



# VERDRIVE

The Newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Triumph Club

September, 1995

## Please ... Be 'Surrey'ous!



### *In This Issue:*

- *BBQ at Benco's a big Hit!*
- *Events galore in September (Stowe, Bronte, Watkins Glen)*
- *"The Little Red TR3A" - Part 2*
- *Plus much more!!*

*Cover: This month's cover was a bit of a folly, meaning to point out the Surrey top on a TR4 at last year's Bronte Creek British Car Day. This was the first Surrey top I'd seen in person, as they were a rarity in North America.*

**Editor's Note:** (Julio) - What a summer we've had. Great days of sunshine and warmth, although some days were a little too hot. All the same, better too hot than -30 and hip-deep in snow! Give me the hot days anytime!

September is the month with the biggest and best car events of the season (excluding our own show in Richmond, of course!). It's not fair, what with Watkin's Glen (good for classic racing), Bronte (closer & cheaper) or Stowe, Vermont (lovely scenery). Decisions, decisions. Luckily, you can't go wrong with any one of them!

**Editor's Note:** (John) - We're back! Lori & I had a great time in Europe, especially in England! I'll tell more in next month's issue. Right now, it seems I have to get out this issue of *Overdrive*. No rest for the weary!

#### **August 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting - BBQ at Benco's:**

Thanks to all the members who attended the OVTC Barbeque at the Benco's. A good crowd gathered around the food & beverage table, kicked a few tires, looked under a bonnet or two and enjoyed lots of car talk. And you thought women can talk - Ha! The guys are masters at it, as long as it's TR talk!

As we said farewell to our guests at the end of the evening, Jane & I looked at our driveway to find oil drips of every size, marking the area where the Triumphs, a Lotus and even a Jaguar had parked. I guess I can go another year before I need to seal my driveway!

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#### **Membership Drive for 1995 continues:**

We're still finding new members and prospects out there! As the season draws to a close, however, we'll pretty much have stabilized until spring. We're in the mid-60 range, with several more as possible members. The lead-up to the Classic will no doubt see a big interest in the club, as it did in 1991.

#### **Kingston Classic Meet - B'n'B Club:**

The Boot'n'Bonnet 6th annual British Car Day event was a success, with about 80 cars attending the show. The weather was perfect and the location excellent. This year it was held at Kingston City Park, along the shore of Lake Ontario. Attendance from the OVTC was small, however - just 3 cars, so I was told. What happened to the rest of us?

#### **Brit Car Festival, Mt. Tremblant - Aug 20:**

What happened was that myself, Jane, and a convoy of 4 other cars were deciding whether to go to the Kingston show as we'd done in prior years, or go to St. Jovite for their first annual British Car Festival and vintage racing. The decision was made and St Jovite won.

Leaving early in the morning, we made our way the 2 or so hours to the event. The road to St Jovite has some fantastic curves, made even better by a recent asphalt job - nice &

sticky (especially for the Lotus Europa of young Lashley!)

Upon arriving at the track entrance, we were told to go to the other side entrance which we passed on the way through town. Yes, but we want to register first. Blank look on the attendant's face! "You go other Gate." O.K. We turn around and go to the other gate. The attendant on duty flags us down: '\$20' we're told. I hand over a 20. No, \$20 apiece! I ask where we register. Another blank look. "This show better be good" I say to myself.

The convoy drives up a dirt road (if you'd call it a road), cross a bridge (this bridge had speed bumps on it which would've stopped a Sherman tank going faster than 3 mph), and arrive inside the track area. We arrive near more attendants. We ask where to park. More blank looks. One points to an area far from other cars of any kind. We're at the right show, aren't we? For \$40 per couple, I hope so. After stopping and getting out, I see over a small knoll where the other British cars are (a small group). We get back in our cars and drive down to where the rest of the cars were. We unpack, get comfortable, and watch some of the racing.

I see Joe (Lord Lashley) talking to another attendant. The voices are getting louder. Joe is getting redder. We are told we shouldn't have parked where we were because we didn't register! There was no-one around from the show when we first parked, let alone when we asked to register in the first place. "For \$40, we'll park wherever we want. If you want us to register (\$15 per car), we will, and you can give us back our \$25 extra" replied Joe. After a while, we also discovered there were no washroom facilities (other than the woods) on the entire infield grounds! The nearest ones were a 10-minute walk across the infield, over the bridge above the track, then along the far side past the pits

to the main offices! After no official came to us after we'd asked to see someone regarding the poor management at the gates (we were driving British cars - what else were we doing there, after all), Joe & John went to see the officials over by the racing area. We were told it was our stupidity regarding their registration process which was at fault, not theirs! Needless to say, this First Annual event will be our last! Sorry Joe Lightfoot, we should've come to Kingston!



