'BRITISH' November 2026



Brits in the Ozarks

'BRITISH'

>Well worth reading some of the time<

November 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: Brian Lea 918-440-9161 brianlea@gmail.com

Membership and Treasurer: Elaine Briggs eb88cs@cox.net

To contact the Editor:

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.

Meeting Minutes:

What a fantastic Brits in the Ozarks!!!
Over 200 cars and over $84,000 raised for the ALS Association!

We have new club business cards. Ask Brian for some.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED! Terry will be joining David as a reporter!

Alan is leaving a large hole in the event committee. If someone would like to help fill it or any other area of the club, please reach out.

No club meeting in December

Christmas Party at the Storey's 6-8pm
Potluck & Dirty Santa

See additional upcoming events on page 4 or on our website. Please RSVP for events.



Chairman's Corner

Brian Lea

I can't talk enough about how great Brits in the Ozarks was this year! Since you have a couple enjoyable stories below about Brits in the Ozarks, I am going to take a different approach. Since I am an engineer, I love numbers so we are going to do Brits in the Ozarks by the numbers.

$84,000 donated to the ALS Association

72,453 social media views for the month of the show

32,000 unique visitors to our social media pages

1,769 website visits for the month of the show

1,050 miles was the farthest distance traveled to attend

316 miles driven in my Sprite the weekend of the show

214 registered cars

204 cars on display

128 out of town participants (60%)

52 club member cars on display

40% increase fundraising through Torchy's Tacos

33 locals participated that aren't part of British Iron

4 people told me they would be joining British Iron

0 mentions of my Sprite burning oil

The standouts for me are one, the obvious, Brits in the Ozarks raised $84,000 for the ALS Association! What a tremendous number! The members of the ALS Association were ecstatic at the end of the awards dinner. To put this into perspective, I only know of one other ALS fundraiser in Arkansas that is raising more money and it, and the numerous events below us, are put on by the ALS Association themselves.

Second, look at the exposure the show and the club are getting through social media! A lot of the online traction came from Betty White, so thank you Mark and Mike. On top of the 72,453 views, we had an additional 26,179 views of the short video announcing the Betty White auction. That is nearly 100,000 views in less than 2 months on our social media pages.

Third, attendance was fantastic this year. I would say we are a regional show staple. An unsolicited comment was *"Brits in the Ozarks is the best regional car show I attend. It is better than some of the national shows I have attended."* 60% of people attending are traveling from out of NWA. Every person I talked to said it was one of the best shows they had ever been to and better than most regional shows. Everyone said they plan on coming back next year. I have reached out to all local participants that are not already part of British Iron in hopes to get them plugged into the British car community.

BEHIND THE WHEEL - from the right hand side

Bill Watkins

Wow, what a fantastic club! What a great event Brits in the Ozarks was and all because YOU ALL know what to do, how to treat people, and are 'bought in" to the event. We broke every record this year:

214 total registrations with 195 distinct registrants (some registered more than one car)

200 to 204 cars and bikes on the field (we had about 10 no-shows)

Participants from a record of 12 states - Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, New Mexico (!), South Carolina (!) Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and of course, Arkansas. Most were, of course, from Arkansas, but Oklahoma and Texas were neck and neck for second.

Roughly $85,000 was raised for the ALS Association (still waiting on the rebate check from the hotel which I expect this to be in the $900 range)

One interesting item I have never really paid much attention to in the past is gross revenue. Calculating in the hotel rebate, this event generated just over $103,000 in total revenue. Wow!

I think that a big part of our success this year – besides the weather! – was marketing. We had a hugely increased presence on social media this year. All credit to President Brian for that. Also important was the coverage Tim Suddard gave us in Classic Motorsports. I've already thanked him for that. I also think that the auction of the MGA got is a lot of attention. Thanks to Mark and Mike.

As you know, we give comment / feedback sheets to the participants. One of them commented that we seemed so organized - we seemed to have people ready to handle every function. That says a great deal about all of you. When you see or hear something that needs doing you jump in and do it. You provide the feel or tenor for the event and make it what it is. I'm grateful to all of you and very proud of this club!! As we do every year, at the meeting I will lead a discussion about doing it again next year.

I see I have a few inches of column space left, so on to another subject – this one a pet peeve!! I've always enjoyed language and words. I love a good stretch of well written dialogue in a movie or book. Words and how they are used can be critical in my business – just ask some lawyers who have famously been sued for mis-using words in a contract or security document. So, when I hear a word misused or mispronounced it sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard to me.

