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

M A G A Z I N E

Issue #41

50 Years of Spitfires



Spring 2012

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Earlier this year I read a news release that said BMW had renewed the Triumph brand name and there is talk of them releasing a new model under the "Triumph" badge. After reading a few articles on this, I found out that many people seemed excited that the Triumph brand was coming back. They talk of a roadster being produced under the Triumph brand and how it is a return of a great name.

Most of us remember that B/L Triumph really died in 1981. That was when all production ceased in England. Yes, the rebadged Honda was sold as a Triumph Acclaim through 1984, but the engineering, design, and most parts were from Honda. If a new car is released by BMW with the Triumph badge, it could be nice, but will it really be a Triumph? Will it be British engineered, designed and built?

A true British car isn't just about a name or badge on the car, it is about the history and location, the heritage of the brand. While I welcome the name (and possible merchandise) that may hit the marketplace soon, I doubt I will ever really feel that these BMWs with a Triumph badge will ever be anymore than a BMW with a Triumph badge!



I had a nice visit with Shawn Frank and Dennis Allen in Des Moines Iowa in early April.

Until next issue, see you on the road...

Howard

howard@triumphspitfire.com

Thanks to everyone for your photos & stories. Please keep them coming! They will be used in a future issue.

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ON THE COVER

The cover features Sam Jeffries'

1964 Triumph Spitfire4 (Mk1).

Sam resides in Houston, Texas.

Read more starting on page 26.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Spitfire & GT6 Magazine...

BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

Dear Editor,
Oh my goodness, coincidence, I think not. My husband's birthday was earlier this week. A few weeks ago, he forwarded via email to me a link that he would like to receive subscription to your magazine for his birthday (subtle birthday gift hint). We acquired a 1980 Spitfire a few months back and he's been faithfully working on it to get it running for us to enjoy. He is from England and had one in 80's and is excited for us to have one for weekends and day trips etc. When we acquired the Spitfire, and he took photos, he submitted it all to Barn Finds website. When he first brought it home, he wouldn't let me go with him to pick it up, in other words, he towed it home on dolly and took it to car wash before he let me see it, that's the shape it was in. Anyway, his first magazine edition #40 arrived the week of his birthday, he was looking through it and all of a sudden let out a little chuckle, "check this out" and there he was on page 18, Barn Finds, Philip Millward, Monroe NC, a whole page about him. What a fantastic birthday gift to him, to be in the magazine, the first one he/we received for his birthday. Thank you for making my husband's birthday even more special, even though we all know it was a coincidence, or as we say "God Wink".
Tammy Millward
Monroe NC, 28112

*Tammy,
Thanks for the email. We are glad you & your husband liked his special first issue. Coincidence, we'll never tell!
Howard~*



TR3 JOURNEY

Dear Editor,
This June my husband will be re-creating a road trip he took 25 years ago across the US in a 1960 Triumph TR-3. Same car, same route and same college roommate. He is hoping to have some company along the way and is looking to put the word out to other British car clubs that they are welcome to join him for all or part of the journey. Any help you can give us in this regard would be very welcome. You can find his itinerary and more information at www.patrickcumby.com/roadtrip.

Thanks so much and happy driving!

Jeanne D. Cumby
jeanne.cumby@gmail.com

*Jeanne,
Thanks for writing. We wish your husband good luck on his journey and will share your letter with our readers to put out the word for you.*

Howard~

MISS DAISY

Dear Editor,
My name is Alex Vieira from Carmichael Cal. I have a 1975 Spitfire 1500. I love this car, It has a been a amazing experience driving my little miss Daisy. I drive her everyday and it feels good.
Thanks,
Alex Vieira

*Alex,
Thanks for your email. Miss Daisy looks like a nice Spitfire. We included your picture on page 14 of the Readers Rides. Take good care of Daisy, and she will take good care of you.*

Howard~



CAR PIC

Dear Editor,
Here's a pic of my car, a 1971 MKIV for you to consider printing in your magazine. I am a new subscriber but have visited your Internet site often. You have a nice magazine.

Best regards,
Wes Lowery
President SCTOA
Whittier, CA

*Wes,
Thanks for your photo and email. We have included your photo on page 13 of the Readers Rides.
Howard~*

CORRECTION #40

I wanted to apologize to Danny Romero and Shawn Frank. I omitted listing photo credits to Danny Romero in Shawn Frank's article in issue 40, page 22. It was an oversight and we thank you for the photos.

Howard~

*We now have over **625** followers on Facebook. Let's keep it growing. We continue to receive "Write the Caption" responses along with Readers Rides photos from there as well.*

*If you use **Facebook** or **Twitter**, you might want to join us. You can find us by visiting the magazine's main webpage and look for the **F** or **T** logos.*

Howard~

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Weird, Wacky & Wonderful!

Triumph Saddle



Spotted on Craigslist by Hazen Wardle, Boise, Idaho.

Triumph english saddle 17". Seat has water stain. Price is low due to cosmetic condition. Structurally sound. Would be a great starter saddle. Comes with a Kincade 48" cinch.. Ready to ride!

Cash only. Price is firm. Local buyers only.

Do you think it would fit in a Spitfire?



Triumph Racket

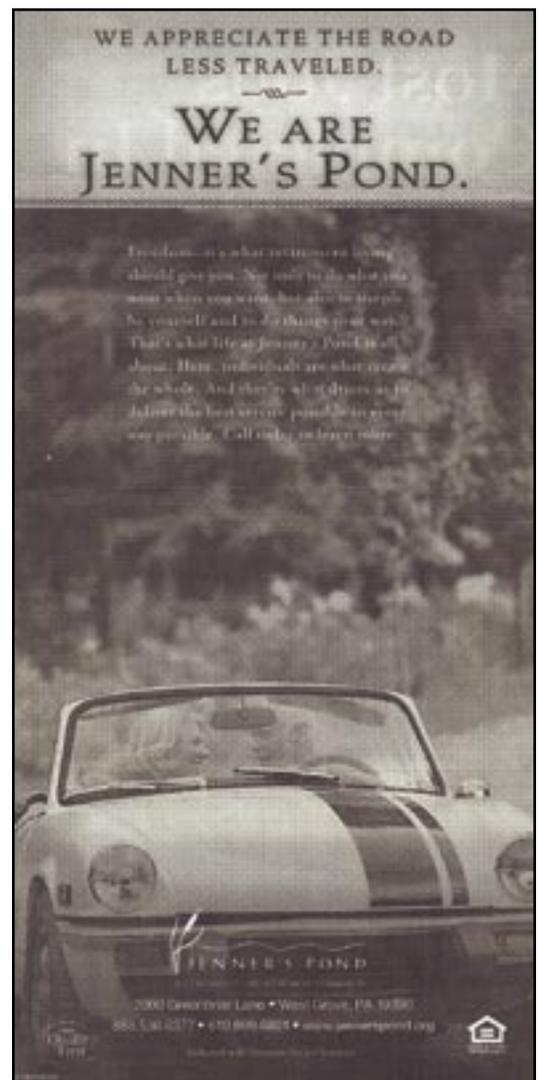


Triumph Tennis Racket recently spotted at Walmart by Ginny Baugues in Terre Haute Indiana.

We know some Triumphs make a racket when they are running, but never expected to see a Triumph racket in the marketplace.

Spitfire Spotted

Spotted in the *Wilmington (DE) News Journal* recently by Dave Denison of Westminster Maryland.



You write the caption



This photo was sent in Jeremy Sturgeon, Zeeland, Michigan. He was getting ready to load and take the poor 1970 GT6+ body to the scrap yard, when he decided to take a few shots.

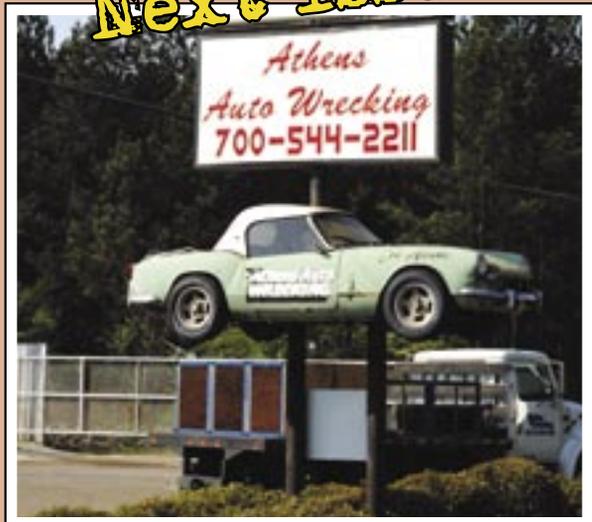
Last issue and on TriumphSpitfire.com, we asked readers to send us suggestions for a caption for the photo to the left. Listed below are some of the responses.

the captions

LITTLE BITS OF SPITS

Never valet park
That's where I left it.
I told you not go down this road
I think I took that corner to quick
Oh, like you haven't driven worse...
I told you the steering rack was loose.
HEY has anyone seen my GT? Yea. it is over behind that tree.
Not again! It overheated and I left it to get some coolant. Dang Jersey Turnpike.
The Triumph community is gripped in fear as yet another mangled body is discovered in the nearby woods.
Biodegradable!!!
You can't see the forest for the GT6
Someone told me if i buried it, more would grow!
It's the seed from the Triumph Tree. Look up! You can see more getting ready to fall.
Not again...dang rust fairy keeps coming back
Another asset of the GT6 is that it is biodegradable
English Iron Still at Work, Feeding Trees & Tin Worms
Project car for sale, 10% there...
Barn Find, one owner, low miles!!!
For Sale- GT6, no rust or wiring issues...
Honey! It just needs a little TLC.
For sale GT6 ran when parked
Needs minor work will take 5000.00 or best offer
GT6 for sale. Perfect roof. Needs some work.
But dad, it's a real classic, and it only needs a little work
Only driven on Sundays, Whisper Quiet, Eco Friendly, Air Conditioning...
FOR SALE-Beautiful GT6 great for rolling along America's byways-Cheap
Can I have that?
I got this Triumph for free honey
Almost complete - could do with a polish
Looks better than the one I'm restoring! (Really!)
It was a rust free tub when we bought it 22 years ago! No joke!
The Straw Blaster(tm) doesn't seem very effective at removing paint.
Just a little wax and this one will look like a new one
Relax, all right? My old man is a television repairman; he's got this ultimate set of tools
They were saplings when I started the body off restoration
I'm not a cow
Roll over, good GT6.
I dare you to tickle its belly!
Shhhhh, not so loud, you don't want to wake it up...
Sleeping Beauty: coming soon to Radiator Spring's theatre.
The GT6 in its natural environment frolicing in the woods, unaware that it is easy prey.
Little Known Fact: Turtles and GT6s will die if left rolled over.
Who said I needed a rotisserie
No rotisserie, No problem ! I can fix your floors
It's a side project !
Help! I've fallen, and I can't get up!
This one time at Triumph Camp.....
Like a good neighbor, state farm is there...
I thought you said let's flip the GT6 to see who gets the COIN...
She told me what would happen if I spent anther cent on it!
Flip Over Read Directions.....thought that was for FORD
Giovanni Michelotti is doing the same this right now.
Long ago, a GT6 went out to the woods to roll over and die.

Next issue...



This photo was sent in by Bob Spruck of Georgia

Send your caption suggestions to
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And FINALLY...

Oops that wasn't what I meant by "Park it on the Right"

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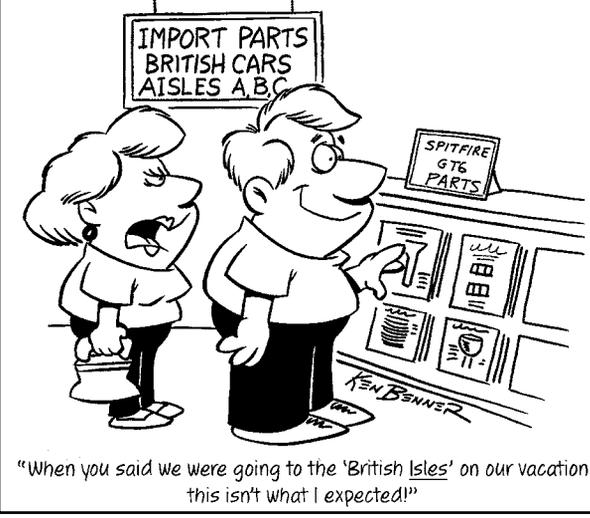


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Triumphant Cartoonist



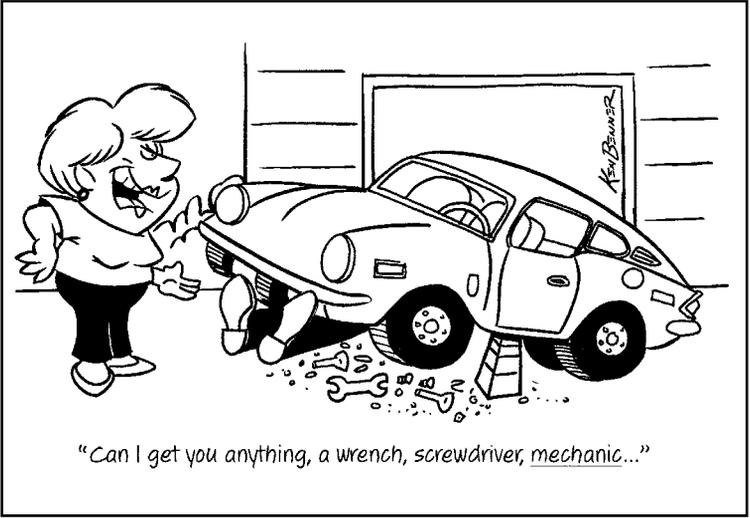
"When you said we were going to the 'British Isles' on our vacation this isn't what I expected!"



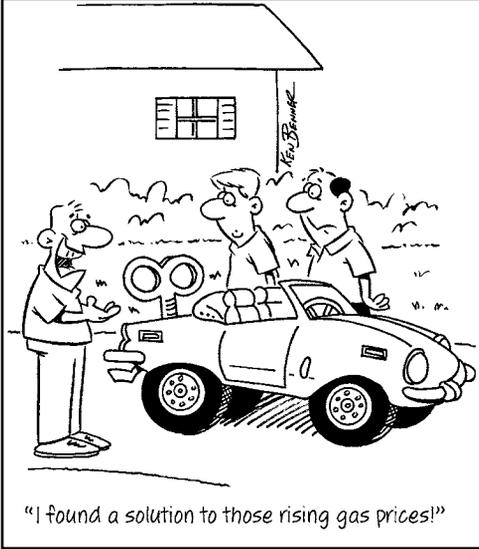
"No I don't believe it just 'followed you home!'"



"We're not sure what's wrong with your car, but we've narrowed it down to something expensive."



"Can I get you anything, a wrench, screwdriver, mechanic..."

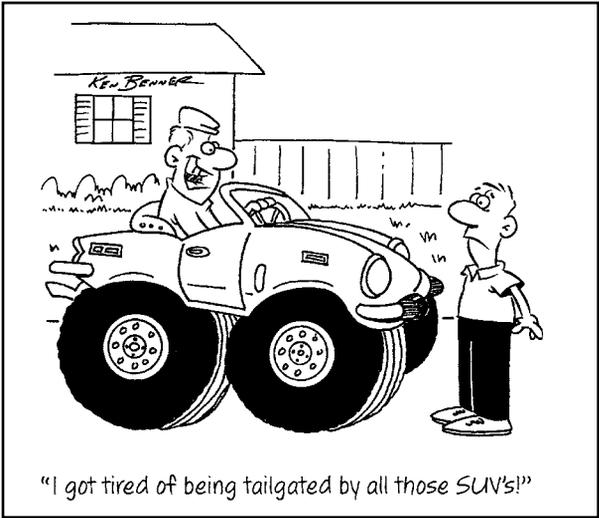


"I found a solution to those rising gas prices!"

A look back at some of Ken's best work.

Triumphantlly Yours,

KEN BENNER
Ken Benner



"I got tired of being tailgated by all those SUN's!"

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READER'S RIDES

1962 Spitfire4 ▶
Owned by Suzie Singleton,
Wiltshire, United Kingdom



1966 Spitfire4 Mk2 ▲▶
Owned by Dave Miller,
Pottsville, Pennsylvania



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◀▲ 1970 Spitfire Mk3, Owned by Dring Cornelius, Potchefstroom, Northwest Province, South Africa



1971 Spitfire MkIV▶
Owned by Wes Lowery,
President SCTOA,
Whittier, California



READERS RIDES



◀ 1975 Spitfire 1500
Owned by Alex Vieira
Carmichael, California
I love this car, It has a been a amazing
experience driving my little Miss Daisy.
I drive her everyday and it feels good.

1976 Spitfire 1500 ▶
Owned by Kelley Hangos-
Carrano
sent via Facebook



◀ 1977 Spitfire 1500
Owned by Jamie Johnston
Saint Albert, Alberta, Canada



1968 GT6 Mk1 ▲▼▶
Owned by Jack Fansher,
Chesterfield, Missouri



▼1970 GT6+, Owned by Graham Johnson, New Jersey. About eight years ago I regrettably had to let my green GT6+ go! Just last sunday however; I picked up another green 1970 GT6+!! This one is a lot more of a project than the last one but I've been working on it every day since!



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:
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BOOK REVIEW

Kas Kastner's Triumphs

Race Cars, Street Cars and Special Cars

Book review by Howard Baugues

Kas Kastner has released another book. This fourth book is a continuation in the series he has written on Triumph cars. This is a full size 8.5" X 11" book with 252 pages and over 500 photos. Its stories cover many Triumph cars, such as a 290 bhp TR-2 from Australia, and in Belgium, a lap in a TR-6 on the SPA F-1 track, to Canada where a TR-3 body is fit to a TR-6 chassis. There are lots of other fix-it stuff, articles and stories.



