

(Too?) ***‘BRITISH’*** October, 2025



Terry Wilson photo

*"Fear not, if you run into a wee bit of British weather.
Just have a good British car under you."*

Mack O'cist

World Authority on Pain

Foreground: Until Saturday, Sept 20th, we never realized that those pilings were for securing canoes.

‘BRITISH’

>Well worth reading some of the time<

Oct, 2025 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.**

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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, Sept 11: Usual heavy ‘slow and speed up’ traffic on I 49, but no accidents or full stops. I guess that section won’t get the fourth lane needed until there are more fatalities. The crowd built slowly tonight, but eventually we had 42. Elaine was away but Bill reported close to last month’s funds in the treasury. I don’t remember ever having this much near year’s end. With just 1 ½ weeks to our annual car show, most of the business section of the evening went to making sure all the necessary work positions are filled. I’m always impressed at the diverse backgrounds and skills of our members – and their willingness to contribute. Bill reported that his Alvis is finally behaving as it should (knock wood). Most of the valves had practically no clearance. Terry Wilson donated a MG sign to the Brit Stop in appreciation for help offered. Nice! Service tonight at the AA Steak House was good, but I’ve given up on the small sirloin steaks. At our table, there was a big conversation about a survey (?) linking the need (or use) of hearing aids and dementia in older people. I don’t have to tell you that trying to hear a conversation five feet away isn’t easy with a background of 42 people yakking. Both my wife and I use hearing aids, but... um, what’s her name... does better in a crowd than Yrs. Trly. So I never heard the conclusion of the debate, but I find it hard to believe there is a linkage between hearing and early-onset dental problems... What?



**Except for motorcycling, perhaps this is the perfect vehicle
for embracing Mother Nature when traveling.
That is, if you want a relationship with Mother Nature.**

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

Well, that was certainly interesting. For those of you who didn't make it to the swim meet / car show known as Brits in the Ozarks, it was quite a day. Varying between light rain, nice weather, and a monsoon, this was by far the wettest event we have held since the famous wash out of 2013. But man, everyone seemed to have a great attitude. I didn't get any gripes other than those with a smile asking who scheduled the weather. And you all hung in there like troopers to make this event a big success regardless of the conditions.

Things like this are, of course, always an opportunity to learn and improve. If I had to do it over (please God, no) I would have tasked someone to help me keep up with the radar and then shut it all down before the worst of it hit and sent everyone home. However, I did learn that the best sales tool for the concessions stand is a storm driving everyone into the pavilion!

I got several compliments on the laser etched walnut trophies or awards. Thanks to Hess for lining this up and doing at least part of the production work. Andy Reid, our speaker, also did well and I had some folks compliment his performance.

The final figures reflect 165 registrations from 11 states and we will have raised between \$75,000 and \$76,000 dollars. Remarkable. There were several no-shows due to the usual things that happen in life plus the bad weather forecast. Hess and Linda are working to get the packets with t-shirts out to the no-shows. I have already mailed out the trophies to the few winners who didn't attend the dinner.

If you secured a donor of any sort, whether a monetary or in-kind donation, **please** send them a thank you note and report to them the success of our event. You can do this with your own stationary or I can provide you with a soft copy of the club letterhead. Let me know if you need it.

And while I am on the subject, thanks to all of you who helped secure donations. Wednesday night of that week Lisa and I were with Andy Reid in the hotel parking lot looking at cars and talking to folks who had arrived early to go on the Thursday drives. I talked to a Triumph owner from Oklahoma who told me that our show has a great reputation and that he and his friends always enjoyed coming over. I asked him why that was since we (or at least I) really don't know how to identify our "secret sauce". The first thing he mentioned was our goody bag!! This surprised me. He expressed how our guests really appreciate that our goody bag contains a variety of useful and good quality stuff in addition to the usual knick-knacks. (One funny note: I saw or heard a few people ask what the small package of coiled up wire in the bag was. These folks must not drive their cars very much if they don't recognize stainless steel tie wire!)

I was also pleased with the level of support we received from the ALS office. I was concerned that with our lead contact people being in Little Rock and Tulsa that they would be somewhat disconnected. That was not the case. Other than the things you would expect when getting a new person trained up on what we do, it all went well and they were fully bought-in and helpful. That bodes well for the future.

As always, I will again ask you at the next meeting if you had fun and want to do it again. No pressure and be honest. If yes, we should have a committee meeting soon to debrief and see where we can improve. We will have a cookout at the shop soon to sort the left-over goody bags and remove any perishables.

