

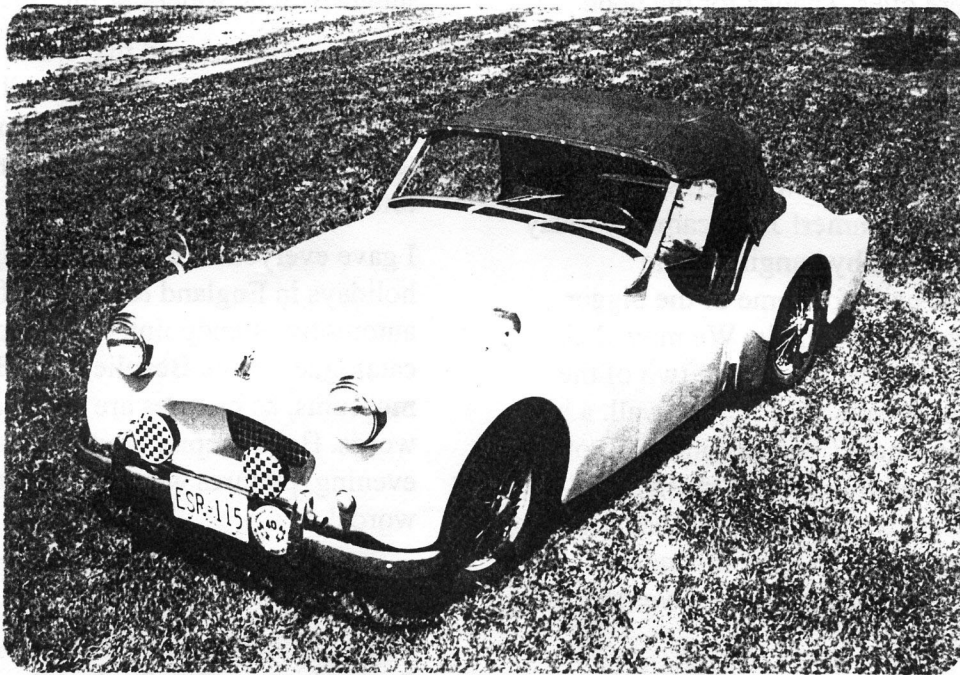


VERDRIVE

The Newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Triumph Club

October, 1995

Buried Treasure Surfaces in Ottawa!



In This Issue:

- *Long-door TR2 awakens from 10-year sleep*
- *Event reports galore (Stowe, Bronte)*
- *"The Little Red TR3A" - Conclusion (?)*
- *Plus much more!!*

Cover: This is the early long-door TR2 which has recently surfaced here in town from it's long slumber. Details on the car are in this issue - read on!

Editor's Note: (Julio) - September turned out to be a good month to drive those country roads, with beautiful weather almost every day. I hope that many of you took advantage of it, as we did. Joe & Doreen Lashley stayed with us for a few days, as they were going to be on holidays for 5 weeks in total. Joe was determined to get his TR8 on the road every opportunity he had, so Jane & I joined the Lashleys on some wonderful tours. But all good things must come to an end, their holidays were over. Thanks for the good times! We'll miss you guys - see you next year!

Editor's Note: (John) - My garage is nearly cleaned up after being swamped with parts for most of the summer! Julio came by today & gave me a hand by hanging some wallboards & nails for some of the bigger bits, such as quarter-panels. We moved all my spare bricks outside, so that two of the spare engines would go along the wall. a bit of sorting the smaller bags of bits, a bit of broom work, and there's now mostly bare floor around bodysell #1. Soon that one'll be out back, and Lori will have the indoor parking spot she thought she'd never see again!

September 25th Meeting:

A surprisingly large group was out for the September meeting (holidays must be over). A large number of Triumphs were also out, possibly for their last meeting before winter. This led to a prolonged tire-kicking session before getting down to business.

Once we moved inside, Clive brought the meeting to order. Our guest speaker for the

night was a no-show, so the meeting was open to the floor.

Clive asked Bruce Young, our sole attendee for this year's Canadian Classic, to say a few words on how the show went. Bruce reported that around 70 to 75 cars were in attendance in Waterloo, this year's site. The best in show went to a U.S. entrant, Bill McDevitt, of Illinois. Bruce emphasized the need for clarification when it comes to concours events, as the line between original and merely 'high gloss' can be a bone of contention among those who've invested a lot of time and effort (not to mention \$\$\$). Clive ensured Bruce that for our show in 1996, all entrants will know what the judges will be watching for.

Clive also mentioned that while the Classic is not for another 8 months, he will soon be calling for volunteers and committee members to work on the show. All 'keeners' can get in touch with Clive to pitch in!

I gave everyone a capsule description of our holidays in England & Europe, from an automotive standpoint. I also brought along the catalogues of the Beaulieu and BMIHT museums, as pictures are worth a thousand words. Being unprepared to speak that evening, pictures were more than a thousand words!

Colin McCallum and Paul MacDonald attended the Bronte Creek shows separately. While Colin described the show at the September meeting, I asked Paul to jot down a few words of his own for this issue, which appear later on.

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New Members:

There were a pair of possible new members at the September meeting. They were:

Ted Neilson Ted is the owner of a TR7V8 since 1984, and he says it is always picking his pocket for more money. Ted - you're among friends in the OVTC!

Kirk Travis Kirk is in the market for a TR6. Unfortunately for me, he prefers it to be all in one piece, darn the luck!

Julio also reports that we have a new corporate member: **Murphy's Garage**, on Bank Street, between Sunnyside and the river. Julio personally recommends Murphy's: they provide good service at a reasonable price. Also, ask for Dan for any welding work you may require.



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If it ain't Broke, We won't Fix it.