A large part of the book is devoted to the building of a GT-6 racer from scratch. Choosing the best of three junkers, the racer is built up over the period of the past twenty months and covered in detail, from suspension, drive line, body additions and fixing, making Lexan windows, to the engine dyno run. Detail views of the engine building and preparation which produced 204 bhp at 8000 rpm may help you build any engine. Fourteen chapters deal with the construction in photos and text. Roll cage building, painting, chassis work, engine building all done right in the home garage of Chuck Gee, 2007 winner of the Kastner Cup in his top notch 1500 Spitfire.

So you can enjoy more of the detail of the photos, most in color, a DVD comes with each book. There are many more photos on this DVD



that would not fit in the book. Put the DVD in your computer, view and enlarge! These photos are great and any Triumph enthusiast would want copies.

This book is packed full of history as well as tech. You can't go wrong adding this one to your collection. 📺



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The Spitfire, Everybody's Favorite

by Kas Kastner, California

On the very first day the first Spitfire came into the Competition Department shops at the Cal Sales distributorship in Gardena California, everyone that saw it remarked, "what a neat little car". The little was not a derogatory remark, it was just an expression of size of the vehicle compared to the TR-4 and TR-3 that were also in the shop.

We did not really know much about the car. The Spitfire was an unknown to all. The suspension was similar to the Herald and the engine was a modified version so we were all ready to take this little devil apart, just as soon as I could get one assigned as a race car.

As head of the Competition Department, I had several cars I was already working on, and feverishly, building TR-4 engines and dynamometer testing for hours and hours every day. But, it was just great to let everyone have a good time with this first Spitfire and speculate on how a hotter version would react.

My usual attitude was with the engine, lets get some more power and right now. Mill the head, clean up the ports, assign a set of different needles to the carburetors and get a camshaft installed that would make some POWER. I did just

that. It was then I found right off that the stock valve springs would not be useful with a racing type camshaft, so valve springs had to be first. Another discovery was that the cam followers were tiny, tiny little things and that limited the shape of the camshaft lobe severely. Did the measurements, checked the sizes and ordered springs made to order from a local spring company. Two weeks later the springs arrived and I immediately set aside everything else to get them installed in the Spitfire engine. All looked great. The springs allowed the lift and were stronger so that a proper racing profile could be ground onto the camshaft. New cam, new springs, milled head, hello horsepower.

Well, it appeared that was the ticket, but the conductor on this modification train said "NO". On the very first run in the dyno, the revs put up to 5500 revs and three of the springs broke. It seems that the spring maker had not understood that these were to be VALVE springs, not door springs, and the steel was so cheap I wondered if that could be held with a magnet. Off to a better source. All of this, of course, came around as we learned what worked and what did not. Time in the chair was needed to make the Spitfire a racer. Unfortunately the budget in the Competition Department was very thin and there was no money for a Spitfire.



Lee Mueller won the National Championship at Daytona with his MK 3 Spitfire in 1969. Above he is with a reproduction model of the car for the L.A. Auto Show. Kas Kastner is standing in the background. The real car was picked up at Daytona by Mike Cook editor of the Triumph Register magazine and therefore not available. The photo was taken in the Competition Department shops located in Gardena, California

HISTORY

An old friend of mine, Ed Barker, was an excellent Porsche racer. (I raced my TR-3 against him lots of times) I respected Ed for his driving and his workshop abilities. He became interested in the Spitfire. I suggested, if he would take it in hand I would help him with pieces, ideas, working time, and dynamometer work. He ditched his Porsche and bought one of the first Spitfires and through his good efforts a ton of work was accomplished in a very short time.

Ed Barker went on to win the first National Championship for the Spitfire, the SCCA runoffs at Riverside California in 1964. Erwin Lorinez won the first National race at Watkins Glen new York, but it was Ed who worked with me and developed more and more of the car and put his Spitfire in the top of the class every where he ran. Triumph had another winner.



Above: Ed Barker running fast in his top dog 1147cc Spitfire

With the information from all this development I was able to write the first of four Triumph Spitfire Preparation Manuals. These manuals have been reprinted by The Roadster Factory and most are still available.



Never did I ever dream that the Spitfire would become the all conquering car that it is now in several classes. The 1500cc engine cars on the West Coast are faster than any of the other racers including the TR-4.



Above: John Wilkins, class winner and Kastner Cup winner 2004

Below: Chuck Gee, class winner and Kastner Cup winner 2007



In SCCA racing Steven Sargis has clinched several National Championships in two classes. It has turned into a real killer racer in the SCCA and vintage racing classes.

Time for a short story of a pretty humorous occasion. Not all racing is dead serious this happening gave us all a good long loud laugh.

It happened in the late 60's racing at Newport, Oregon, an airport track right next to a Christmas tree farm. Lee Mueller was fast and headed for the pole position in his class, lap one was fast and lap two faster, then it started to SNOW. Lee came onto the front chute and he had been very quick going into the sharp first corner with very late braking, but this time through the car was loose and GONE.

The snow had wet down the track and Lee had no control. The Spitfire slide sideways for a bit then off the edge of the track and just kept going. Lee and the Spitfire finally came to rest. But only after traveling sideways over several small pine trees. It was a devil of time towing the car out and Jim Coan and Lee Mueller seem to be having a good time as their manager (me) continues



Jimmy Coan and Lee Mueller signaling they and the car are okay after the long long slide off the track, over the pine trees and settling into the light snow covered ground.

to have a hard time even seeing the car from the pits. It all worked out fine and the Christmas tree farmer was not too unhappy, but it was a Spitfire moment.

Spitfires were racing everywhere it seemed. In Canada Craig Hill, with his modified Spitfire, won more than his fair share of races and kept the brand in the front. Craig was one of our drivers in the 1966 TR-4 team, winners of the team prize, and taking third in class and twenty sixth overall at the Sebring 12 hour event.



Above: Jerry Barker, son of Ed Barker, took up the fight for the Spitfires with the help of his Dad, and won the National Championship two times, years 1975 and 1980.



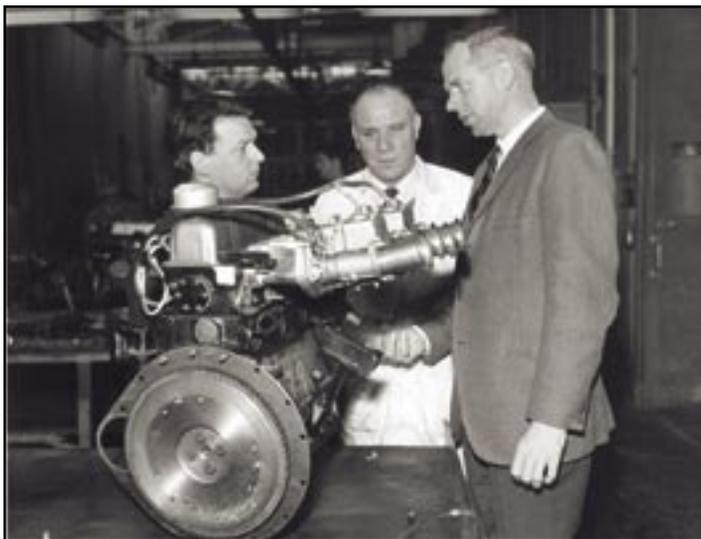
Canadian Craig Hill running his slick Triumph Spitfire through the corner to another win.



Above: John Kelly in the Group 44 Spitfire MK3, another National Champion for the now famous Triumph marque.

HISTORY

The year 1965 was another Spitfire banner year at Sebring for the Spitfire Coupes built up at the factory. This type Spitfire car was the type originally used for the 1964 LeMans and also in 1966. But now it was 1965 and the cars were built and shipped to the USA. Below you will see some photos from the actual construction of these cars.



Above: Dennis Barbet, Ted Silver and Kas discussing the 103 bhp Spitfire coupe Sebring 1147cc engines



The three car team looked good in the starting laps, but a crash of the Bolton /Rothschild car with a high powered sports prototype racer, flipped the Spitfire over at turn 3; taking it out of the race. The remaining two cars finished 2nd and 3rd in the GT 7/8 category.



Not to be outdone by the Sebring and Le Mans coupes, the factory also built a special Spitfire for a special race, the Macau Grand Prix. After the event, the car was returned to the factory, then sent on to me for whatever use I could find for the Triumph called the Macau Spitfire. The Competition

Department raced the car a few times with the original 1147 engine but found it was just not competitive. To give us a fun car I installed a 185 horsepower GT-6 engine. That certainly brought the straight line top speed and acceleration into order. But, even with that, the small tires and brakes made it just was too difficult to run hard against the other two liter sports racers. It was a lot of fun to run though, and we did make plenty of publicity for Triumph with the one and only, Macau Spitfire.

In time I sold the car. It passed through several hands and eventually wound up in the hands of David Pearson of Coventry Classics in England. David has restored the car completely to the original specifications and appearance. It can be seen on his web site and in person at his shops.

Because of the unique appearance of the Spitfire and general appeal to so many people, lots of advertising moments were created and publicity was outstanding. The Spitfire has been the beginning car for so many racers and continues to



Above: Toni Kastner and her graduation car, an 1147cc Spitfire



Above: Sterling Moss and Valerie Pirie showing off the new Hardtop Spitfire of their rallye team.



Above: Very successful racer Susan Kahler, is a good example of the many Vintage Racers who are enjoying this terrific Triumph.

run in the front in most events. Just to top off my personal feeling about the Triumph Spitfire, it was the car I chose to reward both of my daughters, Toni and Jane, for their outstanding work and graduation from High School. Toni had the 1147cc engine but second daughter, Jane, received a Mk3 Spitfire with a 1500 cc engine that I just happened to have sitting on the floor of the shop. Both cars were purchased used from private parties, checked over and they went on to give the girls a ton of pleasure for several years. How can you go wrong, the Spitfire is just a great car.

www.kaskastner.com

Books by Kas Kastner

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Visits and interviews with important speed parts manufacturers, personal interviews with TR owners around the world, and personal happenings of Kas. With more technical ideas and information, special parts and fixes, this book will be of interest to all Triumph owners.

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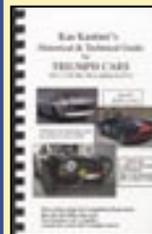
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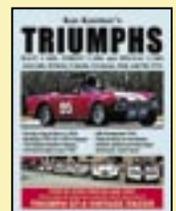
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Free shipping in the U.S.A.



Second Oldest, Still Racing

by George Michael "Mike" Harmuth, Poughkeepsie, New York
With Assistance from Dave Belden and the NY-SCCA

I am researching the history of my racing Spitfire. I'm working with the NY-SCCA region to find out when the original logbook was issued for my 1963 Spitfire4. My family is also into Spitfires, my wife and oldest son both have 1980 1500s. My other son has a '72 MkIV that he rebuilt the engine in last winter. Besides the '63 Spit race car, I also have a '75 1500, my first Triumph, and a '70 GT6 which will emerge this spring after a two year restoration following a sideswipe.

During my research on the racecar, I received a letter from Dave Belden, a former owner, about some of the car's early history.

Hi Mike,

Well, I can answer some of your questions. Of course off the top the car is like your father's axe, much replaced from back in the day. The fiery crash in Big Bend that shows in one of your pictures resulted in a lot of new stuff. I was concussed and didn't take the car home; it was taken by two Spitfire racing friends (Buddy Norton and Steve Johnson) and was disassembled at Steve's shop before I ever got to Providence to see the wreck. The car was rebuilt with a new (used) rear body. The tranny, diff., and nose were original though after that resurrection. I believe this was in '77.

I purchased the car in late '68 or early '69 for the '69 season from Jim Shellington. The car was originally built as a race car by Charlie Rainville, one of the really key people in New England racing in those days and was for his own use. Supposedly it was the first Spit into R.I. and Charlie, as service mgr. at the dealer, got his hands on it right away. As it turned out Charlie didn't use it a lot and I have no record or recollection of his outings with the car. At this time he was an active official (he later was Competition Director for IMSA), changing wives, and going into business for himself. And in '65 and '66 he picked up a paid ride with Team Starfish, the Chrysler Barracuda team in the early Tran Am. Needless to say the Spit was not high on his priority list.

I don't know when he sold it to Shellington or anything about it what Shellington did with it; my impression is not too much, but I don't know for sure. When I purchased the car it was a ways from being fully prepared. Of course the rules were changing at that time so what seemed underprepared to me may have been all that was allowed a couple of years earlier. I fairly quickly (in the first year or two) put on the Minilites and lowered the car and started in on the rear end. It became a decent car and by '71 I could win with it.

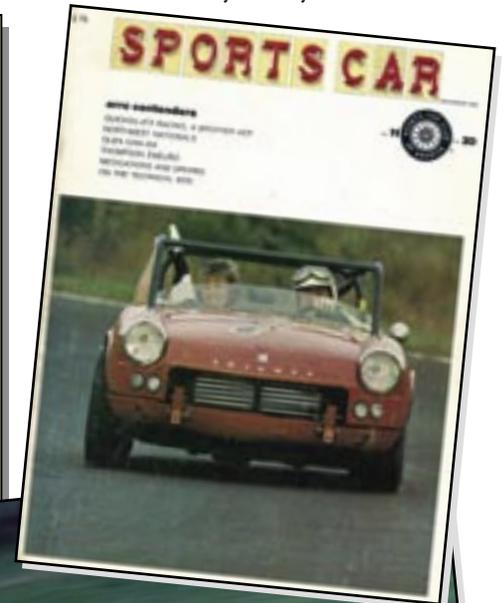
I won the NAARC (then Area 1) championship once only. Having won the NAARC Championship, I decided to move up and concentrate on Nationals for '73. Unfortunately I picked a bad year because in '73 I was elected New England Region RE and we had some real "issues". Additionally my job was stressful and on Memorial day I ran the car into the woods at Thompson for no good reason. I was ahead of Joe Hauser when I went off though. Turned out maybe there was a good reason because later that day I collapsed and was in the hospital for a week getting two pints of blood a day to straighten out a bleeding ulcer.

My racing for the rest of the year was minimal and after my wife (on the Sports Car cover) was killed in a car crash in Nov. my '74 was pretty quiet also. Finally in '76 I got serious and ran enough Nationals to finish 4th in the division and go to Atlanta. During that season I won at least two Nationals at L.R. and Bridgehampton and did well elsewhere. I was going well at Atlanta, in the top ten early on, when a rocker broke. I was in good company here in the NEast that year; the other three guys who I ran near all season finished 1,2 and 4 at the run-offs. The two Hausers were 1 and 2 and Bernie ? in a Spit was 4th.

After the car was crashed at the '77 early LR National my season was dead stop but I did get out with the rebuilt/new car for the LR Labor Day National and beat Alan Sadwin for first in a great fight. Probably the best race I've ever done. I didn't do much in next couple of years, local nationals and the occasional regional; I remember one real good race with George Dennis (Spit) and Joe Hauser at the Glen and this and that but I don't recollect that I won any Nationals. I was ready for something else and sold the car to Lee Auclair around the end of the decade.

So that's it for me with the car the first time around. I didn't keep much in the way of records unfortunately and my memory could be better. Obviously I also had it for some years later, backdated and running usually the SVRA Glen race where I think it won its class six or so years in a row. I occasionally wonder how many engines went into that car in the time; well into double figures. I should also say that almost to the end of my second time with the car it always had an 1147 GProd engine.

Dave Belden





▲ The garage full of Spits
▼ Red#7 ready to race.



Dave Belden sold the car to Terry Smith of Sherman, CT. Terry updated the roll cage, changed the engine to a small journal 1296. He ran some track day events with it, as well as a driver's school but he never raced it. His new business started taking up all his time so he put the car up for sale.

I was racing an open wheel formula car in the SCCA F5 class. The F5 car was fun but required too much work so I was looking for another type of race car to play with. My brother had a '68

Mk3 Spitfire in '74, my first exposure to the breed. I bought a '75 1500 Spitfire in 1981 and drove that for a few years (still have it).

Looking on the internet for car options, I came across Terry's ad. It had been ten years since I'd driven a Spitfire but I had mostly fond memories of them. The car was only 40 miles away, the price was right and it included a trailer, which sealed the deal.



Red #7 supported by a great team!

I started racing it the following spring with the SCCA, in the Historic Racing Group (HRG) <http://historicracinggroup.yolasite.com> and in G, later H-Production class. My first event was the spring race at Pocono. Halfway through the race I started smelling smoke but I was having a good, close race with a Corvair and thought it was the oil smoke coming off his car as he shifted. When we slowed down for the infield section of the track, the smoke turned into flames. I was on fire, but the engine was still running. I drove it to the nearest flag station. The wide eyed corner workers ran to me and put it out. When the smoke cleared, there was a six inch hole in the block where a connecting rod had become a dis-connected rod and left the car. Even with the damage, the engine kept running. I was impressed and disgusted at the same time. What did I get myself into? I dragged the car home and did my first of "I've lost count" engine swaps.

My first year with the HRG I won my first championship, in the Group 1, under 1300cc class. I've won four more HRG Group 1 championships. After the first year, I started racing in production class as well as the HRG. Some weekends I was in eight sessions or more, four qualifying and four races between the two groups. I'd finish a session and change from treaded tires, required for HRG, to slicks for the prod class. I went through three tire guns in two seasons, but the amount of track time I got allowed me to really learn the car and how to set it up. In 2008, I won three championships HRG group 1, NJ Road Racing Series and the North Atlantic Road Racing Championship (NARRC).

