

## ***BRITISH 10 / 24***



**What's your British choice?**



**We try not to discriminate.**

**In the early 'seventies the British still made road bikes that were suitable for wet riding; the rear fender prevents water and mud from being slung up onto your, or your passenger's back – good! The front fender could use a small mud flap to prevent road slop from going all over the engine.**

**Today most road bikes are all about 'profiling' and no consideration is given to the concept that someone might want to – or must – ride in the rain. Racy, mini fenders on road bikes are beyond stupid.**

**On the other hand, the Triumph looks very cozy, if you like constant flapping noises and rain leaks in your car.**

# ***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.

*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**

- 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 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 Sep 12: Bill Watkins had a good line about the small turnout for tonight's meeting, "This is just like the Sunday after Easter." Lots of members were traveling. The conversations at our table were about the oddities of some of the class winners at our car show last Saturday – you never know what people might vote for. You could say that about the upcoming national election too, if you want to get depressed. We also went through some of the usual aggravating situations with made-in-Asia replacement parts for British cars – we could add to that list every month. Mark and Judith are away in New Orleans entertaining relatives from Switzerland – just as another hurricane is coming ashore down there, so they'll get the full New Orleans experience! (No offence to the fine people of the Netherlands, but why would you want to visit a place adjacent to and below sea level?) The food service was good this month, probably because we didn't have enough people to overwhelm the kitchen. Elaine reported \$4,8?? in our treasury at this moment (OK, I didn't hear the small bills amount – hate me). No tech session on Sat 14<sup>th</sup>. Bill Watkins did a recap of the car show and last-minute details, including getting volunteers to handle the mailing of uncollected trophies and registration envelopes. We chose to have a cookout at our Brit Stop on Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00. The Club will provide beer, hamburgers, hot dogs – bring whatever adult beverages, treats or deserts you like – plus camping chairs to sit on. This won't reach you until after the event, but the job is to record. Another reminder about our Halloween and Christmas parties – see the calendar on page 3. We are adding a ride/meal to the now-empty November calendar.**

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

I will be away on vacation at the time of the meeting this week and 2nd. VP David Farrell will be running the show. Please behave and don't traumatize him in my absence (Rudy, that means you!). I have been to the big internationally known swap meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania three times in the past with Doug Schrantz and a rotating case of characters (including David Farrell) and found it amazing. So, Lisa and I are going on a road trip that will include a couple of days at Hershey where we hope to meet Doug and Sharon Schrantz for at least one day. I'm looking forward to it.

Last weekend was fun with two different events on Saturday. We started the morning with the Rogers Heritage High School car show benefitting the RHHS booster club. The RHHS booster club is not your usual athletics only booster club and uses money they raise to support all student activities. Proceeds from this car show will go to the new auto and diesel mechanics program. I toured their facility and came away impressed. It is a worthy cause. This event provided me with the chance to see the long-dormant Sunbeam Tiger project brought by a friend of mine who has had it in his garage for many years (decades??). He has had it running and driving for about three months now and is about to start on a complete restoration. I thought the car looked good but he described it as "tired". Badged as an early 260, it has a 289 in it now. Bright red but originally a dark blue, to which it will be returned. The Cowlings and their TR6 joined me with the Interceptor. Someone else brought a McLaren 720S but I didn't get a chance to talk to them.

The second event was at the airstrip in Lost Bridge Village as part of their annual fly-in. We were told that the bad weather to the East (related to hurricane Helene) would probably keep a lot of the aircraft away, but the 4 that did attend were interesting. Our club has a nice turnout of 6 or 8 cars. I spent some time with Greg's Morgan and have about convinced myself that with some very minor modifications I might be able to fit well enough to live with one of those. Love that car.

We are still waiting on the rebate check from the hotel in order to compute our final numbers from Brits in the Ozarks, but I am sure we will exceed \$65,000 and pretty sure we will exceed \$67,000. I still find all of that amazing when I think back to where this event started. Now we are waiting for things to fall into place in order to schedule for next year - the hotel already has a football schedule, so we need to know the BB&BBQ date and the Chili Pepper Festival date then we can set our date. I'll be working on all of that when I get back from Hershey.

One other thing about the car show: a year ago I said at a meeting that 2024 would be my last year as car show chair. This year was great in that I was able to delegate many things out to many of you and you all handled everything wonderfully. It was much easier for me this year. So I can stay saddled up a little longer. Greg has his annual Fall Tour coming up later this month. Lisa and I went on the first one 2 years ago and it was wonderful. We missed last year (dodged a rainy bullet there) and will have to miss again this year, but I hope you will sign up and participate. It should be a beautiful time for a drive and Greg has some great stops and activities planned.