The Alvis interior got soaked sitting in the rain at the park. It took me 4 days to dry it out. A new windshield seal had been ordered. But the good news is that the erratic running problems seem to have been solved. Confidence is building.

Please come to the regular meeting on the 9th. I hope to see you there.

Club Staff

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Coming Events¶

Monthly Meeting Night – OCT 9th¶

OCT 25: Halloween Party at the Storey's.¶

NOV 7 - 9: Our annual overnight retreat.

DEC 6: Christmas Party at the Storey's.¶

JAN 1: Annual gathering at the Steakhouse.¶

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I just thought of a lesson learned back in the 1950s. How do you describe ‘understeer’ and ‘oversteer’ in a car? “A guy driving an understeering car, entering a curve way too fast will keep turning the wheel, but the car will go straight off the road and punch a hole through a wooden fence. A guy driving an oversteering car, entering the same curve way too fast, will go through the same fence hole, but backwards.”

What a car show day! Miserable, pouring rain and Agri Park was half flooded – yet everyone seemed to be smiling and we made a financial success for ALS. I thought our guest speaker, Andy Reed, was excellent.

Also, big cheers for Hess Kooistra, whose hand crafted, laser-etched black walnut trophies were absolutely first class (no pun intended), not to mention a lot of work. Classy!



This month we are having a history on the non-hyphenated Aston Martin and their DB models. DB stood for David Brown, which you probably knew. We start on page four, as usual.

DB 4



If our club interest was the finances of British cars, life would be much simpler. I could use the same article almost every month. But that would be really boring. And depressing.

If you judge by the duration of a name, Aston Martin has a history of over 100 years. In fact, only the name remains: the firm has been through many changes of ownership and locations. Pre-WW II there was the usual farcical financial collapses and reorganizations. Post-WW II there has been seven changes of ownership, as of this writing!



1922 1.5 liter, twin overhead camshaft, 16 valve, 4-cylinder team cars. Very nice, but not the first. The success of their first cobbled-together car at the 1913 Aston Clinton hillclimb provided

publicity and half of their eventual name. Note the brake shaft bell crank (angled at 1:00 o'clock/7:00 o'clock) which allowed brake cables to pull on the front and rear brakes simultaneously. Similar, but less complex road cars were sold to the public up to the early 'thirties.

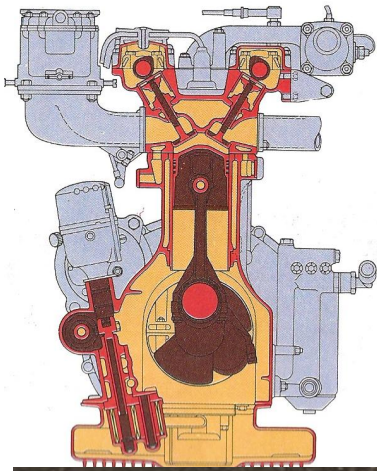


1924 tourer



1937 2-liter open tourer

In 1947, old-established (1860) privately owned Huddersfield gear and machine tools manufacturer David Brown Limited bought Aston Martin, putting it under control of its Tractor Group. David Brown became Aston Martin's latest savior. He also acquired Lagonda, without its factory, for its 2.6-litre W. O. Bentley-designed engine. Lagonda moved operations to Newport Pagnell and shared engines, resources and workshops. Aston Martin began to build the classic "DB" series of cars. *I'm told the gearboxes had gear problems!*



A cross-section of the postwar DB engine. The crankshaft was inserted through a round plate in the back of the block – represented here as thin black lines barely visible behind the crankshaft throws. Good engine, but a pain in the behind to service the distributor down there under the intake manifold (Yes, I had a few AM customers over the years).

This engine replaced the 2.6 liter W.O. Bentley engine and was designed by Tadek Marek and used from 1956 to 1972.



This is the famous DBR1 1959 Le Mans winner, driven by Roy Salvadori and Carrol Shelby. AM finished 1st and 2nd, beating the Ferrari, Jaguar and Porsche teams. A 750 cc Deutsch Bonnet finished 9th.

(Late explanation – hyphenating Deutsch Bonnet was an American convention, in Europe it was abbreviated D.B.)

In April 1950, AM announced planned production of their Le Mans prototype to be called the DB2, followed by the DB2/4 in 1953, the DB2/4 MkII in 1955, the DB Mark III in 1957 and the Italian-styled 3.7 L DB4 in 1958.¹

While these models helped Aston Martin establish a good racing pedigree, the DB4 stood out and yielded the famous DB5 in 1963. Aston stayed true to its grand touring style with the DB6 (1965–70), and DBS (1967–1972).



