



## **Traveling**

**In southern Utah, meandering from Bella Vista to California.**

**Some will say that a new sports car would be more fun.**

**Some will say that a motorcycle would be more fun.**

**Some will say that an old sports car would be more adventurous (bring lots of cash).**

**Some will say that a small RV is the most pleasant. A restroom, fresh coffee, a snack or bed are just steps away, whenever you want them. OK, a loving wife provided the snacks and coffee. A smallish C type RV like this serves a couple well, plus allows in-city parking.**

**Driving a BIG RV qualifies you for Jay Leno's "More money than brains club." (Written rebuttals will receive polite consideration)**

# ***BRITISH***

>Well worth reading some of the time<

**July 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.**

## **Contact Us**

**- Our website: [www.britishironnwa.org](http://www.britishironnwa.org)**

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

**Membership and Treasurer: Elaine Briggs [eb88cs@cox.net](mailto:eb88cs@cox.net)**

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

## **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 November 14<sup>th</sup>: Wow! No accidents on I49 tonight, although it was stop and go from Rogers south. But we were early and it got worse later. Nice turnout tonight with 35 folks attending. At our table there was talk of cruise ships, selling cars when financially upside down (isn't that normal?) and good 'movies' (I think they meant the talkies?). We haven't been for ages. Also, the longevity of various dog breeds. Don Wiseman reports that he saw few (one?) Brit cars on their Ireland vacation. Barbara stopped by our table and we learned she hopes to retire to France when the time comes. Which led to talk about working at Walmart. We had two new members tonight – Brian McGuire has a Sprite. Elias Constantine has purchased Jim Carney's MGB and Timothy Gallaway is currently 'Britless' but was very welcome. Apologies for any misspelled names! Elaine reported \$4,724 in our piggy bank. Business time: Bill W. got approval for another Jan 1<sup>st</sup> lunch meeting, providing the weather isn't too horrible. Remember, we are copying the British tradition of gathering in our British cars to show how hardy we are and that our cars are reliable. (We won't throw stones if you arrive in an American, or other, car with a good heater.) wimp. Our date for next year's 'Brits in the Ozarks' show will be on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Bill is looking for a new 'Events Coordinator' for the club. Volunteer and see your name on the staff masthead. Rita has a Triumph Bonneville for sale. Elaine has some new club grill badges for sale - \$35 ea. We scheduled a tech session at the Brit Stop for December 7<sup>th</sup> – our Christmas Party will be that evening. Greg Bunch told us about the fun Fall Retreat, with great weather this time. Also, discreetly, about a bean festival orgy that had us all thinking about a scene from 'Blazing Saddles'. Bill's Jaguar S-type saloon is for sale - \$16 K, with a discount for members. Sounds like a bargain. Will requested member photos from the age of 5 years to 10 for a future 'youth edition' of *BRITISH*.**

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

Thank you to the Storeys for once again hosting the Christmas party. As I said at the party, whenever we have an event the Storeys step up and offer the use of their shop / meeting hall. Whenever there is work to be done you can count on the Storeys to be at the front of the line for volunteers. For these, and many other reasons over the years, the Club awarded the Storeys the Club Service Award at the party. We have not done this for several years but it was clearly time to do it again this year. Thank you, Storey family, for being such good members. Well done.

The Christmas party itself was fun for the smaller than usual number who turned out. Instead of the 40 to 50 in attendance, this year we had right at 30. But the food was good, as always, and the Dirty Santa gift exchange warmed up and got a little feisty after a somewhat slow start. We are all just too nice! Ah well, you will never hear me complain about that.

We did have a tech session last Saturday. Since new member Elias Constantine (proud new owner of the MGB formerly owned by the Carney family) had to cancel I took the opportunity to bring the Alvis in for its first "once over". I had never had a chance to look underneath this car before Saturday and it was with some trepidation that I put in on our lift and started getting it up in the air. The news was good. No nasty surprises, just a couple of somewhat poorly done sill repairs, evidence on the front cross member of many efforts to jack the car up without putting a board or other pad on the jack saddle, and some small areas of surface rust. All in all, pretty good. The ignition looked pretty good and the carbs were already balanced. I am reassured.

I am often being told that I have a hose or belt or something similar dragging under the Alvis. There is, indeed, something dragging under the car, but it is supposed to be there (or so I am told). Here is what the seller's representative at Hershey told me: What appears to be a hose is, in fact, just a ground strap intended to dissipate static electricity. It was called a "spirit strap" and was supposed to help with motion sickness. Of course, this is total BS and has no effect on motion sickness. Anyway, it is a conversation starter, so I think I'll leave it in place.

