



**Not too shabby. If only it was black and didn't have the license plate in front.
Congratulations, David.**

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Sunday, July 21st, new 'car and coffee' venue at The Momentary, Bentonville: Hey, you know that young woman that lives on the GPS satellite in space and tells you how to get where you want to go? We found out that they didn't tell her about Walmart's new corporate campus going up in Bentonville! We left the house at 10:00 AM and got off I 49 at 8th St. as directed, and that was about the only correct directions she offered. After about twenty minutes of "turn right, go straight" etc. at closed roads we decided to take a break at the Dunkin' Donuts on 102. Then we tried again, and the results were equally bad. No problem! We had good coffee and donuts. The show cars we saw are all below... that's right, not even a momentary glance.

BRITISH

>Well worth reading some of the time<

August 2024 Issue

**The monthly publication of the British Iron Touring Club of North West Arkansas.
Dedicated to the preservation, fixing, touring, towing, racing and discussion of British cars.**

**We Were Losted and Then We Were
Founded.** Do it really matter when?

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, July 11th: A popular vote might have selected the most interesting event tonight as David Ferrell setting an example for us all – he traded up to an Aston Martin coupe. It is a low mileage 2007 model, looking almost new. ‘Almost’ because there was a big, squashed bug on the front. Boy, some bugs have no respect whatsoever. Yr. Ed. was again delayed (40 minutes) on I 49 by a multiple pileup, but managed to get the ‘A.A. Steak House, etc., etc.’ just after 6:00 and most of the large crowd were already eating. Bill Watkins advised that the Nisonger Corp. in NY had a fire and they are, at least for now, out of business. I was ordering parts from them back in the ‘60’s! We had about 50 people in the room tonight and a waitress told us that another 8 were seated outside – people from the MG V-8 Club, which provided tours this week and some of our members participated. A handful of the V-8 Club people came down from Canada and everywhere in between to enjoy our Arkansas roads. It was good to have Larry and Susan Goodsell with us tonight. Aside from the MG V-8 Club leaders, we had one guest who joined our club, Herb ----- who has a Spitfire. A tech session was scheduled for Sat 7/13. Elaine reported \$3,982 in the treasury – I knew last month’s total couldn’t be right. Only one more Meeting Night before our show! The work party for the show is at the Storey’s place on August 25th. Consider what you might donate for our ‘silent auction’ at the show. Sherrie Curry made an excellent suggestion that there should be items donated to the auction that would appeal to women. Why have we been discriminating against the ladies for so long? I found it interesting that Sherrie and Yrs. Trly have nearly identical looking canes, but not interchangeable in size.

BEHIND THE WHHEL (from the right hand side)

I enjoyed seeing the BI-List work the way it is intended to over the last couple of weeks. Brian removed the Weber carburetor from his Sprite and reinstalled the twin SUs. The car idled fine but would not run well under load. Brian got on the BI-List with questions about the problem which prompted several answers from the members and an offer of a tech session to study the problem.

I thought this was great. The BI-List is the vehicle we use to easily communicate with each other about the hobby and club related issues. If you are not on the BI-List you should consider it.

Here we are, a month away from Brits in the Ozarks. Registrations have picked up to be about average, or maybe a little ahead, of “seasonally normal” and I’m hoping we will have our usual excellent turnout. With another bump in the donation from our presenting sponsors we will again far exceed our previous best for fund-raising. All in all, if the weather holds up it should be another great year. At the recommendation from Amber Clark at the ALS office we have spent a little more money this year on t-shirts and caps. Brian has enormously stepped up our social media presence this year. All of those things are designed to grow attendance, both for this year and the future. I am hopeful that we will see an increase in numbers this year. If the newcomers have a good experience they will come again and bring friends.

This coming regular monthly meeting – August 8th – will be important as we will cover the usual subjects for the last meeting before the show. Please attend and be ready to volunteer where you are needed. I’ll have the sign-up sheets at the meeting and will post them via email. Please sign up for some duty.

Like last year, we need people to step up and handle the money. Hess is the treasurer for the event so he can supervise how this is handled. We also need people to handle the tablets for credit cards, again like last year. If you can help in either of these areas, please let me or Hess know.