In 2009, while racing at Limerock, the first HRG event of the year, my differential broke a tooth and jammed going down the main straight. The car twisted the driveshaft like a pretzel, the universals sheared off the rear axles. The car spun in traffic, and went head first into the guardrail.



Repairing the car took the rest of the season, the new Russ Moore axles were the longest lead item. After hearing about Dave's problems with stock axles, I wasn't going to run with anything else. 2010 was a development year, I spent lots of track time getting the chassis tuned back in, as well as engine problems. It all paid off, in 2011, the team won three championships, HRG, New York Road Racing Series and my second NARRC.

2012 is starting with a trip to Road Atlanta for the Mitty and Triumph celebration. I'm hoping for a clean sweep and four championships this year, the three we won last year and NJ, I only lost it by six points last year.

What I love most about my car isn't the winning, it's racing and preserving a time capsule from the golden years of sports cars. People are always coming up to me at events and talking about their experiences with a Triumph back in the day. They had one or their friend did and the stories just flow for hours. The common themes are how much fun they had, what "tweaks" were made to them or what they had to fix on the side of the road. 🏁





Carburetor Kit

Spitfire 68-80

Part # P17-006

Price: \$418.95

A complete Down Draft Carburetor Kit with electric choke for your Spitfire 68 to 80. Tired of trying to tune your stock carburetors? Bolt this kit on and enjoy your car.



Wheel Bearing Kit Rear

Spitfire

Part # GHK1029

Price: \$25.00

Wheel Bearing (hub) Kit Rear Triumph Spitfire. Includes two bearings, seals and gasket. Each kit does one side, two will be needed per car.



Brake Master Cylinder

GT6 68-72

Part # 213690

Price: \$156.00

This is a brand new Brake master cylinder for a Triumph GT6 1968 to 1972. No more trying to find good used cylinders or having to use one with an incorrect bore.

Wheel Bearing Kit Rear

GT6

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Wheel Bearing Kit Rear GT6 Roto-Flex.



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GT6

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This is a Genuine Borg and Beck Unit made in the UK. Borg and Beck has been in business for over a 100 years making the best clutch kits you can buy. Fits Triumph GT6 - All Years.

Wheel Bearing Kit Front

GT6

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Price: \$17.00

Wheel Bearing Kit front for Triumph GT6. Includes two bearings and seal.



Distributor

Spitfire 75-80

Part # 41427E

Price: \$152.00

This is the most advanced distributor available for your Triumph. This Complete Unit has the most updated electronic ignition available for cars with 25D4 and 45D4, 45DE4 distributors. Some distributors offer a 12 month warranty; this unit carries a 36 month warranty. This is the longest in the business! Very simple installation, two wires, no cutting, just plugs in and go!

Note: This distributor will only work for Neg. Ground Cars.



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Spitfire, GT6, TR250

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This is a Rebuilt Starter for Triumph Spitfire, GT6, TR250 and many others with 5 inch hole spacing.



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Ph: 503-864-2001

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A-Arm Brushing Set Poly

Spitfire, GT6

Part # 9103

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This is a set of A-Arm bushings (8) for a Triumph Spitfire and GT6. They are very easy to install, much easier than your stock bushings. The bushings also have graphite impregnated in them for long life so this will be the last set that you have to install.



Pertronix Ignition

GT6

Part # 1169

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This is a Pertronix Electronic Ignition kit for Triumph GT6 with Delco distributor. These kits are very easy to install and are truly set once and forget it ignition system.



Filter Air

GT6

Part # GFE1051

Price: \$11.75

This is an air filter for a Triumph GT6 - All Years.



HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

PROUD TO BE SERVING YOU FOR 30 YEARS OUT OF THE 50 YEARS OF TRIUMPH!

TC, Tere & Me

by Sam Jeffries, Houston, Texas

In late August 2008 my best friend, Art Tuttlebee who lives in Rockport, TX, told me he wanted to buy another Spitfire (his first one was my original Spitfire I had sold to my father who later sold it to Art). He had found one in Houston and asked if I could take a look at it and let him know if it was worth the cost. I contacted the owner and went to see it, took pictures and checked out everything. It barely ran and must have had at least 30 or 40 lbs of bondo with the paint peeling. It was really trashy. It was a 1963 and they wanted \$2500, I told her maybe \$250. She told me what I could do with my money.

After seeing a Spitfire4 for the first time in years, my thoughts immediately went back to June 1965. I was 22 years old, in the Navy and had just graduated from a 38 week electronics school on Treasure Island Naval Base, CA. My new orders were to a 28 week school at Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, Texas (ironically I had joined the Navy to get away from school). I went home in San Antonio, TX on leave and told my parents I wanted to buy a car but would need help with a down payment. They agreed but almost changed their mind when I told them I wanted a sports car. After much talking we went to Alamo Sports Cars and told them I wanted an Austin Healey Sprite. They explained that a much better car would be the Triumph Spitfire and they had one in stock and could have it ready the next week. This was my first car, it was a white 1964. Like most of the dealers they were big into road racing and had a winning Spitfire. They explained the problem with fast cornering on a hard turn and explained they could eliminate the problem with a camber compensator for only \$50. I had to be at Goodfellow AFB on Monday morning so I came back the next weekend and picked it up.

During the next seven months I put almost 14,000 miles on that car. There was a trip at least two to three weekends a month. The longest was to Tulsa, Oklahoma, left Friday evening and arrived Saturday morning, (if you have never spent 12 hours straight in a Mark 1, you don't know what uncomfortable is). I would go back to San Antonio at least twice a month and went to Dallas once. A group of sports cars started doing gymkhana's on the weekends and I ran in a few. I was going against the Midget's and the Sprite's and they really weren't that much competition. I had the camber compensator and the on the fly hand brake so I smoked them every time I ran.

Graduation was in January and I received orders to Hawaii. The Navy would not ship my car for me so my father said he would take over the payments. He drove it to work almost every day and would throw his golf clubs behind the seat and head for the course at least twice a week. He had a lot of fun

with the car also and I believe he loved it as much as I did. In 1973 he traded the car to Art Tuttlebee for a Ranchero.

I spent two years in Hawaii and then went to Kami Seya Japan. A short time after arriving in Japan a white left hand drive 1965 Mark 2 Spitfire came available on base, so I bought it and drove it for almost two years while in Japan. The only time that I was sorry about having a Spitfire was in the spring of 1969. I removed the hardtop and put on the soft-top because the weather was warming up. The next day on the way home from the base, I was stopped in a long line of cars at a traffic light. A large Isuzu dump truck stopped behind me. All I could see in the rearview mirror was his bumper and grill. When the light changed he decided to go, even though the rest of the cars had not moved yet. The next thing I know, my car is moving forward, the differential is digging into the pavement and his bumper is within six inches of my head. He stopped at this time. The luggage locker lid (trunk lid), the rear deck and the fuel spout were damaged. The damage was repaired and the car was back on the road. When I left Japan I sold the car for the same price I had originally paid.



While in Japan, I went back to the states twice for some specialized training. On the first trip Art was meeting with some of our friends and asked me to go along. He brought his cousin Teresa Robinson. I knew her parents but didn't remember her. A couple of days later I was on my way back to Japan. On the next trip in, I decided to call Tere (short for Teresa) and ask her for a date. I borrowed the Spitfire from my father and went to pick her up. When I got to her house this really cute, petite girl in a miniskirt came out of the house. WOW!! She had a lot of trouble trying to figure out the proper way to get in the car. The main problem was I parked on the curb and the seat was almost level with the ground. I can't remember if I pulled up to the cut for the driveway or actually drove into the driveway; but we finally got it worked out, thank goodness.



Every time I was home on leave after that I would call her and we would go out. I was discharged from the Navy in January 1971 and went back to San Antonio. Tere was dating someone else and it was in August before we started dating again. After dating off and on for a while I finally asked her to marry me. We got married in December 1972. We have a son Jeffrey and a daughter Michelle. We moved to Houston in 1978 and are still here.

After Art jogged my memory about my first Spitfire, I started getting the itch for another one. I had a little over a year and a half before I retired and though that would be a great project to keep me busy. Art found a 1965 Spit 6 in Corpus Christi for \$1700. After talking with the seller and seeing some pictures, they settled on \$300. It had not been driven for 10 years and had been sitting next to a salt water canal uncovered for the same period. Art had decided he wanted a Mark 4 Spitfire, so he offered this car to me. Tere and I drove down and picked it up. Tere decided to name it Rusty; I wonder why. The only body panel that was worth repairing was the bonnet. I decided to use as much as possible for parts on another car. On the trip back to Houston, I was watching the rearview mirror to make sure everything was ok with Rusty. Shortly after getting on the highway I said "Oh no! The rear window." Tere said it looks fine to me and I told her the one on Rusty just flew off and landed on the road. She asked if we were going back to get it and I told her "No, it broke into a million pieces and we needed to get out of here." She said, "In that case drive faster." Lucky there were no cars behind us at the time.

I determined it would take a whole tub to repair the body so I started looking for another car. I found a Red 1964 in New York and bought it. Before buying it I asked Tere if it was alright with her and she told me "If I can wear that miniskirt I wore when you picked me up in the first Spitfire then you can buy it." Being a man I took that as a yes. Doesn't that make sense?



It had been dipped and painted a beautiful Signal Red. The front end was all new, brakes, tie rod ends and shocks etc. It had a 1500 engine and transmission but the original 411 rear-end. The radiator was a new three core and full width. It had a Weber with a Cannon manifold (not good) the bonnet would not close without hitting the air filter.

It would cost more to pick up my son Jeff and drive to New York and haul it back than having it shipped. We had not had any rain for over a month except the day the car arrived and it rained all day. The hauler had to unload in a parking lot over a block away. One thing, of many missing parts, was a top. It had a frame but no top. The truck driver said since he was already wet from unloading, he would drive it home for me. Into the garage it went and I immediately started removing most of the things that were completely wrong.

The person who worked on it last was not a Triumph mechanic and tried to set it up as a racer. Most of the parts he put in were wrong. Tere was upset that I tore everything out. She said "it ran when it got here so why break it." I spent many hours pulling parts off Rusty and cleaning and painting them. Tere decided to name this car TC for **Time Consumer**.



FEATURE - SPITFIRE4



A short time after TC arrived I found another Mark 2 parts car here in Houston and bought it. The name of person who sold it to us was John and he was a Baptist preacher so Tere called the car JB. Between Rusty and JB I had a lot of unavailable parts but was still missing some. I found a 1966 Mark 2 in Kansas City, Kansas that had many great hard to find parts so I bought it.

Art and I both retired on May 1, 2009 and on May 6th we hooked up his trailer, picked up Jeff in Denton, Texas and headed for Kansas City. After we got back I told Tere we should name it KC for Kansas City; but she informed me that a better name would be DC for Divorce Court. We all laughed about that. DC had some very good items including a Pierce manifold which allowed the bonnet to close properly.

I now had everything I needed to get TC on the road. I had joined the Texas Triumph Register, the Houston VTR chapter, when I originally bought TC. Everyone wanted to know when it would be on the road and I kept telling them as soon as it runs. The next major delay was the title. The New York title had dropped a number out of the middle so I needed to change it. The easiest was to transfer the title with the mistake and then get a corrected Texas Title. After showing the DPS inspector The Heritage Certificate he approved everything. Now I was ready to start driving. The club has a breakfast every Saturday morning at a different location around Houston. The first Saturday I was going to surprise everyone and show up in TC. On the way there the exhaust pipe broke midway under the car. I was able to tie it up and headed home. The next weekend it was fixed and we surprised everyone.



TC is definitely a perfect name for this car but I love it. The club has many day trips and a few over nighters. Tere and I have been on Polar Bear Runs (tops down in the winter), Bluebonnet Runs, Lunch Runs, and many others. Last February I led a group down to Rockport on a three day trip. On Saturday we drove down to the USS Lexington air craft carrier and took pictures on the dock alongside the Lexington and then toured the ship. That afternoon we went out to see the Whooping Cranes.

In April I met Jeff in New Braunsfels, Texas for the VTR Regional's held at the T-Bar Ranch. He had never driven a Spitfire before so I let him drive it some. He enjoyed the auto-





Jeff cornering at high speed



Jeff & me at the Autocross

cross more than anything. He learned about the jacking of the rear-end on sharp turns at fast speeds. TC won first place for the early Spitfires in the concourse. I was surprised but very pleased to say the least.

At the present time I am replacing the rear spring with a swing spring, all of the bushings on the rear suspension, and putting in the 327 rear-end from Rusty. I have already replaced the front sway bar with a 7/8" bar from a Mark 4. This should make TC handle much better and with the differential I can go 70 mph and the rpm's will be well below 4000. It has

been hard keeping up with the big brothers on the club runs. The next item is to rebuild the seats. They are in bad shape. I hope to have everything finished for the regionals in Tulsa, Oklahoma in April.

Aside from TC, my biggest project is working with the club on the VTR National Convention in October. We are hosting it on Galveston Island, Texas at the San Luis Hotel and Resort. In the June club meeting we started to organize for the nationals. I had earlier volunteered to be on the sponsorship and advertising committee. It was announced that I had volunteered to be the chairman of that committee (When I was in the Navy I was told never to volunteer for anything, I just can't learn). Someone asked what car would be the feature for the show? It was suggested the TR4 since it was its 50th anniversary. I told them that 1961 was the official anniversary of the TR4 and it had to be the Spitfire since it was introduced in October 1962. You can imagine the uproar over that. After much discussion it was decided I was correct and the Spitfire won.

A commitment was made to have more Spitfires at the convention than any other type of Triumph. We are working on having some type of celebration for this anniversary, and as it gets closer to the event, we will have more information. I hope to have between 50 and 75 Spitfires attend, and show our "big brothers" who really rules. At many driving events I have asked the other drivers if they made it there without being attacked by a Messerschmitt and when they reply "Of course", I reply, "That is because the Spitfires cleared the way!"

TC, Tere and I hope to see all of you at the San Luis next October. Until then keep on driving and keep those Messerschmitt's away from our vulnerable "big brothers." 🚗



Sam with TC

THE BOMB

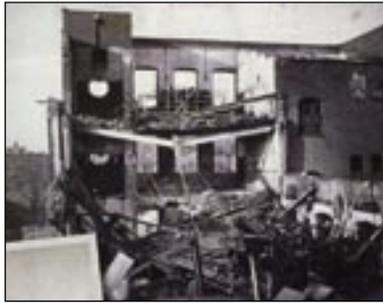


Spitfire History - The Early Days

In the beginning:

Triumph was building cars in the late 20's and early 30s. They produced a number of sporting and fairly expensive models, but those cars were not marketed very successfully. Too many models along with high costs and slow sales led to bankruptcy and a takeover in the late 30s. During the early part of World War Two the company

was tooled up to produce war supplies for the British government. In November of 1940, the Coventry production facilities were almost completely destroyed by German bombing raids. On 31 December 1945, Sir John Black of the Standard Car Company acquired the Triumph name and all of the remaining assets of the company. Sir John's plan was to use the Triumph name as an upmarket "badge" for his Standard models.



At the end of World War Two, England was essentially bankrupt. The marketing strategy was 'export or die', and Sir John witnessed Jaguar and MG make profits selling cars in the US market. Sir John changed his strategy and instead of re-badging Standards with the Triumph name, he developed the name as a sports car marque of its



own. The first models were the TR lines, which in the beginning were based on chassis' and engines of the Vanguard. The TRX prototype led to the TR2 and TR3 becoming successful models.

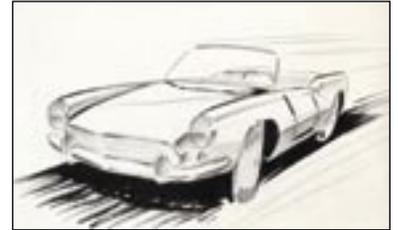
In 1956, the newly renamed Standard-Triumph started development of a completely new saloon. Difficulties with production capacities guided engineers to build this saloon as a simple chassis and body construction rather than a full monocoque design. This allowed the factory to very cheaply produce the car and make the process very flexible. They were able to design different body styles without a complete retooling. So in 1959 the Triumph Herald came to life.



From Herald to Spitfire⁴

Triumph management and engineers had been considering a small sports model, when Austin released its first Austin-Healey Sprite in 1958. The Sprite was an instant success, and designers and engineers were pressed to come up with a Triumph sports car that could compete in the same market. Triumph was confident that they could do better than Austin's Sprite.

Triumph had a tradition of giving a 4 letter code name to each project. The Herald started out as the Zobo during design. This prototype was called "Bomb" or "X659" and was started in 1960. Giovanni Michelotti worked in his



Turin, Italy studio to design the Bomb on the 948cc Herald chassis. 1960 started a dramatic fall in the home market, and the company books dropped into the red. Rumors spread of a takeover attempt, and the Bomb project was stopped, and the prototype was covered and stored in a back corner of the design studio, to be forgotten.

About this time, Leyland Motors had been looking to expand into the car market, and Standard-Triumph was sadly positioned for a takeover. December of 1960 saw Leyland make a successful takeover bid, and they took full control of the company in April 1961. Donald Alick, a Leyland executive asked what was covered in the corner of the design studio, and the prototype was once again revealed. He liked the Bomb immediately and on 13 July 1961 the project was ordered to go ahead with production.



This production car would be built on a shortened (8.5"/216mm) Herald frame. This car, unlike the Herald, would be welded together to form a tub that could be bolted onto the frame in 12 locations. The outriggers were positioned so that the seats were lower than those of the Herald, giving it a lower and sleeker look. By using the wishbone frame, structural support had to be built into the sills, making them a strong and integral part of the body. The ease of access to the engine compartment of the Herald was adapted to work for this production



1958 AH Bugeye Sprite

car, now given the name of Triumph Spitfire, or Spitfire4.

