

The Newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Triumph Club

November, 1994

A Touch of Class



In This Issue:

- OVIC Executive Election Results
- Xmas Party Announcement
- "OIL DRIPS"

Cover: I thought this Triumph roadster from this year's Bronte Creek show would be a change from the usual 'TR' stuff.

Editor's Note: (Julio) - Here we are into November and I can still drive my car (top down). I guess some of the gang wished they hadn't put their cars away so soon - who can tell? We may still have a couple of weeks of this kind of weather if we're lucky (Keep sacrificing those chickens, Benco!). Gotta go - for a run, that is!

Editor's Note: (John) -

I had a surprise E-mail last week at work. It was from Roly Mailloux - in Germany! Roly discovered we could send each other electronic mail. We now have ourselves an on-line overseas correspondent for the OVTC! Roly reports that all is well with the family - glad to hear it! He says there aren't too many Triumphs around, though. Can't have everything, I guess.

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OVTC Executive Elections:

The October meeting was sparsely attended compared with recent meetings: perhaps people feared to attend on the off-chance the might get nominated! As it went, things went fairly quickly. Clive Law was nominated for a second stint as President, to which Clive accepted. No other nominations for President were made: maybe everyone said "good enough for me". Next came the choices for V.P., with

two nominations made: Martin Harasek and Mike Crawford. As for the rest of the positions, the consensus was "so far, so good", and we all got in by acclamation (or by default, depending on your viewpoint).

Since we only had the V.P. position left to decide, the motion was made to take an immediate vote rather than wait until November as originally planned. Martin and Mike left the room, and a show of hands showed Martin got the nod for 1994-95. Congratulations to Clive and Martin, our two new 'big cheeses' for the coming 12 months! Anyway, your new Executive is as follows:

President:

Clive Law

Vice-Pres.: Treasurer:

Martin Harasek Jane Benco

Editors:

John Day

Juliano Benco

Membership:

Dave Huddleson

Regalia:

Pat Mills

Special Events:

Juliano Benco

Past Pres.:

Joe Lashley

A big round of applause at this time for our outgoing heads of state: Joe Lashley and Mike Stapleton. Their main success this year was the Richmond show (how it didn't rain that day, I still don't know!), but they also provided solid leadership through the whole year. Cheers, guys!!

October Meeting:

In addition to the elections, a raffle was held. On the block was a 50-piece Canadian Tire ratchet set. The number was drawn, and the winner was -- Brian Mills!!?? Brian's words on winning were pretty much the same as what everyone else was thinking: "What the hell am I gonna do with this?!" Fair is fair, and Brian did buy a

ticket (3, in fact). A spare set in the kitchen, perhaps? Congratulations!

Fall Tours, Part 1 (by Derek Holbeche)

This year Daisy Mae & I went on 2 fall tours. The first, on Sunday, Sept. 25, was with the Tay Touring Club of Perth. This is mainly a club of North American cars, but a number of Triumphs are making 'inroads'.

The cars that attended that day included a 58 Buick, 66 Mustang, 66, Pontiac Tempest, 75 Jensen-Healey, 54 DeSoto and my Herald. The tour was north of 60 - no, north of Hwy 7 (same thing, Ed.!), with lunch at the Swiss Inn in Denbigh. The roads were good, the pace, at about 45 mph, was good (but too slow for 8's, right, Joe & Dave?), and the fall colours were wonderful.

We passed some nice large homes, but it appeared the owners had gone south for the winter. We did see signs for the emergency helipad in the bush, so they weren't toally out of civilization (kidding).

The route we took was: Perth, Balderson, Fallbrook, McDonald's Corners, Elphin, Snow Road Station, Ompah, Vennachar, Vennachar Junction, and Denbigh. The Swiss Inn is at the corner of Hwy 41 and 28 (if you are out that way, drop in).

Return route was by way of Hwy 41 south to Cloyne, Myer's Cave on 506, and Fernleigh. At this point the road is high above 2 lakes with these unpronounceable names but the view was great. Then on to Ardoch, Clarendon Station at 509, south to Hwy 7 and Sharbot Lake. This is where I discovered my handbrake cable had parted ways with the hand lever. We then returned home from Sharbot Lake, with the Jensen going off in a cloud of dust. It was the first time I had been on some of these roads, but it won't be the last.

