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No, this isn't Yr. Ed.'s former 1934 20/25 Rolls-Royce, but it is close. Mine was a four-light saloon. As usual, I've chosen a photo related to a story inside. Hope you like the photo... and the story.

As I've said before, the 20/25 was slower, less prestigious, less handsome and worth much less money than a R-R PII Continental.

But it was nicer to drive around town.

I sold my 20/25 to complete restoration on the P II. I really liked the 20/25 but there was another reason to sell. As was common, the body was hand-formed aluminum over an ash frame. The center of the roof was canvas over the wood frame. But the curved aluminum metal surrounding the canvas hadn't been annealed (softened) after being formed and was somewhat brittle. My car had some hairline cracks in that area and would leak water onto the headliner in the rain. I didn't have the skill to weld the tiny aluminum cracks, and risk setting the car on fire, nor the patience to remove and redo the cloth headliner. Park Ward was a respected coachbuilder, but someone dropped the ball on that car. (This is a free tip to help you buy your next old Roller)

‘BRITISH’

>Well worth reading some of the time<

March 2026 Issue

The monthly publication of the British Iron Touring Club of NW 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 December.

Other Meetings:

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

Meeting Night, Feb 12, 2026: Shirley and Yrs. Trly respect Mercy Hospital in Rogers, but everyone else seems to worship them! Every month, headed to the monthly meeting, all southbound traffic stops momentarily on I 49 across from Mercy to pay their respects. Weird! Mercy or Mecca? The food service was especially good tonight – the kitchen must have been fully staffed and our waitress was excellent. Conversations at our table were about British cars in the movies and costs compared to the ‘old days’. We had one guest tonight and a total of 44 people. Elaine reported that our piggy bank runnith over (Sorry - this page was accidentally deleted* and I’m making it up on the wing – lower case). This year’s event calendar will be posted in the April issue of *British*. Bill is working on finding a new President. Leaving the Steakhouse, Bill’s Alvis ‘failed to proceed’ in the parking lot. We determined that there was no fuel flow, despite that the fuel pump was recently rebuilt. What a lot of gremlins – or one elusive gremlin – have haunted the Alvis for this last year! I think there may be an air leak in the fuel line above the tank fuel level (vacuum side of the pump), but then I’m just trying to fill up this page.

- **In Our house, combining pages is a high-risk activity. Well... wherever I am, actually.**

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



Well, it could have been worse. A few of you know that I didn't make it out of the All American Steakhouse parking lot after the last meeting. The car had been a little reluctant to start at home before heading to the meeting. After the meeting it was again hard to start, would not idle at all, and finally died for good before I exited the parking lot (thank goodness). I have Hagerty insurance and Hagerty Driver's Club, so I called for their roadside assistance. The process turned out to be fully automated through text and an app and, surprisingly, went well and was easy. To my surprise, the roll-back arrived within an hour. The young man driving and operating it was a car guy and fascinated by the car and took great care of it. I was very pleased and tipped him accordingly.

While the car was in the parking lot I disconnected a plug lead and tried to start it while Wil inserted a screwdriver into it and held the screwdriver against the valve cover. Good spark. OK, fuel next. I disconnect a fuel line and tried to start it while Malcolm held the line - nothing. So, fuel is not getting to the carbs.

I bought a kit and rebuilt the mechanical fuel pump a few months back. I can't imagine that it would fail that soon. One other telltale is that, even though the tank is completely full, neither the pressure nor gravity seem to be pushing fuel up to the engine compartment. Hmm, maybe a blockage??

I am fortunate to have a lot of records of work done on the car by the nephew of my seller who runs a restoration shop in New Hampshire. The other day I pulled out those records and found the dreaded words: "Fuel tank holding old fuel will have to be cleaned and sealed". My experience with the Jensen and fuel tank sealer is that the sealer comes loose and clogs the system. I've drained the tank once and had nothing come out, but I am suspicious. I am also frustrated and not sure how much of this I will tackle myself and how much of it I will just hand over to "my guy", Wade. These cars are an adventure!

Lee Cowling told me that there was a good turnout for the event at the Momentary. Thank you for supporting the work of the Events Committee. They have worked hard to try to come up with events you will like based on your own input from the club survey. Please continue to support their efforts by participating.