(Between Ossington and Cameron)

English Memories - Part 1:

I've decided to split the description of our holiday in England/Europe into 3 parts, to keep each section short, to keep focused on the different areas I'll describe, and finally to have something to write about for the next 2 issues also! The first topic will be the car museums Lori & I visited:

Our first car museum was in Brussels, on the day of our arrival in Europe. The museum is located close to where my friend Rick works, so we toured the collection in the afternoon. The collection was indeed large and varied, as we saw a 1940 BMW 328, a 1937 Cord 812, and a 1957 Ferrari, among the 350 total

on display. While the museum was large (it's an old, converted train station), it didn't present the cars too well. In particular, there was a rare MG coupé (1 of 2 built by Coune) which was off in a corner, packed in amongst other regular passenger cars. I couldn't even get a decent picture! As for Triumphs, the only TR there was a kid's TR4A pedal car! A rarity, yes, but not very inspiring. On the whole, this museum had potential, but didn't use it. The gift shop was horribly overpriced also.

Our second museum was the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. This is the home of Lord Montague, as well as the famous Autojumble (which we missed by 3 days!). The NMM houses an incredible collection of classic cars, mostly British as one would expect. Non-Brit cars included an Auburn Speedster, a Ferrari Dino and Mercedes Gullwing. Several Rolls's were present, including an unusual mohogany-bodied roadster and the Montague family's 1909 Silver Ghost! The Jag XJ220 was there - a truly scary vehicle, you can imagine. A Triumph Renown and Herald were on display, looking very neat and original. Still no TR's yet!

The gift shop at Beaulieu was quite large and extensive, as I proceeded to buy every pewter TR they had! Unfortunately, they sold the last Stag that morning - sorry, Lori! (the Stag's her favourite!). There were other displays and sights within the museum, making it well worth the visit!

Our final museum of the trip was "Mecca" - the British Motor Heritage Centre at Gaydon, about 10 miles from Warwick Castle (we didn't just go to car museums over there). This modern centre was as interesting in person as in the magazines I've seen, and all the important cars were there. For Triumphs, there were the last production Stag, Dolomite, Spitfire and TR7 models off the

line, as well as the first TR6 to use the Heritage bodyshell. There were also the Lynx and SD2 prototype vehicles - what the TR7 nearly became. Other milestone cars were the MG-RV8 (a big, comfy 'B') and the new model MG, which resembled a Miata on steroids! The cars were presented in a big, bright new setting, which made them even more enjoyable to view!

I would recommend the Beaulieu and Gaydon museums to anyone planning a trip to England, as they are worth the visit!

Stowe Show - Julio Benco:

Friday finally arrives and we prepare for the journey to the British Invasion at Stowe, Vermont. This year we planned to leave at a normal time for registration and the free drinks (last time I had a dozen tickets but arrived too late). The convoy consisted of a TR3A and TR8. The weather was great for top-down motoring - a little chilly in the morning but improving as we neared our destination. We arrived at the grounds around 4:30 p.m., following a stop at Ogdensburg Mall. Must appease our navigators!

The field was fairly full when we arrived. We met the Morgan and MG Club gangs at the beer tent (a safe bet). Car talk could be heard everywhere. Anyone not knowing car talk would've thought we were talking a different language. The sun was setting and it was cooling down outside - time to move it indoors. We returned to the motel where most of the OVTC crew were staying. My TR3A looked lonely, surrounded by TR8s, and by Dave Huddleson, who brought his TR7 Spider instead of his TR8 coupe. Our room was the meeting room as we had a convenience suite (fridge for the wine & beer).

Morning arrives and we head for the show. Another fine day - the Gods are good to us.

The field had a large selection of cars, from A to Z. No Lotus Europas, though (they must've all had clutch problems, right Steve?). There was a good selection of parts at the parts stall, but nothing of what I was after. Again this year, there were many winners from north of the (U.S.) border, with Brian & Linda Thomas' early TR3 taking first in their category. My choice of the best overall was a 1937 A.C. roadster - the quality of restoration was superb.

There was also a good selection of cars for sale this year. A very nice TR6 (ground-up resto) was for sale for \$8,500 U.S.

This year I decided to enjoy the evening celebration (dinner, dancing, etc.), but it was not to be. Upon returning to our hotel, I had an unfortunate confrontation with a wasp. He won, and I walked away with a swollen eye. Ever try to wear glasses with a swollen eye? So my evening was spent alone while the others partied, but I was consoled with a fine scotch! Sunday arrives, and we all had an uneventful (ie. trouble-free) trip home.

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Bronte Creek Show - Paul MacDonald:

On 17 September, for the first time, I attended the annual car show at Bronte Creek. It didn't look like a good idea at 7:00 A.M. on the 17th when it was raining in Ottawa and the forecast was for a day of the same, but we figured that we could visit the CN tower or something like that if the whole

same, but we figured that we could visit the CN tower or something like that if the whole Bronte thing bombed. So we (Kathy, my youngest daughter and myself) set off and got into Bronte at about 11:00 just as the rain stopped. There were already a lot of cars on display, probably 300-400 -- truly a sight after 4 hours driving in the rain. I headed straight for the flea market, not wanting to miss anything, but other than a T-shirt (MG I must confess) there was not much to buy.

The grounds were in very good condition considering the amount of rain that had fallen. The only effect the rain had was that the access road had a milky muddy surface on it that sprayed up on the cars as they drove to the display area. Not a pretty sight -- mud all over museum quality Rolls-Royces, Healeys and the like, not to mention the Triumphs!