The annual Work Party will be two weeks before the car show on the night of **August 25th at 6:00 p.m.** at the Storey’s shop in Rogers, as usual. If you have not been to one of these before this is where we all gather to have a pot-luck dinner party and fill the goody bags, organize things, and load the event trailer. As always, the club will provide beer and some water. If you prefer something else please feel free to BYOB. This is usually one of the better parties we have each year so please join us and bring a dish to share in the pot-luck. I will need a couple of hands that afternoon to meet me and, probably, Doug at the club shop to load the stuff in storage into the trailer.

The drives we offer are popular again this year. As of last week, we had 20 or so signed up for each day. That is an excellent response, and a lot of management will be required. Drive leaders will need several club members – modern cars are fine – interspersed in the various groups to help keep them corralled. Please join a drive on one or both days if you can.

We are going to need labor for picking up food and drinks secured by the ALS office staff. As soon as I find out when and where I’ll ask for volunteers. Many of you have filled these various roles in the past so you will know what needs to be done.

Each year I am amazed by this club and how you all support this event and step up to make it happen and happen smoothly. I’ve no doubt that it will be another great success this year.

I’m still working to get my Jaguar saloon into a condition that I am comfortable to sell it. That car must know its fate because it has fought me every step of the way. I hope I am close to having it where I want it before passing it on.

This is an important meeting coming up. I hope to see you there. *Bill Watkins*

Ye Olde Staff

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CLUB CALENDAR

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 25-27 – Fall Retreat.
OCT 26 – Halloween Party at the Storey’s.
NOV – To be announced.
DEC 7 – Christmas Party at the Storey’s.

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Apologies to Mark Cory for his missing ad. An electronic tornado hit this last week – Microsoft called it an ‘update’ – that took days to repair and the ad disappeared. A new business card will be sought on Meeting Night.

Tech Session at the Brit Stop, July 13: Bill Watkins got there early and opened up. Yr. Ed. rolled in about 8:50 and we talked for a while. Eventually we were joined by Larry Goodsell, David Ferrell, Jacob Adcock in his TR6, Brian Lea, Roy Chinn... but not our scheduled guest and his car! Oh, well. After we decided that he wouldn’t show, Jacob volunteered to have his TR6 inspected. It was a little rich at idle, but the compression was OK. We found that his vacuum advance diaphragm is failing, but the ignition (Pertronics) was fine. Unfortunately, during the checkup, his ignition rotor was broken. Activities ceased around 11:00 as Larry and Jacob went off to find a replacement rotor. Roy Chinn purchased our not-suitable-for-the-shop exhaust gas analyzer for \$150. A check will be sent to Elaine Briggs. A good deal for Roy and for the Club. So, despite the no-show, it wasn’t a lost morning.

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British Iron Touring and Ice Cream Eating Society, 7/24: Another great idea from Greg Bunch, a spur of the moment ice cream party at Cold Stone Creamery. Out of this crowd, there were 2 or 3 British cars parked around! Greg said that CSC has been in their Market Street location for a long time, but many of us had never even heard of them. It made for a very pleasant setting as the sun dropped out of sight. Although vigorously denied, several

members chose to take their ice cream nestled in a chocolate covered cabbage leaf. Very strange! (photograph lightened for better clarity – it was actually nearing dusk)



Think all horse power is equal?

A rehash



Imagine a typical chart showing horsepower curves. Power reads up from the left hand side and rpm reads across the bottom from left to right. There are several power curves shown on the chart, arching up from the left and then peaking as the rpm increases. Most curious is the flat line that shows 10 h.p. starting at zero rpm and goes straight across the chart without any rise. Know what that is? **It is R.A.C. horsepower**, a UK formula for computing taxes, based on arbitrary numbers, which was in effect from 1910 to 1947. It determined the course of the British auto industry, small engines with a small bore and long stroke, except for a very few large cars for the wealthy. One purpose was to impede foreign competition in the UK. Henry Ford established a Model T assembly plant near Manchester in 1911, offering better performance than small British cars for equal or less initial cost, but with a much heavier annual RAC tax rate burden for owners. It wasn't until after WW II, when England desperately needed to export, that they realized the broader-picture foolishness of the RAC rules*. The small, long stroke engines suitable for England failed very fast on American highways with our high temperatures, where near-top speeds were required to keep up with American traffic.

Back to our chart: It shows an unnamed modest-sized British engine performing under different conditions.

