

BRITISH NOV 24

Hershey Pennsylvania Swap Meet 2024

Report by Bill Watkins

Lisa and I made the journey to Hershey, Pennsylvania, for the annual Antique Automobile Club of America swap meet and car show. The original plan was to leave on the morning of Sat, October 5th, and pass through Lisa's hometown in Iowa to see her mother, then on to Canton, Ohio for a couple of days of museums and such before going on to Hershey. However, about 1 AM on the morning of Wednesday the 2nd I developed a fever that rose to just over 102 by later that morning. I am rarely sick and, when I am, it's just for a day or two. Power through it, right? Damn the torpedoes.

Despite my denial and refusal to submit I finally gave in and went to Mercy Urgent Care the evening of the 4th. Got some meds and went home expecting to leave the next morning. Wrong. We finally got away the afternoon of the 5th. Let me shortcut this boring discussion of my health and just say while in Canton, Ohio, (where we spent two days as planned), I ended up spending a morning at the ER before heading to Hershey the next day.

We finally arrived at Hershey late on the afternoon of Wednesday the 9th at which time we made our first quick cruise through the swap meet and car coral. It was disappointing in that there were a huge number of empty spaces and the book vendor I specifically wanted to find was not there. Explanations varied from "we are all dying off" to "hurricane Helene kept a lot of people away". The truth is probably some combination of the two. I was only able to find one thing to spend my money on, but more on that can be found found in my monthly column.

The car coral was about 2/3 of its usual size, but there were a few cars of interest to us for sale. The car show was also somewhat smaller but the cars, especially the brass-era stuff, were amazing. If you have never seen an Oldsmobile Limited look it up. There were three of them side by side and they were both beautiful and enormous. Here are some of the photo highlights of the car coral and the car show:



1956 XK 140 FHC for sale at \$89,900



Lovely 1914 Rolls-Royce 40/50 in the car show



Very interesting 1947 HRG Aerodynamic purportedly sold new into this country, on sale in the car coral marked down to \$155,000.



Here is an interesting British car I had never seen in person before: a Lea Francis. This is a 1940 Corsica model. The engine is interesting with its “cam in head” design. The camshafts are mounted just below the valves making for short and therefore stout, pushrods. Most other pushrod engines of the time were long stroke engines with the cams mounted low making for long, flexible, and fragile pushrods.

1935 Riley Imp in the coral (\$115,000 o.b.o.)

1935 triumph Southern Cross in the car show.



Lastly, just because it is gorgeous, here is the only Lamborghini Miura I have ever seen in person. It drew quite a crowd. People over 5'10" (at most) need not apply.



Ed. note: *Bill's report acts as our 'Cover page/s this month. Way better than average, ain't it?*

Commenting on the limited space for tall people, you should have seen me in NJ doing a tune-up and a minor engine repair on a Miura. Some idiot cross-threaded a spark plug completely into the front right-hand cylinder. When I removed the old plug there was a lot of aluminum in the threads. Plugs should be started with a short length of rubber hose fitted tightly on the top of the plug, not with a wrench – especially if being done 'blind'. If it takes more torque to start a plug than the grip provided by the rubber hose something is wrong. Clean the plug hole threads with a 'thread chaser'. Luckily, there was enough metal left to very carefully, slowly, re-tap the hole with grease in the tap flukes to catch the aluminum chips. I think that part of the job took about an hour, a half turn at a time before removing the tap for cleaning. All the while half sprawled over the engine and looking into a mirror.

(The Miura's V-12 engine is crosswise just ahead of the rear wheels.)

That same customer also owned a Lambo Espada.

Nope, I couldn't drive the Miura on the road and didn't want to. A few minutes on the dyno was enough to check my work and also enough torture!

BRITISH

>Well worth reading some of the time<

November 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.**

Founded? Kidding aside, I think we accepted the new, more embracing Club name at Pianalto's in Tontitown about when we elected Bill Watkins as President For Life. Anyone remember that date?

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 at 6:00 or earlier for socializing and supper.