I spent a good deal of time hovering over the "wedges" and the B's (my other weakness). Of particular note was a TR7 which was sponsored by Rimmers as it had many of the Rimmer products on it. Kind of nice to see the quality before ordering yourself. There had to be 30 TR7's and at least 15 TR8's from marginal condition to perfect, and oodles of everything else, like 6 Marcos's, a dozen Lotus super 7's, a Bond, a million Jag's (a dime a dozen!), even an E type V-12 painted mauve with enough chrome to blind you, and a good selection of trucks including an ancient WW2 thing with a Mini on the back of it.

The weather cleared up and it was sunny all afternoon. Eventually about 700 cars showed up, almost more than you could look at in one day. It was quite a show even if my video camera batteries died before I had a chance to use it and my 35MM camera ran out of film just before the first picture! Guess I'll have to go back next year to get pictures.

Thanks for the article, Paul. Brave of you to confess to buying an MG t-shirt, too! Ed.

Beaute Mobile (Moving Beauties) - Ed Kaye:

It is all over now, but from May through mid-October this past summer, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts hosted an exquisite exhibition of rare and "one-off" automobiles called *Beaute Mobile* (Moving Beauties). The collection was assembled from museums and private collections from around the world.

The exhibits certainly put the automobiles on a whole new plane - that of exquisite design and workmanship, from the flowing lines of the French Bugatti to the fins and boldness of the U.S. Tucker. There were "one-off" automobiles built exclusively for royalty and movie stars, as well as those built for the passions of the rich and famous. Some others, designs from the drawing boards of famous factories.

The cars were primarily from the 1930's, with others from the late 1800's up to Jacques Villeneuve's winning 1995 #27 Player's Reynard Ford-Cosworth. It was astounding to view the first Porsche, serial number 1, beside a beautiful flaming red fifties' Ferrari. The exhibit included approximately 50 cars. Most were meticulous and perfect in every way, however it was nice to see some with actual miles on the odometer and wear on the leather. A few even had oil-spotted towels underneath their engines!

Some of my favourites were the BRG Jaguar "D"-type racer, Alberto's F-1 Ferrari, an Indy-prepared Auto-Union, a 1938 Talbot-Lago Saloon and a beautiful '32 BMW roadster (Sorry - no Triumphs here!) Ed Kaye

Thanks to Ed for his report. Shame there were no TR's in the show. Maybe we could get the Nepean Museum to show a few of our cars in response? Ed.

We May Already be Winners:

I just noticed in the latest TRaction issue that the TR Register just had their Jubilee Open Day this past Sunday, October 22. As well as having several big names from the TR world at their offices in Didcot, the highlight of the day was the draw for the Jubilee TR7V8 by Harris Mann, the designer of the TR7! As you may recall, the club received a free draw ticket when we subscribed earlier this year, and I published the number a couple of issues back (just to be on the up-and-up, as I purchased a few extras for myself when Lori & I were there last month). I'll publish the winning number in next month's newsletter.

What happens if the club DOES win the TR7V8? Perhaps a raffle at one of our meetings? That would ensure full attendance, that's for sure! Or perhaps we could re-affle it at the Classic next year - with a 'you-must-be-present-to-win' clause. That would likely ensure the biggest Classic in history, too! Hey, a person can always dream!

Also from TRaction:

The latest issue of TRaction is their special 25th anniversary issue. Among the many items, articles and photos over the past 25 years is an article entitled 'A Short History of the TR Register'. One thing which made me chuckle is the reproduction of the letter dated December 19, 1969, declaring the first meeting of the 'TR2/3/3A Owners Club' as it was first called (roll-up windows were a source of ridicule then). The second paragraph reads:

"A number of people, including myself, are carrying out repairs etc. to their cars and will not have them on the road by 11th January. It will, therefore, be in order to arrive in any vehicle."

Times haven't changed all that much!

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Classifieds:

- 1954 long-door TR2 in very good condition (all original). Stored for last 10 years by widow of second owner. Asking \$10,000. Call Mrs. Parker at 728-4069. (Let's keep this one in the Ottawa area!)
- TR6 Parts for Sale:
 - Convertible top frame;
 - two hoods;
 - Pair - new chrome bullet mirrors;
 - New trunk liner kitCall 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 Scoffield 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)

- Well Randy Hildebrandt did it again! He purchased a TR6 hardtop in very good condition for just \$100! Where does he find these deals? How about letting the rest of the club share in these finds?
- This must be the year of transmission problems: Joe Lashley's TR8; Steve Lashley's Europa; John Day's & yours truly's TR6s. Some were internal problems; some (we hope) are just sticky clutches. We'll find out for sure upon removal of the transmission. What the hey - it's only time & money!

- Brian Mills is busy cutting out the rust from Colin McCallum's TR6 frame. The trouble is parts replacements are not available at this time, so Brian is dipping into his own inventory for repairs. Don't get that garage dirty, Brian - my car's next.

- TR2 surfaces in Ottawa!

I received a call from Paul MacDonald. He informed me of a TR2 in good condition in the west-central area of Ottawa. The history of the car goes as follows:

Paul had met an elderly lady who told him she had an early TR2 in her garage. It had sat for 10 years since her husband had passed away. Paul told me this, and I called for an appointment to view this car. I'd no money in my pocket, but dreams are cheap!

Come Saturday morning, I arrive in my TR3A. There in the driveway is the TR2. It is white, with 'blackberry' interior trim. I've only seen that trim colour once before, in the early 60's. Could it be the same car as then? It could very well be, as not many had that trim specification. On closer inspection of the TR, I could see the owners (only 2 in 41 years) had taken good care of it. There were 90k miles showing on the odometer. The interior was in good original condition; there is the original single-window vinyl top; hardtop & sidecurtains all original. Under the hood, everything as should be - dirty, but original. What really got me was the commission number of this car - TS 530. This is an early 1954 TR2, as the total TR2 production reached 8,636.

