for enthusiasts by enthusiasts

SPITFIRE & GT6 MAGAZINE

Featuring Spitfire, GT6, Herald, Vitesse and other Triumph-based Cars

History Lesson: GT6 Mk3 The last of its kind

Left: Pimento Red 1973 GT6 Mk3 owned by Tom Beaver, Indianapolis, Indiana

features

'73 GT6 - Sweet Little Fastback Coupe
'73 GT6 - I Can Too
'73 GT6 - KF20461U
'79 Spit - Spit Becomes School Project
American British Reliability Run
Toronto British Car Day
Eastwood Rust Dissolver Review
and more...

'73 GT6 - Owned by Sue Snyder

'73 GT6 - Owned by John Gray

Issue #21

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Awaken Sleeping Beauty...

Spring has sprung, and it's time to clean up our cars and get them on the road again. Hopefully the winter has given you time to finish all of your fix-it lists, and you can hit the road ready for a season of fun and friendship.

Some areas saw little to no snowfall while others had record cold & snow. Cabin fever was setting in all over the globe as anxious drivers wanted out but weather kept them in. André, it's finally SPRING, wrap it up and get it on the road. Baby-day is anytime now. Wilf & Liv, Sparky is looking great. You have definitely made good use of your winter hours inside. Bob, time to finish those projects and actually drive that Spit6 on the road this year! John, you do remember how to drive a Spitfire, right? Van, Red Fox is crying to be driven this year. Howard, get it fixed and on the road.... (Hey wait, that's me!). Oops, where has the winter gone?

The fix-it list for my Spit hasn't changed much this winter. Other priorities took precedence. I did get her out once on January 2nd for that first of the year drive, during a warm spell. Possibly this spring will provide enough time to fix some annoying little things that have waited all winter. Anyone with some spare time willing to trade it for some "busy time"?? I could use a couple weeks of "spare time".

Even my "Round Tuit" has gotten dusty over the winter. You know what a Round Tuit is, don't you? I have one hanging on my wall, but it has yet to help me accomplish more than usual. My Round Tuit is a small, circular, cast metal wall plaque that reads: ***Round Tuit - Many times you've said "I'll do it as soon as I get around to it". Now is your chance - Now you can do it - Now at last you've got a Round Tuit.*** Well, it should help, but it has only collected dust. Maybe if I polish it, the "genie" will appear and all those projects will magically get done.

Have you had the genie visit this winter? Send us your stories and photos of what projects you tackled this winter, and show everyone you used your Round Tuit!

Have a safe and enjoyable driving season. See you on the roads...

Howard

Right: That's me dressed in cowboy garb for the Champagne Brit Car Festival *Wild Brits* theme, I was decorating my Spit in a western theme for the car show. We came in third... and yes, I drove there with the horns bolted on the bonnet.

Thanks to everyone for your submissions. Please keep them coming! They may not be in the next issue, but they will be used in a future issue.

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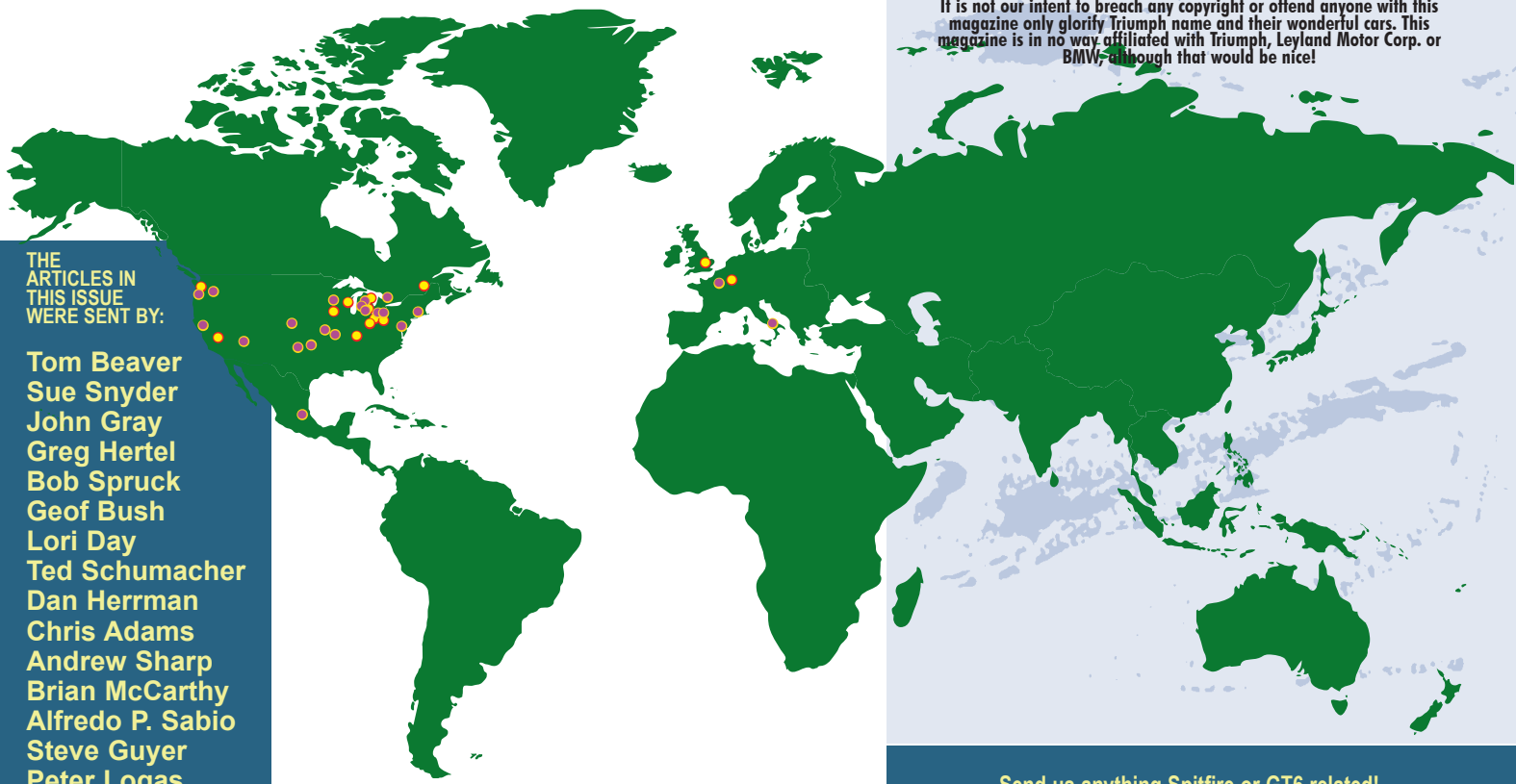

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Send us anything Spitfire or GT6 related!
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Spitfire & GT6 Magazine...

I've been meaning to write to you for some time to inform you that I thought you publish a fine magazine, but lately have been forced to revise my comments to inform you that your magazine is now a real blockbuster.

I have a 1969 GT6+/Mk3 Spitfire conversion in storage and hope to get it on the road this spring, family health permitting. As soon as I get it on the road, I'll send you some photos. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows what they call "Year of registration" license plates for antique cars (over 25 years old). This means I can register a set of 1969 license plates for the car and the state will furnish a current year validation sticker for them. I have my set of 1969 plates already on the car in anticipation.

I have one request/suggestion. I think my Triumph is a Conifer green, but I'm not sure. Since you request that photo contributors identify the color if possible, could you publish a Triumph color chart so other readers and I can match up the colors? This would be a big help and could also provide some incentive for restorers to choose authentic colors rather than go for some far out color schemes.

Keep up the great publishing.
Y'r ob't s'v't
Tony Shalna
Braintree, MA

Tony,

Thank you for your kind words. We strive to make this magazine the best it can be.

As to you suggestion on the colors, we will check with our printers, but printing in a magazine can drift from exact Pantone colors, so we could not guarantee that the end result would be exact.

We do offer, whenever possible, the Triumph name &/or color code on photos here, and on the website, and most major paint companies can show you examples of modern colors very close to the original paints.
Howard~

Dear Editor,
I, Simon and my sister Teresa collect lapel pins, also such from automotive. We want to ask if you have pins and you are able to send us one, if it's possible. For your efforts we can send our drawing of a funny car, if you like. I'm 12 years and Teresa 10 years old. A key chain is also very welcome.
Thank you very much for your help.
Many Greetings,
Simon + Teresa Geislinger
Germany

Simon & Teresa,

Thank you for writing. The publishing company does not offer any lapel pins or key chains. Possibly, a reader that belongs to a car club might respond to your offer.
Good luck,
Howard~

Anyone interested in helping Simon & Teresa can send a pin or keychain to the magazine office and we will send them on for you.

Dear Editor,
How I loved my Spitfire until...
Whilst motoring down I-25 (denver, colorado) one autumn evening, my eyes filled with tears as "Lucas Grey" filled the passenger compartment. "What the ____?" I exclaimed, as the 50 horse cast iron 4 sputtered and stumbled. Quickly shifting to neutral before it stalled out, I glided my "British Racing Green" beauty down the Valley Highway, my gaze transfixed in awe upon a mystic dashboard dance: Tachometer, fuel gauge, ammeter, and voltmeter needles bounced joyfully. Turn signals flashed on and off, head lamps and dash lights faded in and out. The radio tried in earnest to keep time with this "Lucas Electronic Lightshow;" volume up and down, lights dim and bright, static hissing in and out. Even the wipers joined in, swaying once or twice. And then, just as suddenly, the needles dropped, the lights went out, radio went silent, and all was dark. I rolled down the windows to share the night air with the acrid smoke, and my '76 Triumph Spitfire rolled quietly toward the nearest exit. The wire harness had rubbed against a large but misaligned firewall grommet, and chaffed silently until an alternate circuit formed.
Dave Knutson
Denver, Colorado

Dave,

Sorry to hear the Lucas Gremlins got you, but your humoristic outlook on it probably helped the situation.

Good luck with the repairs. We hear they sell bottles of "Lucas Smoke" on Ebay, so you can refill the wires.
Howard~

Hi,
I just found your site and was wondering if the magazine is on-line? Do I have to join something to receive info, etc.? I live in N. Ga and am currently looking for a club-any contacts?
Thanks for any info,
Lydia

Lydia,

The magazine is offered in digital format for download. Information is located on the subscription page of the website.

As for joining, we are not a club, but a publishing company offering this, as well as other magazines for purchase.

You might try the Georgia Triumph Association for a local club contact. Online they are at www.ga-triumph.com or by mail at: PO Box 1138, Tucker, GA 30085-1138
Cheers,
Howard~

Dear Editor,
I'm looking for a brass dash plaque to replace the worn one on my 76 Spitfire. I found it on the reference portion of your site. Could you direct me to where I might purchase one.
Thank you,
Keith Brackney,
Indiana

Keith,

I am pretty sure most major Spitfire vendors have them. Victoria British, Spitbits, Moss, etc. Let me know if these don't. We can give you contacts on the email lists for possible used plaques.
John~

Dear Editor,
I recently bought a 1974 Spitfire- Did some of the 74 Spitfires come with a "1300" engine the engine number starts with FK (1300 prefix) or do you think the engine has been changed. It was manufactured May 1974.
Thanks. Ely

Ely,

We have heard there were a few 74's with 1300 engines but most had 1500's. The way to know is if you Commission number also begins with FK. If not, then it was a swapped in engine. If it does indeed have a swapped in engine, do not worry, both have advantages... most racing spitfires used the 1300 engine as it revs much better then the 1500. Around town, the 1500 does a little better as it has better low end torque.
John~

Hi,
I just received my copy of the magazine, but I may as well not have gotten it at all. The condition it is in is terrible, over half of the pages are all twisted. Hope no one else has this problem!!!

Have you considered using a poly bag or envelope for the magazines.
Thanks, Bob

Bob,

Yes, mailing the magazines in clear plastic bags, or poly bags as the industry calls them, has been a discussion, practically every issue. Unfortunately bagging is VERY expensive, much more expensive than replacing damaged issues every quarter. The problem is not just with Spitfire & GT6 magazine. All the industry trade magazines contain many articles about this very problem. The post offices have installed new sorters that are supposed to make their job easier, but the sorters were not really tested before installing. This means hundreds of tons of mail was scratched/torn/ripped beyond recognition until the machines were "calibrated". In fact we heard rumors that trash dumpsters were pulled up to some sorters and any magazine that did not make it through, was immediately thrown away. The post offices have been working hard to "tweak" these sorters and the damage has greatly gone down, although it does still happen.

Hopefully, if they keep working there will be no torn magazines and the need for bagging will not be needed.
John~

INDUSTRY NEWS

This section is designed to inform readers of news, announcements and new products involved in our hobby.
Send announcements to: P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930 or info@triumphspitfire.com

WHO STANDS TO TRIUMPH!

Lirpa Sloof Rotom, Ltd., a British & Canadian Investment Group, is applying pressure to BMW for the Triumph Brand name & Trademark.

Autocar Magazine was the first to release inside information into the possible forthcoming of a new Triumph automobile. In an effort to force BMW to "***Use it or Lose it!***", Lirpa Sloof Rotom, Ltd. has designed a concept car they say would rival many made today. Badged as the "Triumph GT6 M4", the sleek fastback would sport a 3.2 liter V6 engine, made in England, accompanied by a 6 speed manual gearbox, or 5 speed auto gearbox, to provide a top speed of 145mph. If the fastback is successful, a roadster would soon follow.

BMW, in an effort to retain the trademark, has announced that the group design team is working in California on the possibility of releasing a Mini chassis with a roadster body, modeled after their Z4, though narrower and longer, and a hard top model would follow soon after.

Autocar claims that the car, "close to getting the green light for production", could become a concept vehicle later this year... and eventually be marketed under the Triumph brand.

Stanley B. Poore, CFO of LSR, Ltd., said, "...the buying public are the real winners here. Whether LSR gains control of the Triumph name, or BMW is forced to use it, the end result will be new Triumphs on the road for everyone to enjoy." In a news conference at LSR headquarters in eastern Canada, the concept of a sloped fastback mini-van was also mentioned to be on the drawing board. If LSR is successful in their battle for the trademark, the cars would be assembled in Canada, in a recently closed "Big 3" automotive plant.

While the LSR concept car will not be unveiled until Saturday, 1 April, the media dept. did release the concept drawings and sales brochures for print.

LSRs sales slogan:

"Who stands to Triumph? You, the driver!"

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Weird, Wacky & Wonderful!

A GT6 Mousepad?

Goldtouch Low Stress Mousing Platform GT6-0003 & GT6-0017

The organically-shaped GT-6 mouse pad (mousing platform) with it's beveled edges and sloped surface keeps the arm and hand in a more natural, more relaxed position than a conventional flat mouse pad or desktop mat. Made of stress-dispersing gel, the mousing platform gives under pressure to relieve strain and the lycra cover provides excellent trackability. It helps you attain neutral wrist postures. ***http://www.thehumansolution.com/gtmouseplat.html***

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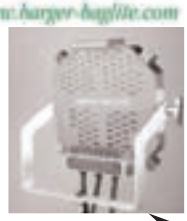
The GT-6 is a 6 lamp heavy duty light specifically designed to use Chimera™'s Quartz Lightbanks in the conventional film, video, and digital-video production environment. This single unit can go from a 300 watt light to a 6k with the flip of a switch. Even with just one lamp burning, the entire Chimera is evenly lit, making it a beautiful soft source. Imagine having the power of a 6k without the need for a costly generator or time consuming cable runs. Just plug in the 3 household Edison plugs and start shooting.



70th Anniversary of the Spitfire (plane)

The 70th anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire was marked on 6 March 2006, when one of the warplane's test pilots took to the skies. Alex Henshaw, 93, flew in a two-seater version of the warplane at 4.30pm - the exact moment the prototype took off from Southampton in 1936. Alex, of Newmarket, Suffolk, then circled Southampton International Airport before making a low pass over the airfield. And he was joined in a display by four other Spitfires. The veteran flier was chief test pilot for the aircraft throughout most of the war. But he said that yesterday's flight was going to be his last.

