

Triumph Newsletter



TSOA

TRIUMPH SPORTS OWNERS ASSOCIATION



EDITORIAL:

The Story of TR7 to Date

It is now four years since the original announcement of the TR7. The January 1975 front page story in the Triumph Newsletter was headlined "Triumph's Entirely New Sports Car . . ." Since then we have reported many advances and changes, some of which are listed below. Although there have been only two complete years of production, some 50,000 Triumph TR7 models have been sold in America.

1975: The public announcement was at Boca Raton in Florida Jan. 18/24. When auto editors road tested the car for the first time, it received wide acclaim. Production started in April and by the end of the year 6211 TR7 models had been sold in the U.S.

1976: This was the first full year of production and marketing in the U.S. 15,696 TR7s were delivered. In 1976, an SCCA racing program was inaugurated in the East and West, Lee Mueller's Huffaker TR7 from California finishing second in the national championships.

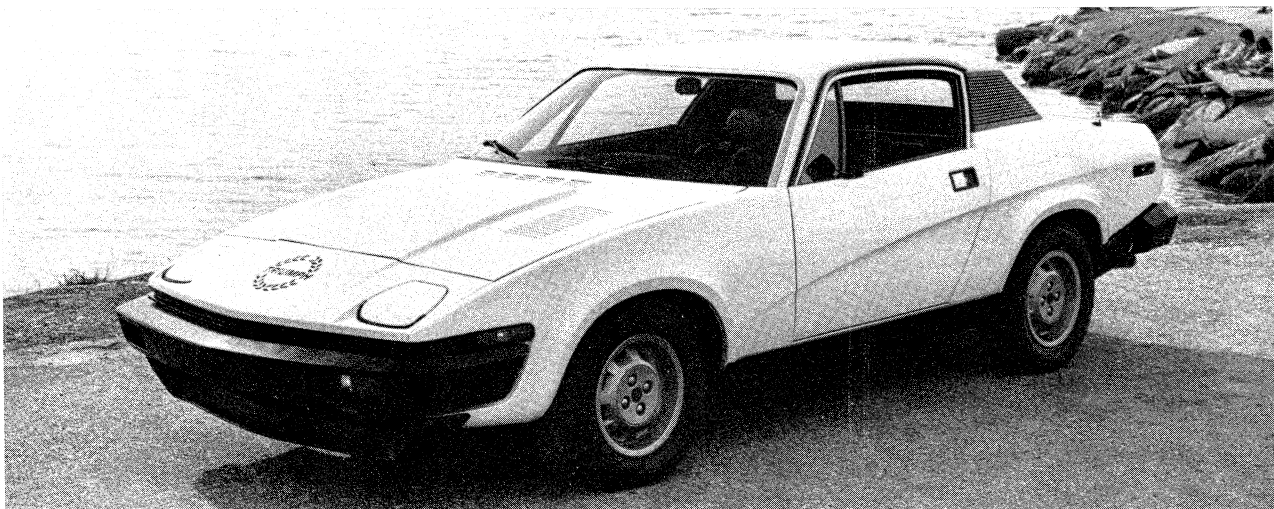
1977: The 1977 line was announced with major advances

in specification. Standard equipment was now a 5-speed transmission. Automatic was also offered. 18,068 TR7s were delivered. Once again TR7 was second (and third) in the SCCA championships. John Buffum and Vicki's TR7 won the SCCA Pro Rally Championship. A special TV film "Buffum & Co" was produced to mark this victory.

1978: Since production was not reaching satisfactory levels at Speke, UK assembly was moved in April to Triumph's traditional factory at Canley near Coventry. Production resumed in October. This meant a gap in sales progress with deliveries reduced to 6,210.

1979: Production builds again and 1979 TR7 Coupes are available at dealers. The TR7 with its high performance 2-litre power train, wide 185/70 steel-belted radial ply tires, lower rear suspension, front air dam and bright interior styling (tartan trim option) is more popular than ever. Additional new models—a convertible and a 3½-litre V8—are planned for introduction in the near future.