The AM DB 2/4 MKII was a grand tourer produced from 1953 to 1957. An optional large-valve, high compression (8.6:1) 165 hp engine was offered. A 2-seat Fixed Head Coupé was new, in addition to the continued Drophead. Three Mark II chassis were sent to Carrozzeria Touring in Italy to be bodied as Spider models. Touring coach builders would later help Aston with the Superleggera design of the DB4.



The Tadek Marek designed V-8, used from 1969 to 2000.

Financial problems plagued Aston Martin from the 1970s through the 2000s. Sales were discontinued to the US for a while because they had no engine to satisfy our emission standards.



Despite all the financial turmoil, AM continued producing beautiful cars. **DB 5.**

Drastically reduced, here are the corporate 'bones' of Aston Martin since 1947:

1947–1972: David Brown

He also acquired Lagonda, without its factory, for its 2.6-litre W. O. Bentley-designed engine. Lagonda moved operations to Newport Pagnell and shared engines, resources and workshops. Aston Martin began to build the classic "DB" series of cars. The six-cylinder engines of these cars from 1954 up to 1965 were designed by Tadek Marek.

1972–1975: William Willson

Aston Martin was often financially troubled. In 1972, David Brown paid off all its debts, said to be £5 million or more, and handed it for £101 to Company Developments, a Birmingham-based investment bank consortium chaired by accountant William Willson. The worldwide recession, lack of working capital and the difficulties of developing an engine to meet California's exhaust emission requirements – it stopped the company's US sales – again pulled Aston Martin into receivership at the end of 1974.

1975–1981: Sprague and Curtis

Six months later, in September 1975, the factory – shut down the previous December – re-opened under its new owners as Aston Martin Lagonda Limited with 100 employees, and planned to lift staff to 250 by the end of 1975. The new owners pushed Aston Martin into modernizing its line, introducing the V8 Vantage in 1977, the convertible Volante in 1978, and the one-off Bulldog styled by William Towns in 1980.



1977
Vantage
1978 Volante
(convertible)
But in July
1980, blaming

a recession, AML cut back their workforce of 450 by more than 20%, making those people redundant.

1981–1987: Victor Gauntlett

In January 1981, there having been no satisfactory revival partners, Alan Curtis and Peter Sprague announced they had never intended to maintain a long-term financial stake in Aston Martin Lagonda and it was to be sold to Pace Petroleum's Victor Gauntlett. The next few years are too complicated to summarize. See Wikipedia.

1987–2007: Ford Motor Company

As Aston Martin needed funds to survive in the long term, Ford bought a 75% stake in the company in 1987, and bought the rest in May of that year. Walter Hayes was instrumental. In 1988, having produced some 5,000 cars in 20 years, a revived economy and successful sales of limited edition Vantage, and 52 Volante Zagato coupés at £86,000 each; Aston Martin finally retired the ancient V8 and introduced the Virage range. *You could say that all AMs look similar after year 2000, but Ford introduced rectangular headlamps on the Virage, as they did on the Jaguar XK40 saloons. Controversial! I may be the only one who thinks that feature on the Jag looked better than the bulging, reptilian headlamp design.* As the entry-level DB7 would require a large engineering input, Ford agreed to take full control of Aston Martin, and Gauntlett handed over Aston Martin's chairmanship to Hayes in 1991.

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By 1993, Ford had fully acquired the company and opened a new factory at Banbury Road in Bloxham to manufacture the DB7. In 1995, Aston Martin produced a record 700 cars. In 2003, Aston Martin introduced

the V8 Vantage concept car. Expected to have few changes before its introduction in 2005, the Vantage brought back the classic V8 engine to allow Aston Martin to compete in a larger market. 2003 also saw the opening of the Gaydon factory, the first purpose-built factory in Aston Martin's history.



Introduced in 2003 was the **DB9** coupé, which replaced the ten-year-old DB7. In October 2004, Aston Martin set up a dedicated engine plant within the Ford Germany plant in Niehl, Cologne. In 2006, an internal audit led Ford to consider divesting itself of parts of its Premier Automotive Group. After suggestions of selling Jaguar Cars, Land Rover, or Volvo Cars were weighed, Ford announced in August 2006

it had engaged UBS AG to sell all or part of Aston Martin at auction.