- 1) 82. Bhp @ 7,500 rpm Brake horsepower running on an **engine dynamometer** without fan, muffler, generator, water pump and adjusted to sea-level conditions. 'Brake' just means measured and this type of power measurement is called 'gross horsepower'.
- 2) 78. Bhp @ 7,000 rpm With all accessories, but corrected to sea-level conditions.
- 3) 70. Bhp @ 7,000 rpm With the engine boxed in to simulate unhood conditions regarding air temps, etc.
- 4) 55. Bhp @ 5,500 rpm Showing horsepower at the rear wheels, measured with a **chassis dynamometer**, including the drive train drag and all frictional losses.

So, which is 'real' horsepower? They all are. **Which is most realistic?** The lowest power, measured with a chassis dyno. Engine dynos are great for experimenting, endurance testing and being able to make modifications quickly – they are used by all manufacturers and in many speed shops. But when all that fun is over, it is the power at the rear wheels that makes a car move.

American cars of my youth were infamous for using 'gross horsepower' numbers, or even spurious ratings, as dictated by the manufacture's sales department. When we got to the era of 'muscle cars', there was occasional talk of engines being underrated by the manufacturers. This may have been so in a few cases, but in my experience, most everyone lied about their horsepower.

So, let's talk about some other kinds of horsepower: If ASE (American Society of Engineers) horsepower was (is?) always suspect, who can we turn to for a more realistic measurement*? Englishman James Watt devised the mathematical formula widely recognized, but as we have seen, the interpretation can be slippery. Most engineers/gearhead types accept the German methods as reliable – DIN, for *Deutsches Institut fur Normung*, or 'German Institute of Standardization'. A car with 100 DIN horsepower engine will be faster than the same car with a 100 SAE engine. On the Continent, DIN is the (mostly) accepted measure.

For our electric car fans: 1 HP is equivalent to 746 watts of electrical power. This means that instead of buying a 100 bhp car, you could buy one of 74.6 kilowatts. But I consider this subject too depressing for further discussion.

Footnotes:

- As you know, by the time the USA got into the Second World War, we were already providing England with essential materials under our 'Lend Lease' program. The UK desperately needed help. But when the war was over, they had an enormous debt to repay us; the saying was "Export or perish". Although some of that debt was later forgiven, it seems universally true that 'gratitude in need' becomes 'resentment in debt' when the need is gone. Our late English member, Charles Wells, once told me that England's mistake was "to not declare war on the United States after Germany fell, and to then quickly surrender." Our Marshal Plan to help rebuild Germany wasn't much appreciated in the UK, where they were bombed, still deeply in our debt and very poor. But Germany was the driving engine of Europe's industry, and we were determined not to recreate the situation caused by the Versailles Treaty after WWI.
- Lest I be accused of anti-American sentiments, we weren't the only ones to fudge horsepower numbers. For instance, from 1959 until 1968, Ason Martin upped their power figures by 15% as they felt that was necessary to compete in the USA, where HP numbers were exaggerated even more.



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7/28 Tech Session: Brian Lea brought in his Spriget, now fitted with SU carbs and with interesting problems – it pulls OK in first and second gears, but has low power in the upper gears and won't go over 55 MPH. Also, it 'pops' in the exhaust on trailing throttle. Hmm... At 1:00 pm Bill W., Mark Holzer, Don Wiseman, David Ferrell and Yr. Ed. gathered to help. "Off with the air filters" – where else would we start? Brian pulled the choke on fully and then released it slowly, engine off. The rear jet stuck in the full 'down' position; problem one. Apparently, the choke actuating linkage is binding, not the jet. And the rear carb floods sometimes – Brian pulled the float lid, and the carb had its original brass seat housing and steel needle! Problem two analyzed... nothing that a new Vitron needle and seat won't fix. With all that excess gas, he pulled the plugs and cleaned the sooty critters in our Champion plug cleaner. The 'popping' on trailing throttle is/was due to rich mixtures and an exhaust leak near the header's downpipe. On a roadtest, the new top speed is... oops, better. An enjoyable 1½ hours.

