

British Automobile



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A publication of the British Transportation Museum
321 Hopeland Street, Dayton, OH 45417

<https://www.britishtransportationmuseum.org>

Open Saturdays and Mondays from 10am to 4pm.

Museum tours are available by appointment.

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NEXT MEETING – 7pm Jan 15th (3rd Wednesday)

Merry Christmas !!

Happy Boxing Day !!

Happy Hanukkah !!

Happy New Year !!

The Nut Behind the Wheel ... by Karl Strauch
(Information and photos gleaned from Wikipedia)



Our "Nut" this month "was an English cycle

manufacturer who was a pioneer of both cycle and automobile development. He was born at Stinsford, Dorset in 1847. He served an apprenticeship at Penn's Engineering Works in Greenwich and in 1869 he moved to Coventry to work at the Coventry Machinist Company.

Around 1874 he started his own company to manufacture cycles, _____ & Co, in 1894 that became _____ & Co Ltd, and in 1896 the _____ Cycle Company, that soon grew into a large business and also in 1896, at the height of popularity for cycles, he floated his business as a company with a capital of £700,000 reverting to _____ & Co Ltd. The development of forks with curves is attributed to him.

He was elected to the Coventry city council in 1881; he became an alderman in 1893 and also served as Mayor of Coventry from 1891 to 1894. He resigned from the council in 1898 as his interests were more with philanthropy and charity than politics.

He died on 4 January 1909, aged 62 at his home at Coundon Court in Coventry, which is now used as the site of Coundon Court school."

The company that our "Nut" began is honored on a plaque about the origin of the Aston-Martin: "From 1905 to 1905, Aston Hill, part of Lord Rothschild's Estate, was a renowned motoring venue. Lionel Martin made his first ascent of this hill. In a tuned (our "Nut's" car), on the 4th April, 1914. Shortly afterwards, on the 16th May, at the Hertz County Automobile and Aero Club meeting, he was so successful that the sporting light car first registered to his name in March 2015 was titled an "ASTON-MARTIN".

Bicycle with motor wheel.

Racing motorcycle



1919 Ten



1927 Junior



1927 Senior



1933 Silent Six



1933 Nine Sports



The Sports Nine's close-ratio, four-speed box made it an immediate success among trials racers. They entered a specially-prepared version at Le Mans, which led to the Nine being commonly called the Le Mans.

1934 Le Mans Sports



Not so good for the marque's reputation was the appearance of three works Nines at the 1935 Ulster Tourist Trophy, where all three crashed, from the same steering failure problem, at the same spot.



1936 Bantam Nine Sports



1936 Bantam Nine Van



The _____ & Co Limited company dissolved in 1936 and the business transferred into _____ Motors Limited.

1946 Super Ten



1948 Super Twelve



1948-1954 SM 1500



1954-1958 Hunter



_____ Motors Limited joined Rootes Group in Dec 1958.

Gazelle Mk V



1960 Gazelle



1965-1970 Chamois



1968 Vogue



So, who was our "Nut" this month who started this unique company back in 1874? Answer: George Singer

Bonus question: Who was the 2nd "Nut" in this tree, the apprentice at the company who bought the entire first year production of 50 cyclecars in 1912 and subsequently demonstrated his sales ability. Answer: William Rootes (William's story deserves another "Nut" tale all by itself.)

[Singer - Historic Vehicles](#) - In 1901 the successful Singer cycle company began motor vehicle production motorcycles, tricars and then four-wheel cars. Singer is best known for its pre-World War II overhead-camshaft powered light cars. Sadly, the company couldn't emulate that pre-War success after 1945 and it fell into Rootes hands in 1955. The end came relatively swiftly.

BTM Sidewalk Replacement – by Pete Stroble



The Museum's front entrance got a big improvement with the replacement of the deteriorated sidewalk. Besides it being an eyesore, it was also a safety hazard. Cracked and crumbling made for bad footing. It has probably been this way for 50 years.

After getting numerous bids in the \$6k to 7k region we settled on one that seemed to be able to do the job. A few days were lost while his excavator was busy on another job. The time table was bumping up on our Chili Cook-off event. They guaranteed that it would be usable by then and it was off to beat the clock.



