up-scale' cars, including my 1930 Packard and the R-R 20/25 cars of the time. A vacuum line was taken from the intake manifold. The Auto-Vac tank held about a quart or so of fuel and when the level fell below a certain point a valve opened ('slurp/click' noise) as the tank refilled. Gravity feed was used to the carb. But on the 20/25 model when the vacuum needed to be replenished in the tank it was drawn from the intake manifold near the # 5 cylinder, causing a slight shudder of the engine. This was only noticeable at idle, of course. But it was deemed unacceptable for the prestigious Phantom cars. The Phantom II engine had a small one-cylinder vacuum pump, mounted on top of the timing cover, to eliminate the slight, Intermittent shudder. Spare no expense!
- 3) **The car on Jay's show had manually operated radiator louvers to regulate the coolant temperature as needed.** Jay demonstrated that feature from inside the car. But that meant it was either a very early Phantom II or a Phantom I system. In 1931, starting with series JS (my former car was JS 24) the louvers were automatically controlled with linkage from a thermostat in the header tank.
- 4) **They showed the updraft carburetor, but did not mention the absence of any air cleaner.** Like many British cars of that era, and up to the 'fifties on some Brit cars (Morgan) no air filters were fitted. Perhaps R-R management thought that if you could afford a Rolls you wouldn't be driving around on dirt roads. *Side note: it amazes me that today many British sports car owners won't even consider driving their cars a few miles without the air filters installed. Jeez! Think a turkey buzzard will get sucked into your carburetors?*
- 5) **There is a small, separate muffler on the P II, on the right-hand side. What's that for?** Carburetor heat during warm-up was provided by a 3/4 inch pipe running from the exhaust manifold on the left-hand side. This pipe passed between the two separate cylinder blocks (123 and 456 cylinders) and to a jacket below the carb. That exhaust was then passed through another small pipe down to a separate muffler below the driver's floor area.

If the Nethercutt Museum isn't on your bucket list, it should be. You've seen fancy garages and museums, but there isn't anything to compare with the Nethercutt's spectacular impact.

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**Tech Session, Feb 17<sup>th</sup>:** Mother Nature did use no favor this morning (21 F), but that didn't diminish our enthusiasm. Lee Cowling trailed Clay Chenault's MGB from Fayetteville to our shop in Prairie Creek. Present were Robert Storey, Bill Watkins, David Ferrell, Larry Goodsell and his friend Jacob, Mark Stuber, Don Wiseman, Malcolm Williamson, Brad Esslinger, Michael Graves and Wil Wing. Clay brought a brand new fuel tank and sending unit, fuel pump, hoses and other goodies to install. No engine tuning today! A good start was made on that installation, but naturally trips to auto parts stores were necessary. Many worked while Michael Graves and Wil exchanged horror stories about engine failures and car dealer screw-ups. The shop's kerosene heater works fine, if a bit noisy and stinky. Most of us had to leave at lunchtime, but we will be back next Saturday morning and hope to get the car running then. To be continued.

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>:** A glorious morning, warming quickly. We lost last Saturday's session waiting for parts. Today, Clay, B. Watkins, Lee, Gavin, Brad, Bill Fitz, Phil, David F, Doug S., and Wil showed up to help or provide moral support. The last of the new fuel lines was installed and gas was added. Two problems: A fuel leak at the tank, because the sender wasn't tight enough (easy), and flooding at the carb (not easy at all). An hour was spent removing the Weber dual-throat down-draft carb lid and cleaning solved that problem. Lee Cowling again proved his value to the Club by digging in and assisting Clay. The car started easily and was smooth sounding. A scope check revealed a healthy points-type ignition system that needs a points adjustment and the timing set. We will probably finish next Sat.

**March 9<sup>th</sup>:** We cleaned Clay's timing marks, located TDC and pulled and serviced the distributor. **(Next page)**



Our Sun engine analyzer shows possible trouble with the condenser windings, but the car runs well. Clay arranged with Lee Cowling to trailer it back to Fayetteville - the tires are too old . See it next on the road?

## **Beware of Replacement Parts!**

Mark Cory

A couple years ago, an owner brought his late model Midget in with no clutch and an ominous rattling from somewhere near his knee. Upon inspection, I found that the clutch actuating fork that holds the release bearing had come, literally, unhinged (the bolt acting as a pivot had come out, the rattling was the sound of nut, washer and bolt thrashing around in the bell housing). Engine and transmission out, new grade 8 bolt with locknut and Loctite in, reinsertion, all good. Except the clutch didn't work. Hmmm.

Bled it again. And again. And, no joy. Tried a new master cylinder, new slave cylinder and new flex hose for good measure. Nada. Yet I knew the throwout bearing was new, as were the clutch disc and pressure plate. And I could see with the boroscope that the throwout bearing was contacting the springs on the pressure plate, but just not enough. In fact, even with all new components, I was getting only ¼ inch movement at the slave cylinder pushrod. So what was wrong?

You've probably guessed. Looking into the footwell, I noticed that the clutch pedal was an inch or so forward of the brake pedal at rest. Normally, they're pretty close to even. Now on the earlier Spridgets, along with Morris Minors and MGAs, Lockheed gave us master cylinders with adjustable pushrods. I knew from my race Sprite equipped with a Tilton pedal assembly that adjusting pushrod length could affect pedal height, as well as distribution of force to the slave/wheel cylinders. If I could lengthen the pushrod at this customer's independent clutch master cylinder, I could restore the correct pedal height and increase the stroke, hopefully increasing more travel at the slave. Unfortunately, the pushrods in these later master cylinders are not adjustable...

My solution was to go retro. I cut the fork from a standard master cylinder pushrod, which conveniently has a 5/16 diameter, contoured the hex end of a 5/16 bolt, welded a nut to the fork after drilling a hole for the bolt to pass through, and voila! an adjustable pushrod. With a little experimentation, the pedal height was restored and the clutch worked!

This of course is a lot of trouble, and really shouldn't be necessary. Sometimes at the track we would wedge a small socket into the clutch slave cylinder, but that's not a very workman-like solution. A check with our former guest speaker John Twist of University Motors confirmed that he has had the same issues recently with replacement master cylinders that simply don't offer sufficient fluid displacement. John's solution, incidentally, has been to heat the clutch pedal leg cherry red and bend it towards the driver!

So, two solutions to keep in mind if you feel yourself sliding into insanity having replaced everything in the hydraulic system without success...