Recently I have seen social media advertising for the recently opened high-end man caves located between the nursing homes and Bellview Road in Rogers. They show text that identifies the project as the "Marque Collection". However, the spokesperson pronounces it as the "Marquee Collection". Checking my sources – Google, Websters, and my ancient Collegiate Dictionary – I can confirm that "Marque" is pronounced identically to "Mark" and is used as a synonym for brand or make, typically in reference to automobiles. If the intent is to describe the subject of the sentence as being "the top" or "above the others" or "the best" then the word would be "Marquee", pronounced "mar-key", as in a theater marquee out over the sidewalk advertising the show playing inside. There. I got if off my chest. Maybe the owners of Marque Collection. will read this.

Club Staff

President – **Brian Lea**

Consiglieri to the President – **Bill Watkins**

Vice President – **Doug Schrantz**

Membership and Treasurer – **Elaine Briggs**

Webmaster – **Brian Lea**

Events Coordinator – **Marcy Benham Davies**

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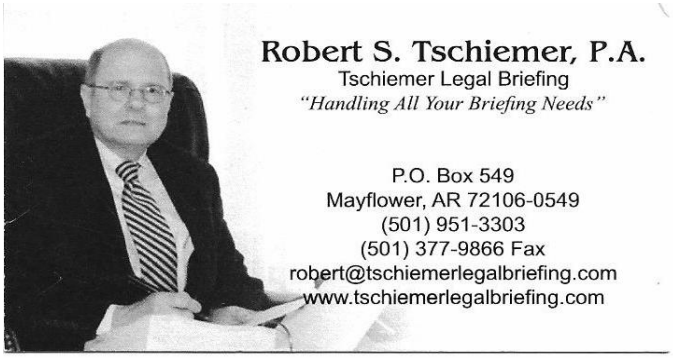
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Coming Events Calendar

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.

britishironnwa.org/events **click on event for details.**

Month	Event Date	Description
Nov	21	BBQ Run Meet at Jones Center
Dec	5	Christmas Party Storey's
Jan	1	New Year's Gathering All American Steakhouse



How to win without ever winning

Wil Wing

This all started at our October Meeting Night, 2026. David Paul stopped by and asked if I'd write about my experience owning a Lagonda. I'd be delighted to do that if I'd ever owned one! So, David asked me to write about a favorite British car instead. After a moment's reflection, I've again chosen the one that did its job in the least amount of time and the least aggravation. Namely, my 1964 Mini Cooper S, which I owned for about 10 months after purchasing it new. Buying it is perhaps the most interesting part of the story.

By 1963 I'd had two full racing seasons in the SCCA (1959,1960) and was feeling a strong urge to get back to into battle. I thought my three-year hiatus, establishing a business, would allow me do accomplish this – besides, I was now married and had a partner and financial supporter.

The trouble with my first race car, although it was excellent, was that it wasn't really suited to American's shorter and slower racetracks. I'd learned a lot, mastered the pros and cons of front-wheel drive, but only won twice in two years. I wanted to do better than that! I also wanted to continue with the (wet) advantages of front-wheel drive.

So, in 1963 the SCCA announced that in the following year they were going to create a class and championship for imported sedans. It didn't take much research to realize that a Mini Cooper would be my best choice. Now – how was I going to win the upcoming NE Divisional Championship? This was all of New England, New York, NJ, and down to Maryland. Here is what I thought I'd need to accomplish my goal:

a) An early start on the season
b) A fast, legally modified car, but not to the extreme that it would be unreliable
c) To be a better driver than most of my class competitors
d) To be consistent, reliable and attend every Divisional race that season

There were no latest-spec Mini Cooper S cars sitting around at dealers at the end of 1963, so how was I going to get an early jump on 1964? I talked to my landlord, Hank Thorp, a retired SCCA racer (MG Twin-cam) and a Regional SCCA official. He knew the US BMC factory representative, Mike Barratt. It turned out that Mike and his wife took their annual vacation at Christmas time to go back to England. If paid beforehand, he would purchase a new BMC car at dealer cost, take delivery and use it lightly while in England. Then it would be shipped to Newark, NJ, and he would turn it over to me. I'd receive the car in late January. That would take care of a) on my list, although handing over the cost of a car on a handshake was a bit worrying.

Feb and March was plenty of time to modify and prepare the Mini for battle. One thing you might find interesting is that I used a big hole saw to open up the RH inner fender for access to the timing cover and changing the camshaft, rather than pull the engine - it worked! Since I intended to use the car for racing, I had a sign painter paint big white circles on the doors and a permanent number 3 in black, which I could change to either 13 or 31 with black tape, if needed. That took care of b) above, I thought! But the first Divisional race was at Vineland in south Jersey and I'd made a mistake preparing the engine. I never noticed that the oil passage in the cylinder head, to the rocker shaft and rocker arms, didn't line up with the hole in the corresponding shaft support. BMC relied on a chamfer to get oil up the misaligned holes for the rocker assembly. I had covered the chamfer. After a couple of race laps the valve train started getting noisy and by the end of the race the engine had lost a bit of power. I had to settle for 2nd place. And replace my rocker shaft and rockers. Drat!