Other Meetings:

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

Meeting Night, Oct 10th: It wasn't really the wrong night, Ron and Mary Shrum were there. We just got there early. At our table British wiring problems were discussed... or was that every Meeting Night this year? Brad E. even brought some wiring trouble-shooting videos to the table for our amusement! Brian Lea brought 7-week old Elliot to the meeting – a beautiful baby. Conner Labrecque visited tonight. We learned that Jim and Rita's E-type coupe is for sale which led to speculation on other dream cars we've always wanted, but chickened out at the last minute on robbing a bank to acquire. David Ferrell was 'Leader for a Night', with Bill W's trip to Hershey. Elaine was also away, and David reported \$4,846. in our piggy bank, and we now have 80 members. Dr. Hess handed out hand-crafted show trophies that were late because of "Bill Gates & Co. messing up" at the show. Nov 16th was chosen for our monthly event but controversy in the ranks precluded our settling on the Roaring River restaurant for breakfast as a final choice. Greg Bunch spoke about the Fall Retreat and encouraged more to sign up. Greg Bunch spoke about the Fall Retreat and encouraged more to sign up. Check the calendar on page 3 for late activity dates. Yrs. Trly forgot to ask for a showing of hands re: a youthful photo edition of **BRITISH**. That can wait.

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

Big thanks to Brad Esslinger for taking the reins and handling the club cookout at the Brits Stop back on the 4th. I got sick a few days before and just could not make the event. In fact, I was getting help at Mercy Urgent Care at the time y'all were gathering. Also, many thanks to all of you who showed up to work and broke down the left-over goody bags. That will make the work party next year easier on everyone.

Thanks to David Ferrell for running the monthly meeting while I was away. I understand that you all behaved and David survived with only minor or no injuries. I missed the meeting because Lisa and I were traveling. The plan was to leave early on the 5th and drive to Lisa's mother's house in far eastern Iowa, travel from there to Canton, Ohio, to see some museums, then make it to the Hershey Swap meet in Pennsylvania by Wednesday afternoon where we would stay until Friday afternoon. My report on the trip and Hershey event appears elsewhere.

Lisa and I spent about 2 hours Wednesday and all day Thursday roaming the swap meet and the car coral. Late in the day Thursday, in a far corner of the swap meet field, I saw something I had never seen in person before. As we rounded the corner my reaction upon seeing it was something Lisa said she had never seen from me. I had always thought Alvis cars were cool. Back in their day they were very up-market cars with an excellent reputation for quality and (relative) performance. I had previously seen a couple of the somewhat dumpy Alvis saloons from the 1950s, but I had never seen one of the two-door coupes from the late 50s' to 1960's in person. There before me was a 1964 Alvis TE21 in what you and I would call gold but Alvis called "metallic beige" (who knows why). Anyway, it was for sale and I never imagined I would find a decent one in this country since they were never marketed and sold here. They are all right-hand drive, of course. These cars came from the factory with a ZF 5-speed transmission, but this one had a more modern, Getrag 5-speed installed after the ZF failed and parts could not be sourced. So I made a deal and bought the car. Where would I ever find another one? I had to make the deal.

The car has had a great deal of work done by what appear to be qualified professionals. Interestingly, the Alvis Owner Club had a presence in Hershey and I was able to talk to a 96-year-old former owner of this same car. I tried the car on and mostly fit. The seat backs are adjustable - by adjusting stops with a wrench rather than a more practical levers, and there is ample space to move the seat track back.

I just think it is a very different and kind of cool car. Here is what I have learned: There were 352 TE21s made from 1964 through 1966 when the company closed. 298 are known to survive. There are four known to be in the US, with the other three being dropheads (this one has a new(ish) Webasto sunroof). The car lives in Maine and I have hired enclosed transport. Delivery should happen between now and November 14th. I'm really looking forward to it.

So that means the Jag has to go to create space! I've solved the temperature gauge problem and am now having the bonnet properly adjusted. It will go on the market at \$15K. BI discount available to members!

Ed. Note: For reasons beyond my ken, Bill's Alvis photo would not go onto this page. It is on the last page.

Ye Olde Staff

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Coming Events

NOV: TBA

DEC 7: Christmas Party at the Storey's.

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Error correction: For the benefit of former Pennsylvania residents, in the 'Frightening Ride' story last month, the northern route across the top of the State is Rt. 6, not 8.

THANK YOU to Bill, Phil Warner and Elaine Briggs this month for their stories.

The 'Birds and Bees' story has info from the tail end of the 1992 cross-country motorcycle story.

This is the first issue with a 'new' (very old) Word program. Don't expect perfection!

Later: it blew up on me and vaporized several stories!