If you can't join Greg's group, you can attend the club Halloween Party at the Storey's usual event space. Costumes are encouraged (but not required), BYOB and bring light finger food if you can attend. If you have not been to the Storey's for Halloween and seen their haunted house you owe it to yourself to do so. And you may be able to get a tour of the collection as well.

By the time you see we will have had our cook out at the shop. Free beer and food were provided as bait to get as many folks as possible to turn out and help break down the left over goody bags from past years. I have no doubt that all of those who showed up had a good time. Thanks to those who attended.

*Bill Watkins*

**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

**Coming Events**

**Oct 25-27** – Fall Retreat.  
**Oct 26** – Halloween Party at the Storey’s.  
Costumes are recommended but not required. Potluck dinner – bring a dish to share  
**Nov** – A ride to a restaurant is coming up.  
**Dec 7** – Christmas Party at the Storey’s.

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**

**Yr. Ed. thanks members for their excellent contributions since I’m back in the saddle. Mark Holzer and Elaine Briggs are the two most recent examples. Please keep it up!**

**Fair warning: some more motorcycle content this month.**

**What do you think about this idea: an article in the future where we show members under the age of ten years old? You would then have to guess their identities. We’ll ask for a show of hands on that notion at the November Meeting Night.**

**After putting together the following Railton story, ‘we’ couldn’t help thinking that any one of those pictured would probably be a “Chairman’s Choice’ winner. ‘We’ like MGs and Triumphs as much as anyone, but how do we get more rare cars to “Brits in the Ozarks”?**

**Thanks to Rita Carney, Doug Schrantz, Phil Warner, Elaine Briggs and Alan Meyer for their contributions after the call for input. They won’t all fit this month but will be coming up soon.**

**And we will need more next month! It never ends.**

**This is Yr. Ed’s final newsletter using Microsoft Word 365. (Sound of hysterical, demented laughter)**



## *Railton Automobiles*

**Another instance of a limited-production British car company turning to America for torque.**

My only “familiarity” with the Railton marque was an acquaintance in New Jersey who was restoring one, but he was in such poor health that I doubt he ever finished the car himself. And years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Bees brought a magnificent example to the GOBMC Carthage show – their cars were always first class. Mr. Bees car had an aluminum domed cover on top of the engine, but the ‘thirties Hudson engines were either 6- or 8-cylinder flat head in-line engines. The ‘valve cover’ was an accessory/fake, but a nice one.

“The World of Automobiles” encyclopedia has a good article on the Railtons, written by Peter Hull, who obviously never did car revues for the English magazines “Motor” or “Autocar” – he is too blunt to fit into that former oh so delicate era of gushing prose. (*Hudson had an assembly plant near London since 1925*).



**Time for a little history:** The Anglo-American Railton came from the factory that formerly produced the Invicta sports car from 1925 to 1933. Invicta made about 1000 cars. In Detroit in 1933 someone at Hudson-Essex Motors thought up the ‘Terraplane’ name. Hudson then made a six cylinder (Essex) and an eight cylinder (Hudson). Railton was introduced in 1933, with the unfortunate first name of ‘Essex-Railton-Terraplane’.

*Left: 1937 Railton*

**First engines:** A 4010 cc, long-stroke side valve six with a five-bearing crankshaft, coil ignition, 14 mm plugs and single barrel down-draft carb making 94 HP at 3600 rpm with a compression ratio of 5.8:1.

**First chassis:** Seven inches longer than the American Essex, but with the same cruciform bracing and semi-elliptical springs all around. The car’s performance in England was described as ‘outstandingly brilliant’. (Compared to an Austin Seven?) The chassis redesign was handed to Reid A. Railton.

*Left: Railton Fairmile Drophead - 1937*



**Who was Reid Railton:** A former designer at Lelands and then a director of the Brooklands racing car firm of Thomson and Taylor Ltd. He had recently finished the redesign of Campbell’s ‘Bluebird’ and was engaged in the creation of John Cobb’s Napier Lion engined track car, the Napier Railton, as well as being involved in chassis design for the new ERA voiturette racing cars. OK, he was qualified.



**Chassis improvements:** The Terraplane's roadholding was poor, if the car was driven vigorously. Railton lowered the chassis and stiffened the suspension by using Hartford friction dampers, rather than the hydraulic type. The original Bendix mechanical brakes were retained.