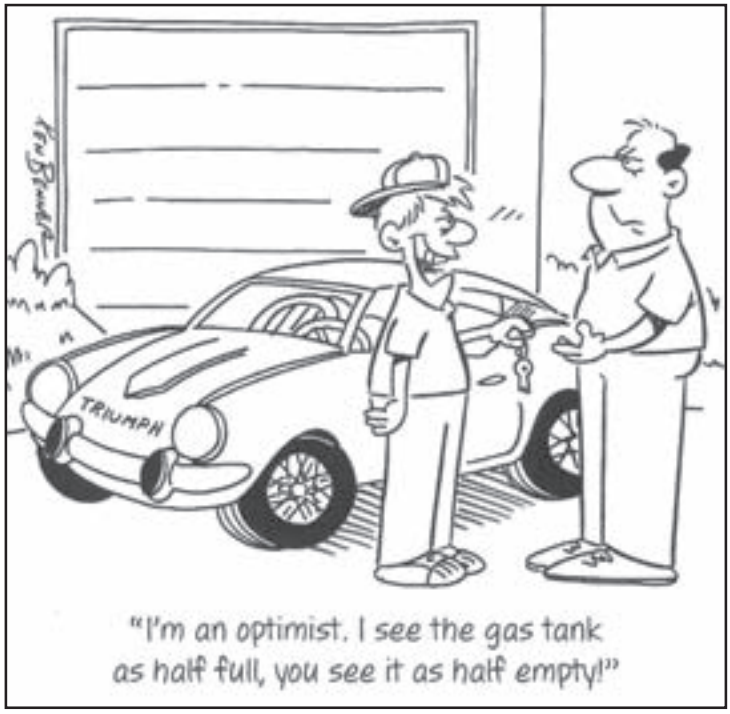
Driving a Stick: Required for Manly Men?

This story, reprinted here from Salon.com, was all over the place in March.

James Bond can't drive a stick: The filming of the new James Bond film, "Casino Royale," hasn't been going at all smoothly. The new Bond, Daniel Craig, had his two front teeth knocked out during the shooting of a fight scene recently, and now it has come to light that he can't drive the Aston Martin to be used in the movie because it has a manual shift -- and Craig can only drive an automatic one. Hardcore 007 fans, who protested loudly when the blond Craig was hired for the role, have now banded together to call for an international boycott of the film. Ex-Bond Pierce Brosnan weighed in on behalf of his replacement at the premiere of "The Matador" in London on Tuesday, saying, "I think Daniel is a very fine actor. These are rocky waters, but I think he will have the last laugh." [N.Y. Daily News, Chicago Sun-Times (Zwecker), BBC News]

Lucas Oil Stadium, Really??

(INDIANAPOLIS) – Lucas Oil Products, a California-based motor sports industry leader with strong ties to Indiana, has won the naming rights for the new Indiana stadium in downtown Indianapolis. Beginning with the 2008 season, Lucas Oil Stadium will be home to the Indianapolis Colts, the NCAA men's and women's Final Four tournaments and other major sports events. "We were drawn to the Colts organization because their leadership has the same high standards we embrace," said Forrest Lucas, president and CEO of Lucas Oil Products. "As a worldwide company, we see Lucas Oil Stadium as an exciting investment that also makes good business sense." He confirmed that the deal is valued at $122 million over 20 years. Lucas Oil will be a great partner for us." said Jim Irsay, Owner and CEO of the Indianapolis Colts. Lucas Oil Products is one of the fastest-growing additive lines in the consumer automotive industry, featuring a line of oils, grease and problem-solving additives. Forrest Lucas and his wife, Charlotte, are both Indiana natives, marrying in 1982 as Forrest was mixing his own engine additives for his fleet of trucks. Although the company moved to Corona, California, in 1986, Lucas Oil Products continues to operate a plant in Corydon, Indiana. Forrest Lucas declares that he "will always be proud to be a Hoosier." *Reprinted from http://www.lucasoil.com*



Got something Weird, Wacky or Wonderful?
Send it to info@triumphspitfire.com or P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930

You write the caption

This shot captured Joel Michael getting down & dirty to get the "perfect picture" of the suspension under a Spitfire Mk3 at the Dayton British Car Day show 2005.

Next issue...

Send your caption suggestions to info@triumphspitfire.com or P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930-0806

Last issue and on TriumphSpitfire.com we asked readers to send us suggestions for a caption for the photo to the left. This was by far the ***largest*** turn out for captions, we had to trim the list down due to space availability. Here are some of the creative submissions.

the captions

A beauty from every angle
Now that's a rear end.
Nice Bottom Eh Mate!
"The tale of Triumph down under..."
Man look at all that oil!
Man! Look how fast that oil leak is!!
See! Even one this shiny leaks!
No Leaks?! It must be out of Oil
It doesn't leak oil! I gotta have a picture, no one will believe it!
Yes Dr. Evil, you can sell the secret of a Triumph that doesn't leak for ONE MILLION DOLLARS!!! HA!HA!HA!
Its Mini-Me, let me get a pic!
The Lucas Gremlins are finally caught on film!
Wow ! No rust ! It deserves a snapshot !
"Dare ya to put a banana in his tail pipe." "Okay, let's do it!"
C'mon... just one more banana
I told you, you put it on upside down.
I told you, it does say Made in England down there
I told you it was hamster driven!
I'm sure its supposed to spit fire from somewhere under here
I swear... it's the propellor shaft!
This thing fell outta where?
Whow! Never seen one of those before.
There is the problem, it stuck on a Molehill
Should we poke at it with a stick?
Hell, I thought we were playing spin the bottle.
I wonder how they got all that beer under there...
That Spitfire Ale has really gone to his head!
It was unfortunate that the Triumph Rally collided with the International Grass Convention.
The car show has come to Brokeback Mountain
Think she'll mind us looking up her skirt?
Naked heck... how did she ever FIT under there!
See, I told you... if a Spitfire has a bra on the front then it has a matching thong underneath
I think it's a female
Told ya it was a boy
Gosh, you can tell the sex of a Spitfire from here!
"Yep, that is one of Joe's Camber Compensators, I gotta get a picture of this"

And FINALLY...

What's under your Spitfire????

Caption response stats-topics:

35- Sex/Gender	*7- Alcohol/drugs*
28- Mechanical	*5- Practical Jokes*
15- Oil/Lube/Leaks	*19- Various others*
11- Clearance	*120- Total*

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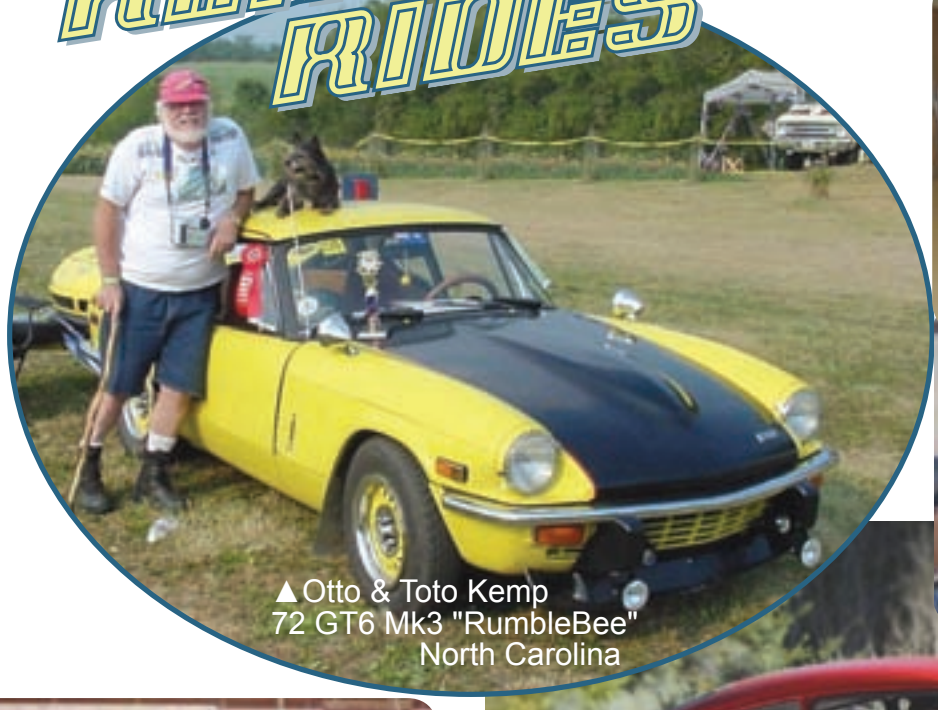
READER'S RIDES



▲Otto & Toto Kemp
72 GT6 Mk3 "RumbleBee"
North Carolina

▲▼Wilf Haasper, Smiths Falls, Ontario
70 GT6+ "Sparky"

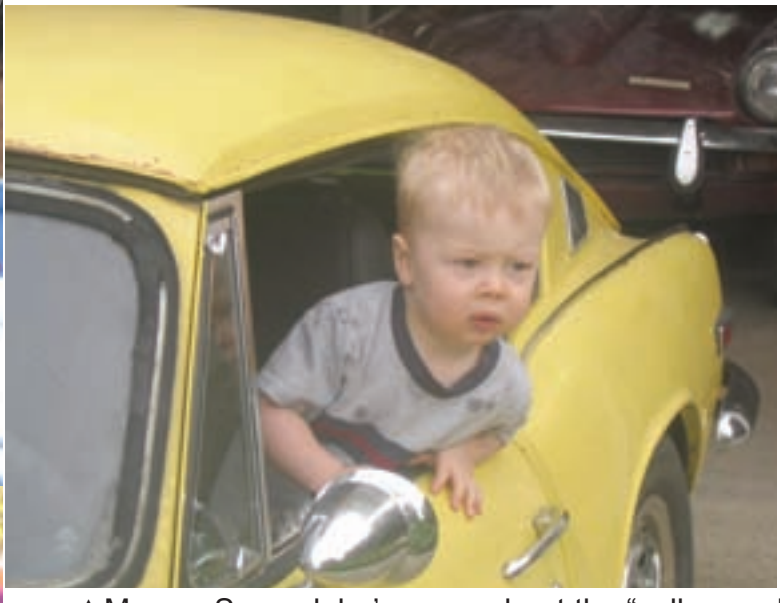
▲I raced this car at Riverside International Raceway in the mid 70's. This picture was my rookie race, and was taken at turn 6 at RIR California.

Mark Howison
Nuevo,
California

To have your car featured in the next issue and on the TriumphSpitfire.com website, e-mail us at info@triumphspitfire.com or mail to: P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930

▲Daryl Shaw, Calgary, Alberta
'80 Spitfire 1500, '78 Spitfire 1500, '60 Herald Coupe

▲▼I was at the local Toys-R-Us shopping for a bicycle for my son, when I came across this model. Which one do you think I bought?
Adrian Larsen, Boise, ID,
'66 MK II Spit FC74602L



▲My son Samuel, he's crazy about the "yellow car!"
▼Boyd Leader, Edmonton, Alberta, Twin 71 GT6+s
Twins because they have sequential serial numbers!

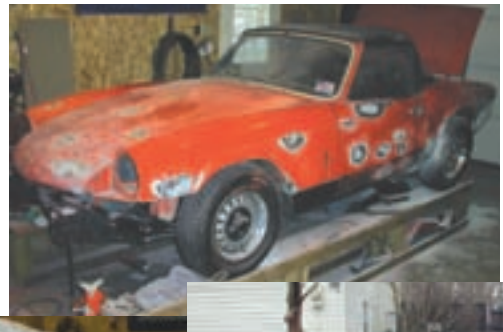
▲ *All the best from Italy!*
▼ Elio Bargigli, Ladispoli (Rome), Italy
'77 Spitfire 1500

... more Readers Rides

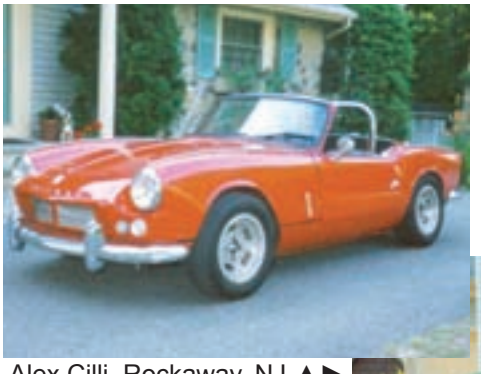
▲Chris Quinten, Phoenixville, PA. '74 2.5L French Blue Spit6

▲Charlie Stowell, Colorado Springs, CO, 78 Spitfire 1500

▲David J. Leitch, Groton, CT, GT6 MKII KC76565



▲This is my third Spitfire, but the other two were owned back in the 70's. I bought this one in 2000 and it was very cosmetically challenged and it didn't run either. It was a project for a long winter. The first year after I got it running I drove it with all the holes in the rockers and rear panels. I then welded in new panels and drove it like that with multi colors, primer and red for two years. Then took it apart and did the final body work and painting. This is my first car to do this much body work on and my first car that I painted so don't look too close to the after pictures. ;-)
Don Slicker, Amelia, Ohio, '74 Spitfire 1500



Alex Cilli, Rockaway, NJ ▲►
1964 Spitfire 4 "Signal Red"

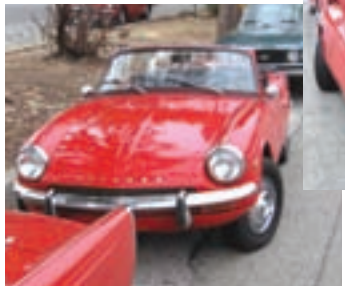
▲Eric Bélanger, Jonquiere,Quebec '68 Spitfire Mk3

▲Jim Willems, Williams Lake, British Columbia, Spitfire 1500

Jeff Elie & Stella Coultas, Owen Sound, Ontario ▲ '75 Triumph Spitfire, Mimosa Yellow

▲ Wade Kvapil, San Antonio, Texas R to L: Fergie - 1979 1500, Brit - 1966 Mk2, the third is an Alfa - - - - my wife's car

▲Ronald Townson, Renfrew, Ontario Spitfire 1500



◄▲►Rick Trenholme, Southern California '69 Spitfire Mk3

Jim Svehla, ▲► Forest Park, IL '68 GT6 Mk1 "Signal Red"

▲Wilmer Sprunger, Berne, Indiana '76 Spitfire 1500

$300 Spitfire

by Andrew Sharp,
Bethel, Connecticut

Three years ago I decided I needed a hobby. I am forty-something year old carpenter who has always loved working with wood, but the combination of being in the industry my entire life and working on my own endless money pit, I desperately needed a diversion. I decided to put my side of the garage to better use and try my hand at restoring a car. I remembered growing up watching my best friends' father restore an old Austin Healy Sprite.

A car like this would be a perfect hobby, not to big and overwhelming, and lots of fun after the restoration was complete.

I ran into someone at work who was selling a 1975 Triumph Spitfire for $300.00. I'll be honest; I had no idea what a triumph spitfire was, but after a quick search on the Internet, I was hooked. I showed up at his house with a flatbed and cash that weekend.

The car had been sitting for several years. It was covered with a blue tarp that did little to protect the car. The top was shot, the pimento paint was peeling, the floor was rotted, and the interior had been a good home for all the local wildlife. None of the wheels turned as I dragged it onto the flat bed.

This would be a perfect project car.

I spent the next three years stripping it down and building it up. Every aspect of the restoration was a learning process. I would research the internet; ask advice from local professionals, or more often, trial and error. I learned to weld and installed new floor pans. I painted the chassis and undercarriage, replaced all the brake and suspension components. I stripped the paint down to bare metal, repaired the body, and primed everything. With the help of a friend, Ronnie, I painted the car Carmine Red (Pimento Orange didn't do it for me). I reupholstered the interior, installed a new top, and replaced the dash with a new Burled Walnut wood dash I made myself.

My goal was to perform all aspects of the restoration myself and except the results, good or bad, as the best I could do. I'm pleased to say, after three years of work, the car looks much better than I expected. I'm now into the second phase of my hobby, I get to drive it. I'm still working out some of the bugs, but, wow, is this car is great to drive. I love taking it out on a Sunday morning, top down, radio off, listening only to the sound of the engine purr.

