

## ***‘BRITISH’***



Wikipedia photo

**Here is a Mustang being tested on a chassis dyno – note rear tires are spinning between two rollers. In this case it is on a dyno that has two-axle measuring capability for 4-wheel-drive cars/trucks.**

**Yr. Ed. spent 23 years of my 28 year career doing this sort of work, except that this machine is far more advanced – and expensive – than what was available in my day.**

**Yup, we are offering a little dyno info this month, wrapped into other issues.**

**Incidentally, looking for a suitable photo, I noticed many articles/questions about “How much horsepower do you lose on a chassis dyno compared to an engine dyno?” Oh boy! Very clumsy and misleading English. The chassis dyno very accurately measures the horsepower at the wheels, and that is what makes a car go. The power difference lost between the engine and drive wheels is a result of frictional losses in the vehicle’s drivetrain, not the chassis dyno.**

**With rear-wheel-drive cars the rear wheels will align behind the fronts. With front-wheel-drive cars the front must be secured with crossed straps, or the car will come right off the rollers!**

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**A sincere Thank You to members contributing to our newsletter.**

## President's Preface

Brian Lea

As we embark on a new chapter for the club, I wanted to thank everyone for their encouragement, kind words, and positive outlook. I'm excited to see the club and car show continue to grow. At the rate our show donations have grown each year, we are on track to unofficially become one of the top three largest ALS fundraising events in Arkansas next year.

April kicked off the busy time for car events around NWA. Even though my car was out of commission this past weekend, I still enjoyed seeing the large number of British cars at Black Top Sunday. The rumor is there is interest in making our group attendance a monthly occurrence, which I love to hear! At the event and through emails afterwards, there has been talk about having a club banner or flag at these types of events. I love this idea and I think it goes right in line with my challenge to grow the clubs "brand awareness." Speaking of awareness, I personally have run out of club business cards to leave on British cars. Is anyone else in the same boat?

Behind the scenes, Mark Holzer recruited his son to help improve our website tracking and analytics. We are now able to monitor activity much closer and understand the impact. In the coming weeks, Mark will be contacting car clubs across the country, and we'll now be able to track how many visitors are coming to our website from each specific club.

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Ed. Note: We welcome our new President's first monthly message. Because the May issue was mostly assembled, using the standard page numbers, I had to come up with a device to fit this page into the front of the May issue of '**BRITISH**'. Hence, 'President's Preface'. That is just for this month... unless Brian wants to keep it!

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Preface

# ***'BRITISH'***

*>Well worth reading some of the time<*

**May 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**

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**Membership and Treasurer: Elaine Briggs [eb88cs@cox.net](mailto:eb88cs@cox.net)**

**To contact the Editor: Wil Wing [briton4@cox.net](mailto:briton4@cox.net)**

**Monthly Meetings:**

At the *All American Steak House and Sports Theater* at 3942 W Sunset in Springdale. The second Thursday of the month, except for December.

**Other Meetings:**

As announced on Meeting Nights or on our B-I List email server.

**Meeting Night, April 9: Momentous News from the business session. After having served his full 25 year sentence, Bill Watkins walked out of the Steak House tonight a free man. Almost. To again show his class, Bill has agree to assist our new President, Brian Lea, continue leading our Brits in the Ozarks Show, and provide his monthly column for our newsletter. Brian spoke briefly about his plans to grow the club. We will give Brian our full support. Brian mentioned that when Bill was first elected President (during a moment of inattention) Brian was three years old!**

**General baloney: Would you believe that even with an early start and Shirley driving, the traffic was still very heavy and slow on I 49? We were the first to arrive and it was a small turnout tonight with a headcount of 38. At our table, Tom spoke of a small mystery oil leak on his MGB, we discussed the irritating convention of service people saying “No problem” instead of saying “Thank you”, and also gall bladder problems! New member Brian Cabell was introduced – he has a green MGA. Elaine announced that we have about \$7,668 in the treasury and 70 paid-up members.**

**Lastly, we thank Bill Watkins for his many years of service, growing the club from six guys sitting around a table on meeting nights to a large, vigorous and service oriented organization. Well done, Bill!**

## BEHIND THE WHEEL - from the right hand side

Well, this is a bit different! I'm writing this column for the first time as Past President rather than as President! I am very pleased that Brian Lea agreed to take on the position and am looking forward to working with him as he gets his feet underneath him over the coming year. I know he will do a great job and have some progressive ideas. Please support him as he carries - or in some cases, drags - us forward.