As the story goes, the woman's husband had bought the car many years ago, and was the second owner. He had put many miles on the car, but had it well maintained & serviced as required. This car deserves a good home, where it can be appreciated for its history.

- Little Red TR3A - final chapter (I hope)

After spending almost 2 months at Pritchard's garage, Shaun's car was almost finished, except for a slight problem. His steering box needed to be replaced (hard to find & not reproduced). There was a unit in Picton, but it turned out to be not much better than the original. Off again to Chaumont, New York - no better luck. There's one more in Toronto - Shaun's off again! Lady Luck smiles this time. It's installed and we're ready to go home (should we sacrifice a chicken just to be sure?). Shaun's off on the road again - it's a warm, sunny day, the car phone's fully charged, CAA & MasterCard are in his pocket - all set!

Shaun gets to Orleans, just 4 blocks from his house - you guessed it - dead on the road! A few choice words were muttered - what could go wrong now!? The only thing not replaced or fixed on the car is the heater, and it's not even in the car at the moment!

A little tinkering here & there reveals the fuel pump was the problem - no gas was getting to the carbs. Some more tinkering and Shaun is home. Repairs are made and now Shaun's ready for some final days of driving before winter comes. May the force be with you!

Technical Article:

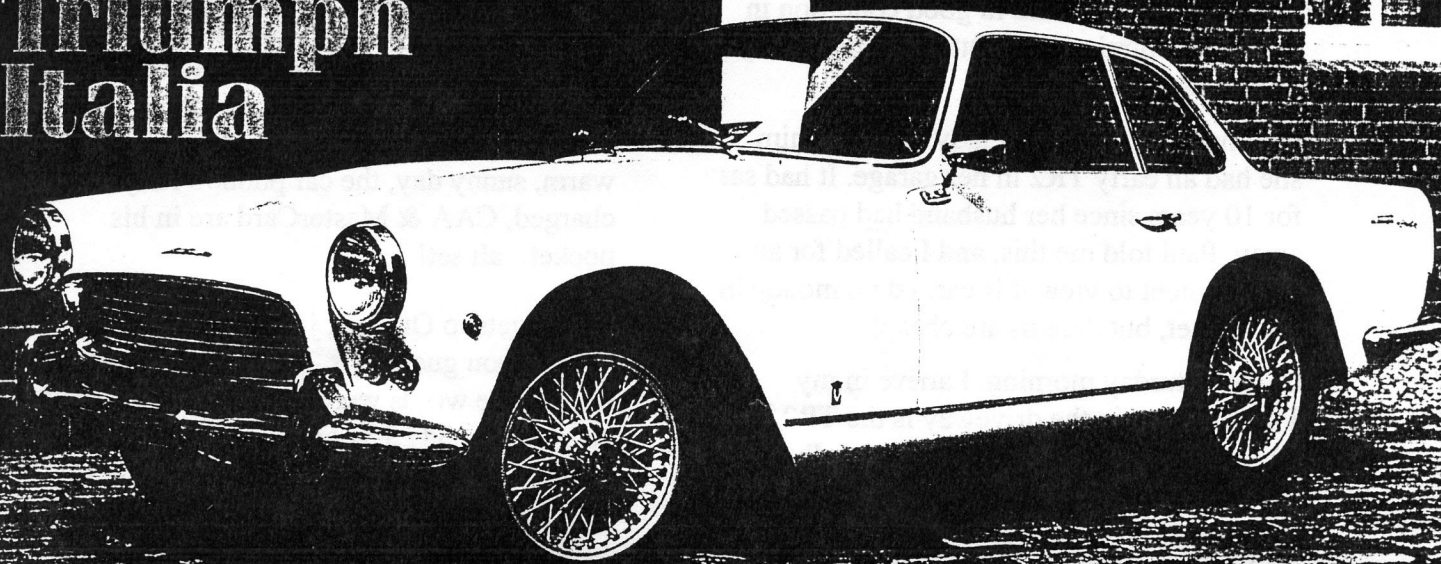
Julio says Triumphs & Italians go well together: as proof, read about the limited-run "Italia"!

Next Month:

- "English Memories" - Part 2.
- Dave Huddleson describes the Roadster Factory Summer Picnic '95.
- Lots more!

British Heart, Italian Soul

The Story of the Triumph Italia



Photos by Dettel Krehl

Although the Italia might be known to most stalwart Triumph enthusiasts, many inaccuracies have been perpetuated over the decades. Italia owner and consultant to the Vintage Triumph Register, Adrian Sinnott, with Jörg von Appen, visited the son of the Italia's creator, to dispel all mysteries...

It is not often that you see the past in a tangible form before you, but I experienced a form of time travel when I visited my good friend Jörg von Appen at his home in Germany. There, in a climate-controlled atmosphere, was the most original Triumph Italia in the world.

It was as though I had walked into a Triumph dealership in 1961. It had covered just 27 kilometers from new! This car had been kept in a dealer's stock from 1962, and only sold in 1989 when the dealer was 92 years old. Yet he was still willing to offer a two-year warranty! We all hear of these automotive discoveries, and as we get older and more experienced, we tend to treat them skeptically. Not with this car! Completely documented and absolutely stunning, it is the finest original Italia to survive.

The Italia offers refinement not found in other Triumphs, the coupé body (it had been designed from the beginning has a coupé and never intended to be a convertible) has structural rigidity generally attributed to unibody cars with none of the squeaks and rattles prevalent in rag tops. All four wings are part of the main body and not bolted on as is common practice with early Triumphs. The body is welded to the chassis near the rear of the passenger compartment (I believe this was used to locate the first section and the body built up from there as it is bolted on in many other areas).

Unlike Triumph-based specials, the Italia used the entire TR3 chassis and drivetrain with only minor modifications. This combination of dependable and

rugged British engineering with the beauty of Italian artistry produced a very desirable automobile.

