

‘BRITISH’ NOV ’25



***Not what you expected?
It's meant as a preview to our page four story.***

Have you got a creepy feeling that you're being watched?



‘BRITISH’

>Well worth reading some of the time<

Nov, 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.**

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/9: Well, the traffic was heavy, but there was something new to complain about while driving down to Springdale. We drove for several miles with the worst stink in the car. I started to wonder if I'd stepped on something nasty, but then realized that there were two liquid tank hauling trucks, traveling together, in front of us. The traffic wouldn't let us pass for another five miles or so. Gott im Himmel, that was rotten. They both had tiny lettering on the tanks – 'inedible'. Gee, no kidding. Did they have the vents open so they wouldn't explode? Or to amuse themselves by gagging everyone? Anyway: We had 42 tonight, including two guests. Robert Storey told us he was working hard on the Halloween decorations – looking forward to seeing that. Greg Bunch was just ready to send out the fall retreat itinerary to all signed up, when he lost power at work and didn't know (as of meeting night) if all that material was lost. Elaine announced that we now have 78 members and the treasury has \$5373.50. Bill reported our car show had 165 entries from 7 states. A discussion at our table inspired a story idea...maybe in this issue. We hope the Halloween Party will be well attended, regardless of weather.

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Thanks to Bryce and Angie Storey for making a ghostly appearance on the cover this month.

Elaine and Carol performed a service for our club and offered a neat story. It will appear in the December issue.

Our fall retreat to Mt. Magazine will also be in the December issue. This month is full.

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

Many thanks to the big group who showed up for the cookout at the shop last Sunday night. The small amount of work that was required was knocked out pretty quickly. Hamburgers and hot dogs were washed down with beer, pop and water and everybody seemed to have a good time.

At the cookout we discussed scheduling for Brits in the Ozarks 2026 and, based on direction from the hotel, decided to try for the first weekend in October. Well, that won't work as I have been told by the organizers of the Chili Pepper Cross Country Festival that they want the park for that weekend. That is a U of A sanctioned event so they will get priority. That leaves us with either finding a new location for 2026 or moving the event back two weeks to October 15 – 17. We have had it as late as October 12 before so this would not be *totally* out of line with past practice. Marcy has looked hard at both Sponato Park in Tontitown and the Catholic Church property where the grape festival is held. Both have pros and cons. Access from the hotel to either location would be very easy

I asked you all in an email to tell me what you thought – relocate or take the later date. Right now, most of you seem to think that the later date at Agri Park is the better option. I remain open to your thoughts. One good thing about the later date is that it gives us more separation from the KC show. But it does kind of crowd Greg's Fall Foliage Drive. And it could be cold!!

I knew this was going to happen some day. Scheduling this event this time of year can be a pain. I have often wished we held it in the Spring but (a) the weather can be even more iffy (ask the Springfield club about that) and (b) it would crowd the Springfield event. Oh well.

I had an interesting experience recently related to getting Alvis parts from England. I ordered a new rubber windshield seat from Red Triangle and received it the usual 4 days. The part was \$229 plus shipping. Upon arrival the delivery UPS guy told me that I had to pay \$25 in tariffs and duties before he would release the package to me, so I did. This was October 27th. Then a couple of days ago I received an invoice from UPS for \$614 (!!!) for more duties and tariffs. The bill contained a great deal of detail, including a credit for the \$25 I had paid and a **200% tariff on the windshield seal**. I did a little Google research and could find nothing that was subject to a 200% tariff, even if it came from China.

As you would imagine, I began the process of disputing this bill with UPS and was told in a call with the UPS international billing inquiries team that the product had been mis-classed as aluminum rather than rubber and that resulted in the 200% tariff. I was given an email address to initiate the dispute process, and I have done so. In the end, so long as the bill is corrected I really don't care why, but even if it was mis-classed I am not finding anywhere that aluminum is subject to a 2005 tariff. Hmmm. What a hassle.

So, my advice, at least until the Supreme Court throws out the tariffs put in place by the President (which I think has a fair chance of happening), is that we look for domestic sources of anything we might need. You MG, Triumph and Jag guys all of US suppliers you can use (as to I for the Jensen), but if you have to order something from the UK look around for domestic options first. If you have to import it you will pay a tariff, just hope that it is the right one!!!

At the last meeting Marcy, Alan, and, later, Greg, agreed to form an events committee to set up 2026 events that the survey you responded to tells us most of you will support. I've asked them to have some ideas and dates in place for the February meeting when we traditionally set our calendar for the year. If you have ideas for an activity or drive please get them to one of these three members. Thanks to each of them for taking this on.