One problem, though: Lee told me that while 20 people showed up, only 8 of you went to the website and clicked on the box to tell them you were coming. This was manageable this time but will be a big problem if we are need to give headcounts to a restaurant or other event location. Please do two things: (1) if you are going to attend an event, please go to the website and click that you are coming, and (2) if you do tell us you are coming, be sure you show up!!! I'm looking forward to hearing what the next event will be.

The car show is progressing through its usual early teething problems and registration is now live. As last year, you can register either online or with a paper form by mail. Hess told me today that we already have 11 cars registered. Not bad for 3 days live.

We have concluded the Sun Diagnostic machine tutoring session videos and, I understand, they are out for editing before being posted to our website. As I've said before, it is my hope that several of us will take the time to really learn how to use this thing. On a related note, we have a roughly \$1,000 budget to search for spare parts for this machine. Sounds like a good way to kill time on the internet!!

I hope to see everyone at the meeting on the 12th.

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Coming Events Calendar

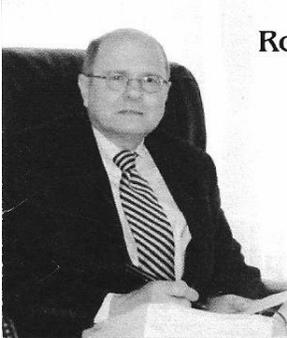
It's coming, it's coming.

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Thanks to Bob Rolle for reminding Yr. Ed. about the 'movie set' story.

The editor's Honda 2002 Si's value is listed from \$1,750 (basic Civic, not Si) to \$7,250 (which seems too much?). Guess I'll just procrastinate for a while.

Suggested 'Black List' for potential new members with these names:

'Marsie', 'Marsee', the optometrist's daughter, 'Marsea', the sailor's daughter, 'Marshia', the Imam's daughter.

Look who is talking! Also anyone who has the nickname 'Wil', with one 'l'. People assume you are so dumb you don't know how to spell your own name. Although that may be the reaction just to me.

Thanks this month to Marcy Denham Davies for her contribution.

"The only thing new in life is the history you don't know"

- *Harry Truman*

British Iron at the The Momentary

Story and photo by Marcy Denham Davies



BI member and docent Alan Meyer explains.

On February 20th, the club had our first outing of 2026 with an outstanding evening at The Momentary in Bentonville. Alan Meyer served as our excellent host, tour guide and docent to about 30 of us for a fun and interesting review of two current shows there. First up was National Geographic's The Greatest Wildlife Photographs exhibit, hanging now through June 7th. These are amazing photographs, displayed in very large formats so every single detail of each shot is clear. Photographers have written about how, when or why they took the shot so we get an insiders perspective on the creation of each shot. Fascinating! Some parts of the display were difficult to read so if you struggle, ask at the desk for a large format book Alan had on hand and that they have available, which makes the exhibit much more accessible.

Second up was an interactive exhibit The Machine Behind the Art: Inside JR's Printing Press, also on display through June 7th. Here, we had the opportunity (for a small fee) to go into a photo booth where we had three chances to take a photograph we liked. Singles or many were allowed inside the booth. Once the picture was selected, we went inside a darkened room where we watched from comfy sofas as a giant machine over our heads produced a HUGE black & white copy of our photograph. This was really fun and we all have a poster sized souvenir to remind us of a delightful night.

Last stop was the Tower Bar which, sadly, our sweet mascot Elli Lea (see photo above, between Mom Alec and Dad Brian), not yet of drinking age, had to sit out with her mom at the base. The 360 degree views from the fourth floor truly are amazing. While this reporter didn't drink due to being the driver going home, all other participants appeared to be enjoying each other's company, the views and their cocktails. A great night that may not have had cars involved but provided the opportunity for club members to get to know each other better!

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Where did all the Alpines go?



This photo was chosen because the car's pastel color, dressed up wheels and woman shown are all part of the past image of the Alpines. The cars were attractively styled, compared to many contemporary British sports cars, which you would now think a big sales advantage. Alas, the good looks resulted in them being thought of as a 'girl's car'. Compared to MG, Triumph, etc., they did not conjure up images of sport car racing. And they are moderately rare today. Did over-sensitive guys of that time shun them because they were pretty? Let's look at Alpines closely.



But first of all, we'll briefly look at the Sunbeam Alpines I and III (no II). They were hand-made from 1953-1957 and only produced 1582, both in the UK and Australia. They are so rare in the US that most of us have only seen one, if you are old enough, in Hitchcock's movie "To catch a thief" with Grace Kelly and Cary Grant (1955). It used a 2.3 Liter 4 from the Sunbeam-Talbot 90 saloon. A nice car, if you could find one!