Next to driving the car, I enjoying the attention the car gets when it's parked. It draws the attention of everyone; men, women, young and old. But the best thing happened to me one Sunday afternoon while I was watching my niece, Ashley, play softball. This guy with a camera case over his shoulder walked by telling someone, "I'll be right back, I want to get a few shots of that Spitfire". I watched as he got out this huge camera, laid on the ground, and began to take pictures of my car. After introducing myself to him, he told me he'd always loved Spitfires and complimented me on my restoration. His name is Peter E. Mueller; he is a professional photography and graphic designer. (www.pemdesign.com) He specializes in taking photos of classic cars and designing backgrounds for them. He e-mailed me photos of what he'd done. I was blown away; the combination of his talent and the good looks of a Spitfire make for a great photo.

I've included his photo and a couple of my own showing the car sitting in front of our towns old train station here in Bethel Connecticut. •

GT6+ Crossing the Border

by Alfredo Perezcalva Sabio, Queretaro, Mexico

After spending time working on my Spitfire MkIV and reading about GT6s online and in the ***Spitfire & GT6 magazine***, I decided it was time to find one for myself. I found a 69 GT6+ on Ebay. I was fortunate to win the bidding and I think the price was right. But, the car was located in Las Cruces, New Mexico and I live in Queretaro, Mexico.

I made some travel plans and took a plane to El Paso, Texas, and met up with a friend that was traveling from Sacramento, Cal. to Laredo, Texas. We went to pick up the GT6+ in Las Cruces (about 45 miles NW of El Paso) and met with the seller who is a very nice person. He advised us about the bad condition of the rear tires, but having a spare and it being too cold, I decided to take the car as it was. We drove to the closest hotel for the night to rest before the trip to Laredo the next day.

The car ran great and the suspension felt right, so after filling with gas, we started our trip at an average speed of 70 mph (I made 95mph in some places). About six hours later one of the rear tires blew out, so I used the spare. The problem was that the spare tire was something like 195/80/13, IT WAS HUGE. The car felt really bad with the tire, so I needed to get two new tires for the rear. We stopped at Junction, TX looking for the tires with no luck, and after getting on the road again and turning on the lights, I noticed that the cars temperature was dropping. I stopped to see if the hoses were OK. They were but soon realized that the problem was with the alternator. After driving 50 miles with NO lights and starting to have ignition problems, we stopped at Kerrville, TX. for the night. Next morning I bought two batteries and decided not to travel by night since we could not find the Lucas alternator and didn't want to try a conversion to a Delco or Bosch in the middle of no where with out the proper tools. We headed to Laredo, and after 760 miles we arrived at 6.30pm, and headed to the brokers office to pick up the papers for the customs office to do the importation of the car to Mexico. Next day we drove 590 miles from Laredo, TX. to Queretaro for a total of 1350 miles with almost no problems at all, and made it here at 6pm.

It was exciting to drive my new car for the first time such a long way. The car is in good shape with some minor surface rust. I'm planning the restoration soon, I first have to get some books to start learning about the GT6+. I never drove a GT6 before (I actually never saw one in person before) but I'm very happy with it. It is much faster than my Spitfire MkIV. •

32 Years of Dreaming Finally Lead to Reality

Story & photos by Brian McCarthy, Illinois, USA

July, 1973. An 18 year old college student buys his first car, a 1963 Triumph Spitfire 4 for the grand total of $60.00. It barely runs, but the dreams of what it could be cloud the reality of what condition the car is really in. He drives it 7 miles to his parent's home, and work begins on turning the dream into reality.

However, like many car dreams, overcoming reality can be a nightmare. After 3 summers of engine, brake and suspension rebuilding, the dream does not see the light of day. Like so many other restoration projects, life's other commitments continually place the dream on the backburner. Just another unfinished restoration project. Sound familiar?

But Brian McCarthy refused to let go of the dream. A number of cars ranging from Volkswagens to Porsches have entered his life, but none had displaced the dream of restoring his 1963 Spitfire.

February, 2003. Nearly 30 years after buying his Spitfire, he decided to finish turning his dream into reality. So began a 2.5 year restoration performed by Mark Samiec at MK1 Motorsports in Westmont, IL. As the Spitfire had spent all of it's time in the Midwest, rust had pretty much touched every body panel. In fact, the only remaining original panels on the finished car were the front bulkhead, the transmission tunnel and the rear bulkhead.

"We replaced floors, inner and outer rocker panels, trunk floor, door skins, etc. The challenge became not in simply replacing these components, but rather in properly tying them all together." With sheet metal components coming from a variety of US and UK based suppliers, proper fit was a recurring problem. Measurements were constantly made against original factory specifications and trial fitting of panels before welding became the norm. The body was mounted on a rotisserie to ensure proper alignment and gain easy access to all areas of the body. After 16 months of work, the body was ready to be sent for painting. As the car was being repainted in its original black color, panel fitment and alignment was crucial.

Preserving all of this hard work was also very important. "We really wanted to minimize any chance of the car rusting in the future. The insides of ALL body panels were painted with Hammerite prior to welding them together. We also used a special zinc primer on all seams that were being welded."

While the body was off to the paint shop, work began on the chassis, suspension and drivetrain. Surprisingly, the chassis only had some minor surface rust (leaky British engines, transmissions and differentials provide excellent chassis rust proofing!). After media blasting, both the outside AND the inside of the frame was painted with POR-15. All suspension components were likewise media blasted and painted with Hammerite. "We debated over powder coating these parts versus using durable paints. As I fully intended on driving (and not just showing) the car, we felt paint was the logical choice. You can touch-up nicks and chips in paint, something you can't really do with powder coating."

Perhaps one of the more novel approaches to protecting the car from stone chips and dings was the use of truck bed liner on the underside of the body. "Mark thought of that. When the body tub came back from the paint shop, he painted the complete underside of the tub, including the wheel wells with truck bed liner. He used a product which did not have a lot of grit in it, but yet would have the durability to stand up to stones, chemicals, etc. encountered in every day use." It would also seal the underside of the body better than any traditional undercoating product.

Owning performance cars, Brian could not leave things stock, yet he wanted to make sure all modifications were not out of place and

were, for the most part, period correct. “We upgraded the shock absorbers to Spax adjustable shocks and went with street (versus race) grade polyurethane bushings throughout the suspension. We upgraded the front springs, but retained the stock rear leaf spring. We also put in a slightly larger front anti-roll bar. The end result has been a firm, yet comfortable ride.”

The standard brakes were rebuilt and upgraded pad material was used. For the wheels, however, he wanted something different.

“Almost all of the Spitfires I had seen had either wire wheels or a Minilite-style of mag wheel. Again, we wanted the car to look unique but period correct, and we were able to locate a set of Cosmic alloy wheels in the correct size.” Cosmic was a British company that made wheels and other accessories in the 60’s and 70’s.

It’s in the engine where the car again took on that “period correct” theme to a new level. In 1963, S.A.H. Accessories offered a Stage Two Tuning Kit which consisted of a fast road camshaft, 8 port cylinder head, dual 40 DCOE Weber carburetors and a tubular exhaust header. This kit was similar to the performance modifications made to the Spitfires which raced at Le Mans in the early 60’s. However, locating one of the rare, 8 port cylinder heads used on the 1147cc engine was next to impossible. Instead, the look he was after would be achieved using a 1296cc engine.

“We built the engine for street use, however, one thing lead to another and we ended up with quite the motor.” The engine block was bored .040” over. All internal components were balanced. The cylinder head has larger intake and exhaust valves and was ported and polished. The compression ratio was raised to 10:1. A fast road cam was installed, as were the dual 40 DCOE Webers and a tubular exhaust header. Although the car has yet to be placed on a dyno, they anticipate the engine will yield approximately 100 bhp. “The engine is very tractable and idles very well, considering the extent of the modifications. It also makes real neat sounds!”

The transmission and differential were rebuilt in stock form. The only change for the future may be the addition of overdrive to make highway driving more rpm reasonable.

The interior was completely redone in red vinyl, just as how the car was originally made. In the interest of added comfort and sound deadening, carpeting was fitted (early Spitfires only had rubber floor covering) with heat and sound absorbing padding underneath.

September 11, 2005. The car is finished at 3:15 am. It’s a big day for both Brian and the car. Today, Brian will drive the car for the first time in 32 years. How will it perform? Where will he drive it to? Will the dream be realized or become a nightmare?

That very same day, one of the largest British car shows in the country is held in the suburbs of Chicago, near Brian’s home. The British Car Union annual British Car Festival features over 600 British cars of all makes, vying for participant choice awards. What better place to take the car on its inaugural drive. Not only did the car perform flawlessly on its maiden voyage, it was also voted the Participant Choice Award for Triumph Spitfires.

So has the reality matched up with the dream? “Absolutely. However, the greatest part of turning a dream into reality is sharing it with others. My wife and I enjoy taking the car out as often as possible. MK1 Motorsports shows the car to prospective customers to give them a sense of what their dreams can lead to. Some of my co-workers have been “bitten” by the British car bug and have purchased Spitfires and MGB’s. Turning a dream into reality is not only personally rewarding, it’s contagious." •

1979 Spit Becomes School Project

Story & photos by Steve Guyer, Wolfeboro, New Hampshire USA

High School Principal Steve Guyer has always loved British Sports Cars. "When I was growing up one of the local high school heroes had a British roadster, and when I spotted a ski blue midget in someone's yard with a for sale sign, I had to have one." Shortly after that first experience, he spotted a British racing green spitfire, and the trade was made.

"I loved the classic British racing green, but I recalled that original high school hero's red roadster, and I longed to have a red sportscar," said Guyer. Enter Gary Sullivan who serves as an Assistant Instructor at Guyer's Region 9 Vocational Technical Education Center. Sullivan, who owns his own MGB, commented that Guyer's British racing green was showing some age and some chips in the paint. In addition, he pointed out the fact that new paint job which had been applied previously, was a relatively shabby job. "I'd paint it red, said Sullivan. After some consideration, Guyer was on board.

Although the Vocational High School has an automotive program, they do not have a full fledged body shop. Body repair is a short unit in the overall course, but Sullivan, who serves as the teaching assistant to Instructor Steve Sanborn, has a great deal of expertise and experience in that area. Whenever a student shows an interest, Sullivan works with them, and in fact one of their students placed in a state wide competition against full blown programs. That student, Yvonne Scrafano, became the point person for the Principal's Car. Other students became involved and the project began.

"I had no idea that the plan to paint the car, would involve so much," said Guyer. What he was referring to was the fact the students and their teacher had decided to remove each part, and sand, prime and paint. Because the car body and paint seemed to OK, Guyer was surprised at the painstaking process, the students and their teacher went through. "I was surprised and a little apprehensive when I saw them remove all the trim, the trunk, the hood, and both doors," said Guyer. When they began to remove all of the old paint, Guyer was shocked to see the where the previous paint job had been done quickly, and he was also interested to see that the hood had been previously damaged by what would appear to have been a collision.

As Yvonne and Gary began to work on the car, they decided they wanted to finish it by the end of February, when the Vocational High School holds a number of special events in conjunction with the National Career and Technical Education Week. Students present "action exhibits," during that time, and the teacher and the students wanted to display the project that week. Guyer was doubtful that they could get the car ready by then, as they really only have two hours a day in the class. But with Yvonne and Sullivan working after school, when February came, the car was finished.

Guyer was extremely pleased with the outcome, as was Sullivan and Scrafano. "The car looks unbelievably great," said Guyer. "I would defy anyone to find any semblance of the previous color," noted the principal. "It was a great project for Yvonne and the others, and for the cost of the materials, I was able to get my red roadster," said Guyer.

The students in the class continue to take on special projects. They built an ice racer that took a number of trophies in competition, and are restoring a number of other vintage cars. The money they earn from these projects go to their student organization, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, which allows them to attend state and national competitions, as well as leadership events during the year. As for Yvonne, she plans to attend college and is interested in pursuing a career in custom body work. •

Logas Spit Rides Again After 20 Years

Story & photos by Peter Logas & Bill Gingerich, Minnesota, USA

On March 29th, 2003, several MNTR members gathered at Ruth & Peter Logas' place in Rockford. Their task was to try to breathe life into a 1970 Spitfire MkIII that had been sleeping for over 20 years. And even though this event had all the outward appearance of a tech session, it wasn't. More on that later.

Attendees included Brent Kiser, Greg Gelhar, John Kallaus, John Withrow, John Hagen, and Bill Gingerich.Peter provided an impressive array of goodies for the crew to devour. Bill was a bit late arriving and the crew had finished bleeding the brakes. Efforts were now concentrated on getting hte engine to run. Ok, first a bit of history on this car: It had been stored untouched for over 20 years. Peter had rebuilt the carb, changed the oil and filter, as well as the antifreeze. He also cleaned out any unwanted rodent debris from the exhaust system. More on this later too.

▲ Spit as was in 1974.
▼ Spit as it emerged from storage.

▼Peter Logas & daughter Charae modeling their RAF T-shirts.

The engine would start, but not stay running. Several theories were proposed: weak spark, low fuel, bad timing, vacuum leaks, bad carburetion, revenge of Lucas, etc., were all explored. Each was rejected as not probable. So why wouldn't it run? We were about to revisit the Lucas revenge theory when Greg noted it seemed like something was choking the engine off after running for a few seconds. Greg also noticed there wasn't any exhaust smell to speak of. The decidion was made to drop the exhaust pipe from the manifold to test Greg's theory. After snapping all 3 of the studs off the manifold/pipe connection, we triedthe engine again. For those wondering, there is nothing quite like the sound of an engine running with an open manifold in a closed garage! We were all saying "What?" for at least a week. Our thanks to Greg for catching the still plugged exhaust problem.

Being the only Spitfire driver in attendance, Bill was asked to render his opinion on the brake status. They seemed a bit soft yet, so we bled them again. The result was a firm pedal. At this point Peter decided it was time for a test drive. He climbed in, fired it up, pushed in the clutch, and shifted to reverse. Squealing tires and a stalled engine revealed that there was a clutch problem. Cracking the clutc master cylinder revealed a dry reservoir. We filled it up, pumped it a lot, and eventually got a firm clutch pedal. Peter decided to try again.

This time all went as it should. Peter backed the car out of the garage under its own power for the first time in two decades. It was loud, but it ran. A quick spin around the neighborhood revealed the car ran pretty well. The brakes worked well, then engine idled smooth, shifting was good, and ALL of the lights worked! Even the original Lucas headlights worked. Ruth joined us, and with Peter at the wheel, they went for their first ride in the resurrected Spitfire.

We all felt good about getting this car going. We were also glad this wasn't a tech session. If it had been, we'd have ruined our record of usually leaving the car in worse shape than we found it. •

I Can Too!

By John Gray,
Belleville, Michigan

I can't even remember why this started, what bug took up posterior domicile, what follicle turned erratic and uncontrollable, what compelled me to believe I could take two chassis and countless boxes of vintage debris in dismay, and produce a classic car from it. But here I am and here it is, I just can't imagine it's already four and a half years later. Much as Rip Van Winkle must have felt when he peeled open his eyes and emerged from the clouds of his slumber, I roll out of my barn and into the sun, under power, for my first ever drive in a Triumph GT6. That's right; I had never even driven one before leaping in to restore it from two absolute basket cases in pieces and boxes. Now that I have it right and driven it, seen the reactions of others, and been in a couple shows, I have zero regrets about taking on this project. Just as soup for the soul, restoring this car gave far more to me and my life than I will ever know. It has emerged as a 73 GT6 Mk III, with an engine from a Mark I. I really wanted to use the MkIII engine I had from the second car but it was in far worse shape as far as my budget and rebuilding it were concerned; besides there was something that piqued my Harley Heartstrings about those external pushrod tubes.