Remember, no meeting in December as we have the Christmas party December 6th instead. I hope to see you at the meeting on the 13th.

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Coming Events

Next Meeting Night – Nov – 13th
DEC 6th – Christmas Party at the Storey's
JAN 1st – Annual Gathering at the steakhouse



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Page three is reorganized because my cheap Word to PDF software hated and destroyed text box content.

Post-Halloween: the Storey family does a monumental job of decorating for Halloween, hosting our club, setting up the tables, making us welcome and then cleaning up after we are gone. We thank you! And thanks to Sue Storey for taking the photos and having them sent. Check the last page for some Halloween photos.

Robert Tschiermer sent a long article this month about Triumph Spitfires, so I can't say there were no member contributions for November. But although I've admired Spitfire race cars, they are very small cars. Please contribute!

Yr. Ed. is not free of prejudices (surprise). This month's Berkley feature is a rare exception to my general disinterest in very small cars. Or, to be more accurate, too small for me to be comfortable. After all, if the manufacturers didn't care about accommodating me, why should I care about their midget cars? Seems fair to me.

This story has little to do with cars

ESCAPE – Wil Wing

Intercoastal Waterway? Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) is correct.

“The Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) is a 3,000-mile network along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts that uses both natural and man-made canals, rivers, and bays to provide a protected route for vessels.” Wow! A government expenditure that benefitted all sailors and has my approval! The river or body of water could be wide, but the ICW was often dredged and could be narrow. You had to watch the buoys.

Not only does this story have little to do with cars, it has to do with the pleasure of getting away from cars! Blasphemy? Read on.

After twenty years of servicing and dyno-tuning cars - we used the dyno, lightly, on all tune-ups - I had breathed entirely too much carbon monoxide fumes, sometimes in enclosed spaces. My ‘reward’, sometimes, was splitting headaches and vomiting. And I still had eight years to go before retirement. Boy, did I need some relief on weekends. A sailboat ‘*down at the shore*’, as we said in Nu Joisey, was irresistible.

Unlike the stereotype of motorboat guys – speeding with a beer can in one hand and violating all the rules while talking – sailing requires paying attention and being active. My style.

We took lessons and I ended up buying a nice, used 25 foot O’Day ‘tall rig’ model. In New Jersey it is practical to have a shallow draft boat or a sailboat with a center-board, which could be lifted. So I bought a boat with a 4 ½ foot deep keel, rather than something more sensible, such as 2 ½ or 3 feet of draft. Why? Well, a deep keel makes the boat stiffer, more stable in rough weather and it will sail faster and closer to the wind. I had to keep reminding myself of that last sentence when grounding the keel dragged me to a stop. That didn’t happen often, but to avoid that embarrassment required alertness and constant attention to the compass headings and marking buoys to keep in the ICW at low tide.

Although the ICW was a blessing for recreational boats needing lots of water under the keel, it also was a big aggravation on weekends in coastal, congested central Jersey. In a word, ‘crab fishermen’. Swarms of crab fishermen would spend their weekends on row boats or small skiffs, anchored in the ICW, with traps to get the crabs in the deepest water. When a boat needing that depth came through, crabbers took it as a personal insult. Do you understand the culture of many men in New York City and upper New Jersey? It was “Get the hell out of my way”, but not always that polite. This is, in my mind, exactly analogous to using an Interstate Highway to go somewhere, but there is no divider separating North and Southbound traffic and the speed is about three miles per hour. Why? Because there are people parked in the lanes having picnics, and they curse you when you go by. (*NW Arkansas folks are, mostly, much nicer than in NJ*)

However, the ICW problems lessened after Labor Day and as the days got colder there was no problem. In Southern NJ most of the ICW goes through wildlife sanctuaries and is lovely and remote. Eventually, we had to have our sailboat pulled and put back on her cradle before winter. Sometimes Toms River froze solid.

So what are the advantages of the ICW? Well, it is safer than being in the ocean for sailors with little training, or who own ‘party boats’ that offer lots of room rather than stability. It means you have access to seafood restaurants where you can tie up for free if getting a meal or relatively cheaply overnight. There are marinas where you can get gas, groceries or marine supplies. In the event of storms you can anchor and ride it out semi-sheltered, rather than being forced to sail in foul weather in the ocean all night. Some of the inlets to the ocean were dangerous, depending on the tides. And so on.

Below: Stock photo. Note sloppily reefed and trimmed sails. Just been in a storm, pal?