Do you know the history of your classic car? I've always been fascinated by trying to learn the history of my cars. In the case of my 1965 Jaguar (still for sale, today and today only discount to British Iron members!), the car came with a lot of records. I have records of the original owners having it serviced into mid-1969. After that there is a gap of 11 years, at which time (1980) the car is having work done in Lincoln, Nebraska. The history is fairly complete from there and I have kept all records since I bought it in 1998.

The 1973 Jensen came with records beginning in the mid-1980s at which time it had extensive body work performed and received what I think was one of many paint jobs. Lots of rust repair was performed at that time. (think about that – the car was barely 10 year old at that time). The history seems pretty complete from then until the present. Of course, I've been obsessive about keeping records while in my possession.

The Alvis came with no records but a US based member of the Alvis Owner (that is correct – Owner – singular) Club maintains a register of all, well, Alvi, and has sent me a substantial history of my car. I am the 9<sup>th</sup> (or was it 10<sup>th</sup>??) owner and I can tell you the name and location of all previous owners plus a lot of the work that has been done on the car over the years. The first owner in 1964 was an executive at some big fancy insurance firm. Maybe in the next few months I'll write a story on its history. At least I will find it interesting!!

I know that Our Esteemed Editor ("OEE") has been having some issues with the software he recently acquired in order to be able to produce this newsletter. Hess has provided him with some assistance (and maybe others I am not aware of) and the Club very much appreciates Hess helping out. It is my opinion that (a) the newsletter is an important tool for any club, and (b) ours, whomever has been the editor, is better than most. I think that OEE was about ready to throw his computer out the window, but we are glad he did not and appreciate this service he provides to the Club. We gather New Year's Day at the steakhouse!

## Ye Olde Staff

President – **Bill Watkins**

Vice President – **Doug Schrantz**

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

Treasurer and Membership –

**Elaine Briggs** [eb88cs@cox.net](mailto:eb88cs@cox.net)

Webmaster – **Malcolm Williamson**

Editor – **Wil Wing** – [briton4@cox.net](mailto:briton4@cox.net)

479-202-3235

Events Coordinator - ? **Speak up**

## Coming Events

**Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, 11:00:** All American Steak House  
for lunch. British cars encouraged.

**Jan 9<sup>th</sup>:** Meeting Night

SALES • INSTALLATION • SERVICE



OVERHEAD DOOR COMPANY  
OF SPRINGDALE, INC.  
P.O. Box 131 • 2400 S. Thompson  
Springdale, Arkansas 72765

GREGORY BUNCH  
Office 479-751-5921  
Fax 479-751-3228  
Cell 479-530-2792  
[gbunch@ohdoor-spd.com](mailto:gbunch@ohdoor-spd.com)



**Nostalgia Racing & Restorations**  
**MGs, Minis and more**  
helping maintain, race and locate  
vintage cars of mutual interest  
**Mark Cory Fayetteville, AR**  
**479-530-7228**

**ABIG thanks to Dr. Hess for spending an afternoon deleting Word (dirty word) 365 from my computer. It made this issue possible.**

**Thanks to Mark Cory for his excellent story this month – and next month!**

**2025 Corinthian Vintage Auto Racing Club calendar for Hallett: March 14-16, October 3-5. Doug Schrantz says, “Club outing?”**



**Dec 7<sup>th</sup> Tech Session:** A balmy 45F greeted a large turnout of members (not all shown) who desired more technical skill and understandi... well, actually we just wanted to see Bill’s new Alvis TD 21, freshly imported to AR. Bill will never have to listen to “Oh, my father had one of those” comments.

This is a lovely car that was never aimed at the US. ‘GT’ - Gran Turismo’ or ‘GE’ – ‘Gentleman’s Express’?

**Bill W. needs an Events Coordinator.**



## ***Best on the inside*** Wil

How many reasons do we have to buy a car? Styling? Speed? Road holding? Prestige? Price? Economy of operation? Here is a silly reason – the interior decor! Yup, I'm a sucker for the 'English Gentleman's Club' look. The photo below shows the interior of the first example of this brand I ever serviced. Not that I serviced a lot of them... their cars have always been quite rare in the States. My first experience was with one of my importer friend's cars. I know of another one in the Lane Motor museum and... ah, that's it.