### **Watkin's Glen Vintage Grand Prix Races:**

(This report on Watkin's Glen was submitted by Bob Thomas, our 'cub' reporter on assignment in Perth!)

*After several changes in participants and departure times, the OVTC contingent for the Vintage Grand Prix met on Friday, Sept. 8 in Watertown, N.Y. en route to Watkin's Glen. Gord Robertson in his gorgeous '64 XKE accompanied by friend Charlie Baker; Jeff and Cheryl Patterson brought their 1980 TR7; and I drove my '75 TR6.*

*With Gord leading the way, we left the sunny north, and travelled through increasing cloud (and a few raindrops) to Watkin's Glen, tops down all the way.*

*We arrived to find the Grand Prix Festival in full swing, and after setting up camp at the track, came back into town to catch the tail end of the street dance and car show. Earlier in the day there had been a Concours d'Elegance,*

*a race re-enactment (on the original race course), and a tour of local wineries (you should've come, Julio).*

*After picking up some "provisions", we settled in for the night and were treated to a downpour that made me wonder whether the tent or the TR6 was the safest place to be (they both let in a cup or two of water during the night).*

*Saturday brought an overcast start to the day and a heavy fog that delayed racing until the early afternoon. It also brought Steve Lashley and his friend Dave. Seems they missed the gate curfew and had to spend the night in their car (good thing it wasn't the Europa).*

*Now seven strong, we toured the garage and paddock during the fog delay and were treated to a wide variety of beautifully restored and maintained cars. There simply aren't words to describe the sights and sounds of all that incredible machinery!*

*Once the fog lifted, practice and qualifying started and the sweet music of high-revving engines filled the back straight where we were camped. For hour after hour, Groups 1 thru 8, Formula and Trans Am cars swept past us until it was almost dark.*

*Sunday morning started overcast and windy for the start of 12 feature (6-lap) races, including the Trans Am reunion race. The highlight of the weekend for me was to take part in 2 parade laps around the race circuit on Sunday with the other participants in the car show that was held at the track. It was the ultimate thrill for an "armchair racer" to be where many of the great drivers of all time had raced.*

*As the afternoon wore on, the day turned sunny, and made for a perfect end to a great day of racing that featured some hard driving and close competition. Late in the day, we headed for home, already making plans for next year. An uneventful (trouble-free) trip home was a perfect end to a fantastic weekend - See you there next year! B.T.*

### **We need your help!**

Bob has just demonstrated how easy it is to contribute an article for the newsletter. We can't be at all events, so those of you who are at a show you enjoy, feel free to put down in a few words your impressions. Any other articles are welcomed also. Let's hear from you!

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Call Randy at 825-7565

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  - Trunk lid in good condition.

Call Randy at 825-7565

- 1976 Spitfire. Excellent condition. Asking \$5,200 (negotiable). Call Chris Moon at 825-4106.
- TR6 Asking \$3,500. For more info contact Dave Scofield at 489-4277 (h) or 956-2983 (w).
- 1963 TR4. Complete or for parts. In partial restored shape. Asking \$2,000 or best offer. Call Kirk Travis at 233-0137.

### "OIL DRIPS" (by Julio)

- Brian's (Doc Mills's) garage is now nearing completion after a major renovation, and will soon be receiving visitors. But all cars must be washed and tire treads vacuumed before entering! Also no dirty fingerprints on the drywall!
- Well, Bob Thomas finally got the TR6 he was looking for. It's bright red and looks to be in excellent condition. Congratulations on a very nice purchase. Take good care of her, Bob, and you'll have many summers of fun ahead.
- That poor little black TR3A of Mike Stapleton's has hardly seen the pavement this year. With Mike's work keeping him travelling around the country and his working around the house, he's had little time to taste the open road. Maybe next year, Mike.
- Steve Rudnicki is slowly working on his TR6 rebuild project. With the frame now rebuilt, other parts can be installed. With luck, Steve may have his car on the road next year. Burn that midnight oil, Steve (but not in the engine!)
- Great news. The European wax called Zymol can now be purchased here, at any Canadian Tire store. This was rated the best in testing last year. I was given a little of it as a gift by the Lashley's, and having tried it, I have to say that this wax is the best I've tried. It's easy

to apply and gives a mirror-like finish. Give it a try!