This restoration was to be a learning experience for me. I have built a gazillion models in my days and consider myself to be a competent modeler. Models spanned the range of cars, planes, motorcycles and ultimately winding up in Radio Control cars and aircraft. My interests peaked at some point that I would like to go to 1:1 scale and build something that I could drive real-time and not via a control box. And about the learning experience, I learned a lot. I learned there is absolutely zero correlation between 1:8 to 1:1 scales. It's infinitely more than 8X harder to build in full scale than 8th scale. I learned that there are no two metal things joined together by one man that another man cannot un-join them. I learned that no matter how square you are on a fastener, the tool will slip off, and you will bust your knuckle accordingly to the air temp and pressure being applied on the tool to yield the maximum pain. And further to the busted knuckle rule that eventually you don't feel the cuts but find them by the appearance of blood on tools, car, clothes that you are working with. And further that the amount of cussing and jumping about is related to the depth of the skin infraction. I learned that those little sloppy fits you accepted today were actually designed to tight tolerance by an educated engineer 35 years ago and you really do need to pay attention to them. I learned that there actually is a Churchill Tool, but no one really knows how to use it and that any operation in the manual calling for one can be performed by other means. I learned I am good mechanically, OK with bodywork, and much as I leave lawyering to lawyers,

painting is best left to painters, until I can afford to build my own temp/humidity controlled paint booth. I learned a lot about sticking to it, and that walking away from an unsolvable problem, makes the solution easy when you walk back to it. Just never quit walking back to a problem. I learned that my loving wife of 17+ years has such a huge degree of love, patience, and support that I cannot measure it, ever.

I found both cars locally with little effort, right place right time and all. The first was on the roadside on my way home from work, with a for sale sign in the window, and the second came from the same owner clearing out inventory. One mans junk eh? So that 4.6 years flat reference began in May 2002, disassembly, sandblasting, painting, tagging, restoring, and storing all the parts of the whole. Rebuild an engine and gearbox from the two better looking examples and prep them for short term storage. Then start on the bodywork and chassis/suspension with more stripping, restoring, and storing. For some reason I felt I needed a little more on my agenda so in September 02, I enrolled in Airframe & Powerplant School so I could take over the maintenance on our airplane. Between working 6:00-3:00 and school 5 nights a week from 4:00-10:30 for 19 months, it left little time for a car project. But school helped by looking the other way when I brought in the appropriate "Spitfire" parts that corresponded to the current classroom subject and restored them on my breaks and lunches. I spent a little time on weekends trying to balance home life and the car, but generally home life won out. I graduated and got my A&P License in April 2004 and spent the entire summer of 2004 working on the body work and eventually working my way to learn to paint. So without a controlled booth, paint is really tough when it's over 90 degrees and 90% humidity. I also learned a lot about sanding crappy paint off. After three attempts to paint, I learned to stifle my pride and found a painter. But before I took the car to the painter, it seemed to be a very good time to move.

After 17 years in our little house and 2 car garage it was time to move on. Fortunately, the cars were mostly boxed and packed, but living in one place for 17 years we certainly collected a lot of stuff. July to September took a lot of house hunting time and after taking the keys on Oct. 04, 2004, the moving commenced. It was a real treat to move two nonfunctional car-carcasses, but thanks to my new neighbor Kevin, for having a trailer capable of hauling a car. After the moving dust settled I had a wonderful new barn that was bigger than my old house. I really tossed around the idea about finding a painter again because with this great new barn I surely had enough room to become a paint booth builder as well. But I kept picturing vast amounts of overspray not being contained and winding up on everything in the barn. Discretion is the better part of valor and I took the car to the painter in December and after a lot of worry about ever getting it back, got it back in March of 2005. The delays were partly my fault, I learned that if the painter you choose has a snowplow, or lawn cutting equipment in his inventory, find another painter. We had a lot of snow that winter of 2004 and my painter was too exhausted to lift a sprayer after being up all night plowing. But he kept promising me the car was "going in today". So March 2005 is when all the real work began. I had everything ready to make the final assembly push, and push I did. We missed out on a lot of activities over the summer but as a car began to take shape, Linda was pulling for me to get it done even at the cost of being a barn-widow on the weekends. It was like a fever, after work, into grubby clothes, into the barn, start the grill, cook some flesh, spin a couple wrenches and by medium well another part was installed. It now seems like it went together incredibly fast, but every part was restored and ready to assemble when I started putting things together. By Mid-August it was time to fill fluids and make some attempts to start it up. On the first attempt there was not even a click from the solenoid. I decided I needed a little help at this point and met both Geof Bush and Patrick Barber through the North American Spitfire Squadron and the Detroit Triumph Sports Car Club.

They helped me to sort out some electrical matters and on Saturday August 20th Linda and I rolled out of the barn, into the semi-sunshine, under power. What a feeling. We powered up and started out, first gear, second gear, then

nadda, no third or fourth, but reverse worked to back up and turn around. Back to the barn. Upon investigation I found there is a spacer collar that goes on the shift fork rod for third/fourth. The books and catalogues point out its existence but do not exactly show where it goes. When I removed it altogether I could reach third and fourth. But in leaving it out as you will read in my post-script may have lead to some other problems. I would be interested if anyone knows if my problem was linked to this spacer collar that now resides on my key ring. So there was some tweaking to get done in time for Sept 11th for the Battle of the Brits and the NASS Central Spit-Together Weekend. I am the one referenced in the write-ups that suffered the brake fitting problem. Seems out of all the nuts and bolts to tighten I missed the passenger rear brake union. As we were coming down a 'BIG' hill into Ypsilanti for breakfast, it loosened sufficiently and my brake pedal went to the floor. With a beautiful line of Spits in front of us all I could picture was…well, unmentionable. But the Gods of brake pressure smiled upon us and with some rapid pedal pumping I mustered enough pressure to stop. Some finger tightening and gingerly driving got us to the B-52 photo shoot. Between that and the Drive to Hell we ducked around the corner to my barn to effect repairs. We rejoined the group just after lunch and finished the days drive. Next day was mechanically uneventful and we were off to the BOTBs. We were asked to split driving duties to bring Pat Barbers GT6 to the BOTB. We instantly agreed and what fun to drive around in his and hers GT6's. Imagine the looks that generates on the road. We bagged a second place NASS trophy which I am elated with. And we met the absolute nicest bunch of people/organization that we have had the pleasure of being a part of.

If you have ever considered doing a project car, get off the couch, do it, do it. If you are in the middle of a restore keep plugging away, your reward is close. This has been one of the top experiences in my/our life. And the experiences keep happening every time that little yellow "What kind of car is that?" comes out of the barn. Things are different when you are riding around in a car that barely comes to the top of most truck tires. It is a mini rolling traffic jam. There are the thumbs up, waves, people looking at the car and not the traffic in front of them. And when we stop, forget it; the Q&A session that follows is always the utmost in entertainment. We were able to attend a couple shows this fall and really enjoyed the people and the drives, and are looking forward to more of the same next summer. The show before BOTB was the Cruizin' the Park Show in Lower Huron Metro Park. It was a riot because that is mostly a Hot Rod show. But the LBC sure turned the heads of the Hot Rodders. Many were amazed at the carry over of technology packed into the GT6 that is state of the art today for Hot Rodding. Independent suspension, speedo driven off the distributor, transverse road spring, and

it's amazing how many Hot Rodders you can get to lay in the grass to check out the Rotoflex. All of them wished they could have so much access to their engine once the bonnet tilts open.

I want to thank everyone who backed me on this experience, because there were some nay sayers. To my wife Linda, for endless patience, and not looking too closely at the car budget, my dog Skyler, who laid there for every hour of work, Eddy the kid down the street in the old neighborhood who spent hours relieving me at the sand-blaster, Nigel, for SpitBits, Geof Bush at NASS/MASH, Patrick "Wire Master" Barber at DTSC, my old neighbor Chris, who kept me motivated by racing to complete his Mustang first (I win dude), Michigan Institute of Aviation Technology for looking the other way at all the "Spitfire" parts, E-Bay, Mark at Mobile Trim Shop, everyone on-line who shared their experiences to help me learn how to get through, my Mom for having always encouraged building models, and the memory of my Dad, because we never did get to build a car together as we had planned. But in Michigan, it's winter storage and fix-up season. This winter the seats will get re-done, Mark's on it, and there is a small catch going into and out of third gear that I want to sort out. Winter gives a guy a lot of time to think as well, and there is still that 2nd parts car sitting in the back of the barn….MMmmmm, well, Nahhhh, or I could, if I just had, Ahhh forget it, anyone want a good project base or parts car? Let me know through the club. Enjoy the pics, I enjoyed everything it took to get them.

Here is the Post-Script to my third gear catch. So I read in the manual where the gearbox can be removed without pulling the engine by fishing it out the passenger side of the car. With manual in hand and a new floor jack that Santa brought for Christmas, I dove in. Removed the carpets, tunnel bridge, tunnel cover etc. Got the car up on jack stands, support rear of engine under the oil pan with floor jack and an 8" square piece of plywood to distribute the weight, and start unbolting. Remove the clutch slave and pull up out of the way and disconnect the speedometer drive. Raise the rear of the engine just a slight bit more and start pulling on the gearbox. Low and behold it slid right out. It did take some finessing and tipping to get it to clear the heater box, dash supports and the wires, and if you don't remove the passenger seat be sure to cover it with towels. Even a freshly restored gearbox with a little over 800 miles on it is covered in oily grime. I removed the shift lever and top cover of the gearbox. My new third/fourth synchronizer was burned blue, and the new third/fourth shift fork was cut up and reduced to half its original width. Did that removed spacer cause all this? WOW. I must not be too good of a gearbox rebuilder, yet. But I did have the parts car gearbox, and it seems in pretty good shape. I gave it a thorough cleaning inside and out and replenished the gear lube and reassembled it. Fishing it back in through the interior maze was a bit more difficult than fishing it out, but it returned home none the less. The entire operation took two 4-5 hour sessions, which is much shorter than if I had pulled the engine. I am a better swapper outer than a re-builder-er. So the end advice is, if you ever need to swap or repair the gears, pull the gearbox from the interior. Other conditions have prevailed so I have not gotten to test drive it yet, but at least statically it sure feels smoother and has no snags moving from gear to gear. Hope the thaw in December means a shorter winter, that's the first time I have ever wished for that. As soon as we get that first rain to wash off the road salt, I am going for a drive •

KF20461U

by Tom Beaver, Indianapolis, Indiana

My 1973 GT6 MK III came into my possession on October 25, 1976. I purchased it here in Indianapolis from a private owner. I'm not sure if he was the original owner or not as those things weren't important back then. It was my 4th Triumph at age 18 following a TR4 and two round tail Spitfires. I was quite excited about the 6 cylinder's power and the possibility of staying warmer in our dreaded Indiana winters. It was also fairly new with approximately 35,000 miles and in great shape.

Here are the details verified by British Motor Industry Heritage Trust production record:

BRITISH MOTOR INDUSTRY HERITAGE TRUST

CERTIFIED COPY OF A FACTORY RECORD

Commission Number - KF20461U
Engine Number - KF20488UE
Body Number - 20559KF
Color - Pimento (72)
Trim - Black (11)
Build Date - October 13, 1972
Dest: British Leyland Motor Inc., Detroit, Michigan
Other - Disc wheels, heater, seat belts,
laminated windscreen,
155-13 Goodyear G800 whitewall tires

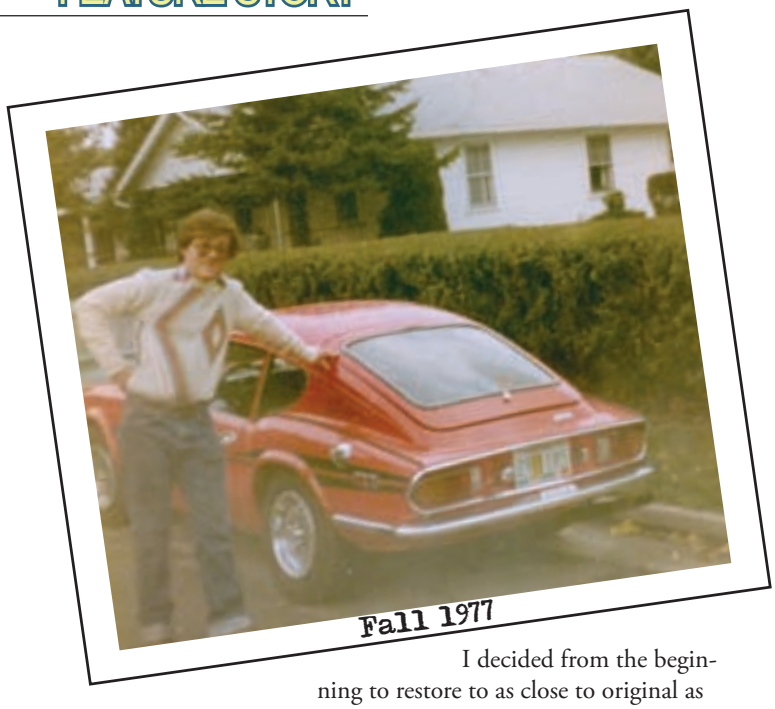
The car also had installed a black striping kit running down the side of the car from the rear to the rear of the front wheels often seen on 1500 Spitfires but not very often on MK III GT's.

I drove it for about 5 years sharing seat time with a 1974 Spitfire. In college the GT sat a lot and took a lot of punishment. It sat a lot due to brake failure and my inability to afford proper replacements for mechanical failures. There was also trouble finding proper replacements. The dealer here in Indy often found my requests funny and not fixable. I drove the car a long time with little stopping ability. It weathered Indiana

road salt, a neighbor backing into the right rear quarter, skidding off slick roads and an attempt at driving through water up to the top of the sills.

In 1983 Vicki and I got married and purchased our first home with a garage. It was the first time I had ever been fortunate to store my vehicles inside. The car sat out for another year not plated or insured. It was really a wreck. According to the notice left by the local constituents, I needed to both move and plate the car or risk the local law enforcement towing the car away and a citation. I then moved the car inside where it sat another 5-6 years.

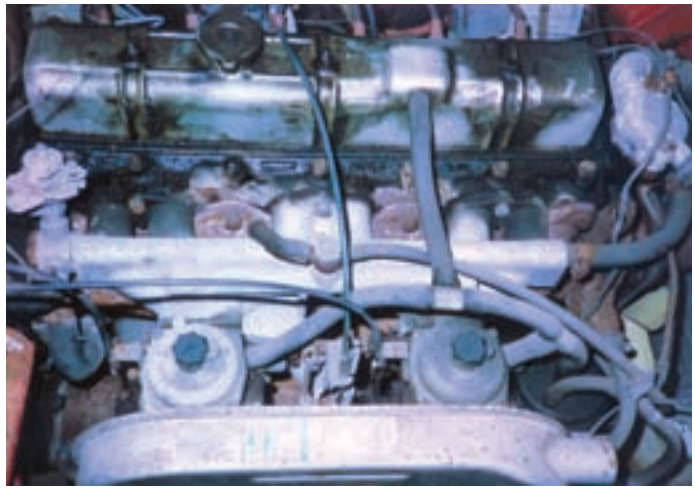
In the late 80's I made the decision to attempt restoring the car. Logical thinking would have suggested trashing the car. The car was rusted terribly. Both sills, both rear fenders, floor pans, front valances, both front lower skins, passenger A post, battery box and inner wheel arches front and back needed replacing. The engine and drive train also needed rebuilt from years of neglect along with the interior, chrome, etc.


Fall 1977

I decided from the beginning to restore to as close to original as possible. That meant the original color of pimento (code 72) with black nylon cord seats and black carpet would be maintained. The original engine and transmission would also be removed and rebuilt to original. Other items would be sourced as needed or rebuilt or serviced.

The car was completely dismantled in my small 2 stall garage. I built a rolling carrier to place the tub on from 4X4 wood and 4 caster wheels. I carefully removed labeled and stored items in a logical pattern. A local fairly new auto restorer was selected for the body and paint work in 1992. The shop also was entrusted to buy all needed sheet metal. That process finally culminated in 1993 when I picked the tub and chassis up shortly before the business closed its doors. A shiny new revamped body was now ready to receive all the other new or restored bits. Later I realized I was missing the front headlamp surrounds. Luckily we were able to gain access to the building and found the missing pieces. Oh yea, they were not painted.

The engine rebuild was also sourced to a business in Indianapolis with instructions to rebuild as original. Every moveable part was



replaced except the crank. The 150CD Stromberg's were sourced to Apple Hydraulics in New York for rebuilding as well as re-sleaving master cylinders and un-obtainium rear brake cylinders. The transmission was dismantled and rebuilt by myself requiring a new main shaft, 2nd and 3rd gears, synchronizers and bushings. The frame was in good shape only requiring a sandblast and repainting with all new suspension bushings.