From the start of the design, the Spitfire4 was made to compete with the AH Sprite in the US markets. As per their intent to build

a better car, the Spitfire4 offered wind down side windows (Sprite still offered only side curtains), more driver & passenger leg room, storage space behind the seats, and a wider cockpit. All of this added to the bonnet giving full access engine bay copied from the Herald made the Spitfire4 a strong competitor.

Spitfire4 heads to market

Testing of the prototypes was not completed until the summer of 1962. Satisfied with the testing, the Spitfire4 was launched at the October 1962 London Motor Show at Earl's Court. The Spitfire4 immediately began to outsell the Sprite, despite the fact that the price was 54 pounds higher. The style and features were worth the difference to consumers. The price difference remained throughout the life of both cars, and the Spitfire outsold the Sprite every year except one, which was due to a labor force strike. Not bad for a car that was brought from wooden prototype to production in just under 18 months.



Earl's Court Motorshow

The 4 in the name Spitfire4, was said to represent the 4 cylinder engine. Some rumors floated that there would eventually be a Spitfire6, equipped with a straight 6 cylinder engine, but that never came to pass. The 6 cylinder engine ended up in the coupe model

we now know as the GT6. As for the actual "Spitfire" name, several stories abound. While the first Spitfire name was given to the Supermarine/Vanguard WW2 fighter plane, there is no recorded evidence that the makers of the plane ever gave permission, nor did they complain about the use of the name for the car. It is not known if Standard-Triumph obtained permission for use of the name. Some stories circulate that Standard-Triumph was allowed to use the name after producing Spitfire aircraft parts in WW2. Another story claims the name was used in a trade, after Vickers (owner of the Supermarine) agreed to swap names with Standard-Triumph, thus the Vickers Vanguard. Previously Standard-Triumph had produced a car called Vanguard.

The Spitfire4 was well loaded for the time. As mentioned, a big feature was wind down windows, as most other British imports only offered side curtains. The tilt-away bonnet and fenders were a strong selling point to demonstrate ease of maintenance. This was often shown in ads of the time. The radio and the heater in the Spitfire4 were options. Can you imagine not having a heater in your car? The soft-top of the Spitfire4 was more like a tent, in that the components were stored in the boot, and had to be assembled separately on the car. The first few years rubber floor mats & tunnel covers were installed as standard equipment, with carpet being an optional item. In September of 1963 the D-type Laycock de Normanville overdrive and a steel hardtop were offered as optional extras.

While designed over a Herald chassis and 948cc engine, the Spitfire4 was equipped with the 1147cc engine. This gave it another advantage over the AH Sprite, with its 948cc engine. As advertised, the Spitfire4 was easily capable of reaching speeds over 90mph. It did 0 to 50 in 13 seconds, and 0 to 60 in 17 seconds, and was able to give over 30 mpg. All of this wrapped up in a sporty design and a 1963 price of \$2199, made the Spitfire4 a well received car in the United States, as well as at home in the UK. The Spitfire4 manufactured and sold over 45,000 units from 1962 through 1964. The Spitfire4 ended with chassis number FC44656. 🚗

New Triumph Spitfire—12 feet long, every inch a sports car.

goes over 90 m.p.h., independent suspension on all 4 wheels.

Triumph engineering all the way. You own it for only \$2199!

Triumph Spitfire

New Triumph Spitfire 4 takes the lead among light sports cars

With one word, Triumph takes the lead in the light sports car field. In fact, the only thing that keeps the new Spitfire out of the heavy sports car class is its price, \$2499.75 inc. p.t.

STANDARD TRIUMPH

Spitfire

Is the new Triumph Spitfire for you?

Triumph Spitfire

MARK 2

Spitfire 4 Mk2

The Spitfire4 had been selling with great success since its release at the end of 1962. Standard-Triumph was outselling BMC (British Motor Corporation) in the marketplace. The Spitfire4 had come in at the right price and the right options. Not to be outdone for long, in 1964, competitor BMC came up with an improved Austin Healey Sprite and MG Midget. In an answer to the marketing success of the Spitfire, the “Spridget” now had a proper bootlid and wind-up windows. The sales race was on.



The competition: 1964 A-H Sprite MkIII



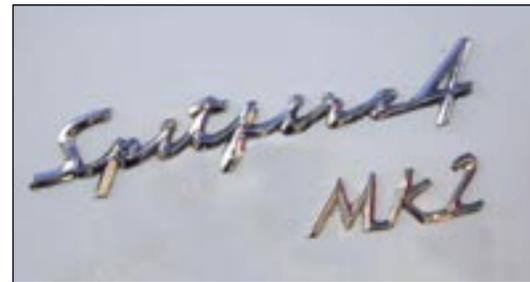
Standard-Triumph responded with the Spitfire4 Mk2 in March 1965. The Mk2 sported a 67bhp 1147cc engine, up from 63bhp in the original. The increase was made possible partly through an improved cam and a revised tubular four to one manifold. The interior had been improved as well. Carpets, which were only available as an expensive option on the Spitfire4 were now standard equipment, replacing the hideous rubber mats. Inner door tops and other previously exposed surfaces were now covered in trim to give a better fit and appearance. Wire wheels, overdrive, steel hardtops, and even the heater was still optional equipment for the Mk2.



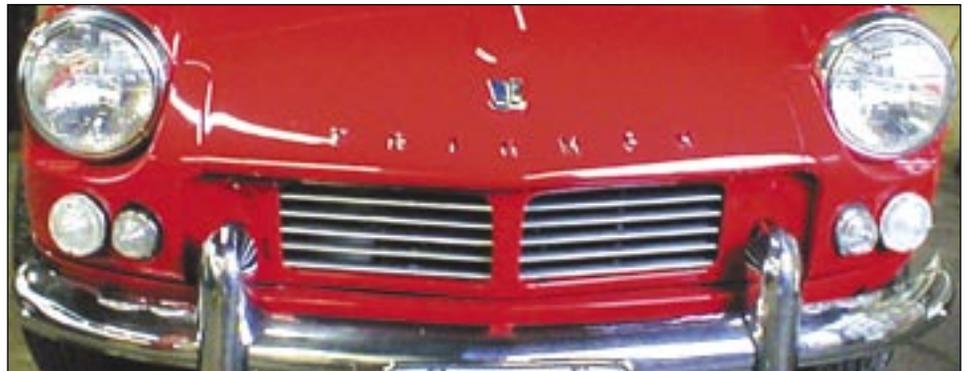
1965 Mk2, owned by Van Kirk, Kentucky

1966 Mk2, owned by Bill Miller, Indiana

Outward appearances were almost identical. Door handles, mirrors, and chrome trim pieces were the same from the Spitfire4 to the Mk2. The only obvious outward changes were the bootlid lettering that had the added Mk2, and the change in the grille, from a crosshatched pattern to a straight slat design. Marker and turn lights varied from year to year and destination to destination, but the overall look of the car stayed the same. The Mk2 was still the car to have.



Above: Cross-hatch grille of the Spitfire4 (Mk1)
Below: The straight slat design of the Spitfire Mk2 grille



Advertising campaigns ran wild, promoting the Spitfire Mk2 as the “Swingers” car to own. Endorsements were sought from various athletes and actors. Even surfing great Joyce Hoffman was featured in the Spitfire ads in 1966. (See ad on next page). Sales remained high and continued to beat BMC’s similar models.

The Spitfire MK2 had a winning combination of style and performance. Its price was still slightly more than the “Spridget,” but consumers were willing to pay the difference. Over 37,400 Mk2’s were built from December of 1964 through January of 1967. Almost as fast as the Mk2 appeared on the market, its replacement had started in design at Standard-Triumph. ©



The new Triumph Spitfire Mk II coming at you.

What could be more fun than the Triumph Spitfire?
(The new Triumph Spitfire Mark II)

THE sleek little 'Spie' has always given its pilot more fun for £ and lbs for lbs than anything else on wheels. Now comes the Spitfire Mk II, which is faster, safer and more comfortable than ever.

When we're done for the power, 140-horsepower. We designed a new carburettor (higher RPM). We gave the engine a new four-bearing mainshaft, and redesigned the distributor. Then there's a revised cooling system and a water-pumped thermostat for faster warm-up. The engine now delivers 67 bhp at 4,000 revs and returns an 8-10 mpg of 10 seconds. Now for the roadster. We've come up

with a new kind of seat. We mean comfy padded, and adjusted to keep you where you're best through the curves. There aren't rounded carpet. One door to drive and the supplied upholstery on one side let you enjoy the view. Finally, we added safety padding covers for your hands and feet. So when the Spitfire Mk II is giving in the upper corners you'll be putting in.

In addition to all this, beautiful MacIntosh soundwork on an ultra-rough grille classic, a 100 24-foot touring clock, a motorized roof rack, big die break-up doors and a wind screen that directs if you want to be a pilot.

Your friend's Triumph dealer can arrange a test drive in a Mk II Spitfire. Where are you going to see her?

As little as £1,000
Spitfire Mk II (1966-1971)
Roadster Model £1,099.00
Triumph
Triumph Motor Cars Ltd



Booming surf. Roaring engine.
A pretty girl's smile. Triumph Spitfire Mk2.

Why did champion surfer Angus Halloran select the Triumph Spitfire Mk2 as his official surf wagon?

It's the car's outstanding styling and performance! Plenty, fully equipped interior. Smooth 4-speed stick shift.

0 to 50 in only 10 seconds!

Safety features? Innovative rack-and-pinion steering. Reliable disc brakes. Tight 24-foot touring clock. Bump absorbing four-wheel independent wheel suspension. And steering column.

Designed to collapse upon impact!

Roomy? Only once every 4,000 miles lubrication. Prices only £1,199! To tell the truth, we really don't know. All right, we say "It's so good!" Ah, we know!

*Standard 1966-1971 1500 plus extra 1972-1971. Right hand in the UK. 1972-1971 standard equipment. Standard equipment. See your dealer for details. Triumph Motor Cars Ltd, Whiteley, Hampshire, England. Triumph Motor Cars Ltd, Whiteley, Hampshire, England.



The new Triumph Spitfire Mk 2 still swings.
Only faster.

Even the limits have gone past her previous. Sports Car Club of America (S.C.C.A.) had rated her "Car and Driver" readers as "Best GT sports car" (for less than £2000) in the world in 1971. 0 to 50 mph in 10.5 seconds. 70 mph in 20.5 seconds.

There's more power in the engine, too. The new bucket seats are individually adjustable and fully contoured. The interior is vinyl-lined and fully carpeted. The front door has a padded top and convenient rear storage compartments.

Other features: accurate rack-and-pinion steering. Tight 24-foot touring clock. Dependable disc brakes. Rugged four-wheel independent suspension. £1,199*. It's the only new thing about her.



Triumph Spitfire Mk 2



Triumph Spitfire Mk 2 is made for swingers. Dig?

See you do. Any swinger dig the Triumph Spitfire Mk 2. She's become 100% stronger in 10% seconds. There's no 10 mph that out.

(That's even faster than the original Spitfire, a Sports Car Club of America Champion. And mind: That GT sports

car for less than £2000* by readers of Car and Driver.)

And check the cockpit! New deep-cushioned, fully contoured adjustable bucket seats. Vinyl-lined, fully carpeted interior. Padded dash with handy coin storage compartments.

Of course, don't forget accurate rack-and-pinion steering. Tight 24-foot touring clock. Dependable disc brakes. Rugged four-wheel independent suspension.

The price: £1,199*. Everybody dig that.



Triumph Spitfire Mk 2

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF TRIUMPH SPITFIRES

CELEBRATING
FIFTY YEARS

5
1962-



1965 Spitfire 4 MK2, Jon Keil, Charlotte, North Carolina



1964
Sam Jeffries,



1969 Spitfire Mk3, Terry Kahl, Conestoga, Pennsylvania

SPITFIRE & GT6

magazine issue #41

OF TRIUMPH
SPITFIRES



2012



1971 Spitfire MkIV, John Hart, St. Louis, Missouri



Spitfire4
Houston, Texas



1980 Spitfire 1500, Andy Stark, O'Fallon, Missouri

MARK 3

Spitfire Mk3

The bulldog with the Roman nose.

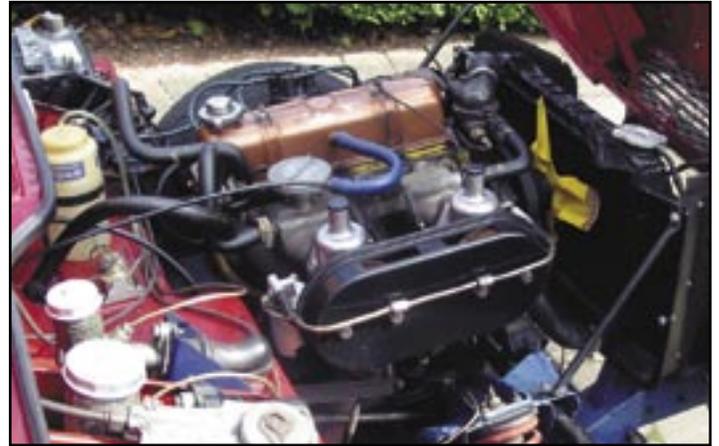


Build a sports car with tough English muscle...the kind that wins races. Put it inside a sleek Italian-designed body...the kind that looks good on you. That's our Spitfire Mk3. With an engine that'll take you to 60 in 12.5 seconds, disc brakes up front, four wheel independent suspension, rack and pinion steering and a track record as long as your arm, the Spitfire's more than just another pretty face. The price? \$2295*

TRIUMPH SPITFIRE Mk3

*Suggested base price. Excludes P.D.E. price national sales, dealer prep and local taxes. Look for your nearest Triumph dealer in the Yellow Pages, Leyland Motor Corporation of North America, 111 Gateway Place, Teaneck, New Jersey 07666.

Production of the Spitfire Mk3 started in the beginning of 1967, but the model was not available for sale to the public until March. This allowed time for the units to move through the supply chain and be positioned for sale when the announcements were released. Two major changes took place in the new Mk3, both involving the bonnet, on top and underneath it. The front bumper was raised 9 inches (230mm) due to new US safety legislation. This gave the Mk3 the "Bone in the Mouth" or "Big Smile" appearance. The rear bumpers were also raised and the chrome overriders were removed.



Under the bonnet was a new powerplant, a 1296cc engine, similar to the engine of the 1300FWD Saloon released by Standard-Triumph in 1965. This engine was an enhancement of the original 1147cc, achieved by way of a larger cylinder bore. The head of the 1296cc now sported an eight port design that was similar to the eight port design used on the 1964 racing Spitfires, although not identical.

The twin 1 1/4" SU's were retained but the intake and exhaust manifolds were now cast iron. The tubular design of the Mk2 had been scrapped for being too expensive to produce. These modifications gave the early Mk3's a quoted peak power of 75bhp @ 6000rpm's.

The Spitfire Mk3 started with a new numbering series, FD1. A less noticed changed was that these cars were set up with negative earth (negative electrical ground). A new soft top was fitted, that allowed faster fold-up and down. The days of the entirely removed soft top were gone. The top latches were the same as the Herald convertibles until after FD13980, when a lever type catch was added, and a matching keyhole was added to the windscreen cap. Early Mk3's sported the same windscreen wipers as the Mk2, but were changed after FD30784, which moved them farther apart. Rain gutters on the windscreen had been added on late model Mk2's and continued on the new model.

The body tub panels did not change, saving costs on retooling for a newer tub. The dash and instrument panels of the Mk3 remained the same as the previous model for the first couple of years, however a dressier walnut veneer was added to the center panel. When the wipers were changed, the dash top was also changed to a finer grain of vinyl. New boot badges dropped the '4' from the Spitfire4 but used the same mounting holes and position as the Mk2.



The birth of the “Squaretail”

Spitfire IV

As the Seventies approached, British Leyland was in command of the Triumph production, and was preparing for some design changes in several of the models at the same time. Money was tight, so the designs were labeled as face-lifts only, with the styling being referred to as “squaring off the tails”. The Spitfire, which had changed very little since the first design of 1962, was slated to undergo this face-lift. Michelotti was brought in to make the improvements, but keep the overall car the same. The tail portion of the Spitfire was “cut” and squared along the same lines as the then not yet released Stag, and the updated TR6, Triumph 2000, the 2.5PI, and the upcoming GT6 Mk3. The rear edges were trimmed with chrome, and horizontal tail lights were installed. The squaring off also created an almost flat bootlid with a new style locking latch. The seams along the rear fenders were capped off with a black chrome, rather than the previous silver chrome finish used on the Mk3 Spitfires. The rear of the MkIV Spit sported a continuous wrap-around chrome bumper, with a raised wedge “TRIUMPH” in black & chrome on the top center, just below the license plate.

The front of the MkIV sported changes as well. The bonnet was redesigned with a lower sweeping angle, and for the first time, no exposed seams on the top of the fenders. An enlarged chrome bumper was mounted higher on front, with the first federally mandated bumper guards. Those guards were a black poly-carbonate polymer, and gave a new look to the Spitfire. A new chrome bonnet badge was mounted in the same location as the RAF roundel that had been used on the 1970 Mk3’s. This new badge declaring “Spitfire MkIV” and similar rear fender side badges, were proudly announcing the last major model change to the Spitfire line, even though buyers had no idea of it at that time.

The windshield frame which was removable in the Mk1-2-3 Spitfires, now was fixed in place, but was 2 inches higher to add needed headroom. A new hardtop was designed without Michelottis assistance, to fit the new MkIV body, which also gave additional headroom to driver and passenger. Inside, the matte black dash was the same as the end of the run Mk3s. The full dash layout gave drivers a better view of the gauges, and allowed easier climate control access. New seats were introduced in the MkIV, but they still did not recline. The seats did however, release from the rear and pivot forward, giving easier access to the rear deck storage area.