(More about the 1979 TR7 on next page)



Bearing a new laurel garland symbol, the 1979 TR7 coupe is now available at dealers.

1979 Triumph TR7 Announced

1979 Triumph TR7 at Auto Expo

The 1979 Triumph TR7 sports car, latest version of the wedge-shaped coupe, was announced at Auto Expo New York in April. The 1979 TR7 retains all of the car's advanced engineering and styling features.

Among the TR7's most noteworthy features are its aerodynamic wedge-shaped styling; slant-four 1998cc (122 cu. in.) overhead camshaft alloy engine; 5-speed manual transmission as standard equipment with 3-speed automatic optional (except California); and a modern suspension system with full 8 inches of travel which provides a ride more comfortable than any traditional sports car.

Interior specifications include choice of red or green nylon broadcloth tartan plaid or beige bucket seats and door panel inserts, with color coordinated deep pile carpeting. Factory installed air conditioning and a sun roof are available as options.

Running changes introduced to TR7 over the last couple of years include heavier duty rear axle assembly, wider 185/70 steel-belted radial tires, lowered rear suspension and front air dam; plus such styling refinements as ventilated road wheel covers and new interior door lights.

TR7 durability was amply demonstrated during the 1977 and 1978 high performance rally seasons by Triumph driver John Buffum of Burlington, Vt. He won both the Sports Car Club of America Pro Rally Championship and the joint SCCA/Canadian Auto Sports Club's North American Rally Cup in 1977. In 1978, he again won those titles and added the North American Rally and Racing Association championship. (See the Sport, p. 11.)

TR7 production was moved from Liverpool to Coventry last year.

1979 Retail Prices

Effective March 16 and April 1, 1979, the Triumph Spitfire and TR7 suggested retail prices at East and West coast ports of entry are:

1979 Triumph Spitfire	\$6,095
1979 TR7 Coupe	\$7,695

Optional accessories include for the Spitfire, hardtop (\$325) and overdrive (\$265); and for the TR7 coupe, air conditioning (\$530), automatic transmission (\$215), sun roof (\$245), and metallic paint (\$75).

1979 Triumph Colors

Attractive colors are especially appealing to sports car owners and for 1979 Triumph offers a range of seven bright color combinations for the TR7 coupe and Spitfire models.

These are Brooklands Green, Carmine, Inca Yellow, Pageant Blue, Russet Brown, Vermilion and White.

Interior colors for the TR7 are color co-ordinated in Green or Red Tartan, or in plain Beige, for the individual

TRIUMPH TR7/TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	
No. of Cylinders	4 ohc
Bore/Stroke	3.56/3.07 in 90.3/78 mm
Displacement	122 ci/1998 cc
Compression Ratio	8.0:1
Carburetors/FI	2c
Horsepower/RPM	85.5/5,500
Torque/RPM	104.5 lb ft/3,250
CHASSIS	
Transmission	M5 (A3 OPT*)
Rear Axle Ratio	3.90M/3.27/A3
Suspension Front/Rear	Ind coil/coil
Wheels and Tires (in.)	
	13x4.5J 185/70 HR 13/M5 175/70 HR 13/A3
Braking System, Front/Rear	
	Disc/Drum
DIMENSIONS & CAPACITIES	
Curb Weight (lb.)	2,454/M5
Wheelbase (in.)	85
Track (Front/Rear) (in.)	55.5/55.3
Overall Length (in.)	164.3
Overall Width (in.)	66.2
Overall Height (in.)	49.4
Ground Clearance (in.)	4.5
Luggage Trunk Capacity (cu. ft.)	10.3
Turning Circle (ft.)	29
Fuel Tank Capacity (gal.)	14.6
EPA-MPG Highway/City	29/19 M5 26/18 M5 Calif. 26/20 A3
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE (POE)	\$7,695