I had purchased a factory spare parts catalogue somewhere along the line and spent hours writing down every possible part (by number) needed. I then ordered wherever I could to find the correct parts. Prior to that many parts were purchased at swap meets and vendors over a period of many years. Several large orders were placed using The Roadster Factory's various sales promotions.

Once I had the tub back home the assembly process started. That process was completed in mid-1998. Bits of the car that I remember and what was done in the restoration process follows:

New:

Body panels (See previous page)
Wiring harness
Seat covers and foam
Headliner
Rear taillights
Front running lights
Lucas front headlamps
Horns
Brake and clutch lines
Carpet
Window and door rubber trim
Door handles inside and out and hatch latch
Door panels
Front windscreen and chrome finisher
Parcel Shelves
Tires
Wheel Centers
Front bumper
Slave cylinder
Suspension bushings
Brake lines, shoes and pads
Front windshield
Wiper Motor, wheel boxes and exterior bezels
Fuel Cap
Shocks
Grille
Badges
Chrome surround on rear lamp surround
Stainless exhaust in stock design

Rebuilt:

Engine
Transmission
Brake Servo
Brake and clutch master cylinders
Rear wheel cylinders
Rear Bumper re-chromed
Driveshaft universals and balance
Rear axles
Radiator
Fuel Tank
Alternator
Starter
Distributor

I left the original dash and instruments alone as well as the differential. I could not find a new dash top so I bought an overlay. I now see where those are available.

Keen observers will notice that the car has no North American side lamps. When the new panels were purchased the holes were not there so the body shop just applied paint. Over the years I've thought about cutting them out but I think the car looks better and is certainly easier to clean as it is. Without the rear side lamps the striping kit is not possible to apply since the kit has an area to fit over the rear lamps. I miss the stripe so someday I'll cut those out and finish the restoration. I also have not fitted the sill anodized finishing strips. I think they serve a nice rust trap. Someday perhaps I will finish the restoration.

The GT as well as all Triumph's would benefit from an overdrive. I've not seen a lot of MK III's with this special option so it must not have been very popular or I've just not seen a lot of MK III's. I am not happy with the fitting of the carpet I used. I would someday like to replace it. The differential now needs some attention also.

We have some other Triumphs in our stable in various stages including 2 Sports 6's, Herald 1200, a 10 Estate and a TR250. At the present time I am working on the 10 Estate. It is a very interesting vehicle purchased in New Mexico. It will also be restored to as close to original as possible. It will be more difficult than the GT to source parts as there is no big after market suppliers like many of our cars. The 2 Sports 6 and Herald cars also await attention. The 250 is a pretty original Arizona car which we enjoy very much.

I would like to thank my high school friend Brian Peek and my wife Vicki for their help in this restoration. Brian and his Dad helped the day we brought the car back to life. Brian and I have been fiddling around with LBC's since high school. Vicki was instrumental in the seats and interior. I also can't forget to thank John for finding the NOS wheel centers. •

GT6 MK 3

The Final Embodiment of Triumph's Sweet Little Fastback Coupe

by Sue Snyder, Sterling Heights, Michigan

The GT6 Saga - In the Beginning...

In 1966, flagging sales of the Vitesse in the United States helped inspire Standard Triumph's development of the GT6. The new 2 liter, synchromesh coupe was engineered with the North American Market in mind, where most of its sales were expected. Based on the Vitesse, the Michelotti styled fastback was also a derivative of the Spitfire, and though always related, the exacting use of the GT6 name allowed the coupe to be promoted as a new and different up-market car. The new GT6 was popular with automotive writers, although there were questions on how to classify it. In some cases, it was compared to the Jaguar E-type and was sometimes referred to as the "poor man's E-type." The car was, however, considered a true Grand Touring (GT) model, providing a refined method of transportation with a relatively quiet and powerful engine, a high level of trim, and attractive styling.

The new GT6 Mark I was launched in the US market in October, 1966 and some 15,818 cars were produced through September, 1968. The success of the Mark I GT6 prompted the introduction of the Mk II, known as the GT6+ in the States, in July of 1968. This second edition of the GT6 was engineered to address some of the complaints logged with reference to the Mark I. Triumph designed the GT6+ with improved road handling and better engine and cabin ventilation. Compared to the original style-wise, the GT6+ had a raised bumper and extra louvers in the side of the bonnet as well as behind the rear quarter windows. The interior of the car was also vamped up. There were 12,066 Mark II GT6 (GT6+) cars produced through December of 1970.

The GT6 Saga - The Final Act...

In 1971, Triumph presented their new model line with a "corporate image" based on the new Triumph Stag. For the GT6, as well as the Spitfire, this meant a totally redesigned body shell. Aligned closely with the re-skinned Spitfire IV body, The Mark 3 (or Mark III for those who prefer, though both are correct) GT6 body shell presented a smoother, more finished appearance. The seamless bonnet now had a wider and flatter power bulge and was accented by the slimmer, better integrated front bumper. The bonnet louvers were eliminated, and newly designed black over riders now concealed the bonnet hinges. The new, deeper windscreen was surrounded by wide polished stainless steel trim, and the badging was redesigned in chrome and black to better fit the new Triumph corporate image. British Leyland badges were added behind the front wheel arches. The doors remained virtually the same, with the exception of flush fitting chrome handles and bullet-style driver's door mirror. The taller and longer roofline allowed redesigning of the rear quarter window and vent to accent the new Mk 3 roof. The louvered air vents were now also painted body color instead of chrome. The Mk 3 wheels were upgraded to ventilated disc type, painted silver, and finished with chrome centers and GT6 badges. Polished stainless steel beauty rings were also available. The fuel filler was moved to the left rear wing and finished with a flush-fitting, chrome, lockable gas cap as on the Stag. This move was necessary to accommodate the completely restyled read end of the Mk 3, which now followed the new Triumph corporate image. The similarities to the Stag and Spitfire IV rear ends were obvious. The hatch mechanism and lock were redone to resemble the boot latch of the Spitfire IV. The rear window now featured horizontal, rather than vertical heating elements. The transversely mounted rear muffler now featured twin acoustic tailpipes that angled slightly upwards.

There were few changes under the bonnet, although the dual carburetors were now Zenith-Stromberg 150 CDSEs, operated by cable linkage. The 90 BHP 1971 USA spec cars were slightly de-tuned to meet emission standards and as these standards became more restrictive, the engine was further modified. In 1972, the compression ratio was reduced, and with several other minor modifications, BHP was further reduced. By 1973, the 2 liter six cylinder engine was

putting out a mere 79 horsepower.

Some of the early Mk 3 cars were still fitted with the lower wishbone or Roto-Flex rear suspension developed for the Mk II GT6. However, with the end of Vitesse production, the Roto-Flex suspension became unique to the GT6. Because it was more expensive to both produce and service, at Commission Number KE20,000 (KF in the States) the Roto-Flex was replaced with the same swing-spring arrangement as used on the Spitfire. A stiffer spring and tie rod ends that used the larger rubber bushes of the GT6 Mk I were also added to the mix. At the same time, the brake master cylinder bore was increased to 0.75 inches, the Girling PowerStop brake servo was added, and rear self-adjusting rear brakes were installed. The transmission remained the same as the Mk II GT6, and the 3.27:1 differential continued as standard with the 3.89:1 unit fitted on overdrive cars.

The Mk 3 interior saw several changes from the earlier models, with a new stainless steel spoked steering wheel being the most noticeable. The overdrive switch, for those models fitted with this option, moved to the shift knob. The deeply raked windscreen allowed for an increase in headroom and the impression of a roomier interior. The dashboard retained much the same layout as the Mk II, with the most obvious exception being the combination ignition switch-steering lock moving just under the driver's side parcel shelf.

Later Mk 3 cars from Comm. No. KE20,000, saw even more changes as British Leyland attempted to stimulate sales in the USA. Pedal rubbers increased in size and now featured a British Leyland motif. The late Mk 3 seats were fundamentally reshaped. As on the late Mk IIs, the standard headliner remained white, while the air extraction vents increased in length. Sundym tinted glass all around became stock. The dashboard layout was neatened up a bit as Smiths instruments with pale green backlights were now used, and the speedometer and tachometer were restyled and featured easy to read white needles. The eyeball air vents were now painted silver around the outer edge to match the gauges. Wiper knobs featured new symbols and the steering wheel had thicker padding and horn push surround. The horn push now featured the letters "T R I U M P H" instead of the TR shield logo. The reclining seats were now faced with brushed or corded nylon cloth for a more luxurious look. and had separate headrests instead of the one-piece high back. Sun visors were changed to black for commonality with the Spitfire and an occasional, but uncommon, black headliner was seen as British Leyland attempted to use up existing stores of parts. In fact, many of the later Mk 3 cars had unusual or earlier version "off the shelf" parts installed to complete their production.

A few specifications unique to the Federal edition of the Mk 3 GT6 included fixed head restraints, side marker lights, thin banded whitewall tires, and of course, the more drastically detuned engines. While the 1971 Federal models were not too hampered and still produced about 90 BHP, by 1973, in order to meet the harsher US emission standards, the 1973 cars could only muster a meager 79 BHP and were incapable of reaching even 100 MPH. Fuel consumption was also poorer than that of non-Federal cars.

GT6 Mk3 SPECIFICATIONS

Production Dates : October 1970 to December 1973
Total Built : 13042 Base Price : £1254 / $3295
Commission Numbers : KE1 to KE24218

ENGINE

Cylinders :	6 in-line
Bore and Stroke :	74.7 mm x 76 mm (2.94"/3.0")
Cubic Capacity :	1998 cc /119.8ci
Compression Ratio :	9.0:1
Valve Gear :	Overhead (pushrod)
Valve Clearances :	0.010" (0.25 mm) set cold
Contact Breaker Gap :	0.015" (0.38 mm)
Spark Plug Type :	14 mm Champion N-9Y
Spark Plug Gap :	0.025" (0.64 mm)
Firing Order :	1-5-3-6-2-4
Ignition Timing :	10° BTDC
Carburetion :	Twin Stromberg 150 CDS
Max Power :	95 bhp @ 5,250 rpm (net)
Max Torque :	105 lb. ft. @ 3,000 rpm (net)

PERFORMANCE

0-60mph :	10.1 seconds
Top Speed :	112 mph
Standing ¼ mile :	17.4 seconds
Overall Fuel Consumption :	27.6 mpg (22.1mpg US)
Touring Fuel Consumption :	30.0 mpg (24.0mpg US)

TRANSMISSION

Clutch :	8½" diaphragm (Girling)
Top Gear Ratio :	3.27
Third Gear Ratio :	4.11
Second Gear Ratio :	5.82
First Gear Ratio :	8.66
Reverse Gear Ratio :	10.15

Final Drive (Differential) Ratio : 3.27 (OD 3.89 -US)
Overdrive : Optional: Laycock D Type on 3rd and 4th gears

CHASSIS

Construction :	Backbone chassis supporting integral body
Front Brake Type :	9.7" Disc, Girling Caliper
Rear Brake Type :	8" x 1¼" drum
Front Suspension :	Ind. Coil & double wishbone w/anti-roll bar
Rear Suspension :	Independent by transverse leaf spring with lower wishbones and radius arms
F/R Dampers :	Girling Telescopic
Steering Type :	Rack and pinion
Steering Lock to Lock :	4¼ turns
Wheel Size :	13" x 4½ J pressed steel (5½ J on later cars)
Tyre Size :	155 SR-13 Dunlop SP41/Goodyear G800
Front Tyre Pressure :	24 psi
Rear Tyre Pressure :	28 psi
Front Wheel Alignment :	1/16"-1/8" (1.6-3.2 mm) toe in
Rear Wheel Alignment :	0 - 1/32" (0 - 0.8 mm) toe out

DIMENSIONS

Length :	12' 5"
Wheelbase :	6' 11"
Width :	4' 10½"
Front Track :	4' 1"
Rear Track :	4' 1"
Height :	3' 11" unladen
Clearance :	4" laden
Turning Circle :	25.4'
Dry Vehicle Weight :	1936 lbs, 878kg

CAPACITIES

Fuel Tank :	9¾ gallons IMP (12.1USgal), 44 litres
Engine Oil :	8 pints imp, 4¾ qts US, 4.5 litres
Gearbox :	1½ pints, ⅞ qt US, 0.9 litres - (2.4 pints, 1½ qt US, 1.4 litres with OD)
Rear Axle :	1 pint IMP, 1¼ US pt, 0.6 litres
Cooling System :	11 pints, 5¾ qt US, 6.2 litres

Rear vent painted to match body

The GT6 Saga - Epilogue...

The GT6 Mk 3 was developed as a companion model to the Spitfire Mk IV, in keeping with triumph's desire to promote their corporate image. According to British automotive author James Taylor, from almost every point of view it was arguably the best version of the GT6 to be made. John Thomason, in his Guide to Originality, says, "The GT6 Mk III became a very attractive and well engineered car, considered by many to be the best GT6 produced." One of the foremost experts on Triumph motoring history, Graham Robson, describes the GT6 Mk 3 as "certainly the best of its type." Unfortunately its life was very short. From October, 1970 to December of 1973, only 13,042 Mk 3s were produced.

The US market was essential to the success of the GT6 Mk 3. Due to drastically reduced performance caused by Federal safety and emission regulations, and the move toward more fuel efficient cars in the early 1970s, sales of the GT6 had fallen off. That fact, along with several labor disputes and strikes at British Leyland, caused price increases which resulted in even poorer sales numbers and a rather gloomy future for the model. Although British Leyland tried to boost the lagging US sales with a final "batch" of improvements, starting at Commission Number KF20,000, GT6 sales continued to falter. The financial reality of continuing to produce small numbers of the Mk 3 could no longer be justified, and sadly, the GT6 was allowed to die a slow death. With no announcement from Triumph, production of the GT6 Mk 3 stopped at Comm. No. 24,218. The seven year run of the GT6 line ended in December of 1973, with many new GT6 Mk 3s sitting idly in British Leyland stock yards. The sale of the car in the US was halted at the close of the year, although the remaining GT6s were offered as part of Triumph's European line-up for the 1974 model year.

The GT6 Saga Continues - Gone, but not Forgotten...

Although often considered by many British car hobbyists to be the least desirable of the Triumph models, the GT6 enjoys a staunch almost fanatic loyalty from its fans, and many marque specific Triumph clubs worldwide are happy to count GT6 owners among their ranks. There are even a few model specific organizations which cater to GT6 enthusiasts. In England, The Triumph Sports Six Club has helped the GT6 reach classic status and given the model a deep support network. The TSSC was organized in 1977. After a rather slow start, the club expanded rapidly in the '80s, and the large membership numbers necessitated establishment of a full-time office and administrative staff. In early 1991, a permanent headquarters for the TSSC was established in Lubenham, Market Harborough, Leicestershire (Lister). The group became the largest one marque club in the UK and has a worldwide membership and links with various other Triumph clubs around the Globe. Today, TSSC offers members an excellent monthly magazine, workshop manuals and books, parts lists, parts and regalia, and links to many parts suppliers. Recently, TSSC has begun to recognize and accept owners of all Triumph models as members.

In the USA, GT6 owners and enthusiasts have had some support from local British car clubs and local Triumph specific marque clubs. The Vintage Triumph Register, The nationally based Triumph club in North America, also represents GT6 owners and has many of them as members. Unfortunately, for GT6 fans, many of whom own and enjoy these excellent Triumph fastback coupes, the inclusion and support offered by many of these organizations is often less than enthusiastic or adequate. Along with the Spitfire, but to an even greater degree, the GT6 is often disregarded as an important or desirable Triumph. I speak from firsthand experience, belonging to many Triumph specific car clubs as well as several all-marque British car clubs.

Thankfully, recent years have seen the development of such entities as *Spitfire & GT6 Magazine* and the North American Spitfire Squadron. NASS was founded in 1998 in response to the lack of support for the Spitfire and GT6 from other Triumph groups, and is the only club in the world today that is devoted strictly to these models. Alas, even in this group, the GT6 often plays second fiddle and is not included in either the name or logo of the club. This omission, though it is surely unintentional, is nevertheless, a "big deal" for many GT6 owners. It is probable that the small numbers of GT6s, as compared to Spitfires, also has a bearing on the situation. In total, there were 314, 332 Spitfires produced from 1962 through 1980, while a mere 13% of that number

- or 40,926 - were manufactured from 1966 through 1973. And although there are 10,726 Spitfires registered in the "International Triumph Spitfire Database," there are only some 1,126 GT6 cars registered in the "International Triumph GT6 Database." Further, of these registered GT6s, only 443 are indicated as residing in the USA, so it may be that size does matter! Still, we tip our hats to NASS for including the GT6 in their club and for all the support they offer to owners through NASS membership and the online forum, in which any GT6 enthusiast, NASS member or not, may participate.