**Styling comment:** Mr. Peter Hull made this observation "The original Terraplane was a pleasant, modest looking car, but as the 'thirties progressed both the Terraplanes and the Hudsons became more and more hideous. (!) The Railton, on the other hand, was always a handsome car."



**Coachwork:** was mainly by a firm called REAL of Ealing and Coachcraft of Hanwell, the latter being a subsidiary of London Railton distributors, University Motors. (Remember University Motors in London? MG guru John Twist worked there learning his trade and then reused the name for his American garage)

**Eight-cylinder Hudson engine:** The Hudson eight was  
*Left: Railton Light Sport Tourer, less fenders*

slightly larger than the formerly used Essex engine at 4168 cc. With a Carter carb and Autolite ignition it produced 113 hp at 3800 rpm. Big end lubrication was on the primitive splash feed (like six-cylinder Chevrolets of the thirties) trough and dipper system, although it worked satisfactorily.

**Evolving improvements:** In 1936 Hudson raised the power of the eight-cylinder to 124 bhp and Railton replaced the old 6V electrics with 12V. Railtons did not use the US 'Electric Hand' automatic transmissions. When Hudson fitted a column shift before the war, Railton converted it to a floor hand shift.

**Production:** 1460 Railtons were made, of which only 81 had the six-cylinder engine.

**Standard body styles:** Although there was only one Railton model in 1936/37, seven varieties of bodywork were offered: the Saloon, the Tourer, the Drop Head Coupe, the 2-Door Sports Saloon, the Fairmile Coupe, the Cobham saloon and the University Saloon. **If you went to your computer search engine and asked for "Railton Car photos", I think you would be pleased to see the many handsomely styled cars.** Chassis were also available for custom coachbuilding.

**Sporting accomplishments:** Although much faster than most British cars of the era, Railtons did not gather many laurels. The 1934 Monte Carlo Rally gained a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for a Portuguese team and Railton had some RAC rally success. A 1938 Shelsley Walsh hillclimb class win went to a Railton. Also in 1938, a Railton came second in class at a Brooklands 50-mile race at an average of 107 mph.

After the war, a dozen or so cars were assembled. *Thanks to 'The World of Automobiles'.*



## ***MY MOST FRIGHTENING MOTORCYCLE RIDE***

*Wil Wing*

In the early 1990s I got up in the middle of the night (2:00 AM?) to start a long cross-country motorcycle ride. We lived in Somerset, New Jersey at the time. My first night's destination was to the home of my pal and former business partner Jerry Miller, who then lived north of Detroit, Michigan. I wanted to get to his home by late afternoon, but also wanted to try a new northern route, rather than the usual boring Penn. Turnpike or Interstate 90 heading west.

I'd pre-packed the motorcycle the day before, so I was quickly on my way through the 'mountains' of N.J. on rural roads, headed for Pennsylvania on my Kawasaki Concours sport-touring bike. My non-trusty radar detector was on, but it was subject to all kinds of false alarms from garage door openers, neon lights and lots of other interference. Going through some rural area at 3:00 AM it started squealing again, but I just ignored it, considering the location. Wrong again! A township cop car was waiting for some fool like me to go by on their deserted two-lane at almost double the 30 MPH speed limit. After getting his consent to remove my helmet (I had ear plugs in) and showing him all my legal documents – by this time he wasn't as nervous – he asked where I was going at that hour of the day. "*MONTANA!*" he exclaimed. Well, yes.

For some reason he had a hissy fit about my using a radar detector, which he spotted, even though it did me no good at all.

What a beginning to a long trip – an hour from home and a speeding ticket already. Worse, I wasn't going to be back in time for the court date. I ended up mailing my ticket home to Shirley and asking her to send a check for my penalty to the court.

Now let's ease into the frightening part of the ride. What might bother you riding on a motorcycle? Maybe a hurricane aftermath night ride, with trees down and electrical high voltage wires arcing in the road? How about UK roundabouts which are much larger than ours and are negotiated at higher speeds – clockwise on the 'wrong' side of the road? Or following a huge truck and suddenly noticing a big rock jammed between two tires, ready to be flung back at you? Well, none of those things even come close.

I had decided to take Pennsylvania Rt 8 across the north of the state as it is marked a scenic route. Much of that road is through sections of various state parks. I got up there at about dawn. Good hunting country, little industry and no traffic at that hour, just a winding two-lane through forests. But - you know how they use dry ice to fake ground fog in movies, to create a scary effect? Maybe a graveyard scene? I'd stumbled into my own horror show - **I couldn't see the road!** Rt. 8 had a solid layer of dense ground fog, coming up to a little above the axles of my bike, in all directions. I could sort of see where the edges of the road were, where the trees started, but I couldn't even see my feet.