The Boot'n'Bonnet Tour will be in next month's issue. Derek.

OVTC Grille Badges:

Clive reported at the October meeting that the grille badges ordered by the club for regalia stock will be ready in about 6 weeks (which translates into 'any day' at the rate I'm progressing on getting the newsletter out promptly). We made an initial order of 8; of these, 4 are spoken for, so 4 more will be available for purchasing in time to hang on the Christmas tree. Call Pat Mills to buy one. The cost is \$40.

OVTC Executive Meeting:

The executive convened to set the tone for the next 12 months: what things do we do different, what things do we keep doing - that sort of thing. The first thing Clive said he wants to have for this year is more outside speakers and visits to outside centres, like we had for Randy's place last September. Clive would do the arranging if we agree that we want to see some place in particular (we may be looking into a trip to Bells Corners Machine Shop already). Voice your interests at future meetings!

Another thing we all thought would be better organized for next year would be our FunRuns. This is the other opportunity for us to get together as a club on a regular basis, so we could do more than take the standard trips to the same pubs (though there's nothing wrong with them too, just less frequently). For next season, attempts will be made to have specific outings in the newsletter. The trip a few of us made at the last minute to Upper Canada Village is a good example, as it was a great time. Again, we're seeking member feedback & ideas, so let us know what you would like to do or where we should go on Sundays!

Of course, the big event for the OVTC has become the Richmond show, and a lot of time was spent discussing last June's affair. Having had a year to organize the show, we're a lot wiser now, and the feeling was that the OVTC should continue to organize things. This is still a long way off before the next show, but we'll begin shortly with more of the nitty gritty stuff. Stay tuned.

Dave Huddleson wasn't there for this, but as we've managed to update nearly everyone to a June renewal date, it would be a good idea to have a fresh membership list, with phone numbers. We may be able to have this for the next newsletter, but definitely for the new year!

We'll be reporting on future Exec meetings as they happen, to keep everyone up to date. Don't worry - we want to be in contact through the newsletter as well as through our monthly meetings, to make this the best car club in the region!

OVTC Christmas Party:

The anxiously awaited Christmas party will be on December 11, 1994. The setup is as in the past: B.Y.O.B., plus some tray of food for the buffet. Note - Contact Jane (727-8113) on what you will be bringing, so that we can have a good mix of goodies.

Place - Benco's (14 Kelvin Crescent) Time - 2:00 p.m. onwards.



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Clive's other side:

Our Prez-elect has more than Triumphs as an outside interest. As proof, he is inviting members of the OVTC to his book launch on the subject of his other passion: small arms used by the Commonwealth forces. As Clive writes: "This is a reminder that if you choose to attend the launch of 'Canadian Military Handguns, 1855-1985', the Army Ottawa Officer's Mess insists that men wear a jacket and tie. Ladies are reminded that jeans are not permitted. The Mess is located at 149 Somerset St. West, between Elgin and Cartier. Public parking is available directly in front of the Mess. behind Know Church. Please RSVP to Clive at 820-7350 by December 7."

February '95 Meeting:

The February meeting will be held at Milano Auto Body (75 Aberdeen St., off Preston) at 7:00 p.m.! Joe Panuccio will be giving a talk on body work, painting, prepping, etc.

I don't know how many of you might've seen Joe on Regional Contact (CJOH TV) last month, but it featured his collection of vintage motorbikes, including his 1939 Triumph, his '42 Harley, and on. It was quite the show!

"OIL DRIPS" (by Julio)

- Sad to say, but John Carr has sold his lovely TR4A. It's new home will be somewhere in southwestern Ontario.
- Pat Zakaib's TR6 is now at Milano's for a major face lift, and will be out in the spring looking like a whole new car, thanks to the magic touch of Joe Panuccio. We can all see the progress this February!