This column will, I hope, take on something of a new tenor. I will no longer be reporting on or discussing club matters from a leadership position (though I will still express opinions, see below) and will spend more column space on the hobby and my experiences. I hope you will find it engaging and more than just a filler of space for Our Esteemed Editor.

The first thing on my mind this month is just such an expression of opinion. Over the years it has been a real pain to get a feel for what the attendance will be for any given event that we put on. We have traditionally resorted to intra-club email strings that flood everyone's inbox with Ayes, I'll be there, or a maybe, it depends in the weather and whether or not I have to wash my hair that day, or if atmospheric conditions raise the air pressure in my tires I'll come along, or some other similar responses. There is no need to do that now with the RSVP function for events that is set up on the website. Going to our website is no harder than opening your email. Responding with the RSVP is no harder - probably faster - than typing up an email. USE IT!! Our events team is doing a great job or setting up events that fit your responses to the survey we conducted last year. Support them and help them make these events successful.

On a related note, if you don't RSVP for an event and then the plans change the organizers don't know who to contact. If you don't RSVP and you get there only to learn that the plans have changed, that is on you. (I guess I woke up crabby this morning).

Speaking of crabby, the Alvis continues to be a challenge. Right now the challenge is less for me that for 'my guy' Wade who has taken on the latest work. A DPO (damned previous owner) went to a lot of trouble to install AC in the car. It is useless in its present form since the stock blower fan won't put enough air over the evaporator to even allow for a proper refrigerant charge, let alone cool the car.. The stock generator is only 25 amps and won't run the headlights, the separate condenser fan, and the blower motor at the same time without discharging the battery. Plus the AC gear just gets in the way of everything under the hood. But, man, if it did work well . . . So, Wade installed a 140 amp alternator which turned out to be a huge pain for him given the available space and the poor method of mounting the AC compressor by the DPO. Wade is a craftsman and fabricated and finagled until he had it all in place to his satisfaction. I'm looking forward to trying it. A 140 amp alternator also means that the old amp gage will have to be swapped for a voltage gage. Wade will so that as well and, while in the dash, replace the original dim bulbs lighting the instruments with LEDs.

On the reliability front, Wade is also installing a permanent electric fuel pump back near the tank. I am hoping that this will resolve my vapor lock issues. I may have to resort to the old method of clipping clothes pins on the fuel line to radiate the heat away. Fingers crossed. He is also installing a Pro-Tronics ignition (the AC lines are in the way of the distributor - GRRRR). I look forward to getting it back and trying to develop some confidence in the car. This week I received an email inviting me to include my cars in a service used to provide cars for TV and movie production. Brandon Rooks has signed up with them before and told me they are legit, so what the heck? I'll let you know if anything ever comes of it. *Bill Watkins*

## Club Staff

President – **Brian Lea**

Consigliere to the President – **Bill Watkins**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – **Doug Schrantz**

Membership and

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## 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.britishironnwa.org](http://www.britishironnwa.org) **click on event for details.**

Month	Event Date	Drive Date	Description
May	3rd		Black top Sunday Rogers, AR
		05/16	Drive & Lunch Jasper, AR
		30th	Drive & Lunch Langman Winery Centerton, AR
June	20th		Crystal Bridges Visit Bentonville, AR
	26/27		GOBMC Car Show Springdale, AR



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Many thanks to Todd Maberry for detailing Yr. Ed's Honda Si.