In a car this would only be mildly concerning. You might run into something on the road, but only the car would get hurt, not you... if you had your seatbelt on. On a bike it is very different. But I wanted to keep going. Reducing my speed to about 40 MPH I drove for about an hour through that stuff, half expecting to take a nose-dive any moment... who knew what kind of obstacle might be on the road? It was the sustained tension that made it so 'memorable'. Eventually the sun started to dissipate the fog.

It just seemed as though I'd held my breath for an hour.



## Little Midget- My intro to British Cars – Rita Carney

After escaping home to the only community college in New York state that had dorms, I started to date the campus radio station's DJ, Mr. Bill. Some of you may recall Mr. Bill's debut on Saturday Day Night Live and the claymation films - 'Oh No Mr. Bill'.

Mr. Bill had a cute little rag top sports car! *Whoo, whoo*, my hitch-hiking days were over! His mostly red 1972 MG Midget already had a few stories to tell! Oh no, Mr. Bill, where did that blue passenger door come from? And how did the green fender come to be? Despite Little Midget's hard life at an early age, she was a blast on the twisty windy back roads of central New York!

Our first spring break adventure together for the 3 of us was the 650-mile journey from the winter of Morrisville NY to sunny Cape Hatteras SC. It was during the 1974 gas rationing days when you were only able to buy gas on either odd or even days depending on your license plate number. Luckily, I had a sister living in Baltimore at the time! This turned out to be a great halfway point. Our 'no gas' day provided a welcomed break to thaw from the cold noisy ride with minimal heat. Besides a free stay and kinship, Baltimore also brought a change in the weather. Spring was in the air!

After waiting our turn in line for gas to leave Baltimore, we started out for another day of driving. By the time we got to Hatteras I had a different kind of appreciation for warriors of long road trips with the top down and feeling the vibrations of the road below you. Wind-blown, sunburned and braided hair in knots It felt great to climb out of Little Midget, flop onto the sand and embrace an alternative rhythm from her 65 hp 4 cylinders to the crashing waves rolling onto the beach. Little Midge seemed to be a reliable little gal and got us there and back!

Back home Little Midget was honored as the recipient of a makeover at the campus' automotive tech class for body and paint repair! What a beauty with her new red coat!

That fall we moved on to Rochester and Little Midget was to accompany me on a daily commute across town to classes.

On the first day we were figuring out our route. As we made a left turn at a light, Bam!!! A hit to her rear passenger fender sent us spinning in the intersection! Poor Little Midget's fender was crushed into the tire! After being towed, the fender dent pulled out and a new tire, we were good to go once again. Although her beauty was impaired, I bonded with my daily driver. Fond memories were forged from the trials and tribulations! I recall sledding through snowstorms on the NY thruway to join family members for the winter holidays. I often wondered if the sand bags in the trunk really made any difference in tracking through the new fallen white powder.

Little Midget required special cold morning rituals of turning on the apartment's gas oven to low, going out and popping her bonnet and removing her distributor cap to bring it in for a little spa time to put her in the mood to cooperate with getting from the apartment to campus. I'd be hoping her dear fuel pump wouldn't decide to take a nap along the way! If so, engaging her clutch, sliding her gear shift into neutral and turning the ignition on and off a few times would usually provide the nudge to wake it up!

This sweet Little Midget also liked to play hide and seek! While driving along a country road in the evening after a long day of classes, the headlights would go out! Sometimes toggling the brights on would light the way once again! Thankfully there was a fog driving light that could come to the rescue... sometimes!

It wasn't much longer when Little Midget's clutch failed. I had just been too hard on Little Midget. Little Midget got parked at the welding shop where Mr. Bill worked. Although I moved on, I will always cherish the memories, the journeys, the good times and the rough challenges with Little Midget and that chapter of my life.



**Doug Schrantz writes:** In a Spl. Tech. Bulletin earlier this year, Brad described how to make a wire wheel hub puller from a cast off knock off. A hole was drilled through the center and using a long bolt and nut combination, spin the knock off on the hub and tighten the bolt against the axle shaft end and the hub hopefully is withdrawn from the axle shaft. Well, maybe.

I previously had to remove a worn hub from the axle of my Jaguar XK. I tried the usual 3 leg puller. With it under tension I banged it with a ball peen hammer, then a sledgehammer. Then I added heat from a torch with MAP gas. Nothing worked.