Under the bonnet, the new MkIV still carried a 1300cc engine, but with a few modifications. A heavier crank was installed, with with larger main and rod bearings, and TR6 pushrods were used. An eight blade fan and new style air cleaner with placed on the MkIV. The US models came with a single ZS carb, detuned to 58bhp in 1971, and 48bhp in 1972. The 1300 engine also came equipped with a “sealed for life” water pump, with no grease zerts. The engine was bolted to a new, all synchronized gearbox. The optional over-drive models came with the OD switch located in the gear shift knob, rather than on the column.



1971 MkIV, owned by John Hart, Missouri

The MkIV was released with a new steel rim design, with oval shaped ventilation holes. To dress up this rim, a black plastic center cap, chrome lugnuts, and a chrome trim ring were added. For the first time, radial tires were offered as standard equipment. The rear suspension was modified on the MkIV to overcome the wheel tuck of the earlier Spits. An improved “swing spring” arrangement was installed, and up front was equipped with a stiffer front anti-roll bar.



1971 MkIV, owned by John Hart, Missouri



1971 MkIV, owned by Shawn Frank, Iowa

This seemed to satisfy the critics and owners alike, that the “new” Spitfire was a better handling machine. But the US emissions laws forced the use of a single carburetor and the detuning of the 1300cc engine to 58bhp in 1971, and down to 48bhp in 1972, causing more criticism due to the lack of power.



improvements were made in the Euro MkIV, the same types of improvements appeared in the US 1500. Complete wood veneer dashes were installed, and the rear axle width was widened 2” to increase stability. This axle change only occurred on the US 1500, not the US MkIV, but it did reach the ‘73 Euro MkIV.

In 1975, the 1500 was released to the entire world, and the Spitfire MkIV ceased production. 🚗

Along with the release of the MkIV, British Leyland & Triumph sponsored the popular television show, “M*A*S*H”, and Alan Alda (co-star) was often seen driving new Triumphs. Sales held steady, and the MkIV continued in popularity. The 1972 model year saw only minor changes from 1971’s, one being the addition of matte black paint on the rear tail light surface. This was done in an effort to make the tail lights stand out more. Near the end of 1972, the “Gas Crisis” started influencing buyers choices, and Triumph struggled to maintain sales. They also fought to keep the emissions levels down while improving fuel economy, the new buyer focus. The 1300cc engine could not be choked down anymore, and something drastic needed to be done. At this point, the Spitfire takes on two lives, in the US the 1973 Spitfire made the conversion to the Spitfire 1500, equipped with the 1493cc upgraded engine, while in the European market, the MkIV continued for two more years. As

Our little inexpensive economy car can beat your little inexpensive economy car.

Spitfire is a long time winner of National, as well as Divisional, Sports Car Club of America Championships. But taking a life doesn't mean winning just one or two hard fought races a year. It means winning ten or twenty or more hard fought races a year.

Also, don't think owning such a big winner will cost a big price. Because you can buy the Spitfire for a small price. And drive the Spitfire for a small price. (It gets 27 miles per gallon.) They don't call us Triumph for nothing.

1969	1970	1971
Riverside, 2/16, 1st Place, L. Mueller Wilton Springs, 3/23, 1st Place, L. Mueller Holtville, 4/19, 1st Place, D. Donovan? Marathon, 4/14, 1st Place, J. Kelly Buckner, 4/20, 1st Place, G. Smiley Combsville, 5/17, 1st Place, B. Hokus Washington, 6/19, 1st Place, S. Kravak Lake Arrow, 8/11, 1st Place, J. Kelly Salt Lake, Labor Day, 1st Place, L. Mueller San Marcos, Labor Day, 1st Place, T. Wright Brewer, Labor Day, 1st Place, J. Kelly Sawney, 9/21, 1st Place, G. Smiley Pomona, 10/11, 1st Place, J. Kelly Deanna, Thanksgiving, 1st Place, L. Mueller	Pomona, 5/2, 1st Place, K. Stigle Wenatchee, 5/29, 1st Place, G. Smiley Riverside, 7/4, 1st Place, J. Spiker Wenatchee, 7/4, 1st Place, G. Smiley Lima Park, 7/4, 1st Place, J. Anderson Dufur, 7/19, 1st Place, J. Spach Pittsburgh, 8/2, 1st Place, J. Kelly Daytona, 8/12, 1st Place, H. La Vessard Washington, 8/16, 1st Place, J. Anderson Lisa Allen, 8/16, 1st Place, G. Smiley Green Valley, 10/23, 1st Place, J. Spach Hessia, Thanksgiving, 1st Place, J. Kelly	Riverside, 2/16, 1st Place, L. Mueller Dallas, 2/14, 1st Place, J. Ray Pomona, 3/17, 1st Place, L. Mueller Arkansas, 3/23, 1st Place, J. Ray Wilton, 3/14, 1st Place, M. Meyer Buckner, 4/19, 1st Place, J. Ray Sunset Pl., 4/16, 1st Place, R. Stigle Arkansas, 4/27, 1st Place, J. Kelly San Marcos, 5/2, 1st Place, B. Anderson Bridgmanville, 5/19, 1st Place, G. Smiley Combsville, 5/16, 1st Place, J. Kelly Lima Park, 5/29, 1st Place, J. Spach Cason, 5/29, 1st Place, J. Spach Portland, 6/13, 1st Place, J. Kelly Thompson, 6/13, 1st Place, K. Stigle Laguna, 6/30, 1st Place, L. Mueller Lima Park, 7/4, 1st Place, J. Kelly Pomona, 7/4, 1st Place, J. Spach Brewer, 8/1, 1st Place, K. Stigle Pomona, 8/13, 1st Place, M. Meyer

Triumph Spitfire

FOR THE NAME OF YOUR NEAREST TRIUMPH DEALER CALL 800-871-8712. IN NEW JERSEY CALL 800-868-8686. BRITISH LEYLAND MOTORS INC., LORAIN, N. J. 07036



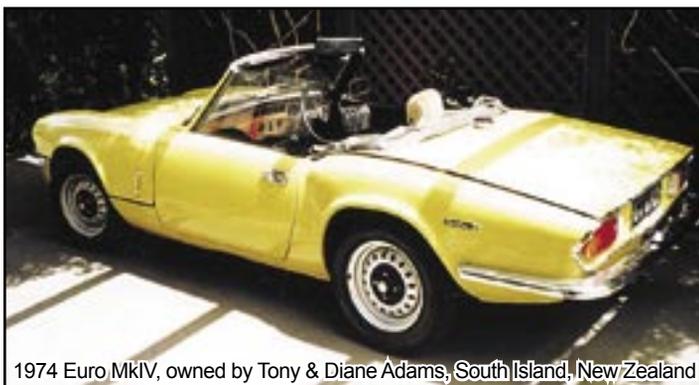
Spitfire 1500

As early as 1966, Triumph had built a 1493cc engine and tested it in a Spitfire. BL started using the 1493cc in cars built in South Africa. The engines were adapted for front wheel drive saloon models in the early seventies. The engine was not marked for Spitfire use until much later. The 1300cc engine had been doing fine, keeping up with US emissions legislation until the early 1970's. It was obvious that the new requirements would choke the 1300 engine and rob power to the point no one would be interested in the Spitfire. Engineers set about making the needed changes to the engine extending the stroke to increase capacity and power while still meeting US emissions standards. Since these standards only applied to US bound cars, BL decided to change the US export model while retaining the MkIV in home and European markets. Euro cars kept their FH commission prefix, while US cars changed to FM, starting with FM00001. This was the start of the Spitfire 1500.



1973 1500, owned by Lee & Joan Avram, Ontario Canada

The 1973 Spitfire 1500 was released with little fanfare in the beginning, and to the untrained eye, looked just like a Spitfire MkIV. The body was the same, the bumpers were the same, only the bonnet & rear wing badges had been changed slightly to reflect the "new" model. The interior looked the same as the MkIV, and in the Euro market the cars continued with 1300cc engines and wore badges of MkIVs. Two models off one production line, it was a logistical nightmare.



1974 Euro MkIV, owned by Tony & Diane Adams, South Island, New Zealand

With the new 1500, the engine horsepower increase was minimal, 57 from 54, but the torque increased from 61 lb-lb to 71 ft-lb. This gave back some acceleration that had been stripped by federalizing. The extra torque was handled by adding a large diaphragm clutch

and the differential was changed to 3.89:1 to help with quieter high-way speeds. The rear axle width was increased by two inches at this time to improve handling.

Engineers listened to Spitfire fans and made another long awaited improvement. The rear spring arrangement was altered, allowing the transverse leaf spring to pivot in the center with the exception of the master leaf. The master leaf was still fixed to the differential, and this arrangement reduced the roll stiffness in the rear. A larger diameter anti-sway bar was fitted to the front end, to help maintain balance under high-speed cornering. New seats with adjustable head restraints were included in the interior changes. A walnut dash was once again used, and sported restyled gauges. A smaller, shallower steering wheel allowed more leg and knee room. Options included a steel hardtop and the electronic overdrive from third and fourth gears. "Vehicle sensitive" seat belts were also added to the 1500. These belts allowed for freedom to move sideways or forward slowly, but the belt locked up when sudden motion was applied. Many new owners thought the belts defective and returned their cars to the dealer. Most modern cars have since adopted the very same function of seat belts and users have found them simple to use and much more comfortable to wear.

**You not only get a car and a girl
but a piece of history.**

Was there a new car fitted on the racing world? Spotted! Following the prize that speed British. It has done the same great, rickling up. New national class. It means (perhaps, giving British Legends to more national production vehicles in Sports Car Club of America competition than any other manufacturer).

If for thousands this lovely two seater was then first sports car. It took an amazing 400000 units. You are still. To see how a Ferrari. But I will have back to that other Spitfire.

Straight line, 1800cc, then 1800cc. Still the same lovely sound, the light touch, the snug seat, the rickling side, the brilliant, warm and the other sports Spitfire.

This year, a bigger 1500cc engine, 2 inch wider track, higher 3.89:1 axle ratio, larger 7 1/2 inch clutch. We look for new things to compare.

There it is. A car, a girl, a piece of history. Like your first love, you'll never forget your first Spitfire.

Triumph Spitfire 1500

The American ad campaign on television & in the magazines displayed a yellow Spitfire next to a WWII Spitfire plane (above), and claimed, "You not only get a car and a girl but a piece of history". This also featured a cameo appearance by retired Spitfire pilot and Battle of Britain Ace, Ginger Lacey. The campaign worked and sales rose.

In 1974, the US standards had changed bumper impact resistance. In an effort to combat this new regulation with as little retooling as possible, "Big Bertha" was born. Called that by many Spitfire enthusiasts, the small "overrides" of the 73 were removed, and the large, arrowhead shaped rubber bumperguards were installed. And these were installed not only on the front, but on the rear as well. This increased the length of a Spitfire by over 12 inches. While not the best looking change, the new rubber bumperguards were accepted and sales continued to grow. In England, it was time to upgrade the MkIV and make one engine for all Spitfires. The Euro 1500 was released, and sported twin SU carbs and their special 4-2-1 cast iron header. US cars were getting the single CD150 Stromberg and a cast iron 4-1 standard exhaust manifold sporting an EGR valve to keep up with emissions.

As 1975 approached, British Leyland decided that the MG Midget engine needed replaced, since it could no longer meet US emission regulations. At this point, BL made a bold move and fitted a Triumph engine and transmission in the MG Midget. This allowed BL to reduce tooling costs and focus on one engine for two different cars. MG enthusiasts did not like this move but had no voice in the plan. Triumph enthusiasts were not happy with this change either, but were glad the engine chosen was a Triumph rather than an MG engine.

1975 also brought forth a new and more bulky override to the Spitfire. This time the rubber bumperguards were squared off, and looked even worse. And to add to the misery, the beautifully simple lines of the 73-74 bumper were changed, and a higher impact piece added to the middle of the rear bumper, between the rubber guards. Gone was the Triumph wedge that had graced the rear bumper in such a stylish way. Gone was the thin, smooth appearance of the slender rear bumper. In its place was a monster of a design,

SPITFIRE 1500

that was engineered to meet the new US bumper 2.5mph impact regulations. (Thank you Ralph Nader!) 1975 also was witness to the disappearance of the chrome badge declaring this the Spitfire 1500. Now the bonnet sported a vinyl "decal" showing "Spitfire 1500" and on the bootlid, a similar decal with "Triumph" added to the top of it. No identification was installed on the rear wings. A new padded armrest appeared between the seats, and a fold down map light was installed above the parcel tray.

Also changed for the '75 Spitfire was the transmission. While still a four speed, a Marina styled gearbox was installed with a single rail configuration. This changed the shift pattern from having the reverse on the left, to the reverse being on the right, next to third. A "J-type" overdrive was available as an option with the single rail transmission. The '75 Spitfire with a 7.5:1 compression ratio boasted a 33 mpg fuel rating for 1975. In California, '75 models were fitted with catalytic converters and required unleaded fuel.

In 1976 the focus on bumper regulations remained the same as 1975, so the bumpers and guards were able to remain the same. Engineers were able to improve the engine to a 9.1:1 compression ratio for most of the US (excl. Cal.), and resulted in a performance increase and a fuel mileage increase to 37 mpg. California cars continued to be equipped with 7.5:1 ratio engines and received a 33mpg rating.





A new style steel rim was used on the '76 Spitfire. New, did we say? Well, not quite. Morris/Austin Marina rims with slotted openings were used in place of the oval holed rims of previous years. What was thought to be a stylish improvement was actually cleaning house at BL. That Austin Marina slotted rim had been discontinued and replaced with a Rostyle rim, and the slotted rims, a left over, were used to clear out old stock. These rims along with the chrome trim rings, did give a classier look to the 76 Spitfire. A less classy change, was the replacement of chrome windscreen wiper arms with black arms, and standard mirrors sporting a black finish.

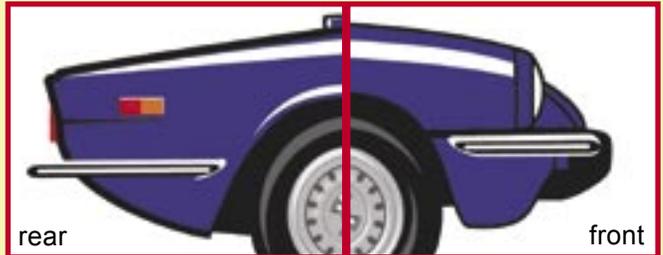


▲ Austin Marina rims with slotted openings were used on the 1976 Spitfire in place of the oval-holed rims of previous years. What was thought to be a stylish improvement was actually cleaning house at BL. These rims along with the chrome trim rings, did give a classy, unique look to the 76 Spitfire.

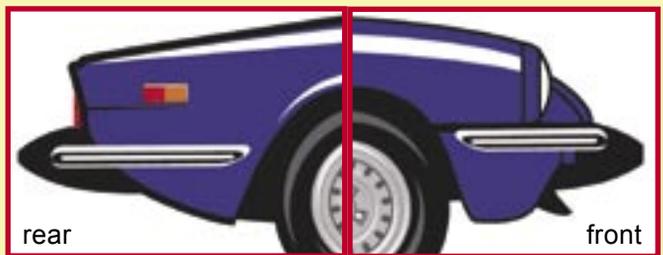
In 1976 the TR6 and Spitfire were marketed as the “Endangered Species”. The advertising agency thought up this theme to show how few convertibles were still being sold in the United States. It was a highly successful campaign and generated a lot of buyer interest and media coverage. Triumph sports car sales hit their all-time highest one month record in June of 1976, selling a total of 2,960 cars. Most were TR7s, but Spitfires still sold at about 1,000 units per month, which was also the limit the factory could turn out. 1976 turned out to be the record best sales for Triumph. with 28,238 cars sold. The previous record was 1959 with 23,072.

1500 Overriders

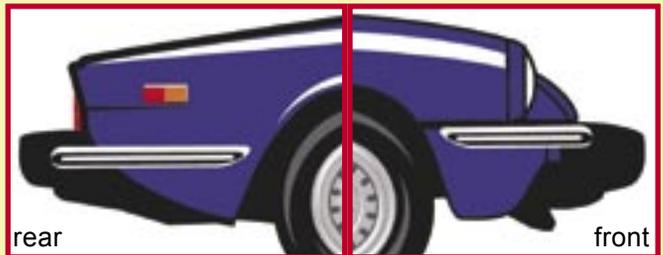
and how they grew...



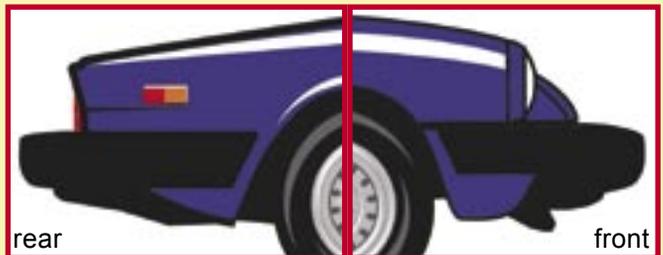
In 1973, the 1500 was released to the US market with small front overriders. These were the same as the Euro MkIV, and no overriders were added to the rear bumper.



In 1974, the 1500 sprouted large arrowhead shaped overriders on front and back to meet new US safety regulations. The Euro Spit added a spoiler on front, had a small front overrider, but none on back.



In 1975, the overriders grew again on both front and rear to a large rectangular shape. The overriders would stay like this until 1979.