Note: The last submission date for contributions is the weekend before Meeting Night.

Why is this page half empty you ask? My answer is don't ask. Writing = fun, computers = angina.

## The "Betty White" Story

(To distinguish between our two project MGAs: one Chariot Red, and one Old English White....we named Jim Carney's former car "Betty White")

Mike Lewis & Mark Cory

Most of you know that longtime friend and club member Jim Carney passed away a little over a year ago. As Jim and Rita were avid British car collectors, Jim's passing left many possessions/parts to include some for a JAG, MGA, MGB and TR.

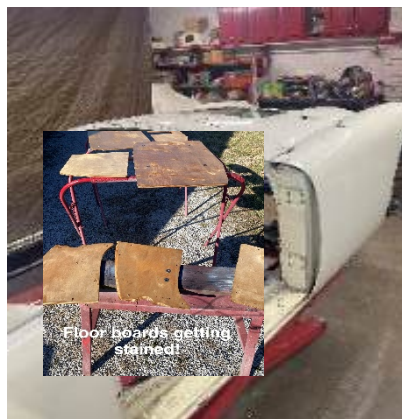


Rita advertised and discussed these projects with several club members asking if anyone was interested in taking on a new project. Well, Mark and I had just finish my 1962 MKII MGA and his 1952 TD, so we found ourselves “unfortunately” 😊 having some extra time on our hands.



Needless to say, after talking with Rita and looking at the MGA with its multiple pieces and parts stacked in many boxes and bins.....we decided to honor Jim by putting his MGA back on the road. Our ultimate goal is to auction the car at this year’s Car Show if all logistics and rules are followed.

So this past October, I purchased the car and we quickly sent the engine to the machine shop for inspections and complete rebuild.....luckily no major issue. We then packed up the OEW MGA and headed back to Mark’s shop. Through initial inspection we were pleasantly surprised that the frame, chassis, bonnet, boot, wings (fender) were all in excellent shape, with **most** parts/pieces to complete the car.



Since October, we have taken the standard restoration steps to include stripping and painting the tub, new rear brakes, new fuel tank, refurbish rear differential, wiring harness, and new brake

and fuel lines. Our timeline is tight, but we have a good plan to get her done.





To reiterate, first and foremost we took on this project to honor Jim and Rita for their love of British Cars and our club....which will also get another MGA/British Car back on the road for someone to enjoy. Without any “major” hiccups in the plan, Mark and I will complete the “Betty” project for our goal of this next car show.

Please reach out if you have any questions or would like to stop by the shop and take a look.

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### Roaring River Outing – story and photos Marcy Benham Davies

The 2026 British Iron Touring season commenced March 28<sup>th</sup> with our traditional Roaring River destination. 18 British cars and several daily drivers departed from Harp’s in Bella Vista on a sunny but cool day that was perfect for driving. Alan & Lee mapped and led the shorter route, while Greg mapped and led the longer route. Amazingly, both route drives arrived at Roaring River at exactly the same time! Well done, drive leaders!

Turnout was great with 40 folks there for lunch, some arriving from other starting points. The general opinion was that the lunch offerings were all delicious, the service was friendly and they successfully got us all fed, watered and happy in good time. The camaraderie was delightful and conversations interesting and varied. Such a great start to our driving season with many more drives and activities planned as the season progresses. Thanks to all those who helped make it such a fun day and we hope to see even more of you at upcoming events! **We meet, we drive, we eat.**



Darn shadows – Ed.

## **“Remove yourself from the plane of rotating forces”**

Musings on ‘situational awareness’, dynos and whatever

Wil Wing

That title, in Italian, was a sign posted in Ferrari’s engine development room and I must have read about it in Road & Track in the 1950s or 60s. I hung the English version on a big sign in my shop for about a year. No one read it! If you don’t get it, it means ‘don’t stand where a rotating mass could kill you if it exploded or came loose. But I’d see people standing fascinated directly behind the chassis dyno when I was testing race cars up to 100 mph. Panic braking. I’m pretty sure a piece of gravel, flung from a tire tread at 80 or 100 mph has enough energy to go through an eyeball into a brain. Good grief! I found that some people more intelligent than me just go blithely through life never considering the danger of their situation. No situational awareness.