2007–2018: Private Limited Company

On 12 March 2007, a consortium led by Prodrive_chairman David Richards purchased Aston Martin for \$848 million. The group included American investment banker John Sindes and two Kuwaiti companies. On 19 July 2007, the Newport Pagnell plant rolled out the last of nearly 13,000 cars made there since 1955. The Tickford Street facility was converted and became the home of the Aston Martin Works classic car department which focuses on heritage sales, service, spares and restoration operations. UK production was subsequently concentrated on the facility in Gaydon. More dealers in Europe and the new pair in China brought the total to 120 in 28 countries.

As sales had been declining from 2015, Aston Martin sought new customers (particularly wealthy female buyers) with introducing concept cars like the DBX SUV along with track focused cars like the Vulcan. The troubles started when sales of the DB9 failed to generate sufficient funds to develop next-generation models which led to a downward spiral of declining sales and profitability.



Vulcan – track car only. Chairman Palmer said, "In our first century we went bankrupt seven times. The second century is about making sure that is not the case." *Smirks and sniggers are allowed.*

In 2014, Aston Martin suffered a pre-tax loss of £72 million, selling 3,500 cars during the year, compared to 4,200 sold in 2013. In March 2014, Aston Martin issued "payment in kind" notes of \$165 million, at 10.25% interest, in addition to the £304 million of senior secured notes at 9.25% issued in 2011. Aston Martin also had to secure an additional investment of £200 million from its shareholders to fund development of new models. It was reported that Aston Martin's pre-tax losses for 2016 increased by 27% to £162.8 million, the sixth year it continued to suffer a loss. Aston Martin returned to profit in 2017 after selling over 5,000 cars.

2013–present: Partnership with Mercedes-Benz Group

In December 2013, Aston Martin signed a deal with Mercedes-Benz Group (at the time known as Daimler) to supply the next generation of Aston Martin cars with Mercedes-AMG engines. Mercedes-AMG also was to supply Aston Martin with electrical systems. This technical partnership was intended to support Aston Martin's launch of a new generation of models that would incorporate new technology and engines. The first model to sport the Mercedes-Benz technology was the DB11, (*No picture – it looked about the same*) announced in March 2016. It featured Mercedes-Benz electronics for the entertainment, navigation and other systems.

2018–present: Listed on the London Stock Exchange

After "completing a turnaround for the once perennially loss-making company that could now be valued at up to \$6.4 billion," and now reporting a full-year pre-tax profit of £87 million (compared with a £163 million loss in 2016) Aston Martin in August 2018 announced plans to float the company at the London Stock Exchange as Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings plc. The company was the subject of an initial public offering on the London Stock Exchange on 3 October 2018. In the same year, Aston Martin opened a new vehicle dynamics test and development center at Silverstone's Stowe Circuit alongside a new HQ in London. In June 2019, the company opened its new factory in St Athan, Wales, for the production of AMs first-ever SUV the **DBX**.
Doesn't look impressive, but then the Porsche SUV sells very well.



I quit here in disgust. If any Club member is on the verge of buying a new Aston Marin, you will have to do the recent history yourself. I'm sick of writing about this. Recently more millions of dollars have been invested by many sources and AM is, apparently, going broke again. It sounds to me like a bunch of guys should be in prison.

Information primarily from Wikipedia, italicized comments by the Editor.

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Scientific vs. Realistic

Wil Wing

A handful of us were at the Club shop on September 6th and I was trying to explain engine analysis, using the Sun oscilloscope method. When it came time to connect up a car, I asked Bill Watkins to remove his air filter housing from the Jensen so we could get at the ignition. I noticed his air filter element had some soot or dirt both on the outside and inside. On the inside usually means there is some carburetor backfiring, usually from an excessively lean mixture when cold.

Working today with cars from the 'fifties and 'sixties, we are likely to encounter a condition known as 'lean surge'; it feels as though the car is fighting a variable headwind – a certain roughness in steady-speed driving. If the car is fitted with a hand choke, this condition is easy to verify; drive as steadily as possible at the speed where the surging is most noticeable, pull out the choke very slowly. If the car suddenly runs smoothly, you have the answer.

Modern fuels are very different from those 1950 or 1960. Your car needs to be rejettet slightly richer. I've seen and fixed this several times.

I wonder if Bill's air filter is dirty (plugged) enough to worsen his gas mileage? You can't tell by looking! And that reminds me of this old story:

A rehash

In about 1958 I needed a new job. Coincidentally, my brother was switching from the Tech Services Dept. of Purolator Filters headquarters in Rahway (pronounced 'Raw-way' locally) NJ and going to California as a sales rep. We both had mechanical experience, were 'car guys' and had some drafting experience in high school – although Ed was better trained in drafting. Anyway, Ed suggested me for as replacement to fill his empty slot at Purolator. I did an interview and was accepted. I remember that the engineering department head commented how unusual it was for two brothers to have similar interests – he said his brother was an opera singer!