The 79 model year started at number FM90001 with chrome bumpers, just like the previous year. When number FM95001 hit the line, black rubber bumpers were installed. This happened just passed half way into the 1979 model, causing some to refer to it as the 79½ model. The reason was to comply with US energy absorbing legislation. This was the final style of bumper remained through all 1980 & 1981 US models.

As 1976 faded away, so did the last of the 9.1:1 compression, unleaded engines and non-catalyst exhaust systems for the Spitfires. The 1977 Spitfire brought back the 7.5:1 engine, along with a modified intake manifold, and an exhaust manifold modified to support a catalytic converter. **The no-lead California engine was now the Federal standard for all imported Spitfires.**



The future would prove the new exhaust manifold design to be bad, causing cracks and leaks due to the weight and how it was suspended. The Smiths service counter that had been installed on the firewall by the master cylinder was gone, and the speedometer cable was now one continuous piece. The radiator also changed to a slanted, narrow radiator, with electric fan.

Inside the cockpit, the '77 Spitfire sported a new and exciting look. The steering cluster of the older style Spitfires was gone, and a new, key in the column style had replaced it. A quick comparison told you the steering column was the same as the one being used in the TR7, and back at the factory. Cost reduction measures imposed by B.L. minimized unique parts where ever possible, and used the very same column in both cars. This moved the wiper/washer off the dash, and removed the under-the-dash ignition. Also, the horn was now on the turn indicator, and the steering wheel center was a filler plug. Despite some cost reductions the seats now had optional houndstooth cloth centers, giving more driver and passenger comfort.



TR7 style steering column



"NEW" Houndstooth cloth interior available starting in 1977.

On the outside, little was changed. The wheels returned to the oval slotted rims like those of 75 and before, but with silver, center caps. The trim under the door handles were changed to satin black,



instead of the previous polished aluminum. Bumpers again remained the same as in 75 & 76, but a new bonnet safety system had been designed. The tilt forward design that everyone loved, was thought to be unsafe in a frontal impact without some modification. A "Hook & Loop" system was installed, along with some changes to the bonnet support frame. The idea was, if a front impact occurred, the hook on the bonnet would catch the loop or eye, and prevent the bonnet from moving up and through the windshield toward the occupants of the vehicle. This feature is not very noticeable, but close inspection of the firewall on 77 and up will show the hook catches bolted to the firewall, and if your Spit still has its original bonnet, the loops should hang down slightly on each side.



Hook & Loop bonnet safety system installed on 1977 models & above.

Minor changes occurred from 1977 to 1980 for US cars, the most noticeable was the bumper. The 79 model year started with number FM90001 with chrome bumpers, just like the previous year, but when number FM95001 hit the line, black rubber bumpers were installed. This happened just passed half way into the 1979 model, causing some to refer to it as the 79½ model. The reason was to comply with US energy absorbing legislation. To some it was hideous, to others, it was love at first sight. Everyone has an opinion about this transition, as you would expect.

So from mid-1979 through the last US car off the line, black rubber bumpers were the standard, like them or not. Many restorers have refitted chrome bumpers to their 79-80-81 cars as they return them to pristine condition, but others choose to recondition their rubber bumpers and keep the original look. British & export cars not bound for North America kept the chrome to the end. Canada got the same thing as the US, rubber. You decide for yourself.

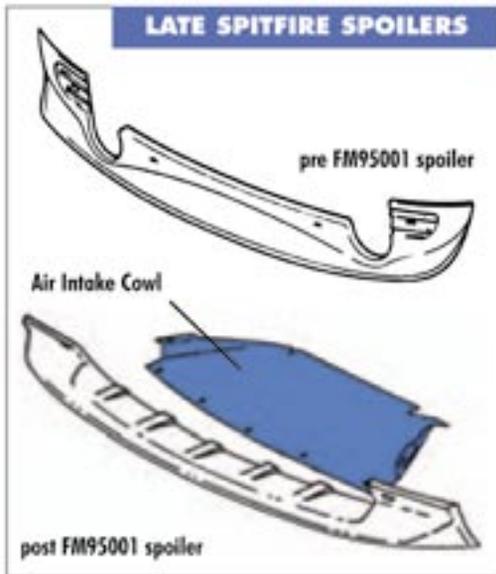
One other notable change that happened for the mid-1979 model was to the front spoiler. The spoiler was redesigned, and an optional pan added to give better air flow to the slanted radiator. (See issue # 15, pages 38-39).

The ad campaigns of the late seventies emphasized fuel economy, quoting 41 mpg highway, and 24 mpg city ratings. And even with the push for fuel economy, they could not resist mentioning the long racing history the Spitfire had accumulated. The 78 Spitfire was again advertised as the "Strong Survivor" in the legislative battles for US convertibles. B.L. was one of a few that continued to manufacture convertibles in spite of the possible ban to the entire US market. (That ban never came to pass). 1978 witnessed peak sales of Spitfires with 10,231 units being sold. A record never to be broken. (Sales figures listed at the end of this article).

1980 saw the ad campaigns with rebates. Rebates were offered on TR7s, MGBs, and Spitfires. At first, the rebate on a Spitfire was only \$500, but as the end of the year approached, B.L. upped the ante to \$1000, giving you the "clean, classic look of a serious competitor" for only \$6365 (after rebate). This rebate was offered on remaining 1980 & 1981 models.

Late in 1979 Triumph converted their vehicle numbering system to the International Vehicle Identification Numbering (VIN) System. The last Spitfire made was TFADW5AT 009898. The various portions of this VIN defines the vehicle according to the following: First character: Defines the Marque. T= Triumph. Second: Defines the model, F= Spitfire. Third: Defines the market configuration, A = Base Model (Home or European), L= Canadian Market, V= US Federal (49 States), Z= California Market. Fourth: Defines the body style, D= Open, 2-seat roadster. Fifth: Defines engine type/size, W= Triumph 1500 engine. Sixth: Defines Steering/Transmission, 1= RHD/No Overdrive, 2= LHD/No Overdrive, 5= RHD/With Overdrive, 6= LHD/With Overdrive. Seventh: Defines the model year, 9= 1979, A= 1980, B= 1981. Eighth: Defines Manufacturing Plant, T= Triumph plant, Canley, Coventry.

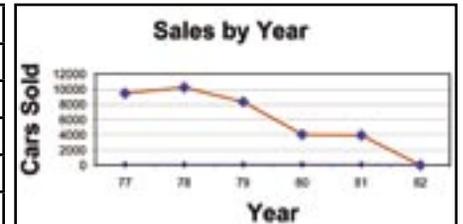
While the sales of the MkIV & 1500 had held steady through 1979, other problems were going on at British Leyland. In 1975 B.L. had asked the British government for financial assistance, as they were struggling to stay afloat. Changes to keep in pace with US legislation had been cutting into the bottom line, as well as a less than favorable £/\$ exchange rate. This along with increasing oil prices was causing hardship for B.L.. Instead of focusing on improvements to their long winning Spitfire, the management continued to



sink time and money into the TR7 & TR8. Leaving the Spitfire to suffer, and only receive minor changes as legislation dictated. The California emissions legislation for 1980 killed the Spitfire. It could not comply with these new, tighter regulations, so B.L. withdrew from the California market (where half the cars were sold). That left low sales and lower profit for 1980, thus causing B.L. to close its doors earlier than expected.

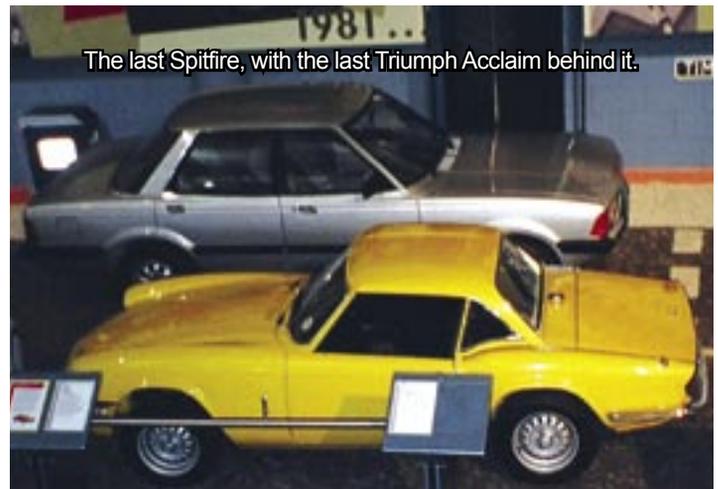
North American Sales figures for the last 5 years.

Year	# Sold
77	9,463
78	10,231
79	8,344
80	4,037
*81	3,924



*While the VIN stated these models were 81's, they were 'left-over' cars built before Aug 1980.

In August of 1980, VIN- TFADW5AT 009898 was the last Spitfire to roll off the assembly line, and ended up in the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon, Warwickshire, UK, where she continues to rest, for all to see.



Nick & Nance Moseley from British Columbia, Canada visited the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon in the late Fall of 2004. The tour guide asked if Nick would like to get in it. He gently opened the door and sat down. There were miles on the odometer, so someone had the pleasure of driving this car. ☺



"THE BEST BASIC SPORTS CAR YOU CAN BUY TODAY." - ROAD & TRACK

SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA CHAMPION 8 YEARS IN A ROW.

41 MPG. HIGHWAY 24 MPG. CITY WITH OPTIONAL OVERDRIVE

\$4500. "COULD BE THE BEST MONEY EVER SPENT ON A CONVERTIBLE." - CAR AND DRIVER



TRIUMPH SPITFIRE
FROM THE LAND OF BRITISH RACING GREEN

The Classically British TRIUMPH SPITFIRE

ROADSTER



The Strong Survivor

Triumph Spitfire. A strong survivor of the all but vanished breed, the roadster Triumph built its first roadster in 1923 to have the success, steady coach of England with its spin handling and best performance.

Top down and enjoy along country lanes, the roadster perfectly expressed the freedom and pleasure of driving.

Today, Spitfire looks similar to the original roadster concept. It offers the maximum amount of driving pleasure for a maximum of two people.

There's generous interior room, reclining bucket seats, and, as a moment of Spitfire's heritage, a dashboard crafted from natural wood.

Spitfire smoothly handles roads and straightens curves with fully independent suspension. Controls center with rack-and-pinion steering. And stops with cast-iron front disc brakes.

A rugged 1700cc engine and all-weather 4-speed 1 with an electric sport drive.

performance that help make Spitfire a Sports Car Club of America champion for the tenth year.

Read it. Jack has called Spitfire the best basic sports car you can buy.

The Triumph Spitfire Roadster. A classic example of the survival of the fittest.

For the name of your nearest Triumph dealer call: 800-447-4700.

4. Illinois: 800-722-4400.
British Leyland Motor Inc.,
Lansing, New Jersey 07005.

Reprinted from New Yorker Magazine - October 1977 - 1978 Spitfire 1500

Reprinted from Car & Driver Magazine - March, 1978 - 1978 Spitfire 1500

RACER

Spitfire's looks and specifications are enough to stir just about everybody who enjoys driving. Consider its hard-wearing, maintenance-free Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) homologation. There are other imported sports cars.

Spitfire is the SCCA's most frequent champion. When he wheeled his Spitfire into victory circles, it was his first title—and Spitfire's fourth!

Perhaps you ought to try racing your Spitfire—the sports car that looks and acts the part. Italian styling gives it a quality of flow. And its entry response comes from rack and pinion steering, front disc brakes, fully independent suspension and the pulling of a 1200cc 4-cylinder engine.

And the moment the top goes down, driving takes on an entirely new dimension. In this era of busy, teak and yachting sports cars, there's really only one word for Spitfire.

RACY



SPITFIRE
JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT.

Reprinted from Motor Trend Magazine - April 1980 - 1980 Spitfire 1500

THE ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME ALL-CONVERTIBLE REBATE. HURRY! OFFER ENDS SEPTEMBER 30, 1980.

TR7 \$1000 REBATE

TR7: Make your best deal and get the best rebate we've ever given on top of that. Here's the exciting, wedge-shaped sports machine with the sleek, refined and clean convertible styling that has made the Triumph marque famous. Now at unprecedented, maybe never-again savings.



MGB \$750 REBATE

MGB: The one of the best-loved convertible sports cars in the world. Come in and drive an MGB. Make your best deal. Then we'll give you a hefty \$750 cash rebate besides. It's the best deal ever on the wide-open sports car, MGB.



SPITFIRE \$500 REBATE

SPITFIRE: Come in and deal. When you've made your best deal, we'll sweeten it with \$500 cash. It's a great opportunity to own this spirited roadster. Spitfire is synonymous with sports-car excitement—with 17 National SCCA Championships to prove it.



Reprinted from Sports Illustrated Magazine - September, 1980 - 1980 Spitfire 1500

Reprinted from Sports Illustrated Magazine - March 1981 - 1981 Triumph Spitfire 1500

**ANNOUNCING:
THE GREAT
TRIUMPH
SPITFIRE
REBATE**

\$7365*

LESS REBATE 1000

\$6365

Here is your chance to own one of the most famous convertible sports cars ever built. The Triumph Spitfire, winner of 15 national class championships in SCCA competition.

The 1980 Spitfire has the clean, classic look of a serious competitor. It has the quick reflexes that can only come from a short throw, four speed stick shift, positive

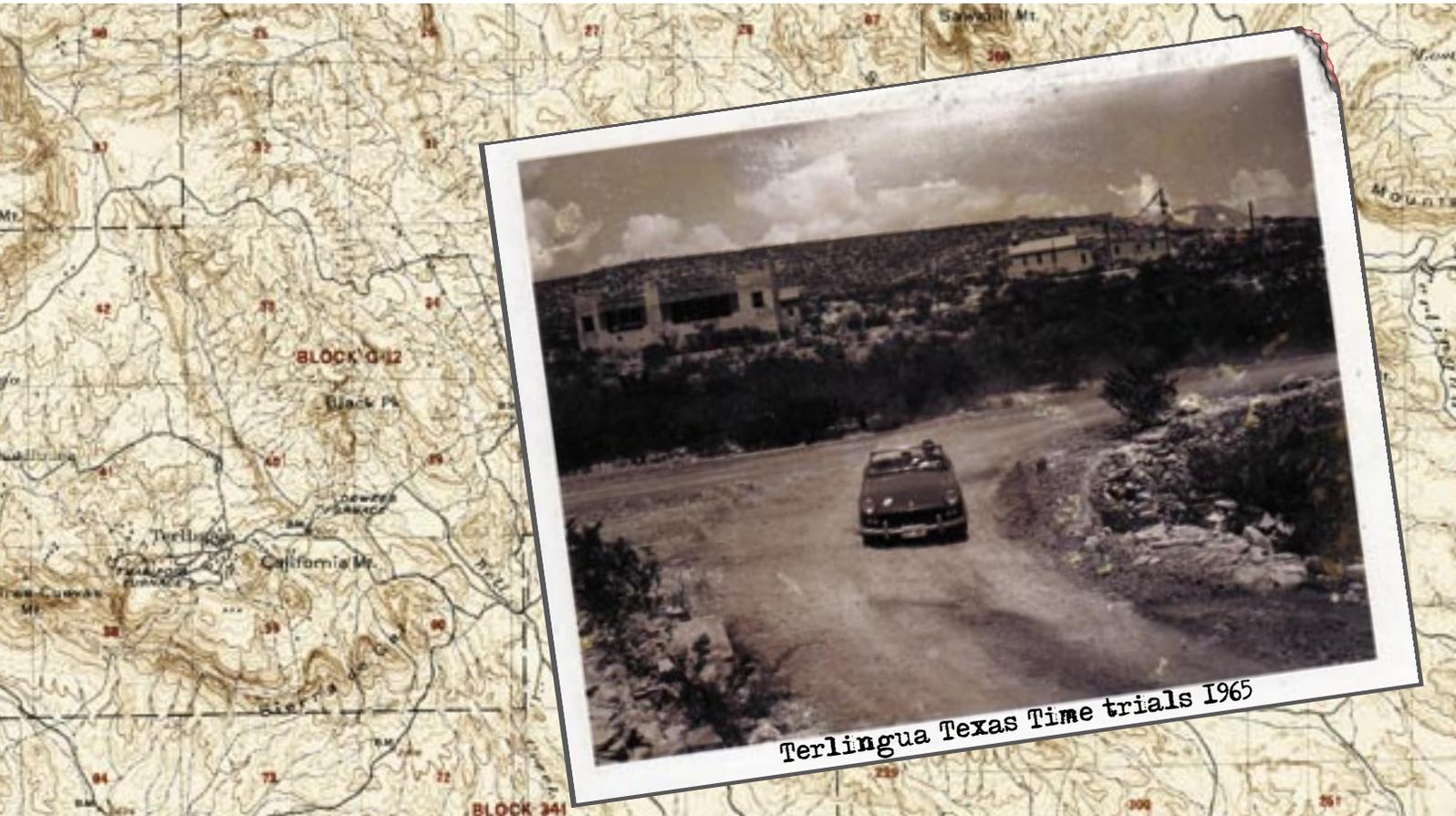
rack and pinion steering, a race proven four cylinder engine and decisive front disc brakes. But the sum of all the Spitfire's track bred engineering is something you must experience for yourself — the pure pleasure of driving this exceptionally lively piece of sports car history.

But hurry. This offer is for a limited time only. And with a car like Spitfire, and a

factory rebate like this, they won't last long! For the name of the dealer nearest you, call these numbers toll-free: (800) 447-4700 or, in Illinois, (800) 322-4400.

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price P.O.E. for 1980 models. Does not include inland transportation, local taxes and preparation charges.

Jaguar Rover Triumph Inc.
Leonia, N.J. 07605.