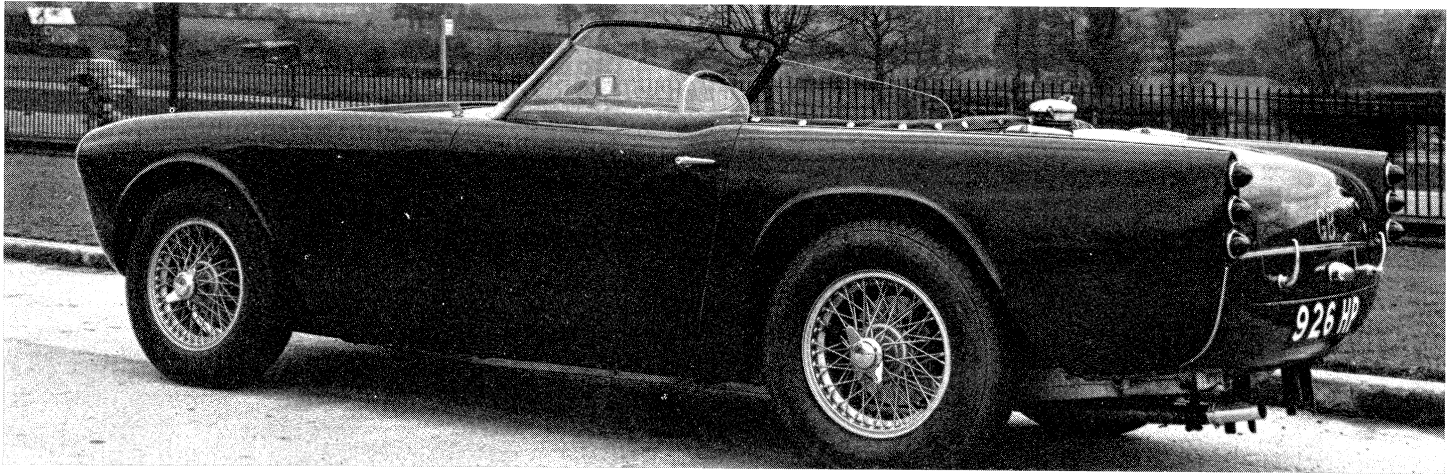
*Not available in California.

bucket seat center panels and for the door side panels. Similarly, the Spitfire interior has hounds-tooth check pattern in Beige or Black.

What Sort of People Buy TR7?

In marketing automobiles, car manufacturers keep close tabs on the sort of people who buy their cars. Surveys are undertaken regularly and are used by the advertising agencies in advising on campaigns and the media to be used. The type of owner is also an important factor in planning future car models. Triumph Newsletter readers will be interested to learn the "profile" of the current TR7 buyer and the following findings are taken from a recent survey by the advertising agency Romano Berger & Wollman/Advertising Inc. of New York.

TR7 owners are 70 percent men and nearly 30 percent women. The proportion of women owners has been increasing each year. The median ages are just over 30 years for men, just under 30 for women; with median incomes of some \$15,500 a year. Some 85 percent are college educated and about 60 percent are single. The proportion of married owners tends to decrease, which may be a reflection of the times rather than the type of car owned! As so often with imported cars, well over half of TR7 sales are made without trade-ins.



By 1960, this 135 mph TRS had been developed to take the twin-cam engine but real success did not come till 1961.

THE TRIUMPH TR3S AND TRS

Recalling some glory days in the Le Mans 24-Hour with Triumph's twin camshaft racers

by Richard Langworth

Finding a successor to the TR3 about 1956 took a long time, much longer than it should. Fortunately, however, Standard-Triumph started thinking about new models even before the original TR had reached maturity, which proved to be a very wise policy. The basic problem, of course, was that the TR2/TR3 was forging its own legend; whatever followed it would have to be at least as good, if not better, in all respects.

Perhaps if Alick Dick had not authorized special twin-cam engines to be built with an entry at Le Mans in mind, and perhaps if Harry Webster had not made sure that these engines could easily be "productionized", then the job could have been done much quicker. Even if the twin-cam engines had been physically no bulkier than the standard production unit it would have helped. As it happened, two dimensions, 3¾ in. (the extra length of the twin-cam engine) and 6 in. (the extra length of wheelbase thought necessary to house it) caused no end of complication.