- Mike Crawford's TR6 is now completely stripped down to the bare bones - all parts are now ready for galvanizing, painting, etc., during the winter months. Watch out this spring, C.L. & M.B. - new kid in town!
- Gord Robertson's getting down to work on his TR6 after 5 years of ownership. A couple of carb kits and a thorough purging of the fuel system got the car running. What's next, Gord?
- If any member is interested in having his or her car repaired & painted, Joe at Milano's has room for 1 more car during the winter months and readied for spring. P.S. his prices are really fair and you get first quality work. Just look at the ones he's done already!
- If anyone is working on their car during the winter months, give me a call (Julio @ 727-8113) if you need help. There are some members who have shown an interest in helping out!
- Peter Corbett's TR6 is making it's way
 to its new owner this week in
 Germany! Apparently the new owner
 heard of Peter's car for sale while over
 here, and with European prices for
 TR6s out of sight compared to here,
 bought the car to ship back. (Hey, Roly
 how about checking the going rate for
 TR prices in Bonn and E-mail me an
 article sometime?)
- This just in I heard Joe Lashley may soon be rubbing noses with the eskimos up north if he accepts his latest job offer - in Yellowknife, for 2 years!.
 Better get skis for the TR8 and a good team of huskies to pull 'er, Joe!

• Lastly (or should I say, Lashley?), I heard a rumour that Steve Lashley had his Lotus Europa on the road briefly last week. Now he can say it didn't go the entire season without touching the road!

Classifieds:

- Rob at Miniman has 2 Triumphs for sale at the moment:
- A 1963 Vitesse (Alberta car); good body; second parts car included.
- A 1967 TR4A IRS (also Alberta car; with overdrive.
 - Call Rob at 836-4283 for more details.
- 1974 TR6. Good condition. Asking \$4,500. Call 489-4277 after 6.
- I've spotted a '75 TR6 for sale near Maitland Ave. Apparently, this overdrive-equipped car has 71k miles, and it's owner is looking to get in the \$3,000 range for it. Call Greg at 225-9099 for more info or to have a look.
- Various TR6 parts from my 1974 parts car: carpets (new), front bumper (rechromed), fiberglass rear fenders, etc., etc. Call John Day at 723-9876 for particulars.

Technical article:

This month's technical article is on the importance of you car's ignition timing: what it is, how it affects performance, and how it can affect your car'e engine.

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One of the most important steps in tuning your engine for optimum efficiency is making sure the spark at each plug occurs at exactly the right time. Chris Horton shows how simple technology can help

YOU CAN LIVE WITHOUT a stroboscopic ignition timing light — just as you can happily exist for years using old-fashioned feeler gauges rather than a dwell meter to set your classic car's contact-breaker points gap — but it makes the checking and adjustment of this crucial engine setting so much easier and accurate that, in

Once upon a TIME

these emission-conscious times, it's an absurdly false economy to make do without one.

Timing lights aren't exactly expensive, either. You can spend \$50 or even \$100 on an all-singing, all-dancing superbright xenon strobe visible from half a mile away, but at the other end of the scale you can spend \$10 — or even as

little as \$5 — on a simple neon device which, while not quite so easy to use, will ultimately do precisely the same job. You can even hire a timing light from some tool shops if you don't want the expense of buying your own.

But what exactly is a timing light, and what does it do? Basically it's nothing more

than a special bright light connected in series to the sparkplug lead for whichever cylinder the vehicle manufacturer happens to specify for checking and setting the ignition timing — usually, but not always, number one — and activated by the pulse of high-tension current which fires that plug once for every two revolutions of the crankshaft.

Each time the plug fires, a mark on the crankshaft pulley (or sometimes the flywheel) is more or less in line with a fixed pointer somewhere on an adjacent part of the engine, and the rapid succession of bright flashes synchronised with the rotation of the mark appears to 'freeze' it in relation to the pointer and allow you to see whether the spark is too far advanced, too far retarded or, with any luck, just about right.

But that's not the end of it. We've shown in the photographs how to connect a timing light and how to interpret and act upon the results to set your ignition timing accurately, but there's a lot more you can find out about your engine than whether or not the spark is happening at the right time at just one given engine speed.