Alpine Series I to V

The first open 2-seater Alpines were based on the Hillman 14 and its successor the Humber Hawk. Rootes replaced them with a softer new smaller 2-seater sports convertible coupé based on the current Hillman Minx and its variants. Kenneth Howes and Jeff Crompton were tasked with doing a complete redesign in 1956, with the goal

of producing a dedicated sports car aimed principally at the US market. The Alpine was produced in four subsequent revisions until 1968. Total production numbered around 70,000. Production stopped shortly after the Chrysler takeover of the Rootes Group.

Series I (1959–1960)

(The first photo, top, is a series I, except for the wheel trim discs). The "Series" Alpines started production in 1959. The Series I was built on a modified floorpan from the Hillman Husky estate car with a 1,494 cc (91.2 cu in) engine and made extensive use of components from other Rootes Group vehicles. The running gear came mainly from the Sunbeam Rapier, but with front disc brakes replacing the saloon car's drums. An overdrive unit was optional. It had dual downdraft carburetors, a soft top that could be hidden by special integral covers and the first available wind-up side windows offered in a British sports car of that time. Coupé versions of the post-1959 version were built by Thomas Harrington Ltd., after the Le Mans Index of Efficiency success of 1961, Harrington sold replicas as the "Harrington Le Mans", using a fastback body and an engine tuned to 104 hp (78 kW). Unlike the Le Mans racers, these cars had a more integrated rear roofline and were without the tail fins of the roadsters. *As you know, a good coupe design has less drag at top speed than open convertibles.* 11,904 examples of the series I were produced.

Series II (1960–1963)

The Series II of 1960 featured an enlarged 1,592 cc (97.1 cu in) engine producing 80 bhp and revised rear suspension, but there were few other changes. When it was replaced in 1963, 19,956 had been made. *Tiny displacement increase can be said to be typical of British manufacturers of that era.* A Series II with hardtop and overdrive was tested by *The Motor* magazine in 1960, which recorded a top speed of 98.6 mph and acceleration from 0–60 mph in 13.6 seconds.

Series III (1963–1964)

The Series III was produced in two versions:

- GT with removable hardtop only (no soft-top)
- ST with soft-top (stored behind the small rear seat)

Other distinguishing features were:

- High fins
- Quarter-height window for guide post
- Roll-up window rear edge angular
- Vertical spare tire
- Tanks in fins

- All chrome bumper guards
- Later "flat" rear window hard top

Series 3 badge on front wing and Rootes Group badge centered low on the bonnet.

The rarest production Alpine, the Series III was produced from March, 1963 to January, 1964 for a total of 5,863 units. It was a transitional model, incorporating many of the modifications of the later low fin cars such as roomier boot, later hard top (common with Tiger), tube type rear shocks, improved micro cell seats, and a vacuum brake booster. The 1592 cc engine was de-tuned in the GT for smoothness. *(Bah)*

Series IV (1964–1965)

There was no longer a lower-output engine option; the convertible and hardtop versions shared the same 82 bhp engine with single Solex carburettor. A new rear styling was introduced with the fins largely removed. An automatic transmission with floor-mounted control became an option, but was unpopular. From autumn 1964 a new manual gearbox with synchromesh on first gear was adopted in line with its use in other Rootes cars. A total of 12,406 were made.

Series V (1965–1968)

The final version had a new five-bearing 1,725 cc (105.3 cu in) engine with twin *(good)* Zenith-Stromberg *(bad)* semi-downdraught carburetors producing 93 bhp. There was no longer an automatic transmission option. 19,122 were made. In some export markets, 100 PS (99 bhp) SAE were claimed *(doubtful)*. *You see there was regular engineering upgrades, but the cars retained essentially the same good looks. In the same general price range, of its two most popular competitors, one had the looks of a cement block (thought some) and the other was the perennial underdog because it a smaller engine than competitor #1 (thought some). The Alpine series cars sold quite well, but leave these questions:*

- 1) *Where are they all now?*
- 2) *Why didn't they sell even better? Yr. Ed. suspects that the Rootes Group dealers did not provide the same technical support or parts support as Triumph or MG, but I'm guessing.*

The Alpines competed with some success in the US in SCCA races, but were never seen in the quantities as Triumph or MG.