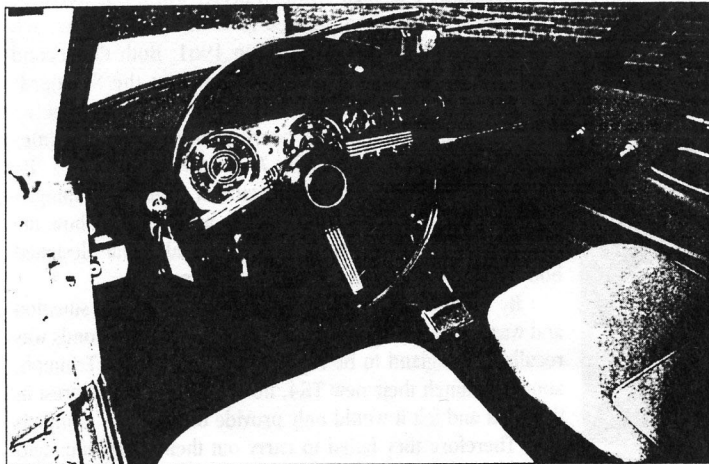
When Vignale built a car body, he never used wooden bucks to test-fit panels. Each of his cars is different and not even symmetrical from side to side. This also applies to the Italia. Vignale felt that this made each car a work of art, and no two are exactly alike.

There is a very large glass area making the interior seem voluminous. The seats are comfortable and spacious compared to other period types and are specially made for the Italia. The back seat is best left for packages, but you can squeeze in a small child. Instrumentation is all TR3 and, unless your car was equipped with the optional Nardi steering wheel, that was also a TR3 item (only Nardi brand wheels were an original option). There is a folding footrest for the passenger, real interior lights that go on when you open the door, and a map light under the dash! A radio was available as a dealer option and here in the States it was the same as in a TR3. Most cars have an awkward looking cigar lighter somewhere on the dash and except for Italia No. 1, the overdrive switch was also located at the base of the dash (not always in the same spot).

Other available options included a leather interior, Borrani wire wheels, and Weber carburetors. The Italia was available in a variety of colors and could also be painted in a special color at your request. Most options for the TR3 could be fitted to the Italia through your local Triumph dealer.

The boot is quite useful, and it contains the spare and tools (these are the same as in a TR3). There are two different fuel tanks: the early cars fill from inside the boot and look similar to a TR3 tank, the later cars have an outside filler and to accommodate this the tank sits where the spare tire should be. Where is the spare? It fits into the tank! Possibly the most unusually shaped tank ever used in an automobile.

On the road the Italia is remarkably stable and quite powerful (no, we didn't take the 27 km car out but Jörg's other Italia, a nice original car that he uses whenever he can to drive to work or down to the Nurburgring for a few laps!), a little slower off the line than a TR3, but with a higher top end due to the



ABOVE: If you could read the odometer, you'd see just 27.4 km! This 34-year old car is like new.

TOP RIGHT: Chassis plate shows Triumph origin.

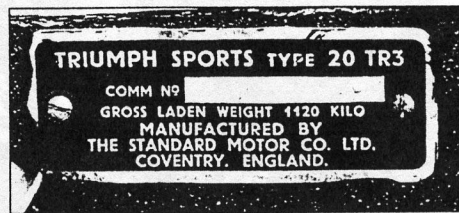
more aerodynamic styling. It is well able to hold its own on Germany's famous Autobahn. In 1959, Italia No. 1 was tested on England's M.I.R.A. track and was faster than any other Triumph up to that time except one, which we believe was the TRS LeMans car. The Italia lapped at over 109 mph, this on a car with less than 1,200 miles, not even run in!

Under the hood sits Triumph's 1991cc version of its venerable Standard-Vanguard engine exactly as in the TR3, except for an addition to the valve cover of a small tab to hold the temperature gauge line (this was later added to regular TR3 production covers). All the cars were equipped with the usual non-synchro first gear transmission, whether one of the early cars or one of the last TR3B-based cars. If you are lucky enough to own one with overdrive you may also have the 4.1:1 rear which will speed up your 0-60 times. The chassis may have a front anti-sway bar, heavy-duty shock absorbers and uprated rear springs depending on its vintage. While almost everything to do with the chassis and drivetrain was available from Triumph, certain parts were specific to the Italia, including the radiator and heater core which are of Italian origin.

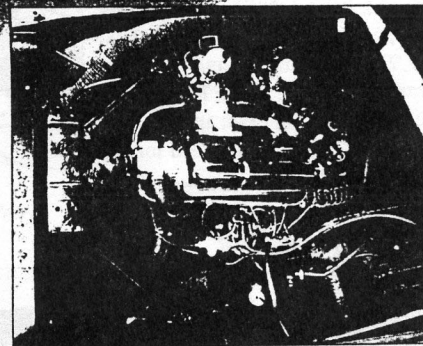
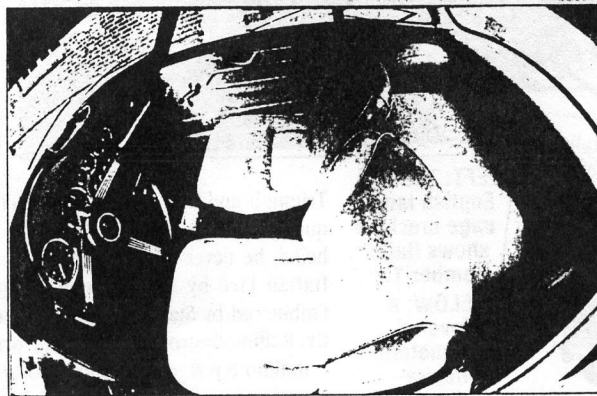
A well-restored or good original Italia has sound deadening material, not only on the interior, but also a material sprayed into the engine compartment. If you ever have the opportunity to sample a well-restored Italia next to a TR3, try it - you'll be amazed. Not that there is anything wrong with the TR3, but just to see how two different approaches to the same chassis produce very different automobiles.