Le Mans, 1955

It all stemmed from Triumph's successful showing at Le Mans in 1955 with the disc-braked TR2s. Although all three cars had finished, and finished well, they were not fast enough to challenge other cars in their 2-litre class, nor could they stop two complete teams of Porsches and Bristols from beating them in the team contest. Alick Dick was anxious for Triumph to make a better showing in future events, and demanded to know what could be done about it.

Ted Grinham, who knew nothing about competition cars, preferred to leave all this to Harry Webster, who knew quite a lot. Webster realized that Alick Dick's desire for Triumph to win that team contest could not be satisfied with the existing power unit (after all, it had been designed in 1945/46 and it had never been intended for racing), and therefore he proposed a new power unit.

If all had gone well, Triumph could have been back at Le Mans in 1958, as the engine ran for the first time in 1957, but in any event the new cars would not be race-ready until 1959, although they had been built in 1958. Work on the new engine, mainly done by Dick Astbury, took a long time to complete (if ever there was a production-car crisis luxuries like competitions projects had to be put away for the time being).

The 20X Engine

The new unit, which Harry Webster reminds us was as much of a high-performance test-bed for the latest die-casting techniques as it was a racing engine, was intended for the 2-litre category, because that was the racing class with which Triumph were familiar, and because it was a convenient production-car size if ever it had to be translated into quantity production. It was physically quite large, even though its cylinder dimensions—90mm bore and 78mm stroke (1985cc)—were not far removed from the 83 x 92mm, 1991cc layout of the standard engine.

Because it had a five-bearing crankshaft, and because it was stressed with an eventual power output of 100bhp/litre—in other words with a maximum output of 200bhp in mind—the load-carrying castings were solid and rugged. The fact that it had a "classic" twin-overhead-camshaft cylinder-head, with the camshafts driven from the nose of the crank in the accepted manner, helped to make it a big and bulky engine; it was 3¾ in. longer than a TR3 pushrod engine, but at 438 lb. it was actually slightly lighter.

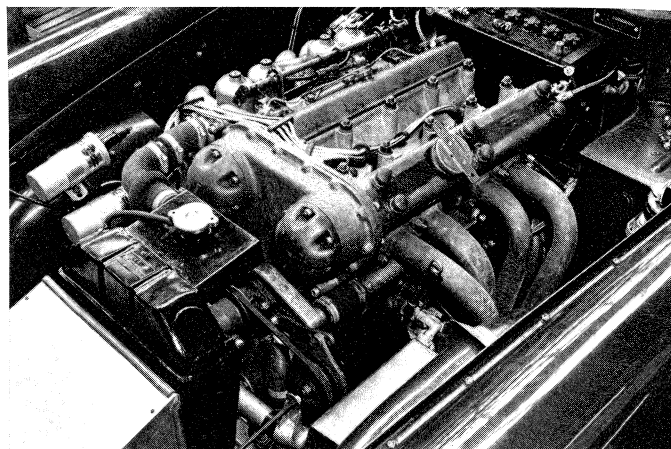
The construction was novel, in order to make the die-casting development simple. Harry Webster would have liked to make every major casting in light-alloy, but the pressure of development and the need to get it right first time meant that the crankcase/block was in cast-iron. In general it was an intricate but extremely logical sandwich—

The Triumph TR3S and TRS (Continued)

the levels being sump, lower crankcase, upper crankcase, block, water jacket and cylinder-head—with through-bolts from the main-bearing caps to the cylinder-head. The cylinder-head layout was typical of its day, with two overhead camshafts, and valves operated by the popular method of coil springs and inverted “bucket” tappets, the valves being opposed at an angle of 73 degrees. There were part-spherical combustion-chambers, single offset sparking plugs, and the inlet manifold stubs were cast in unit with the cylinder-head. Carburation was by the rare twin-choke SU units (two chokes and two cylinders on a single twin-choke central casting) as were being used on Climax FPF racing engines of the period.

