



Editor's photo

Jim Harper's 1952 Allard J2X

Fitted with a modified Cadillac engine

When this car was new, you could buy European sports cars that were more sophisticated, had more top speed, more comfortable, much more expensive and had better handling. Question: How many of those cars do you think could accelerate faster, say from 0 mph to 100? Don't give yourself a headache trying to remember. It was a trick question. The answer is NONE.

Here is an easier question: Guess what British manufacturer we are featuring this month? See page 5.

‘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.

Contact Us

Our website: www.britishironnwa.org

To contact our President: www.bwatkins@bwatkinslawoffice.com

Membership & Treasurer: Elaine Briggs eb88cs@cox.net

To contact the Editor: Wil Wing 479-202-3235 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 December.

Other Meetings:

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

Meeting Night, March 12th: Sure, the traffic was heavy. Bill Watkins still has Alvis problems as of Meeting Night. It was good to see Jim and Dena Peckham and Larry and Susan Goodsell tonight. Several members stopped by to consult about car problems, which is flattering, but I never know if I do any good. Talk at our table was about heart attacks! Glad to see Mark Brewer up and around since back surgery. Yrs. Trly apologized to Marcy Benham for my misspelling her name – twice! We had 53 members present. Very good! Elaine reported \$7385.xx in the piggy bank. Our 2026 schedule was discussed – see page 3.

If anyone in the club has found a way to watch Formula 1 races without signing up for Apple TV, please let us know how.

Thanks to all who showed up and helped with the shop clean-up on the 21st, and to Marcy for the photograph.

Thanks to David Paul for some Alpine history and to Mike Lewis and Mark Cory for their article. We are grateful for all contributions.

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

The big news is that I received confirmation yesterday that our Brits in the Ozarks presenting sponsors, Jeff and Lisa Kellogg, will again provide \$50,000.00 in support. The check is on the way. This means that we will, again, be able to provide significant support to the ALS Association. Also, I have already received another \$2,500 check from one of our long-time supporters in the Tulsa area. We need to find some more sponsors locally. Someday, these supporters will move away, lose interest, sell their businesses or, I hate to say it, die. We need to cultivate new funding sources.

Regarding the ALS Association, they are having their annual Walk to Defeat ALS at Osage park in Bentonville on June 13th. It would be great if we got together a team to participate and, hopefully, display some of our cars to promote our event. That would give us some exposure to both the public and possible new sponsors. We will discuss this at the meeting on the 9th.

Great turnout for the drive to Roaring River for lunch. I didn't count heads, but I bet we had 30 in attendance. Many thanks to the events committee for putting this all together and to you all for supporting the event. The route was pleasant and it was good to have both "leisurely" and, um, "quick" groups. The two groups took different routes and arrived within 5 minutes of each other. Great planning!! For lunch I had the trout and found it very good.

As a confidence building exercise, I drove the Alvis to Roaring River with its temporary electric fuel pump in place (the mechanical pump has been removed). The intention is to see if the temporary pump solves my fuel delivery problems and, if it does, to mount a permanent one back as near as possible to the fuel tank. The car ran very well, and I left the bonnet slightly open while parked at the Lodge to allow heat to escape (see the next paragraph). Encouraging.

The operating theory now is that I have been suffering from fuel vaporization (a/k/a vapor lock) all along. Interestingly, the latest issue of the Alvis Owner Club "Bulletin" contains an article that starts out with "The TD, TE (*mine is a TE*), and TF models commonly suffer from fuel vaporization". Well, I wish I had known that a year ago!! The article then goes into some detail about how the author solved his problems with a combination of an electric pump and a modern device he called a fuel vapor separator (or something like that). Hopefully the fuel pump alone will be my solution and I can avoid all of the rest of that.

We had a good clean-up day at the Brit Stop (our club shop) on Saturday, the 21st. We had a good group of 15 or so and it was a wonder to see the amount of work a group that size could get done in an hour. Thanks to everyone who turned out. The shop area was tidied up, tools restored to their rightful places, stuff that should be stored moved upstairs, and junk tossed out. Bryce Storey will remove (or has removed) the last of the Carney parts hoard so we will have freed up a good deal of space by the sale of the blast cabinet and sale or removal of those parts (thanks to Sales Director Bryce). We now have funds with which to buy replacement parts for our Sun diagnostic machine. I will determine what model it is and let you all know so that you can know what to look for when you are fooling around on the internet.