The question I am most often asked is, "How many did they make?" And my answer is "we don't really know." The long-accepted figure was 329, as an Italia with Vignale No. 329 surfaced (and disappeared) in Florida some years before I became consultant. I personally have seen car No. 328. Rumors abound that Vignale never produced this many and we found references to the Italia in *Quattroruote* (the Italian automotive magazine) listings of Triumphs to suggest that fewer than 100 chassis were imported to Italy (this might not have allowed for chassis shipped in 'knocked-down' form which probably were not considered imported automobiles). This summer Jörg and I spent some time at the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust Museum as the guest of Mr. Anders Ditlev Clausager. With Mr. Clausager's assistance we were able to track down 297 chassis numbers having been shipped to Italy. Whether all were built into completed Italias is unknown. So your guess is as good as mine. We know at least 60 survive, another five or six are with owners that have not answered our requests, and four or five are known to have been scrapped.

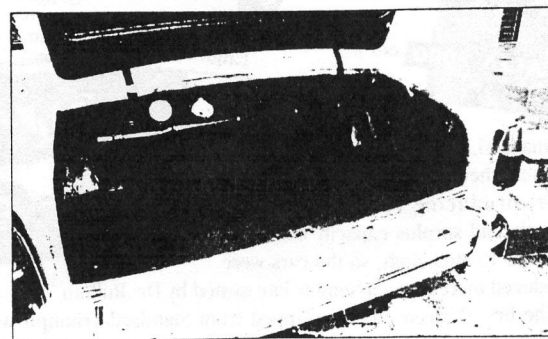
When I became Italia Consultant for the Vintage Triumph Register, very little was known about the Italia, and many thought the car to be a small-time effort completely without the support of Standard Triumph. Few Triumph enthusiasts knew of the car and certain clubs would only allow it "associate" membership. It had been taken for granted that Dr. Ruffino (the name



Italia 2000



ABOVE: Familiar Triumph TR3 engine in unfamiliar surroundings.
BELOW: Note fuel tank in large boot.



most often associated with the Italia and rarely spelled correctly) was deceased and no one bothered to look for him, most believing that this was entirely a Vignale project.

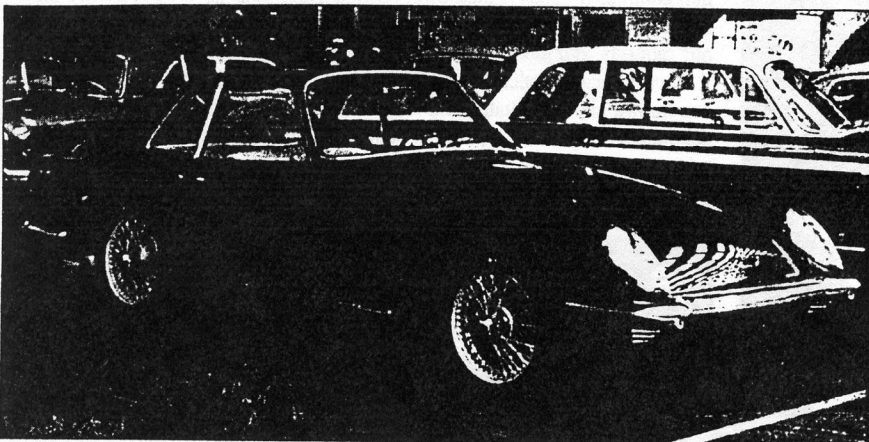
After years of intensive searching we finally located Dr. Ruffino. Unfortunately, not until two days after he passed away! But his son Dario has been an enormous help as he was also involved with the Italia project.

Continued next page

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

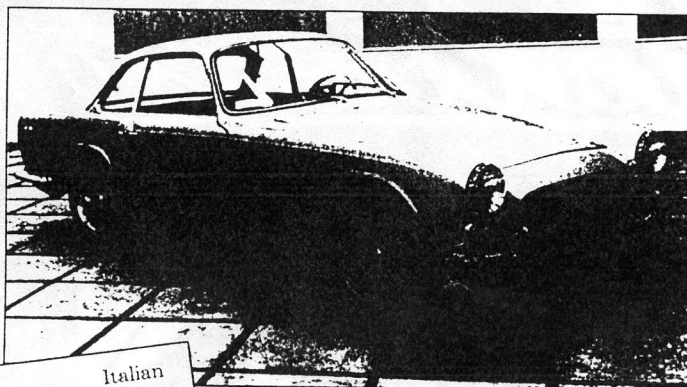
In 1957, Dr. Salvatore Ruffino purchased the rights to distribute Standard-Triumph automobiles in Italy. This was the true beginning of the Triumph Italia, and of Dr. Ruffino's dream to build his own sports car.

The new firm was called C.E.S.A.C., based in Naples. With his company now established, Dr. Ruffino met with his friend Mr. Zambrini, the director of Autobianchi. Mr. Zambrini arranged a meeting with Zagato to produce sketches of a sports coupe. The drawings produced by Zagato did not appeal to Dr. Ruffino (they bore some resemblance to the later Lancia Zagato coupe). A second meeting was arranged with Giovanni Michelotti and, from May to September 1958, Michelotti delivered various sketches starting with the 'Coupe



ABOVE: The Slope-nose prototype at the 1958 Turin show.

RIGHT: The second prototype at Triumph's Styling Studio.