Fresh out of high school I went to work in a machine shop. One long wall inside the factory had all the lathes lined up, from tiny jeweler’s lathes to a humongous monster at the end. In between there was about ten 16” Monarch lathes, where most of the work was done. They were all in a file, angled at about 30 degrees. Why? Sometimes you had to switch from a three-jawed chuck to four-jawed chuck sitting on the floor (a chuck is the device that holds the piece you are machining). The four-jaw weighed about 100 pounds and I couldn’t lift it up to the lathe by myself. Two guys would lift it up onto a special six-inch wide board that held the chuck directly in line with the four-inch threaded spindle. With the lathe in ‘back gear’ at the slowest possible speed, you slid the board and chuck onto the turning spindle. But perhaps once a month a chuck might get out of alignment as it was ‘offered up’. Cross threaded. Then the spindle would pick up the 100 pound chuck and throw it through the air at the lathe in front of you! Hoots and cat calls down the line. But, because of the angle of the lathes, the chuck was thrown onto the floor towards the middle of the next lathe, not likely to hit the operator. I soon found that the guys in front appreciated being asked to help swap chucks. Situational awareness.

To be pre-registered at the new revised Bella Vista gun range, you must take a 10-question test on gun and range safety, which I ‘aced’. I complimented the range officer on the posted new rules at every shooting station. He said, “Yeah, but no one reads them”! Wow! Considering the liability potential, this amazes me. I’ve packed up and walked out a couple of times (over twenty five years) when seeing rare ‘horse play’ or carelessness. And reported it to the range master. My ‘good nature’, such as it is, vanishes when swept by gun muzzles. Situational awareness.

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Although I bought every ‘Road & Track’ magazine for decades, and am grateful for the introduction to European cars and road racing, like everything else, things change. So did R&T and their management – several times. Maybe ten years ago I got disgusted with their attempt to look ‘slick and artsy’ - and cancelled my subscription. Since then I’ve only seen a few copies, thumbed through at bookstores to see if I’m missing anything important.

However, in late March my Florida pal, Bob Rolle, sent me the April/May 2026 edition and it has an article about the current state of dynos and dyno testing, by highlighting four specialty shops.

I used a chassis dyno for 23 years, every work day starting in 1965, every tune-up, at two different business locations. In those days, unless you were a major manufacturer or oil company,

Clayton chassis dynamometers must have represented 90% of dyno sales. They were simple, accurate, and fairly reliable and were mostly mechanical devices, not completely computer oriented, but had one horrible design flaw. The water-filled power absorption unit would rust out every five years or so. Expensive!

Today there are vastly more advanced dynos available – and vastly more expensive. Now, every acceleration run on the rollers prints out a graph showing horsepower and torque curves and instantaneous air/fuel ratios as a permanent record. You might well ask “Why do you need a dynamometer when so few shops use them?” 1) To measure the power of racing cars, when guessing means losing to more thorough competitors. 2) To find faults in any phase of engine operation via testing at any speed or load with full diagnostic equipment providing exact answers. 3) To turn out consistent quality work servicing production cars, rather than hoping for the best.

The physical operation of the dyno was relatively easy – the left hand held a switch that added or reduced the amount of water in the absorption unit, varying the load on the engine – anything from light load cruising (checking the fuel mixtures for economy) to full power at a chosen rpm (looking for misfires or testing for horsepower). Your right hand held a clipboard for making notes. Physically easy, but the work required total concentration while testing engines. While running under load, you had to watch the oscilloscope for ignition abnormalities, the exhaust gas analyzer for fuel mixtures, the dyno meters for power and speed, the car’s water temperature and oil pressure gauges, while also glancing back in the mirror every few seconds, to be sure no idiots have put themselves in danger. Somewhat stressful for the operator, but often terrifying for the owner, who may have never before seen his race car engine screaming at max rpm while the car is standing still.