April 18th is the car show hosted by Neil and Bambi Crozier in Cedarville. This event benefits a pet rescue charity there. Bambi has told me that when Van Buren or Ft. Smith people decide to get rid of a pet the Cedarville area seems to be their favored drop off point. Geez, some people . . . Anyway, the organization Bambi supports works to help these abandoned pets. A good cause. We will discuss departure points and times at the meeting.

Brian Lea has some interesting thoughts on community awareness of our club and what we do. The point is to promote our club and Brits in the Ozarks to the community, particularly the car hobby community. He will discuss this at the meeting.

Lastly, as I have threatened would be coming, I will be making an announcement about leadership succession at the meeting (this is called a "teaser"). I hope to see everyone at the meeting on the 9th.

Club Staff

SALES • INSTALLATION • SERVICE

President – **Bill Watkins**
 1st Vice-President – **Doug Schrantz**
 Membership and
 Treasurer – **Elaine Briggs**
eb88cs@cox.net
 Webmaster – **Brian Lea**
 Events Coordinator – **Marcy Benham**
 Editor – **Wil Wing**
briton4@cox.net



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

Coming Events Calendar

This is only the highlights. For more complete information, go to our website for times, starting points, etc. and to make reservations for activities when a headcount is needed.

www.britishironwa.org **click on event for details.**



Robert S. Tschiemer, P.A.
 Tschiemer Legal Briefing
"Handling All Your Briefing Needs"

P.O. Box 549
 Mayflower, AR 72106-0549
 (501) 951-3303
 (501) 377-9866 Fax
robert@tschiemerlegalbriefing.com
www.tschiemerlegalbriefing.com

Month	Event Date	Drive Date	Description
April	4/11/2026		NABOR car show Lowell, AR
		4/18/2026	Show and drive Dexter dog rescue Cedarville, AR
	4/25/2026		British Iron display EverHope Shelter Bentonville, AR
May	5/3/2026		Blacktop Sunday Rogers, AR
		5/16/2026	Drive and lunch Jasper, AR
		5/30/2026	Drive and lunch Langman winery Centerton, AR
June	6/20/2026		Crystal Bridges visit Bentonville, AR
	6/26/2027		GOBMC Car Show Springfield, MO

The Sunbeam Tiger and the “Get Smart” TV show of the 1960’s

By David Paul

Get Smart was an American comedy television series parodying the secret agent genre that had become widely popular in the first half of the 1960s with the release of the *James Bond* films. It was created by Mel Brooks and Buck Henry and had its television premiere on NBC on September 18, 1965 and ran for 5 seasons. It starred Don Adams (who was also a director on the series) as agent Maxwell Smart (Agent 86), Barbara Feldon as Agent 99, and Edward Platt as The Chief. The series centered on bumbling secret agent Maxwell Smart (Adams), also known as Agent 86, and his unnamed female partner, Agent 99 (Feldon). They work for CONTROL, a secret US government “counterintelligence agency” based in Washington, D.C., fighting against KAOS, “the international organization of evil”. While Smart always succeeded in thwarting KAOS, his incompetent nature and insistence on doing things “by the book” invariably cause complications. The show was ridiculous, Mel Brooks style of funny. I loved it.

