



OVERDRIVE

The Newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Triumph Club

November 2002

Snowflakes!!!!!!!

I've tried to ignore them. I've looked the other way, and I've left the insurance running on the Spit, just in case. But I think no matter how hard I refuse to accept the fact, the cold season is upon us, the Triumphs have to be put away for the winter month. There's no way around this, winter has arrived.

Two days ago, I took the "Firefly" out for one last drive. On my way home from Ottawa, I found myself going north over Almonte, just to be able to drive a little longer, to enjoy the purring of the motor, the steady rattling of the luggage rack, the vibration of the poorly balanced wire wheels. It still seems like a miracle to me that this engine is actually running well, after 20 years of non-use and neglect, that I'm driving this Spitfire without too many break downs. I still don't trust the car completely. There's always an assortment of spare bits ready and waiting in the bowels of the boot, the Haynes neatly folded on the side pocket of my tool bag. The hypochondriac in me emerging, I can't deny it. But, to my defence I have to point out, that I don't carry a cell phone.....yet.

So, I guess, I'll just give up on the acceptance of ice and snow. I'll look forward to those long winter evenings working in the garage, to the restoration process of old "Rusty", the GT6, that's waiting for the kiss of the princess. What are you all doing for fun this season?

I'm waiting for reports.

Cheers

Liv



The Heat is on

Watkins Glen
US Vintage Grand Prix
September 6-8, 2002



It was an unusually hot September day when we drove through the gates of the Watkins Glen International race way, located on top of a mountain, providing a breathtaking vista of the hills and lakes of the Finger Lake area of New York State. Early in the morning, the sun already burned down on the land with a vengeance. I was here to attend the races for the Spitfire/GT6 magazine, as I had promised to write up about Spit/GT6 vintage racing. We had set up camp at the Watkins Glen State park. Bob Thomas had organized the camping set up for some members of the OVTC. Our little group consisted of Shawn and Eileen Hennessy, Jeff and Cheryl Patterson, Bob Thomas and Fran Wright, Ed and Vivien Kaye, and visiting us from England, James Carruthers. We had enjoyed the shady sites at the State park, but here at the race track, the heat was rising from the pavement, beating down mercilessly on the spectators and racers getting ready for the important 3-day event. Most of the

participants had already set up in the paddock area, keeping their vintage racers, and themselves, out of the sun under awnings and tents. Everyone seemed to be busy, making last minute preparation and repairs.

The US Vintage Grand Prix was on it's way, the SVRA's technical inspections already finished, group practices and qualifying races had began at 8 a.m. We decided to check out the facilities, visit with some Spitfire racers, and concentrate on following the races of the Triumphs, especially the Spitfires and the GT6's. It was group one and three we came to see, Spitfires, classified as group one, as small displacement sports cars and sedans in production prior to 1973. H-modified and sports racers displacing less than 850 cc. Formula Vee, Formula 500, front engine F/jr. This group contained some Sprites, some Midgets, many Austin Minis, Mini Coopers, also a Saab, Lotus 7, MGA, Alpha Romeos, a Wolseley Hornet, a Lester MG, and many others.

Group three consisted of recognized series produced sports cars and sedans in production prior to 1972. Included were some Datsun SPL's, Corvettes, MGA's GT6's, Volvos, and A. Healey, TR4's, MGB's, Porsches, Alphas, and others. We spotted the familiar faces of some of our racing friends, not too far from the pit area. Donn Sopp's 66 Mk3 Spit was parked under a canopy, while Donn was pondering over the problem of a slipping clutch. In order to investigate this, the transmission had to be taken out to allow access to the clutch. "Hey kids, stay and help me take this tranny out" he requested, sporting a big grin, cool as always in situations like this. He'd surely miss his qualifying race today. "It's all part of the game" he laughed, telling us the story of how he found this car at a rummage sale for \$ 75 and then proceeded, several thousand dollars later, to convert it to the racer it is today.