Forward to the Past

Mark Holzer

I grew up in Southeast Wisconsin riding motorcycles in the Kettle Moraine area that was created when the last glaciers retreated. That region includes many hills and valleys that are home to a lot of winding, twisty roads with many blind and off-camber corners that are fun to ride on. Elkhart Lake, town and famous racetrack, is in this part of Wisconsin. After moving to Arkansas 6 years ago, some of the roads I found myself driving on reminded me of long motorcycle rides I had taken many years ago, and I hoped to enjoy driving on the new ones I found here.

I decided that a small convertible would be better than a motorcycle for me to enjoy rides in this area with my wife. Apparently, I had mentioned this idea to one of my sons (and had forgotten about it for a few years) because I received a text in March of 2022 asking if I was interested in the vehicle shown below.



It's a 1978 MGB that was acquired by my son's girlfriend's (Emily) great grandfather in 1984 when it had 36,000 miles. It was sold to her grandfather in 1986 who drove it another 14,000 miles and had done quite a bit of maintenance and repair work in 1994. Most notable was:

- Electronic ignition
- Distributor cap, rotor, plugs, wires
- Fuel filter, fuel pump, fuel hose, fuel tank
- New exhaust
- Adjust valves
- Brake hoses
- Carb rebuild (original ZS)

In 2017, Emily's dad registered it but didn't drive it much. By 2022, they were only driving it a few times per year to and from work. They wanted space in the garage and wanted to sell the car to someone who would care for it as a family keepsake and not

just flip it to another person or drive it into the ground.

It was nice to know that it ran and with all that maintenance done only 28 years ago – what else could need to be done! It's not often you get to help your son by buying a family car from his girlfriend. So, at a price of \$3,500, I decided to have it put on a truck and shipped to me from Maryland.

Shortly after it arrived, a friend of mine from Wisconsin who used to race MGBs came to give me a hand with it. I was impressed that it took him only 3 miles of driving to diagnose the failed thermostat and fan controller (by engine smell). He confirmed there was no serious rust in the unibody or underneath or other major issues beyond the noisy water pump. He introduced me to Moss Motors and suggested I see if there was a local British Car club, so I could meet some people who lived closer than him who would be able to help me with it.

While I didn't buy the car to expand my social life, connecting with the people in BI of NWA has been one of the best outcomes of this acquisition. The fact that it was tough to get started, backfired when I shifted, and had snow tires made me realize that I would be doing some projects if I wanted the car to be reliable, and look its best. After owning the car for four months and replacing the water pump, steering boots and ball joints, installing a new top, and de-smogging I decided to lower the car closer to the original MGB design height and see if it would handle differently.

I used the Moss kit (\$260) that included new front springs, blocks, rear U-bolts, and rubber bushing pads for the rear. My biggest concern was not getting hurt while removing the front springs, but I was pleased to find out that they were under relatively little compression and lowering the pan from below made it easy to remove them. Of course, the rubber bushings needed replacing and fitting the new ones was a bit more challenging than removing the old ones. After getting back on the road, I quickly learned that the 185/70 (snow) tires rubbed the rear wheel wells more often than I liked. I didn't want to roll the fender and risk cracking the paint, so I replaced them with 175/65s to fix that problem. Lowering the car certainly made it handle better and I was glad to have done that project. I spent many hours trying to understand the ZS carb and improve the power and the persistently rich running conditions that fouled many plugs. That effort was not fully successful except for the (very rare) house call by Wil when I couldn't even get it started to drive to the Brit Stop. But it ran and I was happy with that and focused my attention on the exterior.

Body Work

The only notable rust the car had was a small hole in the passenger side dog-leg panel behind the door. In October 2022, Dave Ferrell had directed me to Jack Sheldon in Rogers as someone who might do body work and paint on older cars. Jack repaired that panel after digging deeper and removing the underlying rust that started well behind that panel. He also found that buffing the paint removed years of oxidized wax and paint and returned the color to the original vermilion which was much brighter than its current color.

Rubber bumpers are not my favorite for the MGB, and I wanted to make a conversion. The chrome bumpers look great but the kit from Moss is over \$1,400 and it requires some cutting, welding and painting to complete the project. I was looking for an easier option to change the look and then found a bolt-on fiberglass kit that did not require any cutting or fabrication. A small family owned business in the UK offered panels for MGs and other cars and for less than \$300 in parts (plus shipping) I was able to get the raw fiberglass panels, turn signals and mounting hardware (<https://www.rps-ltd.info/mgb-products/>). Unfortunately, it seems as if they recently stopped the business, and it is not clear if anyone has purchased it from them.