About the Tiger;

The Sunbeam Tiger (credit Wikipedia) was a development of the Sunbeam Alpine series I, introduced by the British manufacturer Rootes in 1959. Rootes realized that the Alpine needed more power if it was to compete successfully in world markets, but lacked a suitable engine and the resources to develop one. After negotiations with Ferrari failed, Lord Rootes turned to Carroll Shelby/Ford for a V8. Rootes was thrilled with the prototype and ordered 3000 engines (Ford 260, and later 289 V8s). Ford wanted the car made in the US, but Lord Rootes distrusted them and sought to have the Tiger made in the UK. The Rootes factory did not have the capacity to build the Tiger, so the company contracted the job to Jensen. After bashing parts of the engine bay back with a sledge hammer to fit the V8, Jensen was producing 300 Tigers a month. The Tiger was unveiled at the New York Motor Show in April 1964. They sold but not in huge numbers, Alpine production 1959–1968 totaled: 69,251 of those, 7,083 were Tigers 1964–1967. Like all the Brit sports cars in the 1960’s the US market was the target. But in the US, they were viewed as pretty and a little dainty, swimming around in an ocean of popular muscle cars.



The Get Smart Car:

This secret agent car had various custom gadgets: car phone, cigarette lighter hand grenade, explosives detonated by gas pedal, the oil slick from tailpipe, the expanding bumpers, smoke screen from front (laugh here) or rear, a radar antenna and screen, and passenger-side ejector seat. The Tiger was based on the Sunbeam Alpine, but fitted with a V8 engine. One of the main gadgets was the machine gun that rose up from the hood (bonnet), but the V8 did not provide enough room for the gun lifting mechanism in the engine bay; so the 1.6L inline 4 from the standard Alpine was installed. Bye Tiger.

In the opening credits of the TV series (seasons 1 and 2) the Agent Smart would park the Tiger on the street in front of CONTROL Headquarters. Upon return he would find the Tiger “packed-in” with cars positioned on front and back bumpers. Being a secret agent car, the Tiger was equipped with front and rear extending bumpers. These bumpers were a gag feature that extended outward, pushing the offending cars out and away providing enough clearance for agent Smart to drive away.

David’s Get Smart Sunbeam.

I am from Austin, Texas. In the spring of 1973, I was a freshman in college at a school 30 miles away. I returned to Austin to attend my previous high school’s football game at House Park Field, close to Enfield Rd. For some reason, I continued driving down Enfield spotting a red sports car at an apartment building parking lot.

Being already a Brit-auto-nut, I was delighted to discover it was a Sunbeam Alpine, but looking a little rough. The owner came over and revealed that the car was used in the TV show Get Smart. Wow, I thought, something from my past experience, and I am only 19 years old. He had bought the car from the TV studio and was able to explain a lot of the history of the cars. As the show ran for five years; there were several Sunbeams in the works at any one time. There was not just one car with all the gadgets but several cars with different gadgets and some had "prototype gadgets" that were being tried out. This car must have been one of the cars used to develop some the gadgets. There was a trap door on the hood for a canon. The canon was a crude construction: a galvanized pipe primed with ether and spark plug welded at the back of the pipe to ignite the ether. There were mechanical leavers in the cock-pit to lift the canon through the door in the hood, and a button to fire the spark plug.

The result was a fire breathing canon coming out of the hood. Half of the lifting mechanism had been removed; only the canon remained and left resting in the engine bay. The canon version was never used in the show; they refined the gag to a machine gun that probably used some of the mechanisms developed for the canon. In *British* for March 2026, our Editor asked, "Where did all the Alpines go?" I can tell you that per the script, 3 Sunbeams were destroyed over the course of the show.

So I did not buy it? No. Despite my excitement, there were some problems with the car. The front and rear valences had been badly damaged from the removal of the expanding bumpers. There was a hole in the dash where the canon actuator leavers had been removed. The door for the canon was crudely formed out of wood and piano hinges. There was really no way to restore any of the Get Smart gadgets. What I would be left with was restoring the Sunbeam to original. Of course I was broke, and Dad would not fund the project. Just as well, the following year we found an MGB that we restored to drivability. See that story in the May *British* of 2025.

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Jim Harper and Allard cars

HARPER

When I think of my late pal Jim Harper the word that comes to mind is determination.

I met Jim in 1957-58 through the Garden State Sports Car Club, based in Linden, NJ. We had a clubhouse in a residential part of town. The back lot of a house contained a former municipal bus garage. The rundown wooden building could originally contain two buses, and had enough room for five sports cars plus upstairs storage. Our car storage fees paid for the rent. It was a corner lot and 'our' building faced a side street.