- I'd like to thank Shannon Lee Manion (Old Autos) for the excellent write-up she did for our Richmond show. P.S. - we'll beat the Morgan Club next year!
- I'm sorry if new members haven't been mentioned in this issue. As I do not have the updated membership list at this time, your names will be mentioned in the October edition, which will follow shortly! If any member does not have his or her membership card, contact me (Julio) at 727-8113 so we can get you one a.s.a.p.
- "Little Red TR3A" - the Never-ending Story  
Shaun Hennessy's red TR3A is still residing at John Pritchard's garage, receiving some major surgery to solve his overheating problem. It was discovered when the engine was opened up that the coolant galleries were plugged solid with dirt! Apparently they were spooning it out! Upon further inspection other parts had to be replaced. Oh, oh! More money spent! Guess the kids won't get Xmas presents this year, and the family can survive on hot dogs and beans for another year, right Shaun? Now there's a man who has his priorities straight. Some wives call it the Triumph Syndrome, Disorder or just plain madness. Join the club, Shaun - we all suffer to some extent!

### Next Month:

- John & Lori Day "tell all" on the cars & museums of Britain from their trip;
- The events at this year's Bronte Creek Show and Stowe British Invasion are described by those who went.
- Don't forget the meeting: Monday, October 23 (fourth Monday of the month!). See you all there!

THE NAME IS

Sept 95

# Bond...

Laurie Bond's range of simple 3-wheeled runabouts progressed into sporting Triumph-powered GTs. Norm Mort tells the tale.

Photos by Stuart Beatty



**F**iberglass dates back to ancient Egyptian times but it wasn't until after the Second World War that it began to appear regularly as a lightweight and durable substitute for aluminum and steel automobile bodies. Many small specialist auto companies were experimenting with this easily-molded material as an alternative to the expense of constructing jigs and panel-beating aluminum.

In Britain, fiberglass was the ideal solution to those who wanted to enter into auto production on a small scale. Lotus, Berkeley (also one of Bond's designs), Reliant, Ginetta, and TVR were some of the more successful automotive ventures, as was Bond.

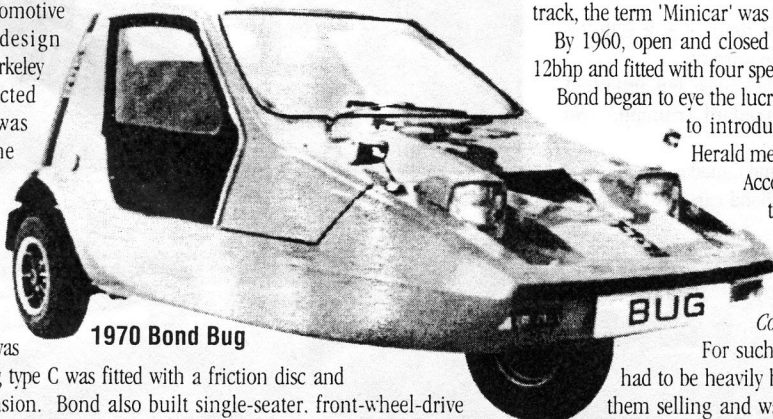
Lawrence Bond was a very creative and innovative automobile engineer. Besides designing and building three- and four-wheeled Bond cars, he was also responsible for a wide variety of other automotive creations such as a rotary inlet/exhaust valve, and a semi-enclosed scooter. He was fascinated by fiberglass as a material for automobile construction. As well as building and marketing his own Bond cars he was responsible for the frameless aluminum and fiberglass Berkeley. He was apparently described as a "weight-saving maniac," by Charles Panter, the builder of the aforementioned diminutive sports car.

Bond established two companies in the late 1940s to build his creations. The first company was known as Bond Aircraft and Engineering Company in Blackpool and was founded in 1948. This company was

involved in limited automotive production and design development. Bond's Berkeley prototype was constructed here. This company was also responsible for the building of competition models on a limited scale. Bond's first car was a FWD, front-engined, 500cc design which lacked any real suspension although it was

very agile. The evolving type C was fitted with a friction disc and rubber coupling suspension. Bond also built single-seater, front-wheel-drive Formula Junior race cars.