After removing the front and rear bumpers that weighed approximately 100 pounds, I noticed an improvement in handling, so I was eager to install the new ones that only weighed a few pounds. I was very excited when the panels arrived (November 2022) but after filing, grinding, and sanding the edges to match the car, I quickly learned that it takes a bit of experience and skill to fit fiberglass parts to the curves of a car, so the gaps and seams look good. Fortunately, I found that Jack Sheldon could do this for me prior to painting. I also found that Tim Cook on the MG Experience blog (Vic92) had done a similar conversion in 2020, and he was helpful with many of the small questions I had about the process. He has documented the work on that blog better than I have in this article.

We decided to respray the lower half of the car because of the dog leg rust repair and other scratches, remove the black stripe, and buff the top which I learned is a common approach to "refreshing" MGB paint. I had noticed that the UK MGBs didn't have side indicator lights and I liked that look. Since they are below the trim line that would be painted, now was a good time to delete them and repaint those areas as part of the painting project. I thought about removing the luggage rack to show the original design lines, but the trunk lid has puckered where it is attached, and I did not want to find a new one and paint it to match. Repairing mine was an option but the costs of the bodywork were starting to add up and I needed to draw the line somewhere.

The rear bumper was installed in February 2023 and the fitting and installation of the front was completed in June. I spread out the work for cost reasons and occasionally drove the car in a partially finished condition for the first half of 2023.

Story conclusion and final photos next month.

Editorial

“It can’t happen to me” and other stupidities

Referring to page 1, after the 40-minute delay from the Bella Vista I 49 on-ramp southbound to Rt. 72 (3 or 4 miles?), the traffic cleared up and soon two cars went past me doing over 80 mph and swerving around cars and between lanes to make up for lost time. The three wrecked cars, three wreckers and four police cars made no impression on those guys (surely men drivers) because of their “It can’t happen to me” attitude.

On my first draft of this rant, I started listing all my qualifications and years of accident-free driving... oh, wait, I’m the editor! That’s all the authority needed to write about safe driving! Could I have an accident? *Of course*, but I work hard at paying attention to avoid that possibility. Do I drive faster than the speed limit? Often, but not in traffic. I love driving and hate to see the results of it being done poorly.

How could the average driver’s skill level be improved? That is not easy or immediate, but doable:

- a) The law says that driving is a privilege, not a ‘right’. **No automobile driving license shall be issued until the applicant has completed a minimum of 5,000 miles on a motorcycle.** The surviving applicants will be wide-eyed drivers, skilled in defensive driving and able to resist distractions, such as talking on the phone, texting, etc.
- b) **Car drivers who make left-hand turns, violating oncoming motorcyclist’s right-of-way and causing injuries to motorcyclists, shall be shot by the responding police officer, either wounding or killing the irresponsible car driver, depending on the condition of the motorcyclist.** Think that would get car drivers to pay attention? *“But those motorcyclists are so hard to see.”* **Horse manure.** *“But those little blond, blue-eyed girls on tricycles are so hard to see.”* Do you think anyone would offer that excuse for inattentive, negligent driving?

Of course, such laws will never happen.

While our Club rides are often above the speed limit in places, to my knowledge there has never been a crash. After 20-plus years of Club rides, we must accept that this is because the drivers are skilled, not just lucky. Folks who are uncomfortable with moderately fast driving usually understand their limitations and won’t try to exceed them. Fine. But that lower level of skill doesn’t justify criticism of more capable accident-free drivers, does it? I think not.

In 1952, I installed Army surplus tank seat belts in my new MG because I wanted to learn skilled driving and hanging on to the steering wheel for support in corners is counterproductive. In 1956 Ford introduced a safety campaign offering the option of seat belts and padded sun visors – the public hated it! Ford’s campaign implied that drivers were responsible for their own safety! The nerve!

It was offensive to those who believe in pre-destination. You know, those who say, “When your number is up.” I can see why that attitude would appeal, but it doesn’t stand up logically. As I say, “Then you tell your children to play in the street, because if their number isn’t up...?”

Drive safely *and* skillfully.

Contrary opinions, explained, are welcomed.