In late 1957, six months out of the USAF, I had bought my older brother's French 1955 D-B race car to race in the SCCA. The car needed an engine overhaul and body restoration, but there was no room at home in Scotch Plains, NJ. Meanwhile, Jim had bought a splendid Allard J2X while living in a garage-less rented home just north in Elizabeth, and he also needed storage space. By 1959 my ready-to-go car was on a trailer behind one of the two sliding doors, so I could hook up at any hour and head to the races. Jim frequently said, "As soon as Wil kills himself, I get that parking spot!"



How he bought the Allard is a story I want to share.

Sometime during 1956 Jim saw an early Healey Silverstone (like the one below) for sale at a used car dealer in Plainfield and was smitten. He talked to the salesman and explained it would take a day or two, but he wanted that car. Either it was bought out from under Jim or he couldn't get a bank loan fast enough. When he went back, the car was sold. 5

Jim vowed that such a thing would never happen to him again. At this time, Jim was still single. Meanwhile he kept looking for a similar car, but now he was prepared to strike fast.

In the mid-late 1950s, in the east, the way to attract a large audience, selling or buying an exotic car, was the Sunday advertising supplement of the *New York Times*. If you wanted to go national, the way was the relatively new '*Road&Track*' magazine.

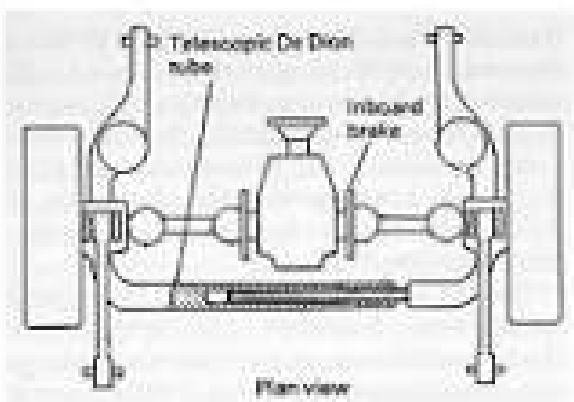
The Sunday NY Times arrived at the Plainfield railroad station a little after midnight. Jim would be there to get a copy when they were picked up, with his Cadillac sedan loaded with gas, a trailer attached, and his wallet loaded with money.

After a few weeks of this he found a Cadillac-engined Allard J2X for sale in Rhode Island, perhaps five hours away. It had never been raced and was mint. He arrived at the seller's town, phoned him at about six AM and asked directions to the house. This, of course, was before the seller or most anyone else was even up. To me that spells determination.

It was a nightmare trying to get the Allard through New Jersey's state operated vehicle inspection stations – you have no idea. Jim soon tired of that farce. He examined all the typewriters in his company until he found one that matched the font on his vehicle's Title and Registration. Before long, he had a 1930-something Allard. Then he had two aluminum plates made up for his valve covers, labeled Allard to hide the Cadillac name. It was now exempt for annual inspection.

Later in life he was married, and lived in a Philadelphia suburb with his wife, two daughters and a baby son. One winter Friday night they decided they would go ice skating the next morning. But in the morning he heard "It's too cold", "I'd rather stay home and read", etc. No one wanted to go. So he went by himself. He wasn't one to change his mind easily.

In 1960-65 my business partner and I did a few small jobs on Jim's Allard, but it was very low mileage, almost like new and needed little. But he did have one problem that seemed insurmountable and drove him crazy. The car might go a month before getting out for a drive. But when he stepped on the brakes there was a big **screech** noise from the rear brakes. It was loud enough to make people turn and look.



Here is an overhead view of a De Dion rear suspension, as fitted to the Allard 'J2X' model. The distinctive feature is that the differential is mounted to the chassis and the rear brakes are mounted inboard, by the differential. The advantage is that this arrangement reduces 'unsprung weight', and the tire contact spot stays flat on the road. But on the Allard, the oil seals, where the stub axles emerged from the diff, leaked endlessly. The Allard had rear brake drums, not the discs shown here. I don't know

how many types of rear seals Jim tried, but it was a lot. And he tried truck brake coil springs tightly around the drums to reduced vibration (noise) but nothing worked. As proud of the car as he was, if in a parade he ended up humiliated when braking. I *think* the problem was because the stub axles we not supported adequately. Just too much wobble for the seals to cope.