Your car's distributor almost certainly incorporates one and probably two devices to vary the spark timing automatically according to the engine speed and load.

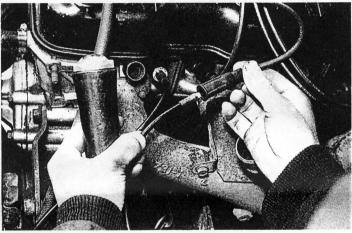
One is a centrifugal affair within the distributor which, as the engine speed and thus the distributor-shaft speed increases, allows a pair of springloaded bob-weights to be flung outwards and in so doing alter the position of the contactbreaker cam a few degrees in relation to the distributor's central shaft so that the spark occurs slightly earlier than it would otherwise. As the engine speed decreases the springs drag the weights and thus the cam back to their original positions, and the timing reverts to its original setting.

The other ignition-advance mechanism is a rubber diaphragm connected to the inlet manifold at some point near the carburettor. The harder the engine sucks as the throttle is opened and the load on it increases, so the greater the vacuum in the manifold and the more the diaphragm - which this time is connected to and moves the contact-breaker baseplate — deflects to advance the ignition.

Once again a spring within the operating linkage inside the distributor returns the timing to its standard setting as the throttle is closed and the load on the engine decreases.



There are two ways of connecting timing lights. Cheaper ones simply link in a series to the relevant plug lead (below); expensive ones use an inductive pickup (left)



The point of all this is that with a timing light (and provided there's a graduated scale attached to the engine) you can check the correct operation of all these functions.

On a Mk1 Ford Capri 1600GT, for example, both the basic static and dynamic ignition timing are set at 8 degrees BTDC (before top dead centre), in the case of the latter with the engine running at 800rpm. (Dynamic timing figures are not always the same as the static settings, but it does

Mind the gap

There's one other variable to check and, if necessary, set before you get stuck in with the strobe, however. Just as the contact-breaker gap is vital to the strength of the spark at the plugs by determining the time during which the coil can build up the required high-tension current, so that gap has a significant effect on ignition timing and should be set (ideally with a dwell meter; see last month's issue) BEFORE you check and set the ignition timing itself.

If, for example, the contact breaker gap is too wide the points will effectively open too soon and the timing will be too advanced; if it is too small the points will be opening fractionally later than they should and the spark at the plugs will be delayed - or retarded - by a similar amount.

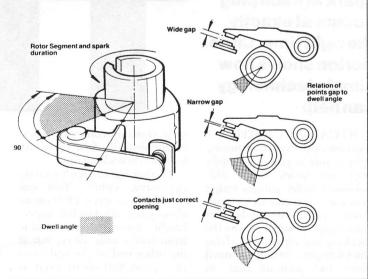
So before you attempt to check and set the ignition timing - whether statically or dynamically - always check and reset the contact-breaker

happen. If you can't find out what the correct dynamic setting should be then simply set it, with the aid of your timing light, to the static figure).

Now comes the clever bit. Disconnect the distributor vacuum pipe (which is

GETTING THE GAP RIG

We discussed the importance of dwell angle in the last issue, but a reminder of it's effect on timing won't go amiss here. The drawing (right) shows the shaded area as the dwell period (ie the angle of rotation of the cam during which the points are shut) and the smaller drawings (far right) the effect on the points gap of a dwell angle which is too small or too large. It follows that the points gap also has a significant effect on timing: too wide a gap and the points will open too early (top); too small a gap (middle) and the spark will be retarded.



sually left in place for the basic dynamic check at idle) and increase the engine speed to 2000 rpm. You should see the mark on the crankshaft pulley move to between 10 and 14 degrees BTDC. Increase the engine speed still further to 3600rpm and the mark should shift to between 14 and 18 degrees BTDC. Take it right up to 5200rpm and the mark should lie between 16 and 20 degrees BTDC.