Sunbeam Rapier Fastback coupé. 1967-1976. 2-door fastback coupé.



I'm throwing this in just because I think it is attractive and it superseded the Alpines.

Like many of the later Rootes Group cars, they are almost unknown in the US



Sunbeam Tiger 1964-1967. 7083 built. West Bromwich, UK. Tiger 1 – 260 cu in V-8 engine (Ford). Tiger 2 – 289 cu in V-8 engine (Ford).

In 1962 racing driver and Formula 1 champion Jack Brabham proposed to Rootes competition manager Norman Garrad the idea of fitting the Alpine with a Ford V8 engine, which Garrad relayed to his son Ian, then the West Coast Sales Manager of Rootes

American Motors Inc. Ian Garrad lived near Carroll Shelby's Shelby American operation, which had done a similar V8 conversion for the British AC Cobra.

Prototypes involved Ken Miles and separately, Carrol Shelby. Wikipedia has more details. All Rootes products had to be approved by Lord Rootes, who was reportedly "very grumpy" when he learned of the work that had gone into the Tiger project without his knowledge. He agreed to have the Shelby prototype shipped from America in July 1963 for him and his team to assess. He insisted on driving the car himself, and was so impressed that shortly after returning from his test drive he contacted Henry Ford II directly to negotiate a deal for the supply of Ford V8 engines. Rootes placed an initial order for 3000. Not only did Lord Rootes agree that the car would go into production, but he decided that it should be launched at the 1964 New York Motor Show, only eight months away, despite the company's normal development cycle from "good idea" to delivery of the final product being three to four years. *Success! But working on the engine wasn't much fun.* . Mostly Wikipedia again.

This article was deliberately done with larger font. Please let me know if you like it or not.

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"Lights, Camera, Ac... get that guy off of the set!"

At the movies – sets

Wil Wing

Mostly by coincidence, I've been briefly around movie sets during shooting – and they were all stinko films! In the Air Force I hitchhiked ((1954? - in uniform) from the Sacramento area to Stead Air Force Base north of Reno in Nevada. A SAC base. It was very cold. They were having SCCA races and I had a couple of days leave. I got a room in the Stead transient barracks on base.

By chance, they were also filming a sports car race movie featuring Clark Gable and it was about as realistic as watching Elvis Presley 'racing' on film later. The most interesting part was wandering around the hanger, used as a paddock that evening and meeting Masten Gregory (later winner of Le Mans with Jochen Rindt), who had failed tech inspection because the brake light/s on his Jaguar 'C' type weren't working. He saw me in uniform and assumed I was stationed at Stead and asked if I could help. But of course I didn't have a 12 V test light to help and wouldn't have destroyed my class 'A' uniform crawling on the oily hanger floor anyway.

I also vaguely remember, but not well enough to share, being by a movie set where Mickey Rooney was playing a race car driver, (stock cars?). Another dog.

However, in the late 'sixties I was paid to be on a movie set! It was short-lived but interesting.

One of the major producers decided to film the life of Gertrude Lawrence, an English vaudeville and singing star of the 'twenties and 'thirties. The name of the movie was 'Star' – a flop in the States. Robert Wise was directing and it starred Julie Andrews (1935 – 2010) and Richard Crenna. For some reason, part of the film was shot in Glen Cove, Long Island on the so-called northern 'Gold Coast'. A mansion had been rented and I think it was all supposed to be taking place in England.

What was I doing there? The plot called for a 1930-something Rolls-Royce on the set. My friend and English car importer, Walter Wolfson was hired to provide the car. The studio also required him to bring a mechanic in case of car troubles, so I was hired by Walter.



We found the rented mansion at about 8:30 AM, plenty early. About 9:00 a food truck arrived with coffee and doughnuts, the same time Robert Wise and Julie Andrews arrived by limo. It was surreal. There was a gang of crew and minor actors looking for morning coffee and a sweet treat. Julie joined the crowd, but no one acknowledged her presence unless she spoke to them first! And then they would pretend to be surprised seeing her! Pretty darn strange, standing shoulder to shoulder. It seems that movie stars are treated as royalty – unless that was all just at Julie Andrews' insistence. She did have a

One interesting part was why it takes so many hours to get 10 minutes of useable film. When they finally started filming, it lasted a few minutes and then the sound technician called a 'Cut'. He could hear the big diesel generating truck running in the background, although it was well down the driveway. The truck, needed for the big arc lamps, was moved farther away. So they then started over.