Jim had the car for about six or 7-8 years before overcome by despair. He called me one day to say he had it for sale in the next '*Road&Track*', for about what he had paid for it - \$2,000 dollars? I said "Jim, the car is now worth way more than that!"

He had set the price determined by emotion. He called R&T in time to double the price (not nearly enough, even in those days) and my name was golden in the Harper house. The next owner had the car featured in 'Automobile Quarterly'.

ALLARD

Sydney Herbert Allard was a British businessman and a Trials and Rally driver.

We will look at some of his vehicles, post-1945, but he started in the 'thirties with lightweight cars powered by English Ford flat-head V-8 engines for English trials.

Like Reid Railton, he appreciated torque. In 1937 Allard began producing modified Fords and by the outbreak of war in 1939, twelve Allard Specials had been built.

Allard Motor Company, founded in 1945 and failed in 1958. Located in Clapham, England.

Using his war-time inventory of easy-to-service Ford mechanicals and bodywork of Allard's own design, three post-war models were introduced with a newly designed steel chassis and lightweight body shells: the **J**, a competition sports car; the **K**, a slightly larger car intended for road use, and the four seater **L**. All three were based on the English Ford Pilot chassis and powered by a fairly stock 85 hp, 221.0 cu in, sidevalve V8 with a single carburettor and 6:1 compression, driving a three-speed transmission and low-g geared rear-end, for superior acceleration. Front suspension was Ballamy swing axle (A solid axle, hacksawed in the middle and jointed!), rear Ford solid axle. They were bodied in aluminum. Sales were fairly brisk for a low-volume car, and demand was high for cars in general, which led to the introduction of several larger models, the drophead coupe **M** and **P**.



Far Left –
Drophead
Model M.
1947-50

Left – 2-door
Model P1
saloon.
1949-52

Allard used "J" for the short-wheelbase two-seaters, "K" for two- or three-seat tourers or roadsters, "L" for four-seat tourers, "M" for drophead (convertible) coupes, and "P" for fixed-head cars. As models were replaced, subsequent models were numbered sequentially.

J1 Built from 1946 to 1947, the J1 was released as a two-seater competition car together with the K1 touring two-seater and the L- Type touring 4-seater. The J1 was a starkly trimmed and equipped 2-seater competition car on a 100 in (2,500 mm) wheelbase. Powered by a 140 hp, 239.0 cu in overhead valve Mercury V8, the J1 had a top speed of 85 mph (137 km/h), limited by the low rear axle gearing. Only 12 were produced and went only to buyers who would rally them. They had some international rallying success.

J2 Sydney Allard soon saw the potential of the economically more vibrant – but sports car starved – U.S. market and developed a special competition model to tap it, the J2. The new roadster, weighing just 2,072 pounds was a potent combination of a lightweight, hand-formed aluminum body fitted with new coil spring front suspension, fitted with inclined telescopic dampers, and de Dion-type rear axle inboard rear brakes, and 110 hp Mercury flathead V8. The J2 had a disturbing tendency to catch fire when started.

Importing American engines just to ship them back across the Atlantic proved problematic, so U.S.-bound Allards were soon shipped engineless and fitted out in the States variously with newer overhead valve engines by Cadillac, Chrysler, Buick, and Oldsmobile. In that form, the J2 proved a highly competitive international race car for 1950, most frequently powered by 331 cu in (5.4 L) Cadillac engines. Domestic versions for England came equipped with Ford or Mercury flatheads. Zora Duntov worked for Allard from 1950 to 1952 and raced for the factory Allard team at Le Mans in 1952 and 1953.



Left: This J2 that finished 3rd at Le Mans in 1950. (Less rollbar).