Spitfire & GT6 Magazine, a quarterly publication dedicated wholly to these small Triumph models, as well as the Herald, Vitesse, Sport 6, and Spitfire/GT6 hybrid, is another great source of assistance for GT6 owners. The magazine has been published for the past five years and, along with their excellent website, looks to have a strong future. Their mission statement says it all, "The goal of the magazine and website is to be **THE** source for all information dealing with the Spitfire, GT6 Herald, Vitesse/ Sport 6 and other smaller Triumph Models. We also welcome any submissions to be featured in the upcoming issue." Included in each issue are letters from readers, industry news and new products, reader's stories, tech articles, book reviews, an upcoming events calendar and much more. Of course, if you are reading this story, then you already know about ***Spitfire & GT6***!

GT6 owners can also get excellent tech advise and support from the web maillist Triumph-GT6-enthusiast, and probably the best supply of GT6 parts - both used and new - are available from suppliers such as Spitbits, Moss, TRF and Victoria British. Nigel at Spitbits is also an excellent source for tech advice. Although as GT6 owners know, many needed parts are now only available in that rarest of all materials "unobtainium" and must be hunted for in earnest. eBay has become a good source when seeking these items, but potential buyers should always exercise caution when getting parts from this venue. I do not recommend eBay for new GT6 owners until they are thoroughly familiar with their car and the parts they need. Taken as a whole, the forecast for GT6 owners does look pretty fair, as an increase in support and interest in recent years has also promoted an increase in the acceptance of the GT6 as a desirable Triumph. The value of the cars has likewise enjoyed a healthy escalation.

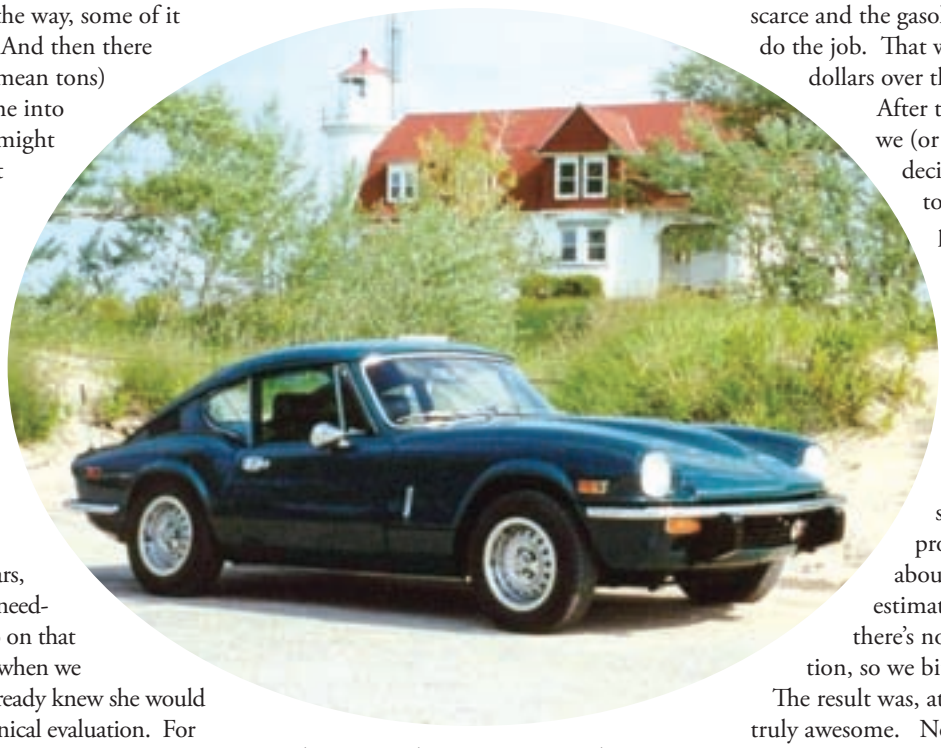
The GT6 Saga Continues - Tales From the Wash Bucket...

At present, I am the very proud owner of a late-model Federal edition Mk 3 GT6, Comm. No. KF21069U. I purchased the car in the Winter of 1992 and paid more than she was worth at the time, but I had been looking on and off for a complete Mk 3 in decent shape for quite a while. I had owned from new a 1972 Glacier White Mk 3, but alas, after well over 60,000 hard miles as a daily driver and five of Michigan's salty winters, the car needed some extensive repair. Obviously, in 1977 I could no longer purchase a new GT6, which would have been my first choice, so I decided upon - dare I say it - a new MGB! What a change that was. Although the B was a great little car, it certainly didn't have the same "on the pavement" sensation of a GT6, or that sweet fastback look.

15 years and several cars (including another MGB) later, I still missed the GT6, so when my brother-in-law (a TR6 owner) found one close to home, he suggested we take a look. It was love at first sight, and with my husband's agreement, I simply decided to buy it on the spot, in spite of the rather high (and non-negotiable) asking price. Well, here we are with another 13 years gone by, and we (or perhaps I should say I) am/are enjoying our GT6 Mk3 more than ever. Not only do we love to drive the car, but for the past 10 years or so we have also had a wonderful time showing our little

Valencia Blue beauty as well as participating in all manner of driving events from autocross to endurance runs. The past 13 years have not, however simply been all fun and bliss. There has been plenty of repair and down-time along the way, some of it right from the get-go! And then there are the tons (and I do mean tons) of dollars that have gone into the car. Many people might not believe the amount we have spent on our precious GT6, and it's a certainty that they would think me foolish for doing so (my husband, Dave just shakes his head,) but none of that really matters when compared to all he pleasure our GT6 has brought us.

As with most used cars, there were some things needing immediate repair, so on that cold, late -October day when we picked up the car, we already knew she would need a thorough mechanical evaluation. For one thing, the alternator and battery needed replacing, so it took some long hard cranking and a jump-start just to get her started. Once running and on the road home, I noted various loud rumblings and the like, which indicated more problems and a need for immediate investigation. Finally home and in the garage, it was a pretty simple matter to determine what needed to be done, although we did not spot all the problems without some expert technical advice. At any rate, over the next several weeks, numerous components were rebuilt or replaced. These included the alternator, coil, battery, U-joints, rear wheel bearings and spring, and a host of smaller items. While all this was going on, we also decided to attack the interior of the car, which was in pretty sad shape. We decided to redo the entire interior, which really improved the appearance of the GT6, and by the summer of 1993, we had a very presentable and somewhat reliable little car. Encouraged by compliments from fellow members of the Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club, we decided to enter the GT6, along with our originally owned 1980 MGB LE, in a few local car shows. The results were very gratifying as our pretty little Valencia Blue GT6 won several awards, and we had a great time meeting other LBC enthusiasts. It was a very good year.



That winter, however, presented a storage dilemma. It's pretty tough to get three cars (even if they are small) into a two-car garage, and we had already had some unhappy results storing our MGB away from home. Then there were all the tools, spares and whatever also kept in the garage. What to do? Aha! A parking lift would solve the space problem, allowing us to double deck the British cars in one half the space. Well, in 1993, there were only a couple options available, so we decided upon a four-post model with a 220 volt motor. Did I mention dollars, yet? Grab the checkbook and pay up. The lift did the job, however, and we could now keep all of our sports cars at home where we knew exactly what was what. The following year, we started attending even more British car shows and meets, some of them quite distant, so we invested in a flatbed trailer to take some of the wear and tear off the GT6, not to mention her primary pilot - me! Cha-ching, cha-ching. Over the next few years, there were several more mechanical repairs and by 1996 we had replaced the water pump, starter, brake master, clutch master, clutch slave, yet another rear spring, and then there were the usual maintenance items like brakes and tires. We also decided to build a no-lead head for the GT6 as the availability of leaded racing fuel was getting scarce and the gasoline additives just didn't do the job. That was another bunch of dollars over the counter.

After the 2000 driving season, we (or more correctly - I) decided to take our Mk 3 to the next level with a professional restoration. From November of 2000 to April of 2002, the GT6 was completely redone, bolt by bolt, to about 95% original specs. (Hey Dave, it's time to look into a that second mortgage!) This project ended up running about four times the original estimates, but once started, there's no stopping such a restoration, so we bit the bullet and finished.

The result was, at least in my opinion, truly awesome. Now, the engine bay and underside of the GT6 were up to snuff, as well at the body and interior. No more black sprayed firewall and engine components, hoorah! With a few exceptions for safety and personal preference, we had our pretty little Mk3 back to what she would have been like coming right out of the factory. Some of the changes we opted for included

Sue Snyder with 2002 VTR Autocross trophy

3-point auto-winding shoulder harness and lap belts, a right-side door mirror for safety's sake, while a cast-aluminum valve cover, K & N air cleaners, black-anodized aluminum engine valences and radiator cowl, stainless steel exhaust and rear wing finishers were installed for appearance. On the inside, we decided to go with a solid teak dashboard instead of veneer, brushed cloth seat fronts and a black headliner, instead of the usual white, although as previously mentioned, I have found some confirmation that both of these last items were used on some of the late Mk 3 GT6s and could therefore be considered correct.

Of course, with all those kazillions of dollars spent, we needed a much safer way to transport our GT6 to distant shows and events than that provided by a wide-open flatbed trailer. Now wait, I know what you might be thinking, but our Mk 3 is still far from being a "trailer queen." I still drive her to events that are only three or four hours away, and last year, we also took her on a three-day 800 mile road trip, but these old bones aren't as resilient as they once were. Besides, it's awfully nice to have that traveling garage when you are spending several nights away from home, especially when the weather isn't so British-car friendly. I suppose one might classify our Mk 3 as a "part-time" trailer queen, but it sure beats spending hours washing and polishing the car right after spending hours washing and polishing the car.

When all's said and done, ownership of our GT6 Mk 3 has been very rewarding. We have been showing and eventing the car since 1993, and over the past 13 years, she has earned many, many awards. All those accolades are only a minor benefit, though, as the real compensation of owning this very exceptional Triumph lies in driving the car and reveling in the joy of that unique GT6 ride, not to mention the appreciative looks and thumbs-up often received when out and about. Then, too, there are the numerous tire-kicking sessions our GT6 can inspire. It is always a fun experience to have strangers stop to admire our Mk 3 and ask us all about the car, but it's an even bigger delight when other British car owners, and especially other Triumph and GT6 owners, compliment the quality of our favorite Triumph. Probably the best thing about having our very special GT6 Mk3, however, is all the new friends she has helped us make through the many British car clubs we have joined and at various British car events throughout the USA and Canada. We have even found a few new chums from the UK. We certainly hope to continue doing the same for many more years to come. In conclusion, I have just one more point to make - our Valencia Blue baby is definitely not for sale at any price. At least, that is, not as long as we can continue to drive and enjoy owning her, and even then, well maybe we'll need to think about it. The glory still exists, so remember, "Keep the shiny side up!" •

It looks good in races too.

If the sleek fastback lines and the well-appointed interior of the GT-6 make it look like more show car than sports car, don't be fooled.

The GT-6 is the national E Class champion racer in SCCA competition.
It has been the champion for two years running.

So if you're thinking of buying one, don't be afraid that you're simply paying for style or the sumptuous reclining seats, or for standard equipment detailing like the walnut facia and self-defrosting rear window.

Figure you're investing in an all independent suspension system, a 2-litre, 6 cylinder engine, disc brakes in front, rack and pinion steering, good acceleration and a good track record.

The looks come as a bonus.

Triumph GT-6

For overseas delivery information, see your local Triumph dealer.

Reprinted from Look Magazine - September 7, 1971 - 1971 Triumph GT-6 Mk3

A Hole in the Darkness

by Ted Schumacher, TSI, Pandora, Ohio

Part 2

Last time we were testing. Trying to maximize the amount of time on course and minimize time in pits. Let's continue on with some of the other things that we found. The longer the car stays out during a race, fewer pit stops are needed. Main item to keep car out longer is fuel mileage. We found that if we raised the right side of the car during refueling, we could crowd in an extra ½ gallon of fuel. By tilting the car, fuel would go up into the filler neck, which on the TR8 is fairly large in diameter and relatively long. An additional ½ gallon per pit stop added up to making 1 less stop per 24 hour race. One of the things we did to speed up pit stops involved the driver change. We would change drivers on every stop. Using 3 driver's for a 24 hour race and 2 driver's for a 12 hour. More than 3 drivers meant someone was out of the car for several hours while the other driver's cycled through. This got you too far removed from the flow of the race. You had to go out and spend some time getting acclimated if you had been out of the car for a long period of time. To speed up driver changes, we fastened each strap of the shoulder harness to its corresponding side of the seat belt. This way, when the driver exited and the new driver entered, no time was lost looking for the seat belt/shoulder harness. For those of you not familiar with a racing restraint system there is a seat belt – 3 inches wide – a 2 strap shoulder harness and an "anti-submarine" belt that attached to the floor. This belt came up between your legs and attached to the main seat belt. The idea of this belt was to keep the driver form sliding out of the seat belts/shoulder harness in case on an accident. You had to get all these belts gathered up and fastened. Anything that reduced this time was a big plus.

Ted's TR8 @ Mid-Ohio 1986

The cars were not allowed racing seats by the series rules. However, nothing was said about not being able to repair a damaged seat. Off to the upholstery shop we go. We had the driver's seat taken apart. New foam, much firmer than the original was installed. The upholstery shop also packed in all the foam they could so the side bolsters were much firmer. This kept you in a better driving position. A good racing seat is worth up to a second a lap. If you are hanging on in a corner trying to stay behind the wheel, you are not as fast. Concentration should be total for driving, not distracted by trying to hold yourself in place.

Some seemingly minor mechanical items could make the difference between time on track and time in pits. We always started with a slightly used set of belts for both power steering and water pump/alternator. New belts stretch so we would "run in" a new set of belts during a test session. These would then be set aside and mounted for the race. Speaking of belts, we always had a spare set of belts ready. The car had a brace that went between the strut towers. A power steering belt was cable tied to the left side of the strut brace and a water pump/alternator belt was tied to the right side. The belts were fastened to the brace on the side they were needed. Why have the alternator belt on the left side when the alternator was mounted on the right side of the engine? Yes, these belts were also pre-stretched. All flexible lines were made extra long – brake, clutch and fuel. This way there was less chance of stressing the line in case of an "incident". The battery was mounted on a pad that soaked up vibration. The starter and alternator wiring harness was attached with quick disconnect wiring. The new component had a matching harness already installed. So, if you needed to change an alternator, the crew unplugged the old unit, installed a new one that was already wired and off you went. Yes, these units were test run before packing.

Testing also showed that the power steering pump wanted to blow out fluid during hard cornering. We solved this by installing a vented cap with a hose going to a catch bottle. Another testing discovered "fix" was using the emergency brake to adjust the rear brakes. Since this was a disc brake/ drum brake car, we could get through a 24 hour race with only 1 set of brake shoes. However, as the shoes would wear down, pedal travel would increase. Experimenting with the emergency brake handle during testing, we found we could "adjust:" the rear shoes by pulling on a click or to of emergency brake. Much better than adjusting the brakes on a pit stop. And, it was controllable. You could back off the rear brakes by releasing the emergency brake handle. If you remember part one, I mentioned the crew did not like to change hot brake pads. Depending on the track, we would use a harder compound brake pad on the outside of the caliper. Since the outside of the caliper does not get as much cooling as the inside - outside is covered by the wheel – we could even brake wear and hopefully eliminate pit stop for brakes.

