

# British Automobile



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Museum tours are available by appointment.  
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## **NEXT MEETING – 7pm February 15 (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday)**

**2022 Year in Review – by Pete Stroble** - 2022 was a busy, successful year for BTM. The highlights were:

Five vehicles were donated to BTM. They were a 1965 Spitfire, 1979 MGB, 1980 Ducati Motorcycle (since sold), 1960 Austin Princess Limo, and a 1960 Triumph TR3A. Two significant loaned vehicles that came to us are a 1926 Rolls Royce Phantom and a 1960 MGA Roadster collaborative project.

Two major building projects were undertaken. Clyde Collins took the lead in the replacement of the three troublesome overhead doors. Clyde researched the doors on the market and saved BTM a bunch of money. He, with some help, has installed two of the three. The other project is the “re-roping” of one of our elevators by TK Elevators.

Major events at BTM were kicked off by our annual May car show, “Brits@Museum”. In July we hosted Mini Meet East to 85 Minis. In October we had our popular “Chili Cook-off”. In December our Holiday Party was a bunch of fun. Significant outings of BTM were our Austin K8 Lorry going to the Dayton BCD and the 1926 Rolls Royce displayed at the Dayton Concourse (winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Preservation Class).

Besides the usual visitor attendance, we hosted five large group tours ranging from the Mercedes and Daimler Clubs to groups of mentally and physically challenged adults.

Post Covid, it was time to advance some of our skills. SCORE (Service Corp of Retired Executives) holds

training seminars for non-profits. Three were attended; Branding, Strategic Planning, and Financial Management. Bradyware held a Fundraising seminar and Meta offered six mentoring opportunities that we took advantage of.

On the PR side; the Queen’s death brought two TV stations to BTM for interviews. An unfortunate way to get publicity. BTM is being advised that we should play up the popularity of all things Royal to bring more visitors to the Museum. Let’s see how this might play out in 2023.

Looking forward, 2023 will be BTM’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the building loan will be paid off in July. Time to start celebrating! How might we mark these significant milestones? Stay tuned.



## **BRITISH K6 TELEPHONE BOX**

In 1935 the K6 (kiosk number six) was designed to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. It went into production in 1936. K6 was the first red telephone kiosk to be extensively used outside London, and many thousands were deployed in virtually every town and city. It replaced most existing kiosks and established thousands of new sites.

The K6 phone box was produced at the Lion Foundry in Kirkcintilloch until 1984 and weighted 1512 lbs. This replica is almost full size, being 6 inches narrower and deep and almost full height.



It was handmade by long time British Car Club of Greater Cincinnati member, Don Fales. A “bloody” good job Don.

## 1960 Austin Princess Limousine

For a country known for its small space efficient cars, it is strange that the British Transportation Museum has been on the receiving end of the larger varieties. The latest is a 1960 Austin Princess Limousine with an Austin drivetrain and a hand-built body by coachbuilder Vanden Plas from their Kingsbury works, North London. At a tad over 4000 lbs. and almost 18 ft. long, it can't be missed.

This recent donation came to BTM from Sandra Beane Milton in memory of her husband William. After a visit to England in 1984 they purchased the Princess from Struan Erskine, a dealer in vintage and collector cars near London. It was shipped to New York and they drove it to Cleveland, Ohio. William already had two Corvettes and an old Ford Pick-up in his collection. The Princess was going to be a fun car and possibly lead into a limousine service.

The Princess would be a very regal vehicle for weddings and ceremonial functions. It is all white with chrome trim and wheel covers. A factory option was to have your monogram on the doors. Ours has "ES", or is it "SE"? Could it stand for Struan Erskine from whom it was purchased? Was Erskine the original owner? They appear to be out of business so the trail has run cold. The interior features a huge back seating area with two occasional seats that could be folded out of the floor giving a total seating for seven. It has a sliding glass partition between the driver and rear passengers with fold out picnic tables.

Our Princess has a soft fabric cloth interior in the passenger compartment and leather in front for the driver. It was thought the leather was too rough on the fine clothes of the wealth. Later on, the thinking changed and leather was used throughout.

Power for the Princess was by an Austin D Series straight 6-cylinder 4-liter OHV engine. With the single carb, it could accelerate to 60 mph in 20 seconds and reach a top speed of 90 mph.

The suspension consisted of coil springs on the front and semi elliptic leaf springs on the back with a large anti-roll bar. A "jack all" type of built in jacking system was powered off the battery to allow changing a tire or other under car maintenance without hunting for a manual jack.

Interestingly only 3,238 DM4 Limousines were made between 1952 and 1968. Besides our 1960, we have on loan a 1966 owned by Giuseppe who does private auto repair in our shop. Yet a third Princess was in our area and it was the wedding car for my daughter Amy. It is now in Florida. Once you start looking at something rare, they seem to pop out of everywhere.

## Sandra Beane Milton, donor of the Austin Princess in her husband William's memory



Loading the Princess



Princess at BTM



Before cleaning



Rear passenger area with "Jump Seats"



Privacy divider



Dashboard



Acrylic column shift knob with 4-spd pattern inside



Austin Princess after initial cleaning



Monogram "SE" or "ES" ?



Fuel filler lid



Rear wheel spats



Our next adventure for the Princess is to get her running. Wish us luck!

The Austin D-series engine is a straight-six engine made between 1939 and 1968. It was used in a number of trucks and various cars including the Jensen Interceptor and 541. The basic design is similar to the Chevrolet "Stovebolt" engines used in Bedford vehicles.