Second Generation by Barry Connally, Oceanside, California

I'm the second owner of my dad's 1964 Spitfire4. I'm retired navy (33 years) and currently live in Oceanside, California. My dad, H.C. Connally, has lived in central and northeastern Texas his entire life currently residing in Wills Point, Texas. He initially began to restore the car around 2002 and I'd tinker on it during my visits. Not making a lot of progress over that time he gave it to me in 2005 to bring back to California.

My dad, H.C., was the Texas Region SCCA Class A (Spitfire) Champion in 1964 as well as the next two years in different classes driving lesser automobiles, MG and Saab. In 1965 his Spitfire won overall First Place in Carroll Shelby's annual Terlingua Texas Time Trials. He continued a successful amateur SCCA and Carrera Panamericana racing career into the 80's.

Interesting story during the trip back; towing the car using a U-Haul car transport I pulled into a rest area in Arizona. As happened several times during the trip the car attracted some attention. One fellow commented that it looked like I had a lot of work in store for me in restoring my "MG". Glancing in the direction of the T-R-I-U-M-P-H lettering on the boot lid and turned back to him and said that I'm pretty sure it's not an MG....

Getting the car back to California I began working on the car with the intent of making it presentable and perhaps getting into a little local vintage racing. As one thing led to another, once the car was literally in pieces with no two attached outside of the drive train, I determined that as I was already half the way through a nut and bolt restoration, I might as well go for the whole enchilada.



My dad (H.C.) at his garage, when he gave me the car.



Before restoration

READERS STORY



Before restoration



Original engine bay



Pulling the engine



Stripping the chassis



Stripping the chassis



The repainted chassis



Rebuilding the suspension



Rebuilding the suspension



Body sprayed and back on



Rebuild complete



Rebuild complete



Rebuilt and clean engine bay



Palos Verdes Concours

As restored, the Spitfire in 2011 won 1st Place in Class (British Sports) at the Delmar San Diego Concours d'Elegance, 2nd Place in Class (European Sports under 3 liters) at the prestigious Palos Verdes Concours d'Elegance and 1st Place in class (Spitfire and GT-6) at San Diego's British Car Days. Despite this success, the car is certainly not a trailer queen getting driven regularly to car events as well as throughout the coastal, mountain and desert areas throughout Southern California.

I want to note that the Engine and Transmission were rebuilt by Randy Zoller and his team at Heritage Motorsports in El Cajon, CA and the majority of body work and paint completed by Rick Hanson's team at Jack Williams Auto Body and Paint also located in El Cajon.

Lastly, I want to mention my loving and understanding wife Jhongrok, without her patience and eye for detail the car would not have been completed to its current level nor be achieved the level of success in the events it has been shown. 🍷



On the Green at Trump Golf Course

READERS STORY

My '65 Mark 2

by Jon Keil, Charlotte, North Carolina

My first Triumph was a Jasmine yellow 1968 Spitfire Mark 3. I purchased the car when I was sixteen. I still have the car and am in the process of restoring it. As many of you remember, parts were hard to come by before the internet, ebay, and dedicated parts suppliers like Spitbits, especially if you lived in the middle of nowhere like central Kansas.

To keep my baby going, I purchased a completely worn out 1965 Mark 2 while I was in college. For more years than I'd like to admit, I dragged around both cars and did little work on them. In time, I decided to practice my restoration skills on the '65 and then move on to the '68. I made the car as original as possible with the notable exceptions of chrome wire wheels instead of the painted wheels it came with and a steering wheel from a Mark 3.

Basically, all the mechanical components have been replaced, rebuilt, and restored. The car was repainted in the original black color with new red interior. When the car cleaned properly, it shows really well. But most importantly, it is a fun car to drive with quick acceleration and very responsive steering--what we all love about Spitfires! 🍷



"Red Peril" Spitfire Mk3

by Colleen Fraser, Durban, South Africa

In 1962, when I was staying at the Germiston Hospital doing my nursing training, I saw this beautiful Red MG TC sports car and I said to my best friend that I would love to go for a ride in it. It transpired that it was owned by her boyfriend's friend who had taken out most of the girls at the nurse's college, so a date was arranged which included a tango lesson and the rest is history!

David sold the MG when he was transferred to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia in June 1963. David & I got married on the 8th August 1964. I have always said that someday I wanted a red sports car and when my son phoned me and asked whether I still wanted one, from friends of his that were going to live in the UK and wanted R15,000 for it, I naturally said YES! When David asked me what the make was, etc., I had to find out first. David said that if it came with a roadworthy certificate I could buy it – this was conveyed to my son who phoned me a day later and said that the Spitfire had gone through a test and now had a roadworthy certificate!

On the 5th December 1997 my son drove the "Red Peril" down from Johannesburg to Durban. David took the car for a test run around the block and said that it had no brakes and I would drive it at my Peril – hence the nick-name Red Peril! It was not long after that that David Blair passed our house when I was washing the "Peril" on our pavement – he got an application for membership form out of the boot of his car and I have been a member of Triumph Sports Car Club South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal Branch ever since.

The Peril has been to all the Nationals since 1998 without any trouble except for a puncture and an exhaust bracket that needed welding at Harrismith. Apart from sucking a self-threading screw into the engine on the way back from "Cars in the Park" event a couple of years ago, necessitating an engine upgrade to a 1500cc ex-MG Midget, it has otherwise been very reliable. Philip de Kock replaced the 4-speed gearbox with a 5-speed Nissan gearbox. Weather permitting I use it at least twice a week. ☺



READERS STORY

Low Mileage MkIV

by Andy Stark, O'Fallon, Missouri

This is a 1972 Mk IV 1300cc. It is owned by John Hart of St. Louis. I have been the mechanic on this car since 1996. It the most original Spitfire I have ever worked on.

When John purchased the car from the daughter of the original owner, it only had 7,000 miles on it. It was a little crusty from sitting but it cleaned up to look like a brand new car. Since then John has taken extremely good care of the car. He has been great caretaker of very special little car.



Some interesting things to note about the car:



12,558 actual miles



The car never had a radio



Body is not drilled/punched for antenna



Car does not have attach-points for interior boot



No door snaps



No pins on the dash pad



Spotless interior



Clean, straight bonnet



Clean engine bay 🇪

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly *My Aventures with a Triumph Spitfire*

by Rick Ladd, Brooklyn, New York

I remember it like it was yesterday, sitting in a brand new powder blue, Spitfire 1500 at a British Leyland dealership. I was 16 years old and thought that this car was the coolest thing I had ever seen. I just loved the design of this small convertible. What's not to like? The car is charming in every way. Plus, I can't think of many cars designed in such a way that you could actually open the hood and practically climb in the engine compartment and sit on the front wheel while you work on the car. So sporty, it reeks of adventure. Everything about it said FUN! Once I received my drivers licence a friend and I would often go to car dealerships acting like a serious customers in an attempt to test drive exotic cars. It never worked, dealers would often laugh at our request. Our acting must of been really poor and the fact that we looked like kids didn't help a bit. We thought our plan was original but I'm sure they had seen it all before. I brought the Triumph brochure home, the one with Alan Alda promoting Triumphs, and pinned it up on a wall next to the iconic Farrah Fawcett poster, the one with her in a swimsuit, big hair and big teeth! So funny and rather silly thinking about it now! The car was something to dream about, and I often did. The dreams were much like the old commercials of a Spitfire driving up twisted back roads. Just me and the car, no Alan Alda, but that would have been awesome too. But no doubt he would have hooked up with Farrah and left me in the dust!

In 1974 muscle cars were the rage and they were everywhere. In contrast I rarely saw any British Sports cars back then. The only one I ever noticed was an Inca yellow Spitfire 1500 owned by a high school class senior. He would often park it in the school parking lot. I learned to drive on my moms 1969 Thunderbird, nicknamed "The Sherman Tank" which was very fitting compared to the Spitfire or most anything else on the road at that time. That yellow Spitfire haunted me. I would notice it often, sometimes in neighboring towns with the top down with his cute blond girlfriend with him. It was just like the Triumph TV commercial of that time. He had the car and the girl.

Buying a Spitfire was not realistic for me at that time and had to be the most unpractical car one could imagine. What I really needed was an all weather, tough car to deal with Chicago winters. I needed reliable transportation, but what I really wanted was a Spitfire as toy. Years passed by and I never really forgot about the Spitfire. I would be reminded of it every time I noticed any older British Sports Car on the road, always followed with a familiar twinge of envy. Since high school, I've always lived in major cities. Chicago, San Francisco and now Brooklyn. Had I lived in the suburbs I would have bought the car long ago. It's funny how the power of first impressions, desire and nostalgia can stay with you your whole life.

Flash forward 35 years. I'm sitting in front of my computer, looking at an Ebay auction for a Spitfire in New Jersey, (less than an hour away), the auction is about to close in 10 minutes. It's nearly midnight and my wife is asking me "what I'm doing up so late?" So I tell her, that I've been watching this auction for about a week and I'm tempted to bid. She glances at the car and says with out hesitation, "I can get behind that!" With a simple keystroke and in a few seconds, I won the car!



Rick with his '74 1500

The Good

So why this car? Well the car had some special qualities that I was looking for. I wanted a strong Spitfire 1500 driver. This one had a recent engine rebuild with overdrive. In addition, it had some nice upgrades, twin SU carburetors, a hotter camshaft, headers, light flywheel and an electronic ignition, a large radiator, electric fans and an oil cooler. It had an older paint job, British racing green. My favorite color with a nice patina. I like that the paint shows it's age. I wanted to enjoy the car as a driver and not be concern about small nicks and scratches. It's a fast car for being only 4 cylinders and the previous owner had welded in a front shock tower and installed a roll bar for extra safety. I met the owner at his house, we talked about the work he did. It turned out that he raced it quite a bit and he was ready to give the car up. He had many toys in his garage. A new Lotus was parked in the corner, three motorcycles parked in a row next to a full size helicopter. No joke, he had a helicopter in his garage with the propeller off. So he moved on to other interests and the Spitfire was old news. Anyway, the car ran okay. I knew I would have some sorting out but as a whole the car was a good buy. Driving the Spitfire was just as thrilling as I imagined. It took some time to get used to all the attention I was getting on the road. I always would hear other drivers honking at me and it took awhile to realize that they were just saying hello not, LOOK OUT! I joined NASS and the NJ Triumph Assoc. Met some local members who were very helpful in getting me to understand my car better. It made owning a Spitfire more fun. Within a couple months I started upgrading aspects of my car. The first thing to go was the large arrowhead overriders. I replaced them with the smaller ones. I found a hard top on Craigs List. It was in great shape, stored in a dry basement for decades, never used. The owners son had a Spitfire and it was stolen while he was in college and the hard top was left behind. The top was red, so unless I wanted to promote a Christmas theme I thought it best to paint it. It looks nice in black. I love vintage styling so I refinished my wood dash and added a beautiful Moto-Lita steering wheel. Last year I added painted wire wheels and made my own wood door trim and matching wood window crank knobs. I was inspired by the trim on a MGA coupe that I admired. I think it really dresses up the interior. I'm surprised wood shops that make replacement dashboards, don't make them too. Perhaps they will now?

READERS STORY



The Bad

Well it didn't take long for my new purchase to start having problems. It once stalled on the Brooklyn Queens Expressway and wouldn't start. Lucky for me I was in typical crawling traffic. I pushed the emergency flasher to find that my thumb went right through the dash! I quickly pushed the car a stretch and noticed a nice incline on the road. I took advantage of that, coasted a bit and popped the clutch and to my surprise it started right up. Shortly there after I got a new battery and tune up. Later that month the muffler rusted out while on a trip to Jersey but a local muffler shop patched it up for me until I could replace it. A few months later I drove the car to our big NASS event in Carlisle PA. I got there alright but had trouble the following day. Out of the blue it would stall, the timing seemed off and I had lost power at low speeds. It was a bit of a puzzle. Some of the club members thought it could be a timing chain problem. It turned out to be the alternator failing. I was able to get all the way back to Staten Island with the help of a couple jumps. It finally died a half hour from home and we called a flatbed tow truck to take us the rest of the way. I often hear stories in Spitfire magazine about car failure at club events. I really didn't think I would be that guy! The next week I installed the replacement alternator and added a volt and oil pressure gage. (I gather Triumph was trying to save costs by omitting such useful things.)

Well I was off and running the back hills of upstate New York. Feeling more confident that everything was running good yet couldn't figure why my sneakers were feeling wet. Yep, you guessed right, the clutch master cylinder failed and was leaking on the floor.



Johanna, hoping bad weather will blow over...

I was able to keep topping it off with fluid to get back home.

Not all my car incidents were due to mechanical failure. Once we wanted to go to a local British car show. It was an overcast day and I hadn't finished installing a replacement rag top. My wife Johanna being the supreme optimist said let's go anyway "it will blow over". So we did and we got caught on the George Washington Bridge in a gusher of a storm. I ended up make shifting my top with spring clamps trying to stay dry. We were a mess, the top leaked, I'm trying to drive and she's there with an empty cup trying to catch water. Now when ever we have any headaches in our lives it's always " don't worry, It will blow over". A couple months later my leaf spring and shocks failed to the point that the car looked like it was always driving up hill. Replacing the leaf spring was a fun project and I have to admit, other than being stranded a few times, I find making the repairs enjoyable and interesting.



The Ugly

Last summer was the longest drive yet. We drove the car to tip of Cape Cod. That was a thrill. The car truly was the little engine that could. However, coming back was a different story. We were on the highway in Providence Road Island when the engine made the most wicked mechanical sound and stalled. We coasted to the shoulder, got it towed to a shop to find out that my crankshaft cracked, throwing bits of metal through the engine. My engine was trashed. Fortunately our British cars are very popular. I easily found a restoration shop eager to do an engine rebuild for me. Erik Nygaard of Her Majesty's Car Service, Pawtucket RI did a fantastic job bringing my car back to life again. Now it drives better than it ever did . I guess it should since I've run out of parts to replace. Spring is right around the corner and and I'm excited to be back on the road again. 🏁



'Finding the Gift'

by Donna Mertz, Saint Louis, Missouri

I set out to find a gift for the *Man Who Has Everything*, needs nothing, has everything he wants, and will just go buy it himself if he doesn't already have it.

I located Greg Williams, an artist/welder, who loves to take all kinds of metal scraps and be creative to make something artistic from remnants such as old car parts. He will take your scrap car parts and turn them into a creative piece of art for your home, yard or office. Greg has the touch to turn junk into a piece of art. (Hence making it a more sentimental piece and also helps to clean out some of your old parts from the parts pile in the garage, barn or the basement, that we all accumulate, whether they are useable or not.)



Greg is a transformer. He took some miscellaneous parts and added them to a bench that he created for me for John for this past Christmas; it has a home on our front porch already. The parts that he incorporated into the bench came from John's Spitfire junk pile. And thanks to John's good friend, Howard Baugues, for donating a classic set of Triumph hubcaps from his collection. Greg restored and added the hubcaps to the bench giving it that "Triumph" signature. John has since made this his cigar bench for sitting out on the front porch at night to relax and enjoy a cigar.



John Lamberg enjoying his new Triumph bench

With John's birthday in January, I got hold of Greg again and he took the remaining parts from the differential John had trashed from his Spit6 and used these parts to make a bowl for our dining room table. It turned out great. I gave him a pile of parts and he took it from there. I have included a little background from Greg with his history, and email in case anyone would like to contact him to create art out of their scrap parts.

Greg started doing metal fab to get out of his factory job. He started out doing furniture (benches, chairs, tables, etc.) Then he saw the market for ornamental iron (fences, handrails, etc.) Although he was super busy for a long time it never was enough business to quit the factory job, so he just kept busy working basically two jobs, the factory and his ornamental iron business. One of the first items he made early on were angel candle holders, made out of light gauge steel, to sell at craft shows and to give to customers at Christmas time who bought fence or handrails that year. He would also give them to friends and relatives. One year he gave them to people in his small group at church, which in a roundabout kind of 'God moves in mysterious ways', is how he got his job working for Brother Mel. That got him out of the factory job that he really didn't care for. Greg has learned a lot about art from Bro. Mel, including the fact that he himself is an artist. He doesn't know if he will make his whole living from metal art, but never the less, he enjoys his work. Greg is always thinking of how he can create the metal sculpture that is one of a kind, and that people will say of it "that is totally bizarre, how in the world did you come up with that?"

Greg is located in the St Louis Missouri area, mmsw1@juno.com



A Summer of Engine Diagnostics

by Ed Kostek, Massachusetts



I had picked up a 1975 Spitfire 1500 in late 2010 which appeared to be very well maintained (you can already guess where this story is going); excellent interior and paint, functional overdrive, no rust issues, and suitable power from the stock four cylinder engine with a Weber downdraft carburetor. After registering the Spit and obtaining a current inspection sticker, the car was winterized and tucked into my garage for the upcoming snowy months. Spring finally broke after a seemingly extra long Massachusetts winter in 2011, and I was excited to get the Spit out and tuned up for the summer months. Initial start up was surprisingly smooth and I was cruising with the top down again on fair weather days. After a short ride in June, I had began noticing a small rapping noise coming from what appeared to be the engine's lower end (most notably heard with a mechanic's stethoscope at the center of the block just above the oil pan; worse when the car was at low idle (800 RPM) which seemed to smooth out around the 2K mark). As we all know, the 1500's reputation for crankshaft problems is quite notorious and I was really hoping my crank wasn't 'knackered', as the Brits say. So began a two month diagnostic process (largely due to work and time constraints – poor excuse, I know). Luckily I was able to recruit the services of my

father, with whom I aided in the restoration of his 1928 Ford Model A several years before.