There was a scene where Andrews was in a business meeting in a room with open glass doors to a patio. Children had been hired to play games outside on the patio. The child actor playing her son was supposed to stumble in through the open doors and interrupt his mother.

He was on homemade stilts of raw 2X3 lumber. But it was tricky for the kid to time his 'accidental' barging into the room and that scene had to be reshot many times. Then, unscripted, the house telephone rang – I think a neighbor wanted to know what was going on. They had to reshoot that scene again.

Another oddity, for an 'outsider', was that they had license plates for the Rolls authentic to the year they wanted.

I had brought a few tools, so I took off the old English plates and started to install the fake ones. Some guy came running over and told me I'd better stop that, or the Union would declare a strike and shut down the set. I would have been allowed to repair the Rolls if it had trouble, but installing studio plates was a union job! Okay, but did I ever mention what I think of labor unions?

For part of that day, Walter and I sat on folding, unused 'director chairs' watching everything. At one point, Andrews walked past and stared at me, perhaps because I was wearing a clean, pressed work uniform, not street clothes? I smiled slightly and looked back. Mistake? Towards the end of the afternoon Walter told me that it wasn't necessary for me to stay until the next day, even though they had not yet got to the scene where Andrews is driven off in the Rolls. A studio gofer drove me back to my shop in North Brunswick, NJ. It was all very polite, but...

I still wonder if Andrews objected to me looking back at her, but I don't much care. The day was more about satisfying my curiosity; no great profit was involved. *Besides, being kicked off of a movie set is more notable than just being there.*

Finally, as the filming was running late, the next day the actor playing the chauffer for the Rolls had another acting commitment in NYC and Walter was hired to hold the rear car door for Andrews, then hop in front and drive off in a small cloud of oil smoke. He had to struggle into the chauffer's uniform, squint into the sun and looks very uncomfortable in the film.

All these delays and re-filming were at a lower level than Alec Baldwin (criminally dangerous gun idiot) literally shooting his crew, but so many things go wrong it is surprising films are ever completed.

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Men are slobs vs. most men are slobs

Wil Wing

And that covers both sides of the eternal argument, or so some believe. When just kids, guys suffer horrible trauma to their minds. We all experienced such parental abuse as "Go clean your room." Or "Shine your shoes." Life-long rebellion was the only possible reaction, or so some men reason.

I'll give you a few examples. Jim, a very good friend of mine and about eight years older, was a US Marine MP at the end of WW II, and then was recalled for Korea. You know Marines are sharp, right? It didn't carry over into civilian life even a bit. After many years, he and his wife split up. She kept their Philadelphia area home and the kids. He moved into the NJ shore home he had inherited from his parents. I went down to visit my pal in Point Pleasant Beach a few months after their separation. Good grief! What a disaster zone. I believe every dish in the house was on counters in the kitchen and that none had been washed. He said, "I need someone to clean up." Obviously, not himself. He enjoyed telling about the time, in civilian life, when he and a friend were sitting in diner having lunch. They started eating, but then his friend leaned over and took the eyeglasses off of Jim's face and then got busy cleaning them. He told Jim he couldn't eat looking at Jim's filthy eyeglasses.

And then there was my former business partner, who's answer to "Where does this tool belong?", both at our garage or in his home was, "Just throw it on the floor." No joke. Both were nice guys and good company.

I consider myself a somewhat reformed slob. You can't make a profit in business – survive in business – unless you are orderly and know where your tools are.

WHY ARE YOU READING THIS?

Because our club President suggested a clean-up and throw-out event at our clubhouse and garage and asked me to direct that activity. It should be coming up shortly. Why would we need that? Because:

Garages and homes have these horizontal surfaces that are called workbenches or tables. Their purpose is to utilize them for rebuilding carburetors or disassembling cylinder heads, etc., in the first case, or eating or displaying objects in the second case. But every horizontal becomes cluttered with junk and rags and tools when things are not returned to their proper cabinet or drawer. It seems the way of men.

Therefore, I ask and sincerely hope that some women will attend our 'Clean Up session' (two hours?). Not to clean up after slobs, but to suggest improvements in layout and where we should have more trash containers, storage containers, etc.

So far we have not seen dead rats or mouse poop in our Prairie Creek location, unlike the old place in Rogers. Let's keep it that way.

Please attend our upcoming 'CLEAN UP SESSION. To be announced.

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