Photo from Wikipedia "Bedford Vehicles" website page:



Bedford was established in 1931 to build light, medium, and heavy commercial vehicles for worldwide sale. Manufacturing was done by Vauxhall Motors, a subsidiary of General Motors. Chevrolet's "Stovebolt" overhead-valve inline 6-cylinder engine introduced in 1929 proved to be smooth-running and very reliable. It's easy to see why other companies would use that as a design concept on which to build their own engines. Toyota apparently reverse-engineered it to design their first engine, the Type A, and used it from 1935 to 1947.

#### 1954 Austin LWB Loadstar truck



#### K9 lorry at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon, UK



#### Austin Princess DM4 motorhome conversion



#### Speaking of motorhome conversions ...

Our **M.A.D.M.E.N.** Scavenger Hunt leading up to the 2009 West Meets East Mini Meet held in MINIsota to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mini was simple, "just buy a treasure at a tourist trap in each state that you drive through on your way to the Meet, including one bought in Alaska, celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, too." Below are the intrepid adventurers who made that trek, including Allen Frost in his "Wild Goose" camper Mini, a wee bit smaller than the Austin Princess DM4 motorhome conversion shown above.



#### West Meets East Mini Meet 2009 in MINIsota ...



## IS RIGHT-HAND-DRIVE UN-AMERICAN?

There is a large amount of both disinformation and misinformation being spread around these days. Our mission with the *British Automobile* is to provide you with accurate information about everything that we publish in these pages. Take this article as an example. Please let us know if what is stated here agrees with your understanding of the historical facts and/or if you are aware of anything that should be stated otherwise.

Many people seem to think that Right-Hand-Drive is un-American. Here are some observations that I have made since I was born just before World War II. Virtually all horse-drawn vehicles are Right-Hand-Drive.



Virtually all power boats are Right-Hand-Drive.



Virtually all postal delivery trucks are Right-Hand-Drive.



Virtually all railroad locomotives are Right-Hand-Drive.



Virtually all American cars <1910 were Right-Hand-Drive



All American cars after 1915 have been Left-Hand-Drive.

**Who moved the steering wheel?** Millions of cars have been crashing and killing Americans ever since then. A friend in Australia who has been driving RHD cars all his life told me that back in the early days of our colonies in the 1600s and 1700s, we used to walk and drive vehicles past each other in the British  $\uparrow\downarrow$  way, but when we decided to break away from Britain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1700s, we decided to switch to the  $\downarrow\uparrow$  way to prove that we were Americans, not British loyalists. Nobody changed what side things were driven from until someone did that ~150 years later. Rumor has it Henry Ford had something to do with that when he introduced his LHD 1909 *Ford*. All his previous *Ford*s had been RHD. The switch might have been made so that he could step into his car that was parked next to boardwalks without having to walk out onto a dirt road and then climb into his car with mud and horse droppings on his shoes. That seems like a reasonable answer to "who done it?" and "why?". What say ye? What really happened? *Karl*

**MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE ASYLUM ... Karl Strauch**

I often wonder why native American “Indians” never had any wheels, thousands of years after wheels were invented and widely used all around the world. They were experts at dragging things around using long sticks that they could also use to support their tipis.



“Indians” were also extremely adept at using watercraft to traverse many streams and rivers. *British Automobile* focuses almost all our articles on British cars, but as the British Transportation Museum, our newsletter probably should occasionally delve into other modes of transport.

My final Senior English paper in high school was about the development of British ships from the 1<sup>st</sup> one until modern times. I got an “A” on it, several months before the Mini was introduced to the world in 1959. That was the last time I ever thought about British boats. I’ve been a starry-eyed kid about British cars ever since.

The earliest descriptions of British maritime history using rafts and dugout canoes date back to about 600 BC, although the “Dover Bronze Age Boat” made of oak and unearthed in 1992 was dated back to 1600 BC.



Julius Caesar made several expeditions to Britain in 55 BC and 54 BC but many of his Roman boats were wrecked during it. The sea-borne invasion of Britain in AD 43 under the direction of emperor Claudius with 40,000 men was more successful.

The Romans controlled Britain until the early 5<sup>th</sup> century when British maritime trade extended across the North Sea and down into the Mediterranean. Northern Britain was attacked by 300-500 ships from the north in the spring of 1066 and the Norman conquest of England occurred in the autumn of 1066. From the early 15<sup>th</sup> century into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, British ships sailed around the world to find new routes and new trading partners. Sir Humphrey Gilbert founded a colony in Newfoundland in 1583. Sir Walter Raleigh established one in Roanoke in 1585. Another colony was set up in Jamestown in 1607. Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in the *Mayflower* in 1620.



Meanwhile, back in the United Kingdom, canals were extremely useful in transporting people and items around the interior of the country. The Foss Dyke was built around AD 120 by the Romans and refurbished in 1121. It may be the oldest canal in England still in use. This sketch of a canal aquaduct crossing a river below illustrates several forms of motive power that would have been employed during that era before steam and gas engines: sail, horses/mules, and/or oars/paddles.



Thomas Newcomen invented an “atmospheric engine” in 1712. James Watt improved that design in 1776 to create a lighter, more powerful steam engine to power steamboats before the later invention of internal combustion engines, eliminating horses/mules etcetera. If y’all are interested, we could easily include more about British water transportation developments since 1776. Would you enjoy an article about BTM’s currach? *Karl*