While we were laughing at the tale, Wilf was already rolling up his sleeves, I therefore went to say hello to the Spit racer next "door" where Russ Moore was hovering over his 63 Spitfire. Russ had just installed new 1 ½ inch rebuild SU 4 carburetors, but was now lacking working feverishly on getting the carbs synchronized. Spit didn't want to start. But, Russ was optimistic running order soon. Last night, he worked into the getting Andy Konopka's 63 Spit running, which had was to be Andy's second race only, nobody wanted to racing community, help is never far away. Andy had his Spitfire for vintage racing. He'd changed the 1147 to an 1300 engine and installed the heavier suspension of a 1500 Spit. Also, a much heavier, stronger axle was installed, bigger valves and 0.20 over pistons. He hoped that he was ready for this race. As it turned out, the following day, he also had to deal with a broken transmission.



Another Spit racer caught my attention. It was Mark Ward in his 65 Mk 2. Mark had been racing since 1996. The Spit was running great, and Mark and his friends were relaxing in the shade before the qualifying races. Sporting an easy smile he explained, that the best thing about racing was the camaraderie of his school friends. Not to be overlooked was the red hot Spit, number 7, of David Belden's. This Spit had been racing since 1968, when it was prepared by Charley Rainville. It had been raced very successfully in SCCA national and regional racing. It was sold in 1980, but then purchased back by David in the early 90ties. David has raced this Spit ever since and is well known to win with this famous little Triumph.

My explorations took me to another area of the paddock where I spotted a Spitfire and a Jaguar E-type, parked side by side, both sporting a racing green coat of paint. Both identified as number 27. This Spit, driven by Don Martin, was a 1500, powered by a 1298 engine. It was prepared to race three years ago, had never been raced previously, and was scheduled to run the 65 minutes enduro race.

As a lover of Vintage racing, the selection of cars was a sight to behold. Every vintage racer seemed to be represented here. The paddocks resembled a colourful buzzing bee hive of busy workers and shiny, polished racers of all marques. The deafening roar of revving engines and rumbling exhausts unmistakably demanded your attention. You could watch the Corvettes, the Jags, Ferraries, the powerhouses Ford GT 40's, the Triumphs

in all of the old world beauty, the Lotos, the Mini's, the Saabs and Datsuns, the Mustangs, too many to mention, too much beauty to be easily absorbed.

We spend two days walking around on the broiling hot pavement. We sat in the stands, watching the activity on the track, some friends racing at along the main fun event, anticipation, is a beloved day, and on this very day the eerie, red glow of the northern lights, the aurora borealis, added a special touch to the festivities.



roasted alive, at temperatures nearing the 100 F mark. We helped in the pit area; we just simply suffered the heat and loved the Friday night, the re-enactment of the race of the early days of Watkins took place, where many racers drive the former track street of the village, then turn north toward the new track. This is a loved by all; waving at the passing racers, cheering them on in and then having a good laugh, when the only racer breaking down Spitfire. Saturday night, the fireworks provided the highlight of the

On Sunday, the big event of the final race was taking place late in the afternoon. Earlier that day, Ed Ceilleys GT6, number 711, had run it's race in group number 3, and had finished somewhere in the middle of the pack, a good run, a good placing. There were some fine Triumphs in this group. A yellow 62 TR4, sporting the number 4, had been driving an electrifying race, some TR3 's were not to be overlooked, some great Austin Healy's held their place, a few Porsches stood up to the test, and some fast MGB's, especially the white MBG "Black Jack" who drove like the devil in disguise, made this race fun to watch. First car getting the checkered flag was a 64 Alpha TZ.

We had been watching the races at the "boot" section of the track, just below a downturn hill, ending in a difficult left turn. Several cars had experienced mishaps at this place. A lotus had blown a tire, an MGB had spun. Earlier, during the group 3 finals, a blue TR3 spun and crashed severely into the tires, having us scared and worried regarding the drivers safety. But, he seemed to recover and drove off, leaving behind his exhaust, and a lot of debris, and one frightened photographer who was picking himself up from behind a guard rail, where he'd jumped for safety. This was one tricky corner of the track. Now, it was time for group 1 to try out their luck. Donn Sopp, relaxed as ever, had been spending the afternoon with us, watching and enjoying the races from a grassy knoll. He'd been working on the clutch problem all day. It couldn't be repaired but, optimistically, he was driving the Spit regardless. He was now with his car, doing last minute check-ups. We were all highly excited about the upcoming final race.