I then remembered as a member of the national Jag club, I had access to a loan of the club tools. I contacted the tool guy and in a few days I received the factory hub puller. It arrived on a Tuesday. Being a weekend warrior, I did not plan to attack the hub again until Saturday. By Friday, however, I got an email wanting to know if I had shipped the hub puller back. It is in great demand. So, that Friday evening I went to my shop and tried it out. In less time than it takes to call the Hogs I had both hubs removed. I was able to reply to the tool guy that the club hub puller was indeed in transit.

Later, an opportunity presented to reasonably acquire the real thing. I have one now and have needed it again. There is no substitute. I count the hub puller as one of my favorite tools.

++++

**Sep 28<sup>th</sup> Lost Bridge Fly-In and Car Show”:** A ‘hundred’ late model Corvettes and we get a homebuilt airplane photo? Yup! We talk about big car projects, but building a kit plane from scratch is a BIG project. This Experimental aircraft uses a Honda Fit engine professionally converted to airplane specs, the most important feature of which is probably the gear reduction drive unit fitted to the block. (Because of prop tip speed limitations, auto engines can’t be used directly). We saw Bill Watkins, Robert Storey, Phil Warner, Greg Bunch, Elaine Briggs and one or two other club members/wives displaying their cars.



The Lost Bridge air strip is in a beautiful setting and personally, ‘we’ enjoyed the band’s music. I think every first timer would appreciate seeing that very lightly used facility. Most maps show a ‘Temporarily Closed’ legend!

Also interesting was an early post-war Packard – a Preservation Class car – with only 12K miles, in exceptional original condition. This was about the last model before Packard styling turned into one of the many horrors of the ‘fifties.

## Alan Meyer reports the September 5<sup>th</sup> Leisurely Drive and preparation

The 5 September Leisurely Drive criteria were: pre-lunch run duration of about 4 hours, speed posted limit or 55 mph whichever came first and after lunch within 40 miles of Springdale to avoid the rush hour traffic. Additionally, a western initial direction would be used for Friday to ensure variety.

Google Maps was used to develop a draft route using the above parameters for time and speed plus satellite and street views for visualization. An initial run was made, data collected, and a turn-by-turn route developed. Testing was then done with my and Lee Cowling's wives as driver and navigator. Lee and I followed. Improvements were made to avoid congested areas, add a photo op in downtown Gentry and sharpen the directions.

By the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> each participating car was given an overall information sheet and a turn-by-turn route. Once we got Brad's car jumped, Lee took the lead in his TR6, with 10 cars behind and I was the tear guard in my wife's 2021 MINI Cooper S. We encountered a slight delay in Gentry allowing Elaine and Carol to join. The run-down Main Street was covered by still and video photography thanks to Lee's son-in-law.

Upon exiting from Main Street, I owe thanks to a Benton County Sheriff's Deputy. To maintain the convoy and get on Route 12 ahead of an approaching black SUV, I did not make a full stop. It was not until most of the way thru the turn that I realized it was a black AND white SUV. We were provided with a tailing police escort until the roundabout at Route 43.

Route 43 provided the views and fragrance of Arkansas chicken houses as well as some remaining destruction from the Memorial Day weekend tornados. A biobreak\* was made at Maysville and Brad bravely shut down. A jump box was made available but not needed. \*a new euphemism! – Ed.

The TRI-POINT marker, for OK, AR, MO borders, was passed and we continued north into MO. At Southwest City an officer coming head-on allowed the caravan to pass over the one lane bridge continuously. I think we were small enough to allow two-lane traffic, but the hold was appreciated. Route 90 was taken east to Noel and under the Noel cliffs. Route H was then used to parallel the Elk River, passing under I 49, crossing the Elk and intersecting Rt. 79 B. Rt 90 was again found just south of the Jane Store and used to access Rt. 71 for a four-lane run to AR Rt. 279 and Bella Vista. We were soon in the upper parking lot of the Bella Vista Country Club/Bella Vista Bar and Grill for lunch and on schedule. Brad shut down and disconnected the battery.

After a convivial lunch in the Fay Jones designed clubhouse overlooking the golf course we returned to our cars. Club drivers made their individual ways to their homes. I took a visiting contingent on a short hop across Rt. 71 to the Cooper Chapel. The unique architecture and wooded setting of the Chapel was as always enjoyed.

A final contingent was then lead, via Rt 112, to the host hotel in Springdale.

The weather was spectacular, and I think the post-event comments reflect that all had an enjoyable time. My thanks to Elaine for pre-sorting participants and to Lee and Karen for suggestions on routing and taking the lead position. Oh, and to Pat for allowing me to use HER MINI.