But, I liked to get off shore a couple times a year. To get off shore we would to usually go south in Barnegat Bay to the Barnegat Inlet Coast Guard Station – about 15 miles / 4 hours - tie up there and leave the inlet early in the morning. Sailing from there up to the Manasquan Inlet just above Point Pleasant would take half a day and motoring back down to Pine Beach on Toms River would take several hours – too narrow and usually unfavorable winds for sailing. I remember sailing out of Barnegat at slack tide and the water was as flat as a lake.

But on another occasion, a friend (the guy who built our house) and I took a weekend to sail down to Harrah's Casino marina in Atlantic City. Getting ready to leave the Barnegat Inlet early that morning, I shouted "Get our life vests!" We got them on just before the boat nose-dived off of a square wave down five feet to the ocean level. The bow buried and the wave soaked us, and the prop was out of the water momentarily, but control was soon regained. *Barnegat Inlet was considered second most dangerous, after Cape Hatteras, NC.* Atlantic City was about 40 miles south (8 -9 hours?) but the water was very choppy and I was wet and seasick all the way. As soon as we entered the Atlantic City inlet we felt fine. Because of sea conditions, we motored home in the

blessed ICW the next day.

What Shirley liked best about our boat was sleeping on it overnight, while safely in the marina. We frequently would go down on Fridays after work. What I liked best was waking up early, quietly getting out of the marina - folks were still sleeping on their boats - and getting the sails up in Toms River before there was any breeze. Soon the sun would start warming the earth and you would see 'cat's paws' in the water moving towards us. The sails would fill, the boat leaned over a bit and the tiller would start trembling in your hand. ***The boat seemed to become a living thing.*** And away we went. No noisy motor or sickening fumes. Heaven.

We had the boat for five years, but I never sailed beyond New Jersey; as they say in the sailing world, I didn't have five years of sailing experience, I had one year five times. In our fifth year my mother was ill and needed a lot of attention and the boat wasn't used much. Goodbye, boat.

Perhaps the biggest lesson I learned the hard way, and my best advice is: ***"Never start a day sail downwind on a falling barometer."*** Boy, did we get beaten up trying to get back to our marina, while fighting gale force winds on the bow. I guess it would be boring if I related all the wonderful times and night sails.

So, lots of good memories and clean air, as well. And Shirley was right, sleeping on the boat was special.

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***“Berkeley cars,
for those who feel an A-H Sprite is too large
and pretentious.”***

A British car manufacturer based in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. The company produced economical sporting microcars with motorcycle-derived engines from 322 cc to 692 cc and front wheel drive between 1956 and 1960. About 4,100 cars had been sold before bankruptcy in 1960. *In some quarters it is pronounced Bar’-kli, but that isn’t necessary here.*

The Berkeley automobile was a collaboration between designer Lawrence "Lawrie" Bond and the Berkeley Coachworks factory owned by Charles Panter, which at the time was one of the largest manufacturers of small RVs in Europe. It was an ideal project for Berkeley, who had developed considerable skills in the use of Glass-reinforced plastic (*fiberglass, to us*), and were looking for something to fill the gaps in the very seasonal caravan market. What Panter and Bond wanted to achieve was "something good enough to win World 750cc races... but cheap, safe, easily repairable and pretty."

Hmm... I saw a few Berkeleys racing in the US from 1960 on, in Class I, the only class smaller than my D-B, Class H. But they sold well in the UK, and amazingly a few of the last series did compete at Le Mans, which surprises me. With a top speed of perhaps 90 mph, the closing speeds of Ferraris and the like must have been truly frightening and very hazardous, especially at night. But “win World 750cc races” sounds like someone was smoking funny cigarettes.



Berkeley Sports SA 322. Oct '56 – Jan '57. 163 produced. Anzani 322 cc transverse twin engine, air-cooled. Curb weight 605 lbs. Three speed gear change on the steering column.

The early cars were an immediate success on the home market, and several derivative models were spawned over the four years of car production. Export markets, most notably the United States, were exploited and the

cars earned a reputation for fun, if fragile, sports motoring on a budget. Recognizing the threat posed by the newly introduced Mini and Austin-Healey Sprite in the late fifties, the company started to develop a more conventional model with the support of Ford Motor Company.



Berkeley Sports SA 328. Jan 1957 – Apr 1958. 1259 approx produced. 328 cc Excelsior engine offering 18 bhp.

Many were exported to the United States where it sold for approximately \$1600. The manufacture touted the number 70, meaning “it could reach 70 mph and had an average fuel economy of 70 mpg”. The export model was differentiated by having separate headlamps (US laws) whereas on the home market they were faired into the wings, although the export type lamps could be specified.