Bond's second company, formed in 1949, was known as Sharps Commercial Ltd. of Preston, Lancashire, before becoming Bond Cars Ltd. in 1965. Here he concentrated on the production of his newly designed three-wheelers. The first Bond Minicar was a very basic vehicle, rather more characteristic of the 1930s than the



1970 Bond Bug

1950s. Reminiscent of the once popular, Edwardian cycle-cars, this 3-wheeler, (single front wheel unlike the customary Morgan arrangement) was powered by a 122cc single-cylinder, 2-stroke, Villiers engine, chain-driven, with kick-start, and no rear suspension. Shifting was via a three-speed motorcycle-like gearbox. The aluminum and steel body/frame design was of unitary construction.

Highlights in the Minicar's production run included the introduction of a bonded rubber suspension system and front wheel brakes in 1953. Later, a larger two-stroke, 8.5hp 197cc air-cooled engine with a top speed of nearly 45mph was fitted. This enabled the Minicar to travel over 270 miles on a tank of gas of three gallons. A zero-to-top speed took around half a minute. Additional sophistication came in the form of an electric starter in 1952, a four-seater version offered starting in 1954, and increased use of fiberglass. The price was \$760 in 1954 for this 110-inch long micro car.

The three-speed transmission had no reverse until 1957, but this was of little concern to Bond owners. The single front wheel swiveled almost 180 degrees giving the Minicar a turning circle of just 9 feet. With a 5'4" wheelbase and a 4' 3 1/2" track, the term 'Minicar' was more than appropriate.

By 1960, open and closed model Bonds were powered by 246cc engines rated at 12bhp and fitted with four speeds. With the tremendous growth in the sports car field,

Bond began to eye the lucrative sports GT and sports car market. His objective was to introduce a fiberglass GT coupe based on reliable Triumph Herald mechanicals.

According to Marketing Director Tom Gratrix, "I decided that we had had a great deal of experience in glass-fiber work and knew about laminating from industrial work, and it seemed fairly logical to do something about four-wheel motor cars" (*Triumph Cars-The Complete 75-year History* by Langworth and Robson).

For such an endeavor to be successful Gratrix believed the car had to be heavily based on a major manufacturer's car and he aimed at them selling and warranting the vehicle. He first approached Standard-Triumph, more than willing to enter into an agreement. As far as Gratrix was concerned they were ideal as Triumph were one of the few manufacturers that could provide a proper chassis, since the industry had switched to monocoque designs.

1963 saw the introduction of a 4-wheeled car powered by an 1147cc Triumph Herald 4-cylinder engine with an all-independent suspension. The stylish coupe was

designed by Lawrence Bond and capable of 83mph while able to achieve 35-39 mpg.

A revised and more awkward appearing edition was announced in the summer of '65, known as the GT 4S powered by the 67 hp Spitfire Mark 2 engine. This heavier Bond was faster at the top end only and carried on into 1967.

At the same time the Minicar had continued to evolve and in 1965 Bond offered a larger rear-engined, three-wheeled version, powered by a Hillman 875cc engine.

The big news late in 1967 was the 2-liter, 6-cylinder, Triumph-powered, Equipe (pronounced ee-quee-pay) GT. A second version was a 4-seater convertible that followed in 1969. At this point it appeared Bond cars were abandoning their roots, but a new 3-wheeler was in the works.

Unfortunately though, 1969 also marked the date of rival Reliant's takeover. As a result, the Preston works were closed and production of the Equipe was halted in favor of Reliant's sporty Scimitar.

The subsequent production of the new, ultra-modern, Ogle-designed, prototype Bond Bug was moved to Tamworth. Further development of the 3-wheeler continued with the fitting of the Reliant 700cc engine. When announced, three models were available: the 'Spartan' with a fitted canopy, no heater or side-curtains; a mid-range model with flip-up canopy and those needed extras; and the '700ES' (Extra Super) with better performance and more standard equipment. The Reliant all-aluminum 700cc four-cylinder engine produced 31 bhp but was increased to 750cc in 1973. This fiberglass, tangerine-only-with-black-accent capsule on wheels was the last model to wear the Bond nameplate before disappearing in 1974. Although Bond's business had centered around three-wheelers, at their height of the Bond Equipe's popularity the four-wheelers had approached an annual production of almost 4,000 units. In North America, the remaining Equipes were sold off as 1970 models before the collapse of the dealer network.