One memorable job was an order from the sales department to conduct a scientific study into the relationship of dirty air filters and gas mileage. They were planning a national sales campaign on that subject and wanted the test results available. We used a full-sized American car with a V-8 engine and a four-barrel carburetor. The technical lab had quantities of dirt/grit to simulate 40,000 miles or so of average driving and sprayed it onto an air filter. Then we rigged Tigon lab hoses from the engine (hood slightly ajar) installed valves, and a calibrated bottle to hung inside the passenger window. We were required to wear white lab coats so the NJ State Police wouldn't bother us on the NJ Turnpike. We were able to drive the car from the fuel tank or, at a mile marker, switch to an exact quantity of gas in the bottle. We maintained exact speeds and did two-way runs over the same stretch. Except that the dirty filter yielded exactly the same mileage as a new filter!

Back to the lab. They put twice as much dirt on the filter and we tried again... and got exactly the same result. See what was happening here? By the way, this was when there was a National 55 mph limit.

They finally used a new filter and wrapped masking tape around it, leaving an opening slightly smaller than one inch square. Eureka! Our gas mileage dropped by about two miles per gallon. The sales department had their scientific proof that you get better mileage with a new filter.

Of course, the whole thing was based on unrealistic thinking. To test realistically, the engine should have been on an engine dynamometer programed to duplicate a mix of city and highway driving, with some hills and large throttle openings thrown in. But we weren't Esso Research and couldn't do such a realistic test.

At steady highway speeds, the carburetor's primary (small) barrels aren't open more than a crack – little more than idle speed. That doesn't represent real life. ++++

The rest of the story - *Wil*

Earlier this year I mentioned in a story that Shirley once came home in NJ with groceries and there was a burglar in our house. I was at work. The story is kind of interesting and has a happy ending.

He broke into our house by smashing a window over the kitchen sink in the back of the house. That window faced an elevated, screened-in rear porch, so he was safely hidden from anyone on the D&R towpath. He picked up a large carving knife and started looking for things to steal – to support a drug habit, no doubt.

He grabbed a small, heavy brass Swiss-made mantle clock Shirley had been awarded by Johnson & Johnson and started to go through drawers for valuables. I don't think he was in the house for more than fifteen minutes before Shirley came home and he heard the garage door opening. He ran downstairs and escaped through the door, which opened on grade, since the house was near the cliff edge. As he left the house he dropped the carving knife in the lower room.

Shirley came in and saw all the broken glass in the kitchen. After a second she realized what was going on and retreated out of the house and ran to a neighbor to call the police. It was too late to catch this guy, as the rear was heavily wooded and there were no other homes with a sightline down by the canal.

The Somerset police eventually came, searched the house and, home by then, I reported only the stolen clock. The cop admitted there was little chance of catching this thief. We got off easily, I thought, except that the scum kicked our elderly, near-deaf beagle. I took her to our vet, who treated the cut and said she had a mild concussion and to just keep her quiet for a while.

Maybe two hours later things had settled down and I sat at our 'gossip bench' near the front door to phone the guys at my shop. The thief had taken a brass vase holding a plant off of the bench and dumped everything on the floor. I guess he thought that people hid valuables in flower vase dirt?

For some reason I looked up... there were footprints across the ceiling for a short distance!

It was obvious that the thief had taken off his sneakers, rubbed them in the dirt, stood on the gossip bench and 'walked' his sneakers on the ceiling, pretending he was 'Spiderman'. Well, now we knew the idiot's age (or IQ) group. The police sent a car back and they photographed the ceiling, just in case.

Later that week, in a nearby neighborhood, a man came home to make his lunch and he saw a young Black kid walking out of his driveway holding a bulging pillow case. He shouted and the kid ran. Luckily, the home owner was young and fit; he ran the kid down and held him while calling the police. He retrieved all his possessions and the kid went to jail. The police had no trouble matching his sneakers to the footprints in our house. Got him!

I imagine, unless he changed his ways, that he is now a permanent guest of New Jersey, behind bars. Perfect. It could have been much worse for us, but I haven't yet forgiven him for hurting our dog.

P.S. I took our broken kitchen window, in the wooden frame, to a local glass shop to be repaired. Our architect had insisted that Pella was the best (1979). But they had never seen Pella windows and couldn't figure out how to disassemble the frame. They had to call Pella in Iowa for instructions!

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