The pictures tell the story with the old being ripped out. This portion of the sidewalk was 6 inches thick as it was once part of the truck loading dock. 8 cubic feet of concrete filled the hole and it finished out very nicely.



The next project is going to be the murals to go on the front panels. The murals will be painted this month and the wood replaced with better weather.



What does 2025 have in store for the BTM Collection?

It is amazing the number of opportunities that come the Museum's way. One of the past articles was about the numerous batches of new and used parts that were donated over a two-month period. Now the same thing is happening with interesting cars being offered to us and we are working on the details.



A beautiful 1954 Singer Roadster is just waiting on good weather to be transported to Ohio from Pennsylvania. It is a light-blue with matching interior panels and a tan soft top. It is an award winner from the Stowe, Vermont car show and we'd like to display it at a local Concourse or two. The Singer will fit in nicely with

our other Rootes group cars, the Sunbeam Imp, Alpine, and Humber Super Snipe.



A similar design to the Singer but with more modern lines is a silver 1953 Sunbeam Talbot Alpine from the east end of Pennsylvania. This marque was made famous with its appearance in "To Catch a Thief" with Grace Kelly driving and Cary Grant hanging on. This is another Concourse winner which will lift up the whole BTM collection. It is waiting on an appraisal before the owner commits.

Three Jaguar Mk II Sedans are in the que, just waiting on the space and a labor pool to move them. The owner is repairing his building and can't work with them there. One of the Sedans has a professionally rebuilt motor and fresh paint. It just needs final assembly. The second is complete but needs restored. The third is pretty much a parts car. Also part of the deal is the loan of a beautiful 50's era Rolls Royce Phaeton Limousine. Absolutely gorgeous! The engine is out and Giuseppe will be rebuilding it while the car is with us.

A 1986 Jaguar XJ-SC V12 fresh from California might make it to BTM before the end of the year. They were only built from 85 to 88 and have a bit of a quirky top design. It is extremely quick and that is why the owner is donating it to BTM for fear of it getting him in trouble.



There is a private collection in Indiana that is being dissolved. There are three Jensen Healeys that we hope to get one of. The price is right, \$500, and we don't have one. It is the same ohc slant four cylinder as in our Lotus Eclat. Also part of this collection is another Austin

Princess Limousine parts car, with spare engine, that Giuseppe is acquiring. This will make four of them in our building and will make it very handy as we continue working on getting the BTM Princess running.



We continue to pursue a Double Decker bus for the BTM collection. There is one just an hour away that might be donated or sold reasonably, just got to make the deal. One of our members is working on yet another one in eastern PA going for \$30,000. He is trying to get it donated or get a steep discount. This owner is up in years and has 9 other buses to worry about. Maybe he would like to keep his legacy alive by preserving one of his buses in a museum. Both of these buses seem to be complete but will require some work. And then there are the logistics of transporting them and where/ how to store these monsters.

What does the future hold for us? Our hope is that this article doesn't jinx any of the deals.

Holiday Party at BTM



26 members and friends joined us at BTM for a fun Holiday Social in the heated Library. It was a good time to celebrate the season with fellow enthusiasts who have put so much into the Museum's progress this year.

With Lasagna as the main Entree, a delicious ensemble of covered dishes and desserts wetted everyone's appetite and kept spirits high. The merriment escalated with the White Elephant gift exchange. In numerical order, a gift was picked from an overflowing table of gifts. A gift could be "stolen" by another person if they gave up their number. Let the drama begin!



A nicely drawn and framed Bugeye was stolen by Bugeye owner Jimmy Dean. He later negotiated to get a gag oversized trailer ball to put on it. Nick Besch got a Roto toilet cleaner which we were not sure if it was for the porcelain bowl or the human posterior. Stan got a Jackson Pollock puzzle that looks to be unsolvable. A "How to Poo at Work" book, three bottles of BS spices, and a grass covered toilet seat were a few of the other high-class gifts.

As always with a great group of people, it was a fun, very memorable party. Now to start searching for next year's greatest gag gift.

Speaking of searches for gifts ...