Initial diagnostics started with some basics... crankshaft end play measurements, inspection for loose motor mounts or a cracked manifold, water pump bearing noises – no obvious issues noted. Compression testing yielded results in the 108-112 psi range across all cylinders. No change in the engine sounds were noted with the clutch engaged or disengaged and the car was still drivable without any noted loss of performance. Although the noise seemed to be coming from the lower end, we checked for piston slap/wrist pin issues by shorting out each cylinder with the motor running to see if the noise would disappear (which is what you would expect if one cylinder was the proverbial 'smoking gun')... No luck with this technique either. In fact, the rapping noise became much more pronounced with shorting out each cylinder one at a time. We decided to drop the oil pan, plastigauge the bearings, and examine the thrust washers. Some mild wear was evident on the 1st and 4th connecting rod bearings as well as the center main bearing. New bearings and thrust washers were fitted (yes, done with the engine in the car; and yes it was a very messy job and not the recommended way to change bearings in these cars, but it was doable). All bearings were re-plastigauged following replacement and all were within spec. The oil pump was also removed and inspected, and clearances were within acceptable ranges. The oil pan was refitted and sump refilled. Unfortunately, the same harsh rapping/rattling noise was present once we fired up the car and it was definitely worsening.

I figured I would go to the infinite wisdom of the internet and do some research to try to come up with a working diagnosis for this issue. I posted a video clip on Youtube which is still available for viewing for those of you interested and can be found at this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=P63K18-m5gI. I have heard a loose timing chain tensioner can create a 'marbles in a can' type of rapping noise, so we decided to remove the timing chain cover, check the chain play, and examine the tensioner – all of which were within normal limits. After resigning myself to the fact that my driving season was over, we decided to pull the head, examine the valves, take cylinder measurements, and remove the camshaft for examination (although camshaft issues are apparently rare with these cars) – as



you probably guessed, all were within spec. More than moderately frustrated, we decided to pull the block although I will admit I had fantasized about rolling the car off a steep cliff by this point.

Bonnet removal went smoothly and we were able to borrow an engine hoist from a local friend. Once the engine was removed we dismantled the clutch housing and found several pieces of metal at the bottom of the housing. Upon closer examination, the pieces of metal were parts of broken lock washers which had snapped between the flywheel bolts and the flywheel (although I am unsure about the specifics of this, I believe Spitfires all had lock washers between the flywheel bolts and the flywheel until 1976-77?). Also noted was excessive wear on the heads of the flywheel bolts as well as wearing of the center springs on the clutch disc where the flywheel bolts were contacting them (as seen in the adjacent photos). It was a big relief to finally find something not right with the car, and a loose flywheel diagnosis would make sense concerning the car's initial symptoms. And the flywheel was definitely loose... I could grab the edge of it and rock it side to side probably about $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{16}$ inch. My wife's cousin had mentioned that this might be a possibility about a month prior and told me a trick to test for it without having to take the engine out of the car. His diagnostic test for a cracked or loose flywheel was to put the car in first gear, hold the brake, and lightly come off the clutch to load the motor which in turn should bind the flywheel and obliterate noises coming from a loose/cracked flywheel (I had tried this suggestion, but unfortunately there was no improvement in the car's



symptoms at that time).

Since the engine was out of the car, we decided to bring the block to be honed and crankshaft to be polished. We completed a general overhaul in my dad's basement which included valves, new rings, new gaskets, new CR and main bearings, new timing chain and tensioner, new Pacesetter header, new clutch and release bearing, and of course a new paint job (red is obviously not the stock color, but it should make this thing faster, shouldn't it?). New flywheel bolts were fitted with Loctite™ 242. Engine refitting and initial start up went fairly smooth (with no loud rapping noises!), although a temperamental starter and a faulty clutch slave cylinder had to be replaced. Just enough time to take the car out for one or two final rides before again getting my yearly inspection sticker and tucking it away for the winter months. Hopefully 2012 will be on the up and up! 🍀



Race Report: 1962 Triumph Spitfire at SCCA Solo Nationals 2011

by Robert MacKenzie, Texas; Photo credits to Rupert Berrington Action Photography and Rich Jankowski

It started to rain as Mike Jankowski and I were filling up with gas somewhere in northern Kansas at about 2:00 AM. We were both amazed as it was the first rain either of had seen in months. However about an hour later we had seen enough.

Mike and I were on our way to Lincoln Nebraska to compete in the 2011 SCCA Solo Nationals what is in essence; the world autocross championships. On an open trailer behind my SUV was FC921, my 1962 Triumph Spitfire that has been prepared for autocross racing.

As we drove further north into Nebraska the light showers turned to heavy rain with serious lightning all around us. This storm chased us east down I80 into Lincoln. We found out hotel 4:30 AM, abandoned the car to the elements and got some much needed sleep after a 15 hour drive.

Solo Nationals is huge. Over 1100 drivers, 800+ cars, 4 days, 2 courses. This was my second stab at this event, having gone in 2008. I really had only three goals; not finish last, get home in one piece and enjoy myself. I am happy to say I accomplished all three.

Our race days were Thursday and Friday with other classes running Tuesday and Wednesday. The format is simple. Get your car passed the tech inspectors, make minimum weight, have the correct helmet, walk the course, be in the right grid spot on the right course on the right day (twice) and you have three tries to set your fastest time. Fastest combined time from each course on each day in your

class wins you a National Championship. Sounds easy, right?

Both Mike and I had high hopes as we unpacked on Tuesday afternoon. Un-poured would be more accurate as everything we had was soaked from the trip up. I did not hear it myself but one of the announcers said that he awoke to find “forlorn Triumph Spitfire” on a trailer parked in the grass in front of the hotel that was “full like a bathtub”. That was us.

There were two other Triumphs entered. Walt Hollowell from Albuquerque, NM brought his 1970 TR6 to run in the F Prepared class. In our class, GP there was another Spitfire, driven by Rocky Entriken. Rocky is one of the few remaining competitors who has been at each Solo National since the very first one in 1976. What makes this string even more stunning is that in every event, except the first year, Rocky has entered the same car, his 1964 Triumph Spitfire.

After winning the SCCA SW Division in our class Mike was a bit more upbeat than I and looking forward to his first time at Nationals. Realistic is the term I had for my hopes, having been here before and knowing the level of the other competitors. We had been working hard on the car all summer and thanks to some corporate sponsorship I had arranged with one of my clients, West Star Aviation, we also had a new set of Hoosier A6 slicks on the car.

FC921 sailed through tech with only one minor flaw. We were ready.

Thursday was hot with the ambient temperature hovering around 100. This in itself was not an issue for us as we had been racing in





Mike Jankowski at the wheel



Rob MacKenzie in the corner

Texas all summer with one event at 108 but it was an issue for the new sticky tires. Other classes had been running all day and the course covered with “marbles” from earlier runs. If you got offline by a foot you quickly picked up a coating of rubber particles on your tyres that severely affected your grip.

We ran the West course first. The course was very challenging but suited the Spit. There was a tight left off the start, leading into a long slalom another left and a offset slalom. The course had a nice set of sweepers in the middle section, another offset slalom and a tight right talking you to the finish lights.

Mike and I both got clean runs in and were sitting 17th and 18th out of 21 entries after day one. With Mike about a second faster than I. The car was handling great with the new tires but it was obvious that something was amiss in the engine. We were down on power and it got worse as the afternoon progressed.

After looking at the engine I decide that we had broken a ring in the #3 cylinder. Our plan for day two was to drive it like we stole it and hope for the best. Off to the biergarten to soak our sadness away.

Day two took us onto the East course, designed by Austinite and multiple national champion, Andy Hollis. Andy’s course was truly diabolical. That is not to say I did not enjoy driving it but it was hard. Some others though it was “too hard” and I could see their point if I was trying to guide a Corvette through the narrow back gates.

Both Mike and I had issues on our first runs and they were not scored. My second run was clean but nowhere near as fast as I wanted it to have been. The engine was about to pack it in. Mike got a clean run in as well as we were both on the board and not last! I almost stalled at the start and as I tried to accelerate towards the start light it was clear I only had 3 cylinders. Instead of getting upset I laughed as I attacked the course. There was no way I could out drive the Hoo-siers. There was no corner, gate or slaloms this car could not take flat

out. I can recall giggling like a madman inside my helmet as I came through the last series of gates and went through the finish lights. It was my slowest run of the day but I am pleased to say it was still faster than some other driver’s fastest runs that heat. I returned to the grid and shutoff the car satisfied that I had done all that I could.

Shutting down the car was a mistake as the engine was seized when Mike got in to take his last run. A quick bump start and we managed to get it over to the final post-race tech inspection for the weight check before we had to push the car back to the grid for impound. I was very disappointed that Mike did not get a chance to take a 3rd run.

Once it had cooled down it fired right up and drove itself onto the trailer for the trip home.

A trip to Solo Nationals is truly an amazing, inspirational experience. In addition to the 100s of really cool modified race cars I saw, I met some great people and made new friends. One that comes to mind was the driver who was racing a fully prepared Lotus Esprit. He was there by himself doing everything without any help and support and he only had one arm. I was astounded. All week we kept hearing about one driver having a problem with his car and another competitor offering him/her a chance to drive in another car or parts/tools/help...whatever was needed. One driver’s car had a spectacular engine failure on the first day. The driver was offered a drive in another car and when it also broke down he made his last run in a 3rd car, setting a faster time than the owner in a car he had never driven before.

We weren’t last. We managed to make it back in one piece, however I can tell you there is no place to buy 14 inch trailer tyres in northern Oklahoma on the Saturday night of a labor Day weekend, but that’s another story... Oh, and we had fun.

Special thanks goes out to Mike and Richard Jankowski for the support at the event and on the trip home and to West Star Aviation for the tyres. Next year won’t come soon enough. 🍷





Project "Ilene" Part 3

by Jim Watson, Maryville, Tennessee



Hopefully everyone has been following our club project - Project "Ilene" – the 1966 Triumph Spitfire we are rebuilding and will raffle off with the proceeds going to the Blount County Children's Home. www.blountchildrenshome.org

Part III of the Ilene Story will be short; she is back from Mike's Fix-it Auto Body with her Old English White paint job. Again, I want to thank Mike for doing the final body work and painting her. I also want to thank the guys at Premier Automotive Color in Alcoa, Tennessee (865-970-9273) for helping us with the Old English White paint, primer and other miscellaneous supplies Mike needed to do the paint job. Ilene has never looked so good.

Now it is crunch time. We need to find all the parts and pieces that we have removed, cleaned, bagged and tagged waiting to be re-installed on Ilene. So instead of spending an excessive amount of time on Part III of the Project Ilene, we are looking for the parts and pieces and planning the work. Therefore stay tune for Part IV of Project "Ilene", this one will tell the story of Ilene going back together complete with pictures.

Our goal is to have Ilene substantially complete by the weekend of May 11, 2012, which is the 25th Anniversary for our British Car Gathering, Springtime in the Smokies in Townsend, Tennessee. Ilene will have her formal unveiling Friday night at the hospitality tent. Visit our web site for more information about the gathering. www.blountbritishcars.org

Stay tuned for Part IV and come and be part of our British Car Gathering, with the Spitfire as the featured mark at this year's Gathering in celebration of it's 50th Anniversary. 🇬🇧



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What were they thinking ???

AND FINALLY

We have all seen them, those conversions that make you ask: "WHAT WERE THEY THINKING ???" This page is dedicated to those slightly different conversions, the ones you either love or hate. If you have seen them at a show, or for sale on the web, send them in to us, and we will include them in WWTT???

Barn Find Unrestored British MotorCar

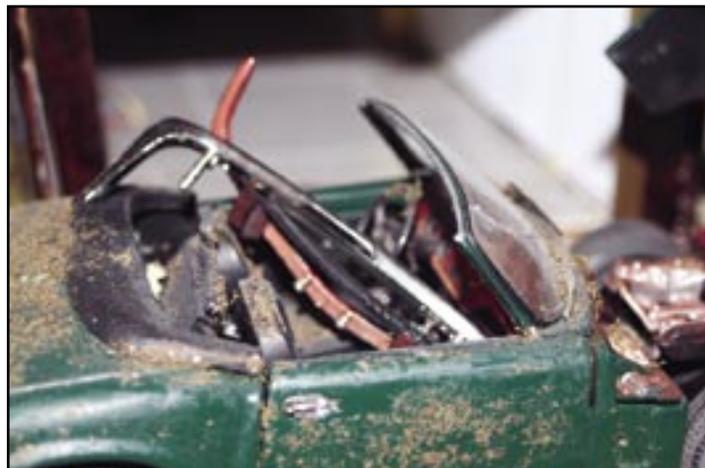


Another Craigslist find. (Chrono)

1970 Triumph Spitfire Convertible
Philadelphia, PA

Car does not come with box. Barn is not included. Windshield is cracked and Radiator is behind the seats. The two rear tires have dryrot flats. The front and rear bumpers are included as shown in photos. This is a neat unrestored car seeking a new home.

Call Kevin @ 3X2-2XX-4XX0 



Have you spotted a Spitfire, GT6, or other British conversion that you feel is worthy of some public scrutiny? If so, send your submissions to the magazine at: Spitfire & GT6 Magazine, PO Box 30806, Knoxville, TN, USA, 37930 or by email to: editor@triumphspitfire.com

**So what do you think?
Keep it or Sweep it??**



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The 50th Anniversary
Spitfire Challenge!
June 3rd, 2012-San Antonio Raceway
AUTOCROSS COMPETITION
 Presented by The Hill Country Triumph Club & Texas Spokes Sports Car Club

Rules:
 Open to all models 4 years of Triumph age limit
 All cars must be street legal
 Seated and parked
 All cars must pass the SP-6225 tech inspection on race day
 Car preparation not to exceed the specifications of the 2012 SCCA Solo Rules for class F Street Prepared (SP5P)
 All cars to race on DOT Street legal tires (NO BLACK BLOCKS)
 Spitfire rules apply for all drivers (see www.spitfire.org for driver information)
 Numbers welcome
 Ladies Welcome
 This drivers are permitted for each car per class.

General Information:
 San Antonio Raceway is in Marion, Texas
 6114 S. State (Dove Rd) Marion, TX 78121 at I 35 Exit 917
 Entry fee is \$25.00 (1 driver)
 Entry starts at 9:00 AM, plan to be there all day
 Lunch facilities will be available
 There is no food sold at the site so a picnic basket is a good idea.

This event made possible by generous sponsorship from:

- Moss Motors
- British Parts Productions
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- Simpson Performance
- Bradburn







Registration:
 Entry at www.sbcglobal.net
 • You will need to appear on-site
 • Submit Texas Spokes Sports Car Club
 • Enter in class SP5
 • Enter a car number, if it has been used (not required)
 • Red drivers will add a "1" before the starting car number

For more information contact:
 Robert Moe Hayes
 President, Hill Country Triumph Club
www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org



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Craig Murden, Wilmington, North Carolina
cemurden@ec.rr.com



FOR SALE: 1979 Spitfire 1500

Four speed with overdrive, new tires, 44k miles, good running condition. \$4,500 or BO
Ed Batt, Huntington Beach, California
714-964-1345

FOR SALE: 1966 Herald 1200

I am selling my Triumph Herald 1200cc Convertible, Colour is BRG and interior red. A great minor restoration project. If you are interested let me know and I will forward you the photos of my car.
Henry, Canada
hxavier99106@hotmail.com

CARS FOR SALE

FOR SALE: 1979 Spitfire 1500

Must inspect in person to see the excellent value of this car. Factory original parts, nothing altered or modified except rear air shocks. Many extras included including spare engine and transmission.

David Beems, Loxahatchee, Florida
561-644-1003 valentine1954@msn.com

FOR SALE: 1979 Spitfire 1500

Excellent condition, new burgundy metallic paint, black canvas top, Miata leather seats, Sony AM/FM/CD Stereo w/Extra speakers, MotoKita wood steering wheel, Minilite alloy wheels and more. Email for pics. Asking \$7,000

Michael Lawlor, Coral Springs, Florida
954 654-1464 mcy12915@aol.com

PARTS FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Spitfire Parts

I need to sell my collection of Triumph Spitfire Parts. It includes a fresh PRI Stage 3 engine and countless new parts.

Daniel Slay, Shreveport, Louisiana
dslay@slb.com

FOR SALE: Spitfire Radio Blanking Plate

High quality reproduction of the no longer available Triumph GT6 and Spitfire Mark IV and 1500 Radio Mounting Plate. Replaces British Leyland Part Number 709843, includes recess for radio faceplate. Fits late model Spitfires and GT6s. Molded from 0.090 inch thick ABS plastic with a wrinkle finish that looks just like the stock part. 50% thicker than stock steel part. May be cut to install a radio. \$29.95 with free shipping. Satisfaction guaranteed.

Tim Castellano, San Juan Bautista, California
831-207-9858 tpcastellano@razzolink.com

PARTS FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Spitfire Engines

1500 engine, needs valve seat. 1300 engine complete with SU's, header, generator, & transmission. \$450 OBO.

Charles May, Raphine, Virginia
540-292-5367 charnan2@ntelos.net

FOR SALE: Rebuilt 1500 Engine

I have a Spitfire engine complete ready to go, with rebuilt transmission.

Engine is stage two build, Kehin quad carbs, headers, and too many other upgrade parts to list here. Please contact me for more info..

Robert Talkowski, Cape Coral, Florida
ibiselectrical@gmail.com

FOR SALE: Mk1 Engine & Trans

Mk1 Spitfire engine block and transmission cheap. Also for sale or trade complete windows for GT-6, Spitfire SU carbs, MK 1 manifold, head, 2 starters, radiator top.

David Broder, Shelton, Connecticut
davidbroder@yahoo.com

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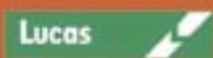
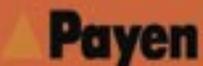