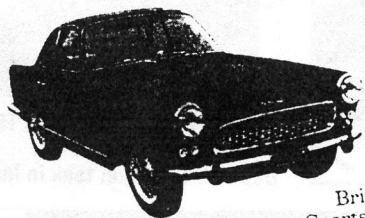
posti su TR3', the so-called 'Slope-nose prototype' (never actually called an Italia) to what was to become the Triumph Italia 2000GT. Shortly thereafter, Michelotti produced the TRS, the 'ZOOM' prototype, and the initial drawings for the TR4. The Italia's influence can be seen in all these cars. The original plan called for the cars to be pro-

Italian
Bodywork at
its Best

LEFT: The first English language brochure shows Italia Number 1.

BELOW: A Giovanni Michelotti illustration of the Italia on a postcard.

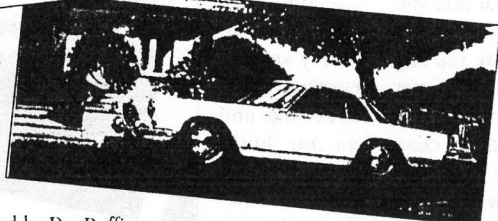
British
Tradition in Sports car
Engineering at its Finest



ITALIA 2000 coupe

duced by a firm called Romanazzi, but this plan was abandoned because they would have been unable to start producing cars immediately. Vignale had surplus capacity and close contacts to Michelotti, so the cars were produced there on an assembly line owned by Dr. Ruffino.

The first thirteen chassis shipped from Standard-Triumph went directly to Vignale. These included the three known show cars, two of which still exist, No. 1 and No. 3. After these cars were delivered to C.E.S.A.C. in Naples, they underwent some serious testing by Carlo Quagletta, chief test driver. Some stability problems were encountered and these were remedied by the installation of a front anti-sway bar, stiffer shock absorbers and uprated rear springs with



an additional leaf (7 instead of 6 as on the TR3). Here is where Standard-Triumph recognized the Italia as a serious production automobile by including a special section in the original TR3 Production Specification book detailing all the changes to the chassis required for the Italia. Italias also had an "I" added to the engine number.

TRIUMPH STEPS IN . . . AND OUT

In late 1959, Dr. Ruffino was in direct contact with Mr. C. L. P. Edmonds of Standard-Triumph (their representative in Italy) and they negotiated a verbal contract for Triumph to require that each Triumph dealer worldwide purchase one Italia for a total of 720 cars. Ruffino planned to produce 1,000 cars; 500 in 1960 and the remaining 500 in 1961. Both the second prototype and Italia No. 1 were shown at the Standard-Triumph styling studio with more intensive testing done on No. 1. Quoting automotive correspondent Denis Holmes excerpted from the book *The Triumph Companion*: "He (Alick Dick, then managing Director of Standard-Triumph) cannot resist a certain flamboyancy, and used to show me proudly the TR sports car with the special Italian-designed body, the only one of its kind in the country."

By 1960, Standard-Triumph was in a desperate situation and was about to be purchased by Leyland. Mr. Edmonds was recalled to England to be replaced by a Mr. Tustin. Triumph, about to launch their new TR4, no longer had any interest in the Italia and felt it would only provide unnecessary competition. Therefore they failed to carry out their obligations and left Dr. Ruffino to build and distribute the car on his own. As Standard-Triumph's Italian distributor, this left Ruffino with

many Italian dealerships to carry the cars but denied him access to the U.S. and other parts of Europe. This was partially solved by Mr. Stutz Plaisted of Stutz Plaisted Imports, Salem, Massachusetts. He imported the Italia on his own and it now became the Italia 2000, with the only external reference to Triumph being a T.M. Triumph badge on the rear wings.

At this time, Dr. Ruffino started 'Ruffino S.p.A.' to handle all Italia business with C.E.S.A.C. to continue as Standard-Triumph distributor. Ruffino S.p.A. maintained production of the Italia until early 1962, but without the sales promised by Triumph and the increased competition of the less-expensive TR4, the Italia quietly faded away. Ruffino was left with a huge debt, but contrary to popular belief, he never went bankrupt. In 1963, he paid a total of over one billion Italian Lire by selling many assets including an entire street in Milan. Embittered by Standard-Triumph's actions, which doomed the entire project, Dr. Ruffino destroyed many of the original documents, drawings and sketches.

Ruffino S.p.A. sued Triumph over failure to supply the chassis as ordered (many were missing the antisway bar, etc.) but remained their distributor until 1965. Dr. Ruffino was also the Mercedes-Benz agent for Naples, Salerno and Avellino. Triumph felt that he would be unable to handle both concessions.

When their contract was up they handed the distributorship to Ducati Meccanica, although Ruffino kept the Triumph concession for the south of Italy. In 1969, he left the auto industry and moved to Rome where he developed economic relations with Canada and the U.S.

Dr. Ruffino was a Knight of Gran Croce of the Holy Sepulchre and was President of the Order for the Campania region. This honor kept him involved in many important aspects of Italian business. Dr. Ruffino passed away on the 19th of February, 1994 without the knowledge that, in many enthusiasts eyes, the Italia was a great success.

SCRUTINIZING ITALIA

Varying production numbers, inaccurate information, no known parts supply, and other worries have plagued the Italia owner trying to restore a car. It was often mentioned that owners had to sign a release acknowledging that no

body parts were available! This was only true within the U.S., as the Italia was imported by Stutz Plaisted, and this waiver was for his protection. Cars in Europe could be returned to Ruffino S.p.A. for repair.

If you are lucky enough to find an Italia to purchase, make sure that the car is complete. While mechanical

parts pose no problems, missing trim pieces can be a nightmare to locate and glass is unobtainable. As with most cars of the period, rust usually attacks the floors and sills; on the whole Italias are very robust with thick steel used to form the body panels. Surprisingly, since the car was hand-formed, it is quite a simple, if somewhat costly, task to replace missing or damaged body parts.