Sale of 1983 and 1987 Jaguar XJ6's?
Anyone game to give them a little TLC?

Lo-Cost Project – Lotus Seven clone donated by Harold Davis of Illinois. Frame, some panels, A arms, coil overs, fuel cell, 2 transmissions, differential, drive shafts, Wilwood disc brakes, etc. All for sale.



EDITOR WANTED – DEAD OR ALIVE by Karl Strauch

It has been a real honor and a pleasure to have been the *British Automobile* newsletter editor for the past 2+ years. I recently had a near-death medical experience and was in the hospital for 37 days. The Bible says that the span of a man's life shall be 70 years, perhaps 80 if all goes well. At 83, I am now beyond the 4th quarter and in "sudden death overtime." As such, I regret that I need to resign from the position of editor and focus on health.

Some folks might think that periodic newsletters are a thing of the past now that we have so many other forms of instant communication available to us. I believe newsletters still have significant value and convey past moments of glory as well as portray inspirational visions of the future, all with positive attitudes and good humor.

If truth be known, my favorite high school subject was English. My teacher strongly encouraged creativity. One assignment was to analyze one act of *Macbeth*. I didn't have the faintest clue what to write, knew I did not want an F but would be thrilled to escape with a D, so I simply translated every line into words we used in 1958. Would you believe she gave me an A for it, along with the comment, "*This is marvelous. Without a word of explanation you have proven that Shakespeare was a master of the language because your paper was lousy.*"

Throughout my senior year, we had to write a paper about some phase of English life during that period. I found a book on the development of English ships from the very early periods to the modern era. By some miracle, each of my papers got an A. At the end of that year, she said we could write an article about any topic we wanted. I asked if I could write about the development of English ships from the early era to the modern era. She said okay, so I just stapled all of my A papers together and resubmitted them. During my oral presentation to the class, I showed an 8mm movie that I had taken of the British ships at Jamestown, with frequent momentary clips of my fellow classmates running for touchdowns at recent football games.

Her inspirations significantly contributed to my ability to write technical papers during my 47+ year career as an engineer with 6 major food packaging companies and to enjoy writing for several different car clubs.

The first was the Basso Presto Sports Car Club's "*Beep Sheet*" in Mankato, MN in the late 1960 where I wrote a monthly column with a photo of the back end of my 1966 Corvair Corsa and the title "*Hot Air*".

The second was as editor of the B&M Beans Co "*BeansTalk*" in Portland, ME. One month, Jean Shepherd wrote an article for me. That was quite a thrill !!

At the end of the 1970s into the early 1980s, I was co-editor of the SCCA Glen Region's "*Sparkplug*" newsletter. I bought my 1st Mini, a 1967 Austin Cooper 998 from Doug and Laurie at Mini City. Unfortunately, the huge A&P food packaging plant that I worked for near Watkins Glen suddenly closed in 1982 and put 1500 of us out of work. I subsequently moved to jobs in Arizona, Illinois, and then Massachusetts in the next 6 years, buying 2 more Minis along the way. (Minis grow on you. They are like potato chips. You can never have just one.)



At the end of 1987, I moved to Missouri with all 3 Minis on the floor of the moving van and all of our other worldly possessions put on decking above them. The day after we moved in, someone knocked on our door. "Pardon me, do you have any little British cars here?" One of our new neighbors had a friend who also had 3 Minis and who immediately welcomed us into a small group known as the Gateway Mini Enthusiasts. I have always tried to adapt to the ways of the natives, rather than try to change them, but I could not resist suggesting that they think bigger, like Intergalactic Mini Enthusiasts. We ultimately compromised and settled on this monicker:



Here below are my first 3 Minis after restoration efforts.



My '70 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow was too ostentatious. My son and I had an awesome 18-day Alaskan road trip. My grandson Aaron just had to have his own Mini, too.



My daughter Karla and I bought 2002 MINI Cooper Ss. My grandson Hunter loved his MINI Cooper S in Japan. I recently bought a 2012 MINI Cooper S Coupe to enjoy.



I sincerely regret having to resign as editor and strongly support the visionary mission of the British Transportation Museum. Editing can be a real hoot. Try it. You'll like it !