Now that you have an idea what is involved in endurance racing, next time will be what happens before and on race day. Stay tuned. •

Spitfires In Savannah

by Bob Spruck, MotorMouth/South

At VDCA's Season Finale Races, December 9-11, 2005,
at Roebling Road Raceway, near Savannah, Georgia

Group 1 Grid ready for practice laps

The Vintage Drivers Club of America (VDCA) seems to have solved some problems for many vintage racers. A major trend in vintage racing at the time was towards less track time, higher registration fees, additional fees for endurance races, and a feeling that the race weekends were a little less fun than before. So, VDCA was founded about five years ago with the expressed intent of providing more track time and more fun for its members than they were getting with these other groups. The solution didn't happen by accident. The founders knew quite well what an increasingly large number of vintage racers didn't want, plus, they solicited input about what they did want. The universal answer of the demographic was "more track time for the money and leaving the track at the end of the weekend with the feeling of having had some real fun, our kind of fun." So, they created a model that had fewer race groups (but still maintained rational, workable competition), two 30-minute sessions every day for each group, the ever-popular endurance race (one that didn't include additional charges, but was included in the registration fee), and a return to the racing attitude of old. The target membership also wanted cars to be prepared in the configuration of their original racing era, no exceptions, no variations. They wanted fun and fellowship (that means parties). They wanted sane on-track behavior, because some of the members intended to bring out their REALLY valuable cars. They wanted no shenanigans or cutthroat antics on the track that would endanger their automotive investments or their safety. The model also included an extra race in addition to the practices, endurance race, and the feature races. The Gimmick Race was for all racers, regardless of Group or Class and was guaranteed to be fun. The rules, or gimmick, would change at each event. As it turned out, the rules often changed during the event!

This winning combination was used once again during the weekend of December 9th to 11th at the 2.02 mile long Roebling Road Raceway in Bloomingdale, GA, near Savannah for the 5th annual Season Finale Races. VDCA also seems to have perfected the technique of sharing the track with other racing groups, thus making the track rental costs much more reasonable for each. The local chapter of the BMWCCA was once again part of this traditional season ending event. VDCA's September event at this same venue was shared with the Buccaneer Region of the SCCA and also went off without an inter-group hitch. There's always the potential for one group to get carried away and have so many cars needing to be towed off the track at the end of their session that the delay impacts the time the next group has for their on-track session. VDCA's shared events always seem to have a minimum of these kinds of delays because each group seems to respect the other's position. Judicious combining of speed-compatible groups within VDCA also insures that each race group gets their full-allotted track time, the right amount of cars, and a good variety of cars to provide some great racing. We like to keep the tow truck drivers, corner workers, and medical staff professionally bored and excite them only with the cars and the racing. Seems to have worked!

As is common practice, the nine race groups were re-organized into five track groups, based on speed potential. There were fourteen half-hour time slots available each day on Friday and Saturday. The BMW club had four for their practice sessions while each of the five vintage groups had two. The all-comers Gimmick race then finished the day on Friday.

Forty cars from all the vintage groups took part in the fun race, with the extra challenges of the speed differentials of the cars and the bright sun glaring up the front straight as it sank behind Turn 1. Doug Meis, who honchos this event, must lay awake at night, formulating the rules with the help of some diabolical inspiration. Or maybe it was some bad sushi. Based on five years of Gimmick Races rules, including one where we bobbed for apples with our starting position on them, and another where poker hands were involved, we have absolutely no reason to think otherwise. This year, participants formed four car teams and each member of each team designated a target fast lap time. After the race, this time was compared to their fastest lap time during the race. The team with the lowest total deviation from their predictions was declared the winner. The team of Tim Slater (1147 Spitfire), Hank Giffin (Morgan Plus 4), Stan Heath (MGA), and Robert Clarke (Bobsy FV) posted an unbelievable 2.4 seconds of total deviation from their collective estimates! Then, true to form, Doug made a management decision and elevated the third place team to second place solely on the basis of their clever team name. Team Porcupine (an inside, racer joke), composed of Porsche drivers Jack Lewis (911), Stuart Reiter, John Cox (912), Robert Demetrius (911), and Dan Albright (911T) were good sports and by no means porcupines.

Practice continued Saturday morning - one session for each vintage group and two for BMW. Saturday afternoon saw the vintage qualifying races for each group while the BMW crowd had a qualifying race and then their 90 minute endurance race. Following the VDCA model, various social activities capped off each day's activities. The Saturday night Pig Pickin' and Oyster Roast started by Alex Quattlebaum many years ago has fortunately been continued with gusto. Then we got down to serious business on Sunday. The morning was devoted to two warm up sessions for the vintage cars and one for the BMWs. The 60 minute Vintage Enduro finished off the morning's activities before the quiet hour at eleven.

The 60 minute, 39 lap endurance race is always well subscribed at VDCA events. It is fun, well run, safe, and free. A total of thirty-six cars from all

Rob Stewart's '67 Spit

▲ *Quinn & Leigh Derby's crew keeps busy between sessions*
▼ *Dale Oesterle's Spitfire "Daisy"*

▲ *John Paul Preston's '64 in its shiny glory*
▼ *Susan Slater preps husband Tim for the big race*

the Groups started the race and 29 managed to finish it. Peter McLaughlin's Brabham BT29 led the considerable pack, got a short view of the rear of Jack Lewis's Porsche 911 as he led lap 2, then passed Jack and kept the lead for virtually the entire race. Until his mandatory five minute pit stop, that is, because master strategist Lewis had made his stop earlier and took the lead again. The obviously quick Brabham passed the Porsche again but then disappeared from the fray, leaving Lewis finally in front again 'til the end. Our Spitfire pilots did quite well for themselves. Rob Stewart finished 11th after starting 9th. He fell back to 28th at his pit stop but raced towards the front afterwards and finished 11th Over All. His fastest lap of 1:26.8253 helped him get First in Class for FP. The other 1296 Spits started in a tight pack just behind Rob, Leigh Derby in 11th, Dale Oesterle in 12th, Fred Danovitz in 13th, and Quinn Derby in 14th. Leigh finished 12 OA and 2nd in FP with a fast lap of 1:28.990. Dale had some good racing but ended early on lap 29, finishing 24th OA and 4th in FP. His fastest lap was a 1:28.330. Fred took an early pit stop, ran a fast lap of 1:26.492 and finished 8th OA and 1st in 1X. Quinn ran towards the front early, took an early stop but then had some difficulties, finishing 17th OA, 3rd in FP with a 1:28.415 as his fastest lap. Note how close the lap times were! Tim Slater drives an 1147 cc Spitfire and had a best time of 1:33.614 on his way to a DNF and 3rd in GP.

Things got REAL exciting at noon as the BMW feature race was run, followed by the five feature races for the vintage cars. The last group finished no later than 3:30 and everybody was able to start the long journey home before dark.

Vintage Group 1 is comprised of Production Sports cars under 1300cc displacement and the ever popular and growing class of Formula Vees. This weekend, Group 1 was the largest single Group, with about 30 cars. During all the practice sessions, the Triumph Spitfires of father-son team Quinn and Leigh Derby, Rob Stewart, Dale Oesterle, and Fred Danovitz were always able to run away and have their own race. The same happened in the feature race. Quinn led green to checker while Leigh was close behind, passed only by Fred for lap 2 as he and Alan Casavant in a Lotus 7 and Rob moved up quickly. A little excitement in Turn 2 forced Alan and Fred out of the race and delayed Rob. He fell behind to 11th but then did a fantastic job of catching up. In fact, he posted the fastest time of the race at 1:26.975 while fighting his way up to fifth at the end. If only the race was a few laps longer, eh Rob? Quinn, Leigh were 1st and 2nd OA and 1st and 2nd in FP, Rob was 5th OA and 3rd in FP. Tim recovered and made 1st in GP and 14th OA. Dale and perennial hot shoe John Paul Preston did not start, JP ending his weekend early with a catastrophic engine failure. Six Vees, 5 Bugeyes, and 3 Spridgets all had great races within the race. A Merlyn, Mini, Alfa, and Fiat Abarth also contributed to the racing excitement.

The weekend was a wonderful finale to the racing season for most of us. VDCA's schedule for next year includes more races than last year with some new venues and some new partners. Hopefully, it will also include many new participants, ones who want to experience the unique combination of features that VDCA provides. How about you? Check them out at www.vintagedrive.com. •

A Review of Eastwood Rust Dissolver

by Chris Adams, Spring, Texas, USA

My latest project is a 1968 Spitfire Mk III with a MK II bonnet, along with more than it's share of rust. It is a project that was given to me and originally told that it should be a parts car. As Greg Hertel described in Issue # 20, I am a "do it yourself… I can fix that masochist," but I am one for a challenge and a sucker for a pretty face so; I took on the project of patching the old girl up and getting her back into shape again. As there is rust everywhere on the car, I know of several options to remove the rust. I can send it to a company to let it set in a vat of acid, I can media blast the body, or I can try something chemically "non-acid". I have heard that using acid can be effective, but is difficult to completely remove, causing long lasting after effects. Media blasting is slow and with limited space, I could not exercise that option. So I looked for a chemically non-acid treatment that would remove the rust and let me know what my options are on saving the panel or replacing it. Looking through my favorite catalog, I found Eastwood Rust Dissolver, which touted an "acid free rust remover that is gentle enough to leave the paint." I sent them the $40 for the gallon to try for myself how well it worked.

I removed the right hand radius arm from the car, which suffered from a good layer of rust all the way around. The instructions of the Rust Dissolver include techniques on treating large parts with a setup that would include setting the part in a discharge stream of a commonly available electric plastic pump where the "surface must remain wet", and then gives expectations of how long to soak the part. "Light surface rust: 5 to 30 minutes, Moderate rust: up to 4 hours, and deeply rusted parts may require overnight soaking."

After cleaning the dirt and lose rust from the radius arm, I placed the part into the solution and started my timer.

Time Passes.

I have to admit to you, I had no idea on how long the part would take to be clean. But I checked on the progress every thirty minutes for the next four hours. If you look for immediate results for deeply rusted parts, you will be disappointed, as I was. As the results were going, this might be a jug of snake oil. But let's soak it overnight before passing judgment.

More time Passes.

Twenty-three hours later, I check on progress. This time the results were positive. Like many products from Eastwood, the Rust Dissolver lived up to the promise. I remove the radius arm from the solution and notice that there are still layers of paint on what would be the top of the radius arm and bare metal on the bottom. There are two options after the rust is dissolved. Wash the part with water and prep it for paint or let the dissolver dry on the part to prevent rust in between bare metal and paint. Because I have not made a decision on how to finish the part, I let the dissolver dry on the part. After sitting in the garage in the air, for several weeks, I notice no rust.

Disposal: Eastwood also states that the dissolver can be poured down the drain in its unused form. Iron and other contaminates that are leached into the product when being used dictate how it is disposed according to local, state and federal regulations.

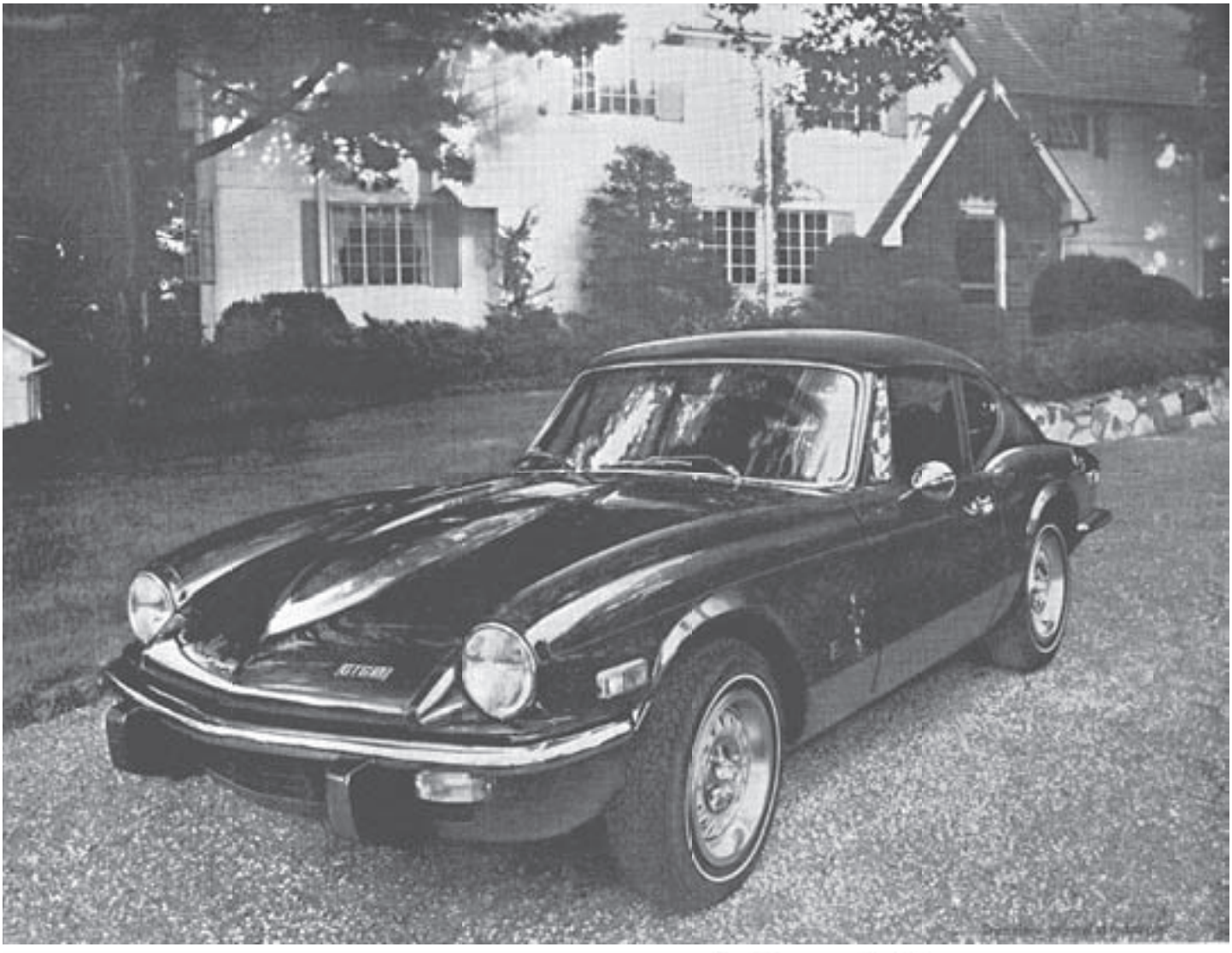
So here are the pros:

1. Effectively removes rust and once dried on the part, keeps it away until part is painted, powder coated, or chromed.
2. Non-Acid, and keeps good metal on the part.
3. Cheaper than a media blasting cabinet.
4. Perfect for leaving rusty parts in dissolver for a while until you get back to project.
5. If you only have a little rust to take care of, a one-gallon bottle treats 20 square feet.
6. If the part cannot be immersed, the part can be put into a "discharge" stream of rust dissolver.

And here are the cons:

1. It is slow. Media Blasting would have been much faster.
2. If you have a really rusty project, one gallon treats only around 20 square feet. •

Eastwood Rust Dissolver
Quart $ 14.99
Gallon $39.99
The Eastwood Company
263 Shoemaker Road
Pottstown, PA 19464
1-800-343-9353
http://www.eastwoodco.com



It feels great doing 70. It looks great doing nothing.

At 70 mph, the Triumph GT-6 handles well enough to be a championship racing machine. Which, by the way, it just happens to be. National racing champion in Sports Car Club of America competition.

But that shouldn't surprise you. It doesn't us. Because we built into the GT-6 an all independent suspension, a 2 litre 6-cylinder engine, rack and pinion steering, an all synchromesh 4-speed gearbox, front disc brakes and most importantly, Triumph engineering.

And when you have all that, you can't help but perform beautifully on the track.

But the GT-6 also performs beautifully on the driveway. And you don't have to know the first thing about engines to appreciate styling by Michelotti (who designs Ferraris). Or a well appointed interior (sumptuous reclining seats, walnut facia). Or standard features like an electrically-operated rear window defroster.

In conclusion, what all this means is the GT-6 not only beats its competition when moving.

It beats them when it's standing still.

Triumph GT-6

British Leyland Motors, Inc., Leonia, N.J. 07605

FOR THE NAME OF YOUR NEAREST TRIUMPH DEALER CALL: 800-631-1972. IN NEW JERSEY CALL 800-962-2803.