Walnut, soft leather and comfort have an appeal. These qualities were found in Rolls-Royce and in many older Jaguars, Daimlers and other expensive British cars.



This is an early post-war Rover P-3. When I mentioned my admiration for the P-3 in the Lane Museum to Charles Wells, he replied, "You wouldn't want that as they are too slow." Well, I didn't say I'd keep the same engine, after all. That was a long time ago and I had more strength and ambition.

Later I became enamored with the Rover P5B and looked for one with LH drive. I then joined the Canadian Rover Club to have access to their For Sale ads and to query their officials. Alas, there were few P5B's on the market.



In an interesting bit of duplicity, Rover produced this lowered-top version and called it a "Coupe"! Actually, the "short owner" version! The P5's saloons were neat cars. But then I tried on a TR7 at the Kansas City show and discovered that it was cheap and fit me!

## **My Life as an Addict**

by Mark Cory

You've heard the saying: "All good things must end." Or a variant. Whatever. As some of you in our club already know (because I've told you "no!"), Nostalgia Racing and Restorations will close at the end of this year. It's been a grand ride, and I've been privileged to have been of some help to a few members over the years. Often folks wonder how a university PhD professor of German language and literature stumbled into restoring LBCs. Here's the story of my addiction...

Before the Beatles, there was another British Invasion. I was a victim. My father, a career Army officer, returned from the Second World War to discover not only me, but a wife who had come to appreciate a life outside the kitchen. This woman, my mother, needed a second car to get to her job. Enter a British Racing Green Morris Minor convertible. I loved that car! In fact, it was the car on which I learned to drive. So cute! But cute soon gave way to sexy, and the Morris was traded by my father during my high school years for a nearly new Austin Healey 100-4. I have many fond memories of Friday night rallies in the San Francisco Bay Area with my father driving and me trying to keep us on course in events that drew hundreds of cars and lasted well past midnight.

During my college years, I was not permitted to operate a car, but I could participate in the college sports car club (imagine such an organization today!). I watched hill climbs, I spent a weekend at Watkins Glen, I ferried an MGA from Chicago to San Francisco. The hunger for an LBC of my own was intense. After graduation, I needed a car. Naturally I wanted an Austin Healey. Alas, I had a budget of \$500. Enter the 1959 Bugeye Sprite (this is the same Bugeye you know from our shows). Of course for \$500, the car came with a set of problems. Having no money, I borrowed a few tools from my father and began the long, slow learning process that eventually matured as Nostalgia Racing and Restorations.

The 1960s (my period of military service and graduate school) were still a heyday for the LBC scene. While visiting our parents, my younger brother and I would attend the Monterey Historics at Laguna Seca, dreaming someday of racing on that iconic track. I competed with the Bugeye in autocross events in California, Indiana (grad school in German) and Nebraska (first job, teaching German), just by removing the spare tire and bumpers and ignoring the valve bounce at something like 6500 rpm. That Bugeye took me cross country three times and all the way to Montreal for the 1968 World's Fair.

One day in Lincoln, Nebraska, I spied a 1964 Mini Cooper S on a lot. The left front fender was bashed, the grill was gone, the wiring harness was splayed out the front, and it leaked oil. Perfect! For another \$500, I now had two LBCs. It was with this Mini that I would commute between Lincoln and Fayetteville for two years until I could secure an academic position at the University of Arkansas, where my now wife, Judy, was teaching (also German – her native language).

Work, kids, house and yard – all that took up most of my energy and time for decades, but on weekends I could relieve the stress of publishing, grading, dealing with colleagues, etc., by maintaining the Mini and the Sprite. Fun! So much fun that I bought (this time for \$350) an MGB GT that was slowly sinking into a garden out on my bike route. A good father-daughter project, I thought, my eldest then in high school. Because much of the MGB GT had rotted away in that garden, I needed a welder. Then I needed to learn how to weld. Then I needed a spray gun to paint with. And a compressor. And a few more tools.

One Sunday, as I was happily creating a cloud of paint overspray in our driveway, my wife opined that the hobby might just be overwhelming the neighborhood. She was right, of course, so I began to search for a

shop. The perfect property, the one some of you know as Nostalgia Racing and Restorations, appeared on another bike ride. Deal done, and the hobby moved to a primitive, but functional 1200 sq. ft. structure supported by a house that I could rent out for just enough to cover the mortgage.