How risky is dyno testing to the engines? No more so than driving on the road or racing on a track. In 23 years of dyno work, I never had an engine blow up. But there were a few cars I refused to test, because I didn’t like the sound of the engines. Some garages gave up on dyno work after operators with tin ears ruined customer’s engines.

I mostly enjoyed my work and thought myself lucky to be self-employed. After the State of NJ decided to re-route Rt.1 through the property, I was too old and arthritic to start over again at another location. I went to work for a big local hospital... some personal satisfaction there, but an indifferent hierarchy and back stabbing supervisors. When self-employed, I had been even luckier than I had realized.

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**24 Years of reliability and fun. Gone.** After a few months of hinting in our newsletter, I’ve sold my 2002 Honda Si hatchback. It was a rather amazing experience! Bill Fitzgerald came over at about 1:30 PM on April 20<sup>th</sup> and set up an ad on Marketplace with nine photos. Done by 2:30. Within an hour the phone started ringing. Serious buyers called from Oklahoma (2) and one from Springfield, MO. But a guy from Rogers got here with cash. So the car sold in about five hours. Too bad I didn’t have a few more – the market for them is that strong. Thanks again to Todd Maberry and Fitz. 8

## Spring is in the Air

By: Robert S. Tschiemer

British car owners, more than anyone, know when spring is coming. The heaters are only needed for half-days now, and we start thinking about taking the tops down, but the wise drivers always hesitate unless they have a complete garage because it has snowed in Arkansas in March and April can be cold as well. My personal favorite procedure is to always have one car with its top down but have another that is roadworthy, so you may drive the car with the top up in the morning and the open-air car in the afternoon. Spring weather is like a tempestuous cloud that is unstable and cold but in the heat of the summer, it rises and has violent thunderstorms. The key is to be able to predict it, which is not always easy in Arkansas Springs.

Thinking back to college days, this writer was attending a two-year school in Winfield, Kansas, named St. John's College, and in thinking about a good Spring-break adventure, the undersigned thought of a great idea of hiking the Caney Creek Trail in West Arkansas near Mena, for spending up to six days in a wilderness-trail adventure. Two classmates joined in the expedition and on the first day of hiking the weather turned bad and we were in absolute wilderness with 50-pound packs and the waters quickly rose to flood stage, and we were already committed in deeper and deeper in the wilderness.

My classmates and I were up to our chests in freezing creek waters as we crossed the main creek and its tributaries as they zig-zagged on the trail. Each night we set up camp, pitching our tents and cooking with my little Svea stove, made in Sweden, as we tried to warm, eating our freeze-dried meals, and we tried to make the best of the situation. Preferring the early spring as we did, we estimated that there would be fewer people and perhaps fewer poisonous snakes. We saw none of those fortunately, nor any bears, and survived a memorable Spring break.



Driving a British car has its surprises at times, but fortunately they are less daunting. There is a heater of sorts in these sports cars for the most part, although sometimes you must open the hood to turn it on, or at least I must do so in my MG Midget and Austin Healey Sprite, but it is an adventure much like some of us experienced in college days and lived to tell about it.

If you have not been driving your British cars in the winter, it is important to re-acclimate the cars for the roadway in warmer temperatures after resting them for several months. Checking the air pressure is a given, because as the temperatures start

rising, the pressures will as well. Check the oil and water as a routine because there might be a leak or a broken hose in the winter, and be sure all is in tip-top shape. There is a date on the oil filter and the wise motorist changes oil as needed rather wait until a problem, or disaster, occurs. You cannot change oil too often but can err if you do not change it enough. You may need starting fluid if the engine has not run in a while. Finally, hope that no rodents have made a dinner feast of your wiring.