Motor’ magazine tested a 328 cc Berkeley in 1957 and found (reality) it to have a top speed of 62.1 mph and acceleration from 0–50 mph in 30.6 seconds. *(But it’s cute)*



Sports and Twosome (SE492) Oct 1957 – Mar 1959 666 approx produced. 492 cc transverse two stroke three cylinder, air-cooled.

In late 1957 a new derivative model was introduced, using a 30 bhp Excelsior three-cylinder 492 cc engine with triple carburetors. This engine configuration was made possible by the vertically split crankcase of the Excelsior engine and modular crankshaft and barrels, which made adding a central cylinder relatively easy. A four speed gearbox was standardized. The top speed was now 80 (?) mph.

Reliability of the air-cooled two-strokes, became more of an issue with the extra heat generated by the triple, and

there were a number of recorded reports of warranty claims.



Berkeley Foursome. 1958–1959. 20 approx produced. 492 cc transverse two stroke three cylinder, air-cooled.

Note cover over tiny rear seats behind cockpit and spare wheel, now mounted over rear bumper. The body was somewhat wider and longer and the suspension was revised to accommodate.



Berkeley B95 and B105. Mar 1959 – Dec 1960.

178 approx produced. 692 cc Royal Enfield transverse four stroke twin, air-cooled. Super Meteor engine in the B95 and the 50 bhp (37 kW; 51 PS) Constellation unit in the B105 which could reputedly exceed 100 mark. At launch of the B95 in March 1959, a further 2,500 mi of road and track tests had also been carried out by Berkeley factory drivers. Perhaps to address the reputation for breaking down that the two-strokes had developed, the factory claimed no involuntary stops during testing. *Thanks to Wikipedia again.*

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Apples vs. oranges, old thinking vs. new

Wil

At Meeting Night on October 9th, the endless old debate of MG vs. Triumph came up at our table, although in a civilized and calm manor (unlike 60 years ago).

Yrs. Trly has a history and outlook that just wouldn't be appropriate for converting anyone today to his thinking. Too much time has gone by and the sports car world has changed too much. The average 'young guy' with a sports car now means under 50 (!) and we no longer have any racers in the club. However, I hope some might be interested in how 'old-timers' think.

I saw my first sports car race at Linden airport in either 1949 or 1950 – age 16 or 17. At that time, the SCCA production classes were divided strictly by displacement and that continued for another five years or so. Then, for better or worse, the SCCA started handicapping the Production classes – owners of inferior cars had complained that they didn't have a chance against superior, more expensive cars of the same displacement ("Boo-hoo. It ain't fair"). Of course, the handicapping wasn't always fair either, and it changed from year to year. I preferred the Competition classes (racing cars, not production, which retained the displacement separation). To my old-fashioned thinking, the best car in an even fight (engine size) should win, if the driver is any good.

So I looked at British cars from the viewpoint of "*How good are/were they in their class?*" The Triumph was a couple of miles an hour faster than an MG? Who cares? They have a bigger engine and run in a different class!

My analogy for folks who think only of ultimate performance: "Heavyweight Champion Mike Tyson could beat the snot out of a sixth-grader. He obviously is better! Who cares about an even fight?" I did.

Back to English cars – Hardly any owners now care about top speed relative to displacement. We live in tamer times. *Better not say anything else.* What is valued is looks and the feeling of torque on acceleration. Bigger displacement and more response at low speeds is king – not speed! From that limited viewpoint, the Triumph is definitely better than a MG. And if you like the looks of Triumphs, you're home free...except:

My obsession with getting the most power out of a given displacement led me to dynamometers and a career in the tuning business. An early discovery was that Triumphs consistently ran out of power about 1000 rpm below the tach redline. Triumph used what I called "tractor cams" – horsepower sacrificed for low speed torque - in their engines, and that was probably smart business thinking, for the US market. But what are we to think when comparing a Triumph to another car with the same displacement, which is way faster?

Answer: hardly any Triumph owners would care. Times have changed.

One last comparison. On a 'momentum' racetrack (with no very slow corners), my 750 cc D-B racecar would turn lap times even with TR 3 Production class Triumphs with 2,200 cc's! Did that make the D-B a better car? No, although it gave me great satisfaction. The D-B weighed about 1,000 (?) pounds, had all the power at high rpm's and offered nothing in the way of comfort or weather protection. Apples to oranges again.

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Our Halloween Party

All credit to the Storey family←