Road testers of the day found the engine, transmission and chassis components from the Triumph GT-6 provided immediate response. The straight six ohv engine with dual Strombergs produced 104bhp which enabled the over-one-ton fiberglass Equipe to reach speeds of over a hundred miles per hour. A 0-60 time of 11.0 seconds and quarter mile times of just under 18 seconds at 77 mph was equal to the Fiat 124, better than the MGB, and slightly less than a Triumph GT-6.

The Equipe featured an all-independent suspension, 9.7 inch disc brakes up front, drum in rear, rack and pinion steering, and most importantly to many, four-seats.

Optional equipment included an overdrive transmission, wire wheels, and a tonneau cover. The passenger compartment was incredibly spacious and didn't detract from the Bond's sporty appearance. The Bond GT chassis and engine performance were considered superior to many more expensive automobiles.

British road tests were far more critical than those conducted in North America. Although they felt the roadholding was excellent there were complaints regarding the Bond's stability at speed and excessive wind noise. The high ride height was criticized for giving the Equipe an ungainly look.

Further remarks were made concerning the inconsistent quality of the fit and finish. Surface ripples, drooping doors and rough edges were often noted. A new Equipe GT was sold for \$3,395 Cdn. or about the same price as a MGB/GT or the Fiat 124 Coupe, while the topless version went for a mere hundred dollars more.

The overall opinion of the Equipe was favorable, citing the Bond as a sports car for the man who was searching for something a little different.

More importantly, the Equipe was based on a well-tried running gear with the added bonus of a large service network and a British Leyland warranty.

Ads of the day stressed the 'hand-built' aspect of the Bond Equipe, but also noted the Equipe was, "Built by Bond in association with Standard Triumph." No mention was made of British Leyland.

Today only a handful of Bonds can be found in the U.S. and Canada.

One of the most enthusiastic owners and collectors of Bond cars is Richard Dittman of Essex, Ontario.

His first Bond was purchased in 1980 while out searching for a bumper for a Mercedes he had been working on. It was a combination of love at first sight and a need for four seats. Richard now owns several Bond cars but most notably the 1969 Equipe Mk II Convertible featured here, of which only 841 were built, including about 400 convertibles. He often travels great distances in the Equipe, particularly when in search for another Bond.

His fine 1969 convertible was the result of hours of hard work, as it was in terrible condition when he purchased it. Bought in Tilsonberg, Ontario, the body had been circular-sanded, which had ruined the fiberglass and then hand-painted black.