There are three distinct trim changes with the Italia and a few minor ones:

The first ones were the 'Show cars' (these appeared at the Turin show and in the magazines), these are car No. 1 and No. 3 (and probably No. 2). They had special Vignale and Michelotti badges on the nose and bonnet respectively, no side marker lights, a Vignale script beside the Vignale emblem on the front wings with Michelotti crossed flags on the rear wings, plexiglas sun visors, chrome interior handles and were called the 'Triumph Italia 2000GT'. Even the crinkle finish on the dash was different from the following cars.

The next group consisted of the 'Production cars'. These were now called the 'Italia 2000', the only mention of Triumph being the 'T.M. Triumph' badge on the rear wings. There was a side marker light on both front wings, with only a Vignale



emblem on the front wings (one owner has fitted the Vignale script near this emblem to fill some extraneous holes but this is incorrect on these later models) with Michelotti crossed flags on the rear wings. Their interior handles were now aluminum and the sun visors had been replaced with more ordinary vinyl covered versions. These cars still had the fuel filler in the boot.

The final incarnation was basically the same

as the previous series but the cars now sported an outside fuel filler. This continued through the last thirty cars which were TR3B-based.

Throughout the production of the Italia there were running changes that must have been related to the supply of parts. Cars with aluminum tail light housings generally had Lucas tail lamp lenses as used on the Alfa 750 and the Nash Metropolitan. These cars also could have Lucas headlamps. Cars with chrome tail light housings had Carello lenses (as seen in the photos) and these are practically impossible to find if yours are broken. Chances are that these cars will also have Carello front lights. The front parking light and turn signals were made by Altissimo. These were clear or amber with longitudinal flutes on the early cars and translucent with concentric circular flutes on the later models. A very few had a rectangular parking/turn signal combination lamp as on the second prototype. No cars were built with the TR3 style Lucas lights although many owners have had to install these when the originals were broken or lost.

There were three versions of the rear license plate light. The first as shown on our test car, the second version consisted of the same type light/handle with

ITALIA REGISTER

According to the Vintage Triumph Register, my position as a consultant is to assist owners with questions regarding their particular automobile. I and other owners before me have considered starting a quarterly newsletter but we were unable to interest more than a small number of owners, never enough to cover the cost of postage, paper, etc. I am proposing to create the International Triumph Italia Register open to owners and enthusiasts alike with a quarterly mailing.

Jörg and I are also planning a very limited production book on the Italia containing copies of the brochures, pictures and many other previously unobtainable pieces of information for release sometime during 1995. If you would be interested in purchasing a copy of the book, or joining the Italia Register as described above, send a S.A.S.E. to Mr. Adrian Sinnott, P.O. Box 1423, Huntington, NY 11743, for further information.

CREDITS

Jörg and I have been on an expedition since we met many years ago to find out the true history of the Italia. We have gathered information and shared it freely with all Italia owners. Many owners have been kind enough to pass on copies of whatever material they possess. We would like to thank Mr. Dario Ruffino, Mr. Anders Ditlev Clausager and the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, Mr. Edgardo Michelotti, Mr. Guiseppe Del Core, Mr. Ted Watson, Mr. Bob Slayden, Mr. Dave Hutchison, Mr. David Tomlin, Mr. Krehl for his photographic skill and all those others who have helped over the years and continue to support our efforts. I apologize to all those that I could not list. A belated final thanks to Dr. Salvatore Ruffino for creating such a wonderful automobile, this article is dedicated in his memory. □

Italia 2000

an additional light mounted on the rear bumper, and the final style used a smaller handle with the light mounted on an escutcheon below the boot lid.

Most Italias had a vinyl interior, very few had Borrani wire wheels, some had TR3 type disc wheels and a handful were built as right-hand drive. Overdrive became more prevalent after No. 96, and all had the 1991cc engine with the non-synchro first gear trans - even the later TR3B-based cars. After Ruffino had arranged the production specification with Triumph, most Italia engine numbers now ended with the suffix 'EF'.

There was always some confusion regarding Italia chassis numbers. While they are continuations of the TR3's consecutive numbers, the suffixes are different. All Left-hand drive TR3-based Italias start with the prefix TS and end with the suffix LCO or LCOO. The 'L' represents Left-hand drive (right-hand drive cars are listed as 'CO' or 'COO'), the 'CO' means chassis-only and the additional 'O' stood for overdrive, although some cars with overdrive did not receive this extra letter. The last thirty cars which were TR3B-based had the TSF prefix.

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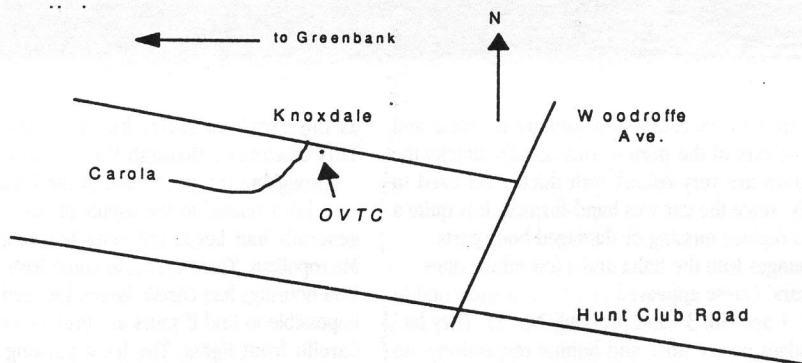
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Membership is open to all individuals and companies interested in Triumph sports cars. Membership is \$30.00 per year (June/June) per household and \$60 per year, corporate.

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



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