Suddenly, the pace car was coming down the turn, lights flashing, pursued by a bunch of restless Minis, some overanxious MGB's the Lotus's, then our group of Spits A few minutes later, the first lap of the race was in progress. The Mini's seemed to lead outrun. The little cars were sliding the tarmac, engines screaming in Sprites, then our Spits, running approaching a straight, then into the and..... Gone, beyond our field of



the pack. They were racing flat out, not to be around the bend, one tire flying high above protest. Following were the Lotus, the smoothly, taking the turn fast, but cautiously, sharp curve of the boot, up a step incline, vision. Some slower cars were purring by.

The highlight of the group was a very old 1932 Alpha Romeo Monza 7, driven by Peter Giddings, who gave everyone a run for the inner circle. On the next lap, the chase was on, the race in full swing, action on the track. Donn Sopp's Spit number 18 was chasing Russ Moore's "48". David Belden, in number 7, was way ahead. Everybody was passing the Saab and the 59 Cooper T42, which rattled by, ever so faithfully, sounding slightly like my old lawn mover. Flashes of cars raced by, round after round. Then, all of a sudden, Donn slid past us, the engine not sounding too steady. He was having some trouble maintaining speed. It was the condenser, giving him problems, we later confirmed. David Selden, in number 7, was also slowing down, trailing smoke behind him. He was going into the pits. Russ Moore also experienced difficulties, as his engine gave up. But, the rookie Andy was rolling by nicely, waving at the spectators. Group one finished with Jack Cassingham in a Midget and Larry Holloway in a Mini Cooper. For the Spits, it was Don Sopp at number

14, Russ Moore, number 15, Andy Konopka, in position number 21. As everyone told me, the race was fun, as always. The engines will be replaced shortly, the racing season will continue, see you next year at the track.....

You bet!!!!

Liv Haasper

Pictures by James Carruther

My quest for a Mini pickup

My husband and I have been members of OVTC since 1995. Jeff acquired his first British car that spring, a 1980 TR7. He stumbled upon the Richmond Show that year, after following a group of Triumphs to the fairgrounds (did I mention that he was driving a the time). Juliano Benco approached the cruiser, something may be wrong. When he learned that the was there was to check out the Triumphs, since he a TR7, he ordered Jeff to wait right there. Juliano minutes with an OVTC application and told Jeff to bucks.

Well, that is when we joined. We attended the next TR7. Pulling into the parking lot, Jeff saw (and fell in William's TR8. Paul even let Jeff and I take the 8 for Well that did it. From that moment on, Jeff had to have a TR8. He spent the next 5 years looking for just the right TR8, but I knew the right TR8 could only be Paul's.



police cruiser at thinking that only reason Jeff had just bought returned in 5 give him 30

meeting with the (love) with Paul a little spin.

Finally, he got it. 5 years later, Jeff became the proud owner of a 1982 TR8, which was the very car that Paul owned. I was happy for him, but I really couldn't see what all the fuss was over. There was no warranty, its hard to get parts for, there's no back seat for our son to ride in and it's noisy. Anyway, it's what he wanted. I would just as soon drive my comfortable Honda Civic, with air conditioning. I just didn't have a passion for British cars (at least I didn't think so back then). Then, it hit me.

We went to the Vintage Races in Watkins Glen this September. We went, of course with a number of OVTC members, and all camped together in the State Park. The featured marque was the Austin Mini. The only thing that meant to me was that a whole bunch of people were going to be racing Mr. Bean's car.