One visual detail made the 20X engine (for such was its code) stand out—literally—from its contemporaries. All the auxiliary drives were contained in the timing arrangements hidden behind the engine's front cover, and the sprockets at the nose of each camshaft had bulbous covers. Then, as now, most new projects attracted nicknames and the 20X engine was no exception. It just so happened that at the time one of the supporting characters in a popular Arthur Askey TV series was a girl with an extremely well-developed and attractive figure. It would be true to say that her bust was her most prominent asset, so it was hardly surprising that her stage name—Sabrina—was applied to the Triumph engine, and like all good pet names it stuck. Before long even the directors were using it.

Right from the start, Sabrina, though quite heavy, was



The 20X twin-cam 'over-square' 2-litre Sabrina engine developed 155 bhp at 6500 rpm.

also powerful, and it all looked very promising. For its first races the engine produced more than 150bhp at 6500rpm, at least 50 more than the output developed by the pushrod engines in the 1955 Le Mans cars, and probably 20 to 25 more than a super-tuned pushrod unit could manage while keeping its reliability.

Excerpted from the new book “Triumph Cars: The Complete 75-Year History” by Richard Langworth and Graham Robson. Autographed copies (by both authors) available from Dragonwyck Publishing, Box 385-T, Contoocock, NH 03229, at \$25.95. (Bookstore price \$29.95).

(to be continued in next issue)

CLUB NEWS

1959 Triumph Rally of Europe Reunion

In April a small group of Triumph rallyists gathered at the home of John and Cora Giesen in Boca Raton, Florida, to exchange reminiscences of their 1959 excursion around Europe in TR3s. (See TN, Jan./Feb. 1979, p. 5.)

The Triumph Rallies of Europe were run from 1957 through 1962. Participants ordered a new TR3 for delivery in England and at the same time reserved space on the tour. As a package, considering first-class accommodations and many extras, it was a very good deal, approximately \$3,000, all-inclusive for one person, for a car (to keep), hotels, most

meals and sight-seeing, etc., for 3-4 weeks in eight countries.

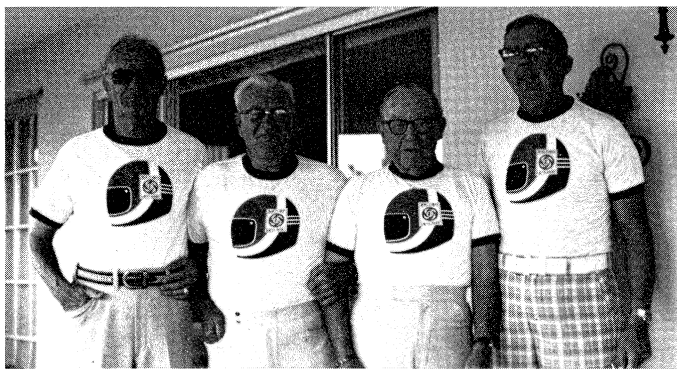
The 1959 group has been the most cohesive, holding reunions in 1960 and 1961 in Michigan and now, 20 years later, in Florida.

Besides John and Cora Mae, there were Mr. and Mrs. George Cheadle, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Strale and Mr. and Mrs. Larry Kroha. Slides were shown, memories exchanged and a general good time was had by all.

North New Jersey Club Formed

Bill Sohl, the former Long Island club luminary, has got his new club going in New Jersey. They held their first meeting March 29 at Budd Lake with people driving Triumphs in from all over North N.J. Official title is North New Jersey Triumph Association and they already have a nice club badge and a newsletter, plus five TR3s, two TR4s, three TR250s, two GT6s, seven TR6s and seven Spitfires among the members' cars.

Their first big event will be to join in with the June 17 Concours and Picnic being organized at Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, N.Y. by the Long Island Triumph Association. Those interested should contact Bill Sohl (201-691-8116) 29 Netcong Road, Budd Lake, N.J. 07828.