Reprint of GT6 Mk3 Ad provided by Bill Gingerich

My Old Girl's Rear End

by Dan Hermann, Brookfield, Wisconsin

If you really want to get the full experience out of your Little British Car, you need to do more than just drive it. Go at it wrench in hand. Reap the satisfaction that comes from taking a thing apart and successfully putting it back together.

Anyone who has ever worked on a car, or anything else for that matter, knows that the key word in the opening statement is the word "successfully". The word itself implies a positive ending, but it tells nothing of the effort involved in getting there. This article and my articles in general, are about the trials and tribulations of a newbie gear-head, desperately trying to get there. Speaking of getting there -- I have one of those "creeper/crawler" devices. It lets you lie on your back and scoot around under a car at will. It is my second preferred modus of under-car travel, the first being the "cardboard carpet". I carpet the area under the car with cardboard and do my work directly from its surface. Cardboard has all the right properties for the job. It is free, slippery, insulating, cushioning and thin. And, did I mention it is free? Sliding around under a car on cardboard, as opposed to rolling around on a creeper, provides an extra two inches of headroom. The extra distance makes for more comfortable viewing (for my old eyes) and provides enough room to twist and turn without getting grease on your white shirt. I was kidding about the white shirt. But after watching an old BBC series about a country veterinarian who made house calls to pig stalls while dressed in a full suit, I would not be surprised if British mechanics of yore dressed the same way.

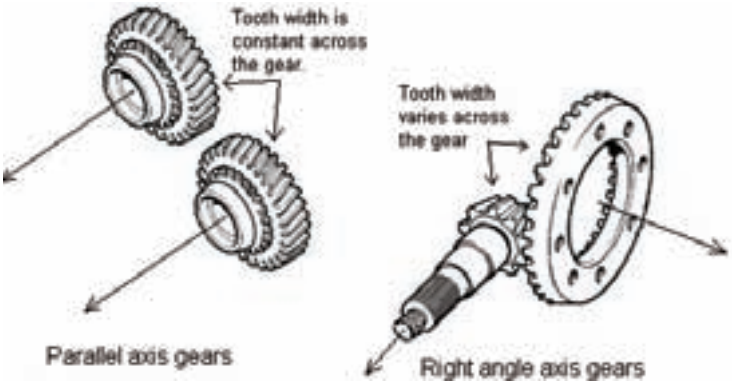
This trip to the dark side of my 1980 Triumph Spitfire was for general reconnaissance preliminary to replacing a "howling" differential. My differential (final drive, as the service manual calls it), has been a sore spot with me since installation, 7500 miles ago. It was advertised as being rebuilt, and at $500 I had thought it a good deal. But when the UPS truck arrived, the front mounting plate was sticking out of the not-strong-enough cardboard shipping container and one of the front mounting cups was dented. With assurance from the seller, I removed the dent and had my favorite local vintage car shop (SportsCar Services of Mequon, WI), install the differential. Although the dented mounting cup was not the cause, from day one, whenever my road speed went between 60-70 miles per hour, the differential "howled" like a lonesome wolf. Normally, I would have returned the defective product to the seller. But this time the seller was lucky, because I did not have the luxury of time. "SportsCar Services" was preparing the car for the "6900 Miles in a Spitfire" trip and the differential replacement had to be deferred until my return. While on the road, I found myself unconsciously adjusting my speed up or down to avoid hearing the howl. The advice that the good doctor gave to the patient who complained that his arm hurt whenever he bent it, works just as effectively with cars!

When a differential "howls" it means the crown and pinion gears are not in proper mesh. The crown and pinion gears rotate about axes which are at right angles to each other. Unlike parallel axes gears, the transverse position of each gear relative to the other determines if the gears will mesh properly. Transverse gear positions are under the control of the assembler. But it is only for the right angle gear drives that the transverse position becomes critical to proper gear meshing. The reason for this follows. The teeth on the crown and pinion gears

are cut on a bevel. That means that the radius of the gear varies across its width. Geometry then dictates that the tooth width must be wider on the side of the gear with the larger radius. In order to mate properly, the width of a tooth at a given cross section must be the same as the width of the tooth on the corresponding gear's cross section at the point of contact. On gears where the tooth width varies, there is only one transverse gear position that will satisfy that requirement. While on parallel axes gears, where the tooth width is constant across the gear, gear meshing is determined solely by where the axle bearing holes are drilled.

Eliminating the "howl" from my existing differential, after 7500 miles of improper gear meshing, requires more than just redoing the gear alignment. The chance of success increases dramatically if the crown and pinion gears are replaced. The procedure for assuring proper gear alignment involves a lot of trial and error. Each error requires stretching the differential housing, pulling the gear bearings, repositioning the gears using different sized spacer shims, coating the gear mesh surfaces with a coloring agent, rotating the gears, then checking to see if the coloring agent has worn off of the mesh surfaces in the proper pattern. When the pattern is right, the differential should be a silent runner. But, of course, the final test is always the road test. It should be noted that the Triumph factory did not use this method when assembling their differentials. They did the job on the first try by using a "hard-to-find" dummy pinion gear and taking precise measurements to determine proper spacer shim sizes.

My brother Ken, who is a much more proficient gear head then myself, had attempted the gear alignment process on his TR3A. It had caused him enough frustration that he finally had the job done by a professional. Being aware of Ken's plight, I never had any serious thoughts about doing the alignment work myself. My plan was to hire a pro to rebuild an extra 3.89:1 differential to a 3.63:1 by installing a new crown and pinion gear. That way, my car would not be laid up while the differential was being worked on and I could save a few bucks by installing the rebuilt differential myself. My plans changed for the better after a phone call to Bob Dempsey, owner of another great vintage car shop called "Wunderwerks". Bob steered me to a company called British Parts Northwest, web site www.bpnorthwest.com , as a possible source for the crown and pinion gears. I found that although they did not have any 3.63 gear sets available, they did have a rebuilt 3.63 differential in stock. They would sell it to me for



$710. When I told them about being stuck with a "howler" once already, the man said with the conviction of a person who knows he is speaking the truth "this one is perfect". Well, Victoria British listed a 3.63:1 ratio crown/pinion gear set for $552 and a rebuilt 3.63 Differential for $1200. Buying the gear set from Victoria British and hiring a pro to do the gear alignment, would cost a lot more than $710. The best deal was to buy a rebuilt differential from British Parts Northwest.

My new differential arrived from British Parts Northwest in a not-strong-enough cardboard box, but much to my relief, it was undamaged. To remove my old differential, I followed the instructions shown in my oil-splattered copy of Robert Bentley's Spitfire 1500 service manual. The procedure as listed in the manual is as follows.

- ◊ **Remove rear wheels.**
- ◊ **Disconnect shock absorber at lower end.**
- ◊ **Remove exhaust pipe and silencer.**
- ◊ **Disconnect drive shaft from differential pinion driving flange.**
- ◊ **Disconnect both half axles from inner drive shaft flanges.**
- ◊ **Remove trim panel (located behind the seats) and the rear spring access cover.**
- ◊ **Remove 4 nuts and studs securing the rear spring to the final drive casing.**
- ◊ **Remove the final drive rear mounting nut and special bolt.**
- ◊ **While supporting the final drive, remove two nyloc nuts, washers and rubbers securing front mounting plate to final drive.**
- ◊ **Maneuver the final drive unit clear of the chassis taking care not to spill oil from the road spring stud openings.**

Everything went as planned until step 10. Fearing that the final drive was going to fall out of the car all by itself, possibly on me, I had put a plastic 5-gallon bucket upside down under it prior to doing step nine. Then I tried to pry it loose. But to no avail! Every time I gave the pry bar a pull, the leaf spring followed the movement. The connection between the spring and the differential housing would need more than just gentle persuasion to break it loose. The differential on a Spitfire is bolted upwards to the car frame. It is removed by pulling it downward. The transverse leaf spring which supports the rear wheels is bolted to the top of the differential. Therefore, when the car is up on jack stands, gravity is holding the leaf spring to the top of the differential. To counteract it, I positioned extra jack stands under the each rear wheel radius arm (See graphic). Then, using a heavy brass drive pin, I drove the spring up high enough to create a crack between the leaf spring and the differential saddle. Then putting the working end of an old screwdriver into the crack, I gave the personal end of it a good whack. The spring broke free! It had been the tightness of the leaf spring centering pin, which fits into a hole cast into the top of the differential, that had prevented the separation of the two parts. The parts were not rusted together; it was just the tightness of the fit.

If I ever have an occasion to remove the differential again, I am going to try backing off the stud bolts mentioned in step 7 about a quarter inch while the car is still resting on its wheels. That way, the weight of the rear end of car is used to pull the leaf spring centering pin out of the differential's saddle hole. Once a crack has been created between the leaf spring and the differential housing, a piece of flat material will be used to fill the crack. That will prevent the crack from closing when the car is lifted up on jack stands.

The new differential is a silent runner. The man at British Parts Northwest had told the truth. But, my success was still not perfect. Every once in a while I heard a clunking sound coming from the rear end. I knew what was causing it. The poly cushions that fit into the front differential mounting cups were not the correct fit for my car. They were too loose around the center pins. So I re-installed the one-year-old rubber cushions that had been removed. And that brought silence to my old girls rear-end once and hopefully - for all? •

2005 American British Reliability Run

by Geof Bush & Lori Day, Michigan

The starting point

The halfway point

The morning of 1 October 2005 dawned crisp and damp, but it didn't slow 44 British cars, drivers and navigators from departing Marshall, Michigan on the 3rd annual British Reliability Run, organized by Blake Discher of Detroit Michigan. The purpose of this 700+ mile run through Southern Michigan, Northwest Ohio, and Central and Northeast Indiana was to raise money for children's charities. This year, the National Children's Cancer Society (www.nationalchildrenscancer-society.com/) was the benefactor of over $37,000 raised by the teams. Of the funds raised, 100% goes to the charity as the teams pay for their own expenses. These amount to approximately $500 per team which is not reimbursed in any way.

The route changes annually for those of us who have participated in all three Reliability Runs, and this year was totally different from previous runs. The first two runs dealt with part of the Great Lakes system. This year, other than an occasional local lake, none were to be seen.

The age of the vehicles ranged from a 1959 Morris Minor 1/4 ton pick-up to a 2005 Land Rover LR3. Twenty-nine of the teams participated in past Reliability Runs while fifteen "rookies" were in the field this year. There were twenty-five Triumphs including one each, Herald 1200, Triumph 2000, TR3, TR250, TR7 and TR8, two Dolomite Sprints, three each, TR6 and GT6, four TR4's and seven Spitfires. Other cars included a TVR, Jaguars, MGs, Austin Minis, Mini Cooper, Lotus, Ford Cortina, two Austin London Taxi's, and a Daimler SP250.

Traveling on mostly 2 lane roads and,

at times, country lanes, the participants wended their way past corn and soybean fields and saw a part of Americana virtually lost since the advent of the Interstate highway system. Many small towns and villages stood and watched as the parade of British cars drove past. An actual parade in Auburn, Indiana was along our route, requiring an "on-the-fly" reroute, but all handled that pretty well.

The Saturday overnight in Rockville, Indiana, was an area with a heavy concentration of covered bridges. Some of the NASS members in the group met up with Bob Arnett and Howard at John Innis's parents cabin near where we were staying. We went far into the evening unwinding and relating stories of our exploits.

Photo ops abound as the cars gathered for a group shot in the early Sunday morning rain. The drive though Indiana on Sunday was VERY wet as the heavens opened on the teams as they headed back north.

In total, the three British Reliability Runs have raised almost $82,000 for The Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan (2003), the Children's Diabetes Association (2004) and The National Children's Cancer Society (2005). Out of a total of 106 British cars that participated in the three years, all but 2 made it all the way around. There is reliability in British cars! •

British Car Day

September 18, 2005

Story and photos by Greg Hertel, Eastern Canadian Correspondent

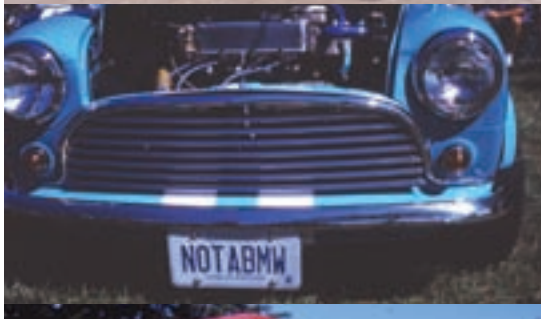
The L.B.C. gods once again smiled favourably upon the Toronto Triumph Club as September 18, 2005 was another blue as blue-skyed sky can be, perfect, late summer's day. The T.T.C.'s twenty-second annual British Car Day was held at Bronte Creek Provincial Park which is about thirty-five minutes (as the four-wheeled Spitfire flys) west of Toronto.

Billed as North America's largest one-day gathering of British cars, this years B.C.D. did not disappoint. Over 4500 spectators came to see the approximately 1100 British cars from all over Southern Ontario and the adjacent northern States. Unique marques from Austins to Alvis', Jensens to Jowetts, Wosleys to Westfields, Sunbeams to Singers all made appearances throughout the day.

As always, a large squadron of over 70 Spitfire pilots proudly taxied their Coventry beauties, wing by wing, in perfect formation on to the aerodrome field. Visibility was excellent, there was little turbulence and no enemy fighters in sight, save a few BMW Minis. (Cut to shot of an original Mini with a license plate which says NOT ABMW)

B.C.D. is a vibrant celebration of British cars. For British car aficionados, the five or six hours where all the cars are on display, hardly provides enough time to see them all. B.C.D. is an annual coming-out party for new restorations and an extended family reunion for all branches of the British car family tree.

Congratulations to the Toronto Triumph Club for yet another successful event. For information on B.C.D. 2006 which will be on September 17, go to *www.britishcarday.com* or *www.torontotriumph.com* •



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I Pledge Allegiance to Myself

Lizzie West's new album "I Pledge Allegiance To Myself" released on Appleseed Records, April 2006

Lizzie West heads out on the holy road again, singing the songs of freedom from a whole new perspective. In the short time since 2003 when Lizzie released her DEBUT ALBUM, "Holy Road:Freedom Songs", on Warner Bros. Records, and was named "BREAKER ARTIST OF THE YEAR" BY AOL AND ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY. She lost both her parents to Cancer. Meanwhile, she experienced an interesting journey through political censorship and the American corporate machine. Now, in the spring of 2006, Lizzie releases the album of her career "I Pledge Allegiance To Myself" on APPLESEED RECORDS. "Sowing the seeds of justice through music", the record label is also home to Donovan, Eric Anderson, Ramblin Jack Elliott and other artistic greats. Don't miss Lizzie on the road in the Holy Road Medicine Show Tour, a traveling road show and weekly podcast hosted by "Lizzie West and The White Buffalo" bringing you music and medicine from all corners of the earth. Visit Lizziewestlife.com, home to the hungry soul traveling the holy road, for downloads, videos and much more..

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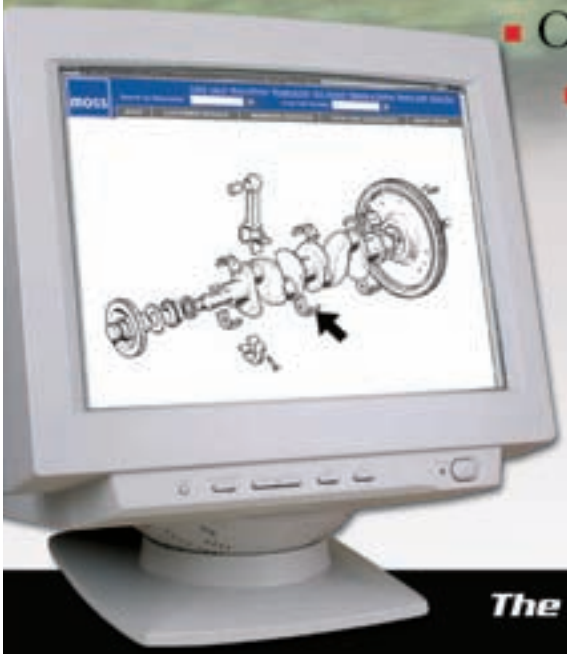

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