The motorist is eager to start driving once the warmer temperatures arise because there is nothing like hearing the sound of the throaty British engines and feeling the air in your face with the top down.

Gasoline prices are on the rise with the conflict in Iran but at least the impact is not as great in British car owners. If your car is not getting 20 miles per gallon, the engine may need a tune-up. In my Austin Healey between Mayflower and Harrison, I was getting 29.5 miles per gallon in a trip to a club meeting in Springdale last year.

Taking the tops down requires a clean top and a warm day. If the temperature is in the 60s, at the minimum, the tops should not be put down because the plastics are not as flexible. I prefer the air temperature to be in the 70s anyway because subjectively it feels about ten degrees colder with the air blasting into the car as you drive. A new top may do better than one 20-years-old. A good habit for preserving the top is to put a towel over the plastic window between it and the rest of the top before folding them down; otherwise you may scratch the plastic or break it.

These cars are meant to be fun and not an everyday chore of commuting to work. Attending club rallies and everyday driving are no longer chores but fun, the way driving was intended to be.

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**New Technology: Funeral homes, fearing legal action, when presented with a new cadaver would formerly use a mirror and look for mist on the glass. But that test is not 100% accurate in some temperature/humidity conditions. Now the funeral directors lean over and whisper the words ‘Smart Phone’. A fore-finger twitching up and down indicates a remnant of life remains.**

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**Brit Stop Tech session, May 2<sup>nd</sup>:** There was lots of puzzlement that we never quite figured out. The car didn't want to idle and we went through the proper sequence – mechanical, ignition and carburation, correcting and discovering small errors as we went. For instance, #2 cylinder has lower compression. Also, the cylinder head rocker arms were assembled without any shims on the rocker shaft, so some were misaligned with the valve stems. We cleaned the slightly sooty plugs, and inspected the carbs, visually checked the points, etc. Our oscilloscope, on it's death bed last time, failed to work at all today. Good thing the club piggy bank is healthy! Anyway, we got a pretty good idle.

However, TR6 refused to even ‘pop’ after reassembly – ignition kaput. What did we do wrong? After all the usual tests we found the ignition switch only provided 12V to the ignition for a split second when it was first turned on and off. Very strange. OK, it has a bad ignition switch. I suggested we use a jumper wire - from the battery ‘hot’ terminal to the coil plus (‘sw’) terminal – to get the car home, and the car started immediately. Then to check repeatability we tried it again without the jumper wire, and it started right up! Good grief. Brad was holding one spark wire to the block when it started on 5 cylinders, but no one believes that is the solution for future starting.

I'd say a new ignition switch is definitely in order except that former English parts are now made in the Far East and are frequently defective when new.

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### **Cedarville Car Show Report by Bill Watkins**

Lisa and I drove down to Cedarville April 18<sup>th</sup> for the charity car show put on by Bambi and Neal Crozier. This event supports a local dog rescue charity that deals with the unwanted pets dumped in the area by Van Buren and Ft. Smith residents. We drove the Interceptor down, taking I-49 to the Rudy exit then west to Cedarville.

The Interceptor is made for this kind of driving and just eats up Interstate mileage effortlessly. With the trees in the forest leafing out and the rural roads from Rudy to Cedarville, it was a lovely drive.

Lee and Karen Cowling met us there, but the rest of you bailed!! The weather was not great – quite chilly – and that, plus a big, well promoted car show in Ft. Smith, really had an adverse impact on attendance. Only 18 or so cars were present, including four British cars: the interceptor, a MINI, and two Land Rovers. One of the land Rovers showed up on the end of a tow-chain.

A club from Oklahoma came over with some nice pickup trucks. I'm not really into trucks, but the quality of the workmanship was very good, so they were interesting to look at. Here are some photos from the day.



Photos are all courtesy of Bambi Crozier since I forgot to take any.



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