20 years after the 1959 Triumph Rally of Europe these four participants held a reunion in April at Boca Raton, Fla. (LtoR) George Cheadle, Larry Kroha, John Giesen and Fred Strale.

The Sport



Triumph's World of Motor Sport

by Visor

California in New Championship Bid

Spitfire 1500 driver Jerry Barker of Cerritos, Calif. is bent on repeating his 1978 performance—namely to completely blow away the F Production competition in SCCA's Southern Pacific Division and earn a high placed starting spot in the run-offs at Road Atlanta.

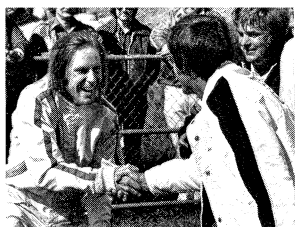
As of this report, Jerry has won three SCCA nationals making him a sure candidate for Southern Pacific Divisional Champion. That's a title he won in 1978 and 1977.

Jerry is now in his eleventh year of racing, most of it with Spitfires. In 1975 he won the SCCA National Championship in GP with a Spitfire. He also ran Spitfires in 1969 and 1970. In 1971-73 he drove formula cars.

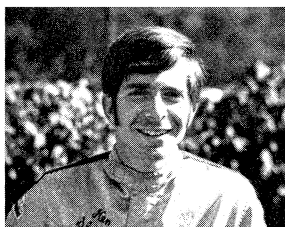
In 1970 he came within three laps of winning the GP National Championship at Road Atlanta. He was leading at that point but his motor let go.

What makes Jerry Barker special for Triumph enthusiasts is that his father Ed won the first American Road Race of Champions in 1964 with a GP Spitfire. Ed still plays an active role in the preparation of his son's Spitfire and is much in evidence at Road Atlanta during the run-offs.

* * *



Jerry Barker



Ken Slagle

A "China Syndrome" Racer?

Ken Slagle of Wellsville, Pa. hopes to run the "China Syndrome" TR8 in east coast SCCA nationals. Ken's home isn't far from Three Mile Island. He and his wife/crew chief Janet steadfastly deny that the race car glows in the dark.

Ken is about the most unswerving fan Triumph has ever had. He started racing with a TR3 in 1967. By 1970, he was in an F Production Spitfire and qualified for the SCCA run-offs. He's been to the run-offs every year since and in 1975 won the National Championship.

In 1976, Ken switched to a TR7. That's when he bought a wedge shaped transporter for the race car.

* * *

The Rally Circuit Fires Up

On the rally side, John Buffum expects to have his new TR8 out of the box and on the road at the SCCA's Susque-

hanock Trail rally in Northern Pennsylvania June 9-10. He'll park the TR7 he's driving now on the West coast and use it for some SCCA and NARRA events in that part of the country while running the TR8 in the east, mid-west and Canada.

Ex road-racer Jon Woodner also hopes to have his TR8 ready for the Susquehanock Trail. Jon says his co-driver will be fellow Washingtonian Jerry Hinkle, a former MG Midget racer in the Central Division. Jerry is now with the Department of Energy.

* * *

TR2 and TR3 National Meet

We look forward to reporting the fifth annual national meeting of the Triumph Register of America. This is for Triumph cars of the TR2 and TR3 series only. The June 7 through 10 event returns, after a couple of years, to Burr Oak State Park near Glouster, Ohio. The Wayne National Forest there makes a beautiful setting for the meeting and the Concours with its five classes. Information (if its not too late) from Jim Johnson, Rt. 1, 1575 Logan, Thornville Rd., Rushville, Ohio 43150.

* * *

Long Island Rally and Tour in July

Following their annual Concours and Picnic in June, the Long Island Triumph Association will run a rally and tour July 21. This starts at Roosevelt Field 8:30 a.m. that Saturday morning and the tour is to the Henry Austin Clark car museum at Southampton. Contact, John Rago, 27 Squirrel Lane, Levittown, N.Y. 11756 (516-735-0343).