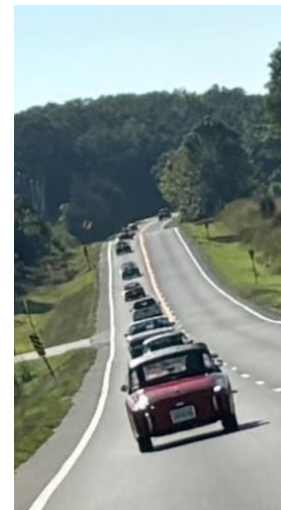
Another spark plug tip: if the new plugs have removable end fittings, always tighten them down gently with a pair of pliers. They can un-thread themselves inside the plug wire connection. Very embarrassing to find your engine misfire is a plug wire that fell off!

Cars and Culture at BITO 2024

by Elaine Briggs

The two leisurely drives for Brits in the Ozarks were a huge success with 12 cars driving on Thursday and 15 cars participating on Friday. You've already read about the Thursday drive in last month's newsletter. Here's the scoop on the Friday drive!

On Friday the group was led by me and Carol on a 60 mile drive east out State Route 43 to Route 12 north, ending at Crystal Bridges. Alan Meyer, who is a volunteer tour director at the museum, arranged for a reserved lunch seating at the Eleven Restaurant and reserved parking. After lunch, Alan led the group on a private tour of Crystal Bridges. We lined up for departure from the Holiday Inn promptly at 9:15.



The participants on both days were from Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. New friends were made and most said they would definitely return next year for another BITO and the leisurely drives!

Phil Warner writes

Years ago in 1974, when I was blissfully unaware that Yankee Land was just an accidental birthplace and momentary stop in my life's journey, I saw a forlorn little blue car surrounded by a ring of tall grass in the back yard of a home in Washington Court House, Ohio. I didn't know what it was, but it looked like a fun successor to the AMC Hornet, the Renault R8, and other orphan cars I had been driving.

When I knocked on the door and inquired, the lady said it was not for sale and her husband was intending to "fix it up someday", but I left my name and phone number with her "just in case". A year later I got a call from the husband who had received a wifely ultimatum and he said if I was still interested I could come buy his 1955 Triumph TR2 for the princely sum of \$400.

With the aid of a new battery, I actually drove TS6301LO home from the back yard in which it sat. At the time it had an "automatic clutch" feature and you had to remember to take it out of gear at stop lights before the slave cylinder leaked down. When the light changed you just held the clutch pedal to the floor, shifted to first, and waited a few seconds for the clutch to slowly engage and take off just as smooth as you please. I replaced the slave cylinder and the TR2 was my top-down daily driver for a number of years even in the winter with the tonneau cover fastened over the passenger side, the heater on full blast (or as full as an English heater can blast), and a motorcycle helmet on my head to keep the cold back wind from whistling down my neck.

Though it looked very forlorn, I drove it in TSD rallies and to several TRA National meets and it was judged second place in one national TRA Concours, even in its forlorn condition, because there were very few TR2s and the others, though better looking, were not as "original". One fellow asked what I had done to prepare for the long drive to the meet and I told him I'd changed the oil and the floors. On the way to another national meet I had a flat tire and had to stop under an overpass when it went down. The rest of the local club convoy ahead saw it happen, but by the time they turned around and came back the other way I had the spare out of the compartment, on the car, and was heading out again; those knockoffs do make a tire change quick work and it helped to not have to unload the boot to get to the spare. I bought new tires for the drive home from a fellow TR enthusiast who had a tire shop near the meet site and discovered too late that they were not round, but that's another story. The TR2's last drive was home from that same National meet when the engine suddenly began blowing oil smoke so thick I had to keep wiping the INSIDE of the windscreen with a rag to see where I was driving.

After that the TR2 lived in a side shed at my mini-farm in New Holland, Ohio until I moved to



Springdale, Arkansas in 1980 and in a garage there until 1995 when I moved out in the sticks near Beaver Lake and built the pole barn, and since then in the pole barn among the cats, rats, raccoons, and other varmints. It is still sitting on now-long-flat-not-quite-round new tires (never again will I put Italian tires on an English car) awaiting its turn for cosmetic attention and an engine overhaul. It will

likely go to my oldest daughter Jennifer when/if I get it finished

or if I die first. I asked her if she wouldn't rather have my 74 E-type V12, (when I die, of course) but she said she wants the TR2 instead.

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Finding solace where you can

(better than crawling into a bottle!)

Wil Wing

Strange, but I have a favorite advertisement. I searched in vain for it on the Internet, so I'll just try to describe it for you. This must have been back in the 'seventies or so. That, of course, was long before the Internet and before the public became obsessed/addicted by cell phones and things like Facebook. **You need to imagine a photo of a winding, rural two-lane road in foothills snaking up towards a mountain range in the distance. At mid-distance there was a solo rider on a BMW motorcycle, leaning into a curve, going away. The ad simply said:**

“No, there isn't a place where you can reach me!”