Note: The American engine installations were done by Bill Frick Motors, located on Sunrise Highway in Rockville Centre, Long Island, NY, a legendary 1950s automotive shop founded by Bill Frick and driver Phil Walters ("Ted Tappett"). Known as "the king of engine swaps," Frick specialized in racing, repair, and creating the "Fordillac"—a 1949 Ford chassis with a 331 cubic-

inch Cadillac V8 engine. Of 313 documented starts in major races in the 9 years between 1949 and 1957, J2s compiled 40 first-place finishes; 32 seconds; 30 thirds; 25 fourths; and 10 fifth-place finishes. Both Zora Duntov and Carroll Shelby raced J2s in the early 1950s. Ninety J2s were produced between 1950 and 1952.



Left: **J2X** (new replica shown) *Dressed up with front nerf bar.*

In an effort to extend a line growing obsolete in the face of advances in sports car design, Allard introduced an 'improved' model in late 1951, the J2X (extended). The chassis remained unchanged from the previous J2, but in an attempt to improve handling, the front suspensions rear attaching radius rods were redesigned with forward ones, which required a forward cross member and extending the nose past the front wheels. *In side view, if the tires are about six inches ahead of the front wheels, it is a J2X.*

This, in turn, allowed the engine to be moved forward 7+ $\frac{1}{2}$ in. yielding more cockpit room. The nose was lengthened some 6+ $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to accommodate the change. *Note: They had a reputation as dangerous, unpredictable race cars. Jim Harper used to say "They are fine, if only the driver's widows would stop bad-mouthing them."*

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JR This 1953 car was a lightweight specialist racer, now with envelope body, powered by a Cadillac engine claimed to produce 300 hp. Entered at Le Mans that year, the Allard/Fotheringham-Parker car suffered a broken rear suspension, while the Duntov/Merrick car also retired. This was the marque's last effort at Le Mans. Seven cars were built in total, with the last car finished in 1956. *It seems that the power and speed of this Allard overwhelmed the strength of the chassis.*



It seems that the power and speed of this Allard

1948 P1 sports. For a small company with a short life span, Allard made an amazing number of different models. I show the car on the left just because I like it for the time period. Also there was the K1, K2, P, P2, P2 Safari, M, Clipper, Palm Bea, and a few others in small quantities. Allard was now in decline, without the finances to keep up with urrant technical advances. They struggled on for a while, but with products that would not interest most of us. The Allard name was revived some years ago, making replicas of the J2X.



HARPER

Jim started the Allard Owners Club in the States, with 12 or 15 members, and a simple newsletter. It had an accidental and amusing feature. Jim had Allard Club stationary and envelopes printed. The envelopes had a prominent black J2X on the bottom left corner. When the USPS automatically scanned his club mail, there were wavy lines through the Allard, and the postage stamps were untouched!

.The J2X weighed approximately the same as a MG TD. With a modified Cadillac engine, and big torque, there was nothing that could match its acceleration in the 'fifties. His Allard was fitted with two 4-barrel carbs and patented inflatable seat cushions. Comfortable, but wiggly.

Jim and Sydney Allard had exchanged a few letters. Jim decided he wanted to speak with Allard about some of his car problems and see the 'factory'. He also had some distant Irish relatives to look up, so he flew over. Unfortunately, Allard Motors was then in financial trouble and apparently Sydney was depressed or angry. They had Jim sit in an outer office for hours and then finally told him that 'Mr. Allard did not have time for him'. Jim felt they meant 'or for any Americans'. Imagine his disappointment!

Not just a casual car pal, Jim and his wife Sally were our Best Man and Matron of Honor when Shirley and I were married in 1962.

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Look, Ma, the shop is getting clean!



Mar 21: After a few wasted days of running back and forth to our shop – trying to get in with a failed electric garage door opener, on clean-up day we also found the main outside circuit breaker to the shop had been tripped.

When Yr. Ed. got to the shop at about 8:45, there were already six or seven guys hard at work and by 9:30 every guy who had ever been to the shop before was at work. I didn't count but at least twelve guys pitched in. My prepared list of jobs was unneeded. The shop looks better than I can remember. If I had my druthers, we would have discarded or

sold more stuff that is taking up floor space, but I'm a misfit. *Marcy Benham* joined the 'fun' and provided the *photo*. Nice work, all!

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