Important Forthcoming Sport Events for Triumph Cars

- June 7/10 National TR $\frac{2}{3}$ Meet/Concours (Triumph Reg. of A), Gloucester, Ohio
- June 17 3rd annual Concours/Picnic (Long Island TA), East Meadow, N.Y.
- July 21 Rally/Tour (Long Island TA), Roosevelt Field to Southampton, N.Y.
- Aug. 17/19 N.A. Triumph Challenge IV (Detroit TSC), Waterford, Mich.
- Sept. 13/16 International Rally ('STIR' IV) (Vintage TR) Dearborn, Mich.

(Information is requested by Triumph Newsletter from the Triumph club organizing at the New Hope auto show August 12. Please supply name and address to which Triumph car entries should be sent.)

Special Number Plates

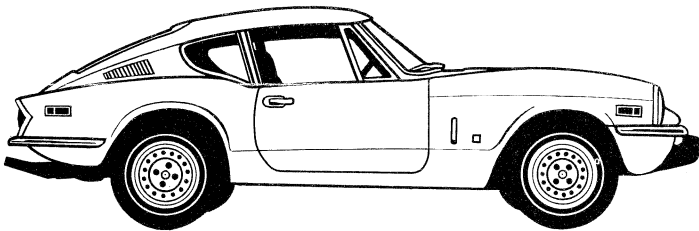
In the last issue of Triumph Newsletter, a reader, R. E. Rogers of Little Rock, Arkansas, was inquiring about special number plates of the English type. We have now learned that a leading manufacturer is Hills (Patents) Limited, Hills House, London Road, Staines, Middlesex, England TW184HJ. Write for details and prices.

Where to Find Goodyear Redwalls?

"I'm a proud owner of a 74½ TR6. I keep this classic in cherry condition—which means all replacement parts must be stock. Now the rub: I'm finding it exceedingly difficult to obtain Goodyear Redwall 185 SR-15 radial tires. If any fellow enthusiasts know where I can locate any of these tires (new or good used ones), I would appreciate the help."

—Stephen M. Kienzle, P.O. Box 457,
Montebello, CA 90640

(We talked to Goodyear but the Redline tire is out of production and no longer in the price book. Sorry, no stock available from Goodyear warehouses.—Tech Ed.)



GT6 Overheating

"I am requesting technical information regarding my GT6 (1973, KF21108U). There is an almost intolerable amount of heat seepage from the engine compartment into the passenger compartment. Apparently engine heat (exhaust system) is being trapped in the engine compartment. I am certain that this is a common problem for most GT6's. Has British Leyland issued any service information regarding this problem? Was air conditioning ever offered on the GT6 model range, or has anyone squeezed a TR6 unit into a GT6? Any information would be greatly appreciated as that heat problem along with a HOT Louisiana summer makes for a very miserable sports car!

Seriously, my wife and I are very high on BL products as we now own:

- 1973 Triumph Stag LE21429U
- 1973 GT6 KF21108U
- 1970 Jag XKE PIR12129
- 1960 Triumph TR3 TS63225LO

We have just completed a total restoration on the TR3 and are well underway on the E-Type (it was purchased wrecked)."

—Nick Tusa, 5900 Flagler St., Metairie, Louisiana 70003

(The company has never issued any service bulletins with regard to heat seepage into the passenger compartment. It is very important to make the following checks to minimize the exhaust heat. Ignition timing, air fuel ratio, security of manifold bolts and cooling system. These should be checked and set to specifications, to be sure of the best operating temperatures.

There has never been a Factory approved air conditioning unit for the GT6 but we have heard of GT6's with air conditioning operating in Florida.—Tech. Ed.)

FOR SALE

1955 TR2 long door, titled TS 3851E, original options (wires, o.d., hardtop, alum. valve cover). Also 1955 TR2 short door. Many, many new and used parts TR2 through 4A, including some TR4/A sheet-metal. Too many goodies to list. \$3500 for everything. Richard D. Barnes, 2301 Pebble Creek Rd., Winston-Salem NC 27107. (919) 788-7861.