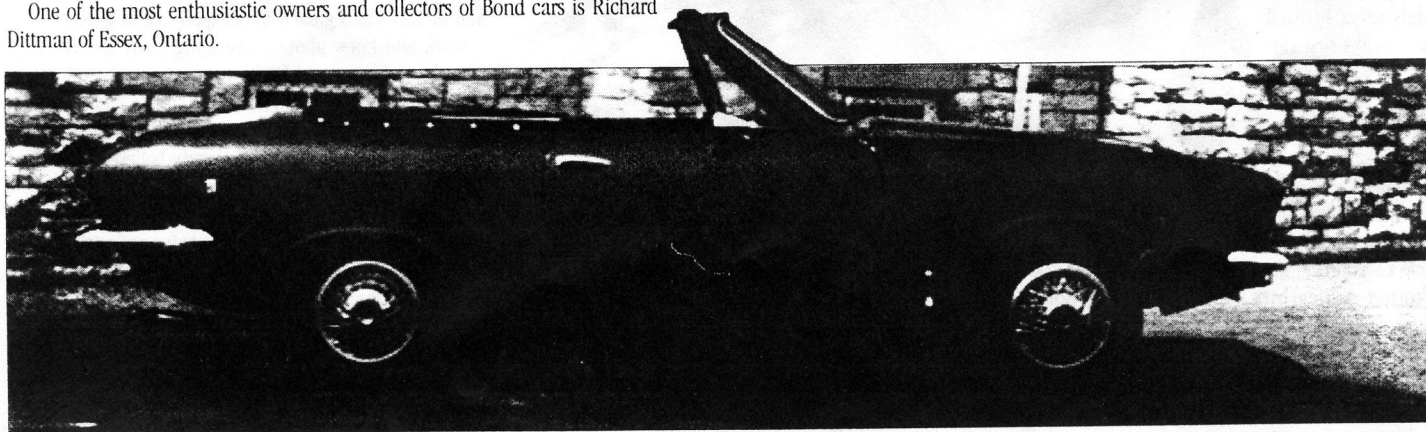
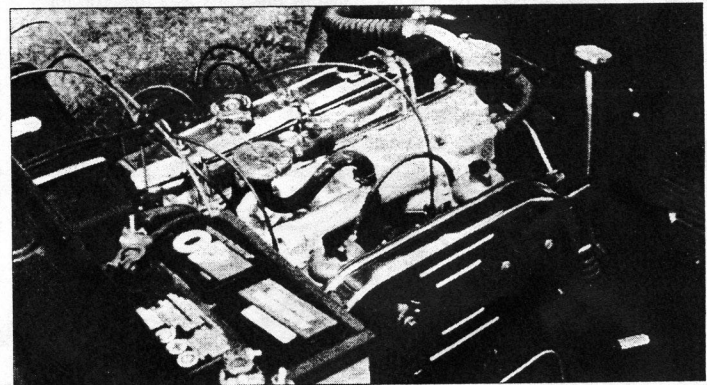
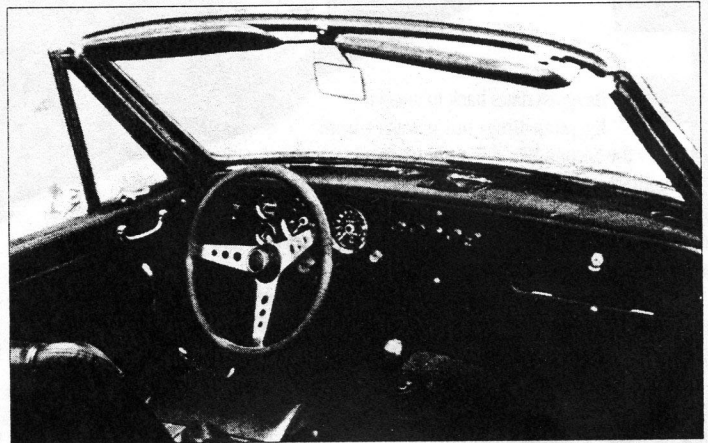
The Triumph engine was re-built two years ago and continues to perform admirably. The Triumph-based mechanical parts were easily obtained. "Restorers will be amazed at the number of smaller Triumph parts and components utilized in the Equipe. Even the original Triumph Vitesse inner skin was used for bonding the glass-fibre panels."

The unique Bond parts are another story.

Richard was able to purchase a soft top from England but parts there were also scarce, so he is always on the lookout for a parts car. At the top of the list are wheel covers and an overdrive transmission.

Richard thoroughly enjoys his Bond. He believes the Bond's best features are its handling and independent rear suspension.

Richard discovered only 500 Bond convertibles were built, and only ten were left-hand drive. Of some historical note, the King of Nepal ordered a Bond Equipe in black with red interior. □



The Ottawa Valley Triumph Club is comprised of approximately 65 members. The Club meets on the fourth Monday of each month at the Manordale Community Centre, Knoxdale and Carola (see map). Meetings include technical seminars, video presentations, restoration techniques and much more. The Club also publishes a monthly newsletter, *Overdrive*, which it distributed to members. *Overdrive* is also exchanged with newsletters from other clubs. The OVTC Executive at present is comprised of:

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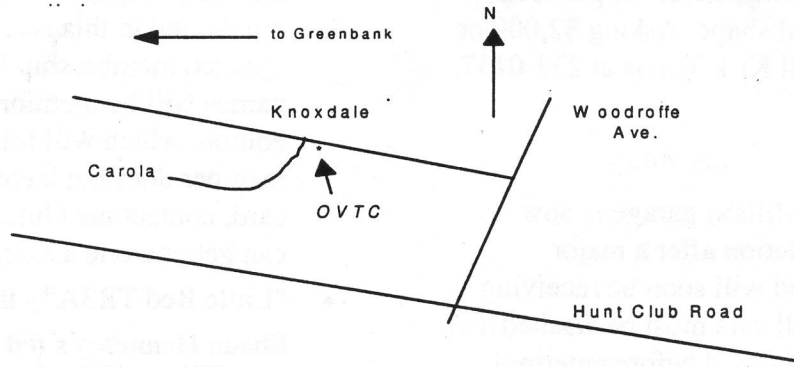
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Membership is open to all individuals and companies interested in Triumph sports cars. Membership is \$30.00 per year (June/June) per household and \$60 per year, corporate.

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



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