As for item 'c' above, I had plenty of self-confidence, even though my Mini wasn't the match of the Deutsch-Bonnet on high-speed corners, nor quite as stable in the rain. My main problem was a single Mini from the

Boston area that was equally fast on the straights, but faster on the turns. This was months before I realized that it had been illegally modified with a welded-up differential. Luckily, he didn't contest every Divisional race that season, and though fast, I didn't think it was prepared as well. As the season progressed, I continued racking up second places, to my disgust. It felt like a jinx, although I lead in points from the second race onwards. The trouble with second places is that no one notices or cares and I was trying to be more prominent, in hopes of getting rides in faster cars.

Well, there was no problem attaining d), but I fibbed to you in the title of the story. I did have one win at Lime Rock. 'Boston' get a big lead on me and when I saw how he opened the gap on 'Big Bend' (a fast, wide 180 RH loop at the end of the main straight), I thought perhaps I wasn't trying hard enough. So, on the next lap I flung my Mini into Big Bend about 10 mph faster than ever before. Stupid! I never knew you could spin out in a front-wheel drive car, instead of just plowing off straight ahead, but it is possible on dirt. I ended up facing back towards the main straight, balanced on my two right-hand side tires at a 45-degree angle. I was very lucky that the car dropped down onto the tires, not the roof. Then I discovered – why hadn't I ever thought of this – that I couldn't reach the ignition key to restart the engine when my racing harness was dead tight. By the time I got things sorted out, I'd seen two slower Minis go past and 'Boston' go down the main straight escape road and pull over. So, reentering, I was now in third place. I did some of my best-ever driving and won. It turned out that 'Boston' had done an oil change before the race but forgot to retighten the drain plug. He had lost the plug, his oil and oil pressure going down the straight. Naturally, I was heartbroken about that.

What turned out to be the final race for me was the farce at Marlboro, MD, where after a big pile-up in the sedan race, the officials disqualified the results, with no points awarded. I ended up 9 points ahead – the value of one first place. So, I achieved my goal of winning with (almost) no wins.

A couple of hindthoughts: 1) the over-square 1071 cc Mini-Copper engine was a superb, strong and free-revving. With my early points the slew of mid-season 1275 cc entries couldn't catch up. 2) If this was one of my most satisfying British car experiences, is there a lesson here for everyone in the club? Buy new and sell them after a year before they get to be a pain in the butt? What do you think?

Maybe you remember that after the '64 season I fell in love with an old Rolls-Royce and had to agree with Shirley that we couldn't afford racing plus a big restoration project. I just didn't realize how many years the Rolls would take.

Brits in the Ozarks Leisure Drive to War Eagle

Elaine Briggs



Thursday morning dawned perfectly for a British car drive through the hills and dales of Northwest Arkansas with our lunch destination being War Eagle Mill. Fourteen cars lined up in the Holiday Inn parking lot to begin our journey.

Amazingly on our trip through Springdale, the caravan was able to stay together! Lee Cowling led the group on a 43 mile drive to Hobbs State Park for a comfort stop and to explore the beautiful visitor center.





After our short visit the group headed off to War Eagle Mill for lunch, shopping and a demonstration of the grist mill operation by Tom, the retired mill historian who came in solely to give our group the tour! Lunch was delicious – so if you have never been to War Eagle for lunch, check it out!



The group then drove over the War Eagle Creek one lane bridge where each car was photographed going over the bridge!



We headed out for the final 35 miles at exactly 12:45, since we were due at our next stop by 1:15. The surprise and the best part of the drive, for us, was the police escort that Lee arranged with the Rogers Police Department! The Police met us at the intersection of Rt 12 and Arkansas Street. With their flashing lights on, every intersection was cleared and traffic signals turned green for our uninterrupted caravan! Cars were pulling over to the side of the road and no cars turned into our group from any intersection! In fact, at one intersection, two more police cars had the east-west intersection physically

closed. Carol and I jokingly said to each other – “Maybe all the other drivers on the road think we are in a funeral procession!” – since we all had our headlights on for safety on the entire drive. The escort brought us as far as New Hope Road. It was really something special!



Thank you Lee!

None of our cars had any mishaps and we essentially stayed in two groups of 7 which helped manage traffic lights and busy intersections better.

Enjoy the pictures!