TR2-6 wire wheels (2) 15x5½J 72 spoke, \$60 ea. TR2-6 wire wheel (1) 15x4½J 60 spoke chrome, \$60. TR4-6 tonneau cover, black, \$25. TR4-6 boot cover, black, \$20. TR3 wiring harness \$75. TR250 auto books service manual, \$7.50. All parts are new stock BLMC parts, prices include postage. Bill Redinger, 12118 Erskine Plaza, Omaha, Nebraska 68164. (402) 496-2006.

Hardtop for Spitfire MK II, steel and glass, good condition, yellow, \$115. plus freight transport. Jordan Zurbuchen, 3869 Adrian, Warren, Ohio 44484.

TR3 parts for sale: 4 doors, motor parts, rear axle, distributor, radiator, headlight brackets, suspension arms, vertical links, brake calipers, steering box, and many other: TR6 rear bumper 1972 model, transmission and rear axle parts, trunk lid, center console (black), door panels (brown), complete dash with gauges \$130. Two black seats, separate gauges, steering wheel, steering column, steering rack, front anti-sway bar, radiator, and more. Noel Reity, 501 St. Johns Dr., Camp Hill, Pa. 17011.

1957 TR3 with seized engine for parts or restoration. Many extras—factory hardtop, overdrive, American mags, new tires, new adjustable steering column, new front suspension, supercharger, and more. A bargain at \$450. Chris Klemmer, 713 Westover Dr., Lancaster, Pa. 17601. (717) 285-3647 (after 6 P.M.).

1959 TR3, very good condition, 54,000 original miles, black, wire wheels, Michelins, hard top, AM/FM \$2500. Bill Salancy, 20 Tod Road, Norwalk, Ct. 06851. (203) 846-3031.

1966 TR4A for restoration: rebuilt 130 hp engine, completely new front and rear suspension. Car complete—no collision damage but the usual rust. \$700. Much work already completed. Jack A. Taylor, 168 Art St., Ringwood, N.J. 07456. (201) 728-9203.

WANTED

TR6 Factory Hardtop, any color, call collect (516) 271-4349 after 6 p.m. or write Kent Hambrecht, 31 Bolan Drive, Huntington Sta., N.Y. 11746.

TR6 steel wheels, four needed with lugs, hub-caps and trim rings. Factory hard top for TR6. 4.11.1 ring and pinion, set-up if possible, for TR6. Cast sump to fit TR¾. John Taylor, 168 Art St., Ringwood, N.J. 07456. (201) 728-9203.

TR4A Bonnet Badge (or just chrome ring for same). Also am trying to locate TSOA newsletters volumes 12 through volume 14. Also still looking for good TR3, TR3A in Richmond vicinity. R. F. Gerow, 5008 Fairlake Lane, Glen Allen, Va. 23060.

Stage 2 camshaft, part No. V.432, for TR6. Len Renkenberger, 5 Miller Fall Ct., Derwood, Md. 20855.

TR2 and TR3 toys or models. Donald Koutny c/o Thomas Plumbing, 847-15 St. SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403.

TR6 stage II camshaft. Part No. V.432. Len Renkenberger, 5 Miller Fall Ct., Derwood, Md. 20855.

TR7 left door and dashboard top outer plastic. Bill Redinger, 12118 Erskine, Omaha, Neb. 68164. (402) 496-2006.

87mm piston and sleeve for TR4 engine. Contact: Bill Sohl, 29 Netcong Rd., Budd Lake, N.J. 07828. (201) 691-8116.

THE TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER—for Triumph enthusiasts

EDITOR: JOHN F. DUGDALE

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We shall be pleased to consider for publication any reports, photos and results of newsworthy Triumph events submitted by readers. Original articles, illustrations and technical notes will be paid for at our current rates. Six issues are published each year, bi-monthly.

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