BMW Motorcycles

That ad was compelling in my working years, and I still like it (I'm not on Facebook).

For Sale

Whitworth tools for sale: Buy yourself a great Christmas gift: I am leaving British cars after 9 cars and over 50 years. I am selling my tool collection. These are Whitworth. All sockets are 12 point and include the following: Koken 1/2 " drive 8 sockets total. Dowidat 1/2" drive 3 sockets. Koken 3/8" drive 6 sockets. Avira 3/8" 6 sockets Combo wrenches by Aces(nice thin profile from Spain- a 7 piece set King Dick open end4 pieces, King Dick offset box wrenches 3 pieces. Gordon open end 2 pieces Dowidat open end 4 pieces, Dowidat box wrenches 3 pieces This collection sells for 320 dollars. If interested I am George Kalin 50 Shetland Drive Bella Vista AR 479-5537005 georgekalin50@gmail.com

ADULTS ONLY!

To enter, click here if you are 18 or older _____

Dirty spark plugs and the birds and the bees

“But my spark plugs are only six months old!” or
“But my spark plugs are only six days old!”

Yes, yes. I’m sorry, but the engine oscilloscope does not lie. If your spark plugs are shorting out there is no denying the fact. Here is a truth that gets to the heart of the matter: If your choke isn’t working properly, a super-rich mixture may coat your spark plugs with electrically conducting soot in six minutes! You probably already know about the birds and the bees, but here is another fact of life: black, electrically conducting soot sticks as easily to new plugs as it does to old plugs. Shocking, isn’t it?

Sometimes a drive, with the choke off and the carburetor/s performing correctly will burn off the soot and your plugs will self-clean. And sometimes not. These are the facts of life, regarding old carburetor-equipped cars. And then there are the special problems attendant with our English carbs; improper use of the hand choke, sticking linkage, electric chokes (Jag) that are either ‘on’ or ‘off’ and our old friends the plastic SU floats – or, as they should be properly called, the SU Just Barely Floats.

Then again, sometimes spark plugs short out when they look fine.

A member had problems with his Jaguar 3.4 after the Blytheville show. It wouldn’t start. Recently his Champion spark plug cleaner – which he has generously donated to our club garage – was used to clean all six. I can see why he was reluctant to blame them; they were very expensive Bosch platinum plugs and he had cleaned them well – no soot and they looked fine. The Champion spark plug cleaner has an essential testing ability, allowing the plugs to be tested in a pressure chamber while you watch the proceedings via an angle-mounted mirror. The owner was half right. Sitting on top of the machine attached to the test leads the plugs worked fine, but under pressure the spark went out at 100 p.s.i. Most any car now develops over 100 psi while cranking; in other words, the plugs were worthless. Just to show that he wasn’t alone in thinking that plugs that look good must be good, here is a little story about me falling for the same illusion – and I should have known better.

On a cross-country motorcycle trip, my bike started misfiring under load. Being then in Colorado and in the middle of nowhere, I pressed on with ever larger throttle openings and ever less power. Eventually I found myself entering the dark (at that time) Eisenhower Tunnel on Interstate 70 in the uphill direction. It had no shoulder for breakdowns. And my maximum uphill speed was now about 35 – 40 mph. I figured my chances of getting out of the tunnel before being splattered on some truck’s grill were less than 50%. No fun at all!

At the motel that afternoon, I met my brother from California, who had ridden his bike to our agreed meeting point. I told my brother that my coils must be failing, because I’d pulled the plugs and they looked perfect.

He didn't believe me (brothers never believe their brothers) and he insisted on running to the next town and buying me a set of new plugs. Meanwhile, I dumped all of my gas. Needless to say, he was right and I was wrong. The bike then ran perfectly. Earlier, I'd been running on fumes and pulled off the Interstate into a cruddy gas station and filled up on their premium gas.

Actually, I think the gas station *was* the town and I suspect their 'premium' gas was years past its expiration date.

Sometimes things just aren't what they look to be. I'm surprised no one has coined a phrase on this subject.

Hey, I've got an idea! How about this: **TEST, DON'T GUESS!** *Wil Wing*

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Here is Bill's new Alvis TE 21. Coachwork by Park Ward.



There are countless YouTube videos on Alvis cars and the Red Triangle garage in England that has an enormous supply of parts and still manufactures new parts and rebuilds Alvis cars.