**Ed. Note: Mark's story will be concluded next month.**

**Due to a computer glitch, it was impossible to add the provided photos to Mark's story. Next month we'll do better.**

++++

### **Cross country motorcycle trip, part 2** (A few folks asked for more!) *Wil*

I got to Jerry's house in Bloomfield, MI about 5 PM, as they were having a family celebration and cook-out in the rear yard. That was enjoyable, but I was dragging after about 15 hours on the road. What I needed was a shower and a bed – it was an early night for me.

The next morning Jerry got up and made us breakfast while we talked. I'd planned for a shorter day and was on the road at 9AM in light rain. Moderate rain never bothered me; with a good rain suit you could ride all day and stay dry and comfortable... well, almost. Although I treated my m/c boots with waterproofing goop, a little water got past the stitching and after enough hours the bottom of my socks would be damp. No big deal. I wanted to see Michigan's rural Upper Peninsula, with Lake Michigan on the left and Lake Huron on the right. So I took the Interstate North through lots of woods and small towns, eventually over the Mackinac Bridge (pronounced 'Mackin aw' by locals) almost to Canada.

The Mackinac Bridge was my minor excitement for the day. The bridge is relatively narrow but very high so big ships can pass below. It has – or had in 1992 – four lanes total. The two outer (slow) lanes were paved and the two inner (passing lanes) were steel grid, the kind where you can look down and see the water below. The trouble is that the steel grid offers very little traction to narrow motorcycle tires. In fact, the sides of the grid rubs on the sides of the narrow tires and cause a 'steering effect'. Very uncomfortable, with the bike wiggling around beneath you and little control. I never fell on a grid bridge but had m/c friends who absolutely refused to drive on that type of surface, no matter how far they had to go out of the way. The

bigger problem was that the car full of people in front of me was barely moving and I decided that the driver must be terrified – of the height? They were so slow it was hard to balance myself and I finally had to pull over onto the slippery wet steel grid and wiggle/wobble past them. When alongside I turned my head to give them a death stare and very dark thoughts...Oops! Hold those bad thoughts, it was a car full of nuns in full habits. They were just out of their element, not trying to deliberately kill me – I think.

There is a strip of US land north of Lake Michigan that allows you to go west towards Wisconsin and then on to the Minneapolis/St. Paul region where I had a friend from our UK trip two years before. He had offered me a bed for my trip's second night. He was a big Moto Guzzi motorcycle fan, so there were lots of things to see and talk about. Then we went out to supper...in a car.

**Left:** The subject bike with soft tank bag and waterproof map compartment. The map was studied when stopped, never underway! There were also soft



bags alongside the rear wheels on trips. Looking at this photo makes me want to go for a bike ride... if only I was 30 years younger!

## ***Who knew chiropractors had so much influence?***

My second British car was a 1952 Jaguar XK 120 coupe, about 8 years old, and it cost me... I think it was \$600.00. There was a reason for that low price; a customer had just exploded, by brutal force, the tranny innards while drag racing. When he didn't want to pay for the repair, he accepted my offer.

The engine was good, I fixed the tranny and put quiet mufflers on the car. One problem was that there wasn't enough legroom, even with the seat all the way back. I removed the driver's seat back, gaining 3 or 4 inches of leg room and added a piece of one-inch-thick foam to the support behind the seat. But I first considered turning the seatback upside down. Do you understand why?



Here is a front seat from a Jaguar MK 7, typical of English seats of that time. A person could sit comfortably nestled in between the bolstered edges... if he was four foot tall or less. A normal person will have the top bolster pushing his shoulder blades forward while there is a concavity at the lumbar region. ***Pain predicted within one hour.*** Visualize the seatback upside down – now the bolster would support the lumbar region and at the top it would be straight, not pushing you forward.

Below we have drawings of good seated posture on the left; note that the chair has a pad for the lumbar region and nothing to interfere with the natural curvature of the spine above. On the right he is slumped forward... the poor guy must own an older British car!



How did this stupid seat design trend ever get started and become almost universal when it is so obviously wrong? It is like solving a murder mystery – who gains?

***We have our suspicions!***

++++

shutterstock.com - 2387951149

**Dec 7<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party:** 32 members attended, shared dishes, shared presents, stole presents back and



shared laughs tonight. We were all very pleased that our hosts for many years were honored with a Club Service Award Trophy this evening. Congratulations and thanks to Robert and Sue Storey. They had transformed their yard and rec room from Halloween to Christmas completely. Lots of good food.

Thanks to Brad Esslinger for sending the photo.

++++

**Bill W. needs an Events Coordinator.**