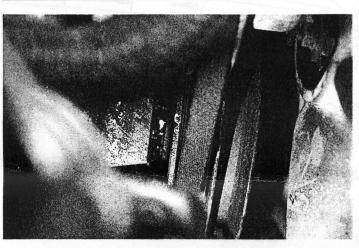
Any reading substantially outside these figures indicates problems within the centrifugal advance mechanism — usually nothing more than seized bob-weights or weakened

return springs.

Checking the operation of the vacuum advance system without a sophisticated vacuum gauge to tell you the exact manifold depression isn't quite so simple if you want to go into specific numbers, but it's easy enough to see whether or not the thing is actually working—nd that, in all honesty, is usually enough to suggest that it's working properly.

With the engine running at, say, 2000rpm, and the strobe pointing at the timing mark, simply pull the small vacuum pipe off either the distributor or carburettor and you should see the mark drop back a few degrees as the diaphragm returns to its rest position and the contact-breaker baseplate drops back to its static setting. (The timing mark won't necessarily

Some distributors feature an external adjuster (left) for fine-tuning the timing once it's been set by turning the distributor. Timing marks easier to see with Tipp-Ex (below)



return to its static setting because of the effect of the centrifugal mechanism, if fitted).

Alterntively you could remove the pipe from the distributor (and plug it so that the engine isn't running with a massive air leak), and then

connect a hand-operated vacuum pump to the distributor. Not only should the engine speed increase very slightly as you increase the suction on the distributor diaphragm, but this time you should also see the timing mark move forward in

Static timing

Before you can time the engine dynamically with a strobe you've got to get it running — and that, if you've previously removed or significantly disturbed the distributor, means timing it statically first. Ideally you should mark the position of the distributor body relative to the engine before you disturb it. Typing correction fluid or a thin scribed line are ideal for the purpose.

relation to the static pointer indicating that the timing is automatically advancing correctly.

On the same 1600 Capri, for the record, the timing should advance to 11 degrees BTDC at a manifold depression of 186 mbar, and top out at 17 degrees BTDC at a manifold depression of 305mbar.

In both cases the most likely cause of vacuum-advance failure is a damaged diaphgragm — which will mean replacing either the complete vacuum unit or again, on some occasions, the entire distributor. (New vacuum units tend to be easier to find than centrifugal springs and bob-weights.) If you're lucky, though, the cause may again be nothing more serious than a partially seized linkage or contact-breaker baseplate.

WHY TIMING IS SO IMPORTANT

Without getting too deeply involved in the technicalities of combustion efficiency, the crucial importance of ignition timing can be likened to the relationship between a couple of judo players.

Much of the skill in judo lies in using your opponent's weight against him, and the skill in that lies in knowing when to pull and when to push.

If your attacker is rushing headlong towards you, for example, there's no point in simply standing resolutely in his way and getting flattened; rather, you grab him by the lapels at exactly the right instant and use his momentum to help you throw him over.

Likewise in an internal combustion engine you don't want the spark to fire the explosive petrol/air mixture so soon that it effectively tries to stop the rising piston dead in its tracks (which is essentially what's happening if you over-advance the timing to the point where pinking occurs).

Instead, you want to fire it at a precisely predetermined point just before the piston reaches the top of its stroke, but where its accrued momentum carries it smoothly over onto the downward stroke.

You can, as we said at the beginning, set the timing to a basic static figure with the engine at rest, and that's precisely how it was routinely done for many years before the invention of stroboscopes (and it's also how, after the distributor has been significantly disturbed, you set the timing simply to get the engine running again), but it's not really as accurate as modern engines demand for optimum combustion efficiency.

It cannot take wear or even straightforward working clearance in the distributor drive into account, for example, and

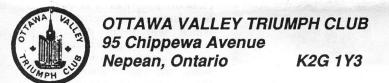


Get it right, or hole a piston...

ideally you need to see the precise relationship of the timing marks as they are in real life — when the engine is actually running, in other words. And the only way you'll do that is with a stroboscopic timing light.

"'Clean', in the sense we use the word, Madam, has nothing to do with soap, water and a brush"





Pat & Brian MILLS 53 Etterick Crescent NEPEAN, ONTARIO K2J 1E9 95/06