Well, it was on the Friday that I saw it. I've never seen one before in my life, and to be quite honest, didn't even know that such a vehicle existed. It was a 1963 Austin Mini Pickup, and it was yellow (I hate yellow vehicles). I was watching the Glenkana in the village, when a bunch of Minis went by. I didn't pay much attention, until I saw this yellow Mini go by with what looked like a box instead of seats. I ran out to the street to get a better look and. at that point then and there. I realized what Jeff felt when he saw his first TR8. This pickup was beautiful. I needed to have one.

We went to the track the next day where I dragged Jeff around until I found that Mini Truck. I figured, since 1995 Jeff's been dragging me to the vintage races, to see what he wanted to see, well, 2002 was my year. And, where do you find the Mini's? At the Mini corral of course. Once I spotted this yellow truck in the corral, I once again dragged Jeff to go inside the fenced-off area to get a better look .To my disappointment, the security guard wouldn't let us in.

"This area is for Mini owners only "the jerk said" But, my husband owns a Triumph" I replied. "Minis only" was his final word. He didn't hear my final word. I had to see this truck. We went to the fence and tried to get the attention of one of the many "Mini" owners inside. This very nice man came over. He owns a Mini,

something or other ...blah blah blah.“ No, I want to see that little yellow Mini pickup “I said. “Well, come on in” he stated “But the big mean security guard won’t let me come in” I whimpered.” Well, we can’t have that, can we?” he added.

I heard him yell to somebody named Kevin. Kevin, I learned, is the owner of this beautiful pickup. Kevin was really nice. He brought the pickup to me, since I couldn’t come to it. He even let me sit in it. Well, that did it. I just had to have one of these beautiful trucks. Jeff told me not to get my hopes up, since these trucks were never imported into North America. That didn’t matter. They only made 2750 TR8’s for the whole world, and he has one, so there should be an available Mini Pickup with my name on it.

The Mini owners suggested that we see this guy from somewhere in Canada named “Big Al” He was at the Vintage Races and had this huge British Motor home with a British flag paint scheme. Big Al imports Minis from England. We found Big Al that day.” I just happen to have a pickup” he stated. It’s in Halifax right now, clearing Customs. I’ll have it at the Bronte British Car Show next week-end, if you’re interested.” I could hardly contain myself. There’s actually a Mini Pickup for sale. I knew, it would not be a problem getting Jeff to drive me up to the Bronte Car Show, since he had taken his TR8 up last year, and put it in the show. I couldn’t sleep all week. I had bought this pickup in my mind. I didn’t care what it looked like, because this is probably the only one in the world for sale. Big Al only wanted \$9000 for it.

Well, Sunday came. We stayed at my sister’s place in Bolton Saturday night. “Come on, we have to get ready for the car show” I said to Jeff, waking him up. “But it’s only 5:30 AM” Jeff replied and went back to sleep. We got to the show at 11:00 AM. We were to meet Wilf and Liv Haasper at the show, because Wilf volunteered to check out the truck, if it was there. We met them as soon as we got there, with their friend James, who was visiting from England. Then, I found the truck. It was a little rusty (actually quite rusty), but I still wanted it. Wilf checked it over and suggested that we pass on it. It needed just too much work. You can just imagine my disappointment. “Can’t we get it anyway” I said to Jeff. “We’ll find another one “he said.

I spent the next month and a half on the Internet. To my delight, there were a few pickups for sale on the internet and on E-Bay. I registered as a bidder and tried my luck. I almost had the first one I bid on. It was a 1976 and was right-hand drive (I decided, that if I’m going to get one of these little puppies, then I want a true British truck. That means right-hand drive). I was the high bidder until about an hour before the bidding ended. Two bidders outbid me, and then went on to pay way more than what I was prepared to.

I tried again last week. I found a 1973 Mini pickup on E-Bay. It’s restored to Cooper S standards (whatever that means...I want one that’s restored to Mr. Bean’s standards,) and its right-hand drive too. It’s not yellow, but it’s white, which is my second choice of colours.

Well, I won the bidding. I was on pins and needles for the last hour of bidding, because of what happened to my previous attempt. I tried to call Jeff at work to see how high I should go if someone outbid me near the end. I got the receptionist in his office in West Carleton. She was a big help all right.” Don’t worry about Jeff “she said. “Just keep bidding until you get it”

Thankfully, I didn’t need to go any higher. I got a hold of Jeff on his (my) cell phone, shortly after bidding ended. “I got a truck” I said. “I won the bidding on E-Bay” That’s excellent” he replied. “Where do we go to pick it up?” West Yorkshire England “I said. “O h” he replied.

Anyway, that was a week ago today. Robin Craig, from the Ottawa Land Rover Club is filling a container right now in (you guessed it) England. He thinks, my truck will fit in this container, along with some articulated British snowmobile (now just what is that!!!). If everything goes smoothly, my Mini truck may be parked in the garage beside Jeff’s TR8 before December.

Cheryl Patterson

Upcoming events

November meeting, 26, 2002, 7 pm at the Manordale Community centre. The speaker will be Craig Hamm, rally Director of the Motorsport Club of Ottawa. Craig would like to talk about an all-pavement charity rally, which is in the planning stages for 2003. Length of the rally not in excess of 200 km. He would like to have vintage cars participate, and for anybody who loves to drive rallies, this meeting is a must to attend. Craig would also be willing to speak about general questions relating to rallying, and talk about the recent 2300 km Targa Newfoundland tarmac rally, which he attended as a support crew person and team photographer. He has a 10 minute video about the rally.

Members, I hope you will be able to attend this meeting. It's promising to be a great one.

Please note: There will be no December meeting, besides the CX party, scheduled.

December, 7th, 4 pm, annual Christmas party, at the Manordale Community center. The membership has expressed that they would like to see:

- a) Gifts exchanged, not exceeding \$ 8.—in value
- b) Timing: 4 pm,
- c) A pot luck, we're going to have a cold buffet, sand wiches, deserts, salads, etc.
- d) We'll have a small surprise for the children. For the people who haven't done so, please contact me to let me know if your children will attend the party. So far, we have 6 children listed.

I'll be in contact with people to organize the details reg. food and decorations. If you have any comments or, ideas, please feel free to contact me at any time, Tel. 613 257 5742 or, by email, at wilivhaasper@sympatico.ca.

The next issue of the newsletter

As a newcomer to this group, I'm slowly getting to know the members of the OVTC, learning about their past Triumph history and about their current cars and project. I'm sure, many new members feel the same way and would like to get to know fellow club members. I would therefore like to include a members profile in the coming issues. I'm going to ask members to write up their Triumph history, and also an introduction to the cars and projects they are enjoying at the present time. You can all look forward to the story of the Dyer family, which will be featured in the next issue.

Kid's corner

Are there any kids in our club who would like to have the opportunity to voice their opinion from time to time? I would like to hear from our young Triumph owners!! Send me some pictures of you and your parent's car, a fun write up about some Triumph related adventures, drives, anything that concerns you. Hope to hear from you.

Classifieds

Wanted

TR3 front bumper brackets for license plate needed. Also looking for a Clip/bracket to mount a 2- hole badge on a Moss Motors badge bar.

Bill Klausman

Email: billklausman@msn.com

Please submit your classifieds to the editor. I will be compiling a new listing of want ads in the issues to come.

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The Ottawa Valley Triumph Club is comprised of Approximately 65 members. The club meets at 7.30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Manordale Community Centre, which is located at the corner of Knoxdale and Carola Roads in the City of Ottawa. Meetings include technical seminars, video presentations, restoration techniques, and much more. The club also publishes a monthly newsletter, *Overdrive*, which is distributed to members and exchanged with other car clubs.

Membership is open to all individuals and companies interested in Triumph sports cars. Membership is \$30.00 per year (June/June) per household and \$ 60.00 per year, corporate. **Please send membership applications to:** OVTC c/o Vivien Kaye, 1710 River Road, Manotick, Ont, K4M 1B4

The OVTC is a member of the British Car Council and is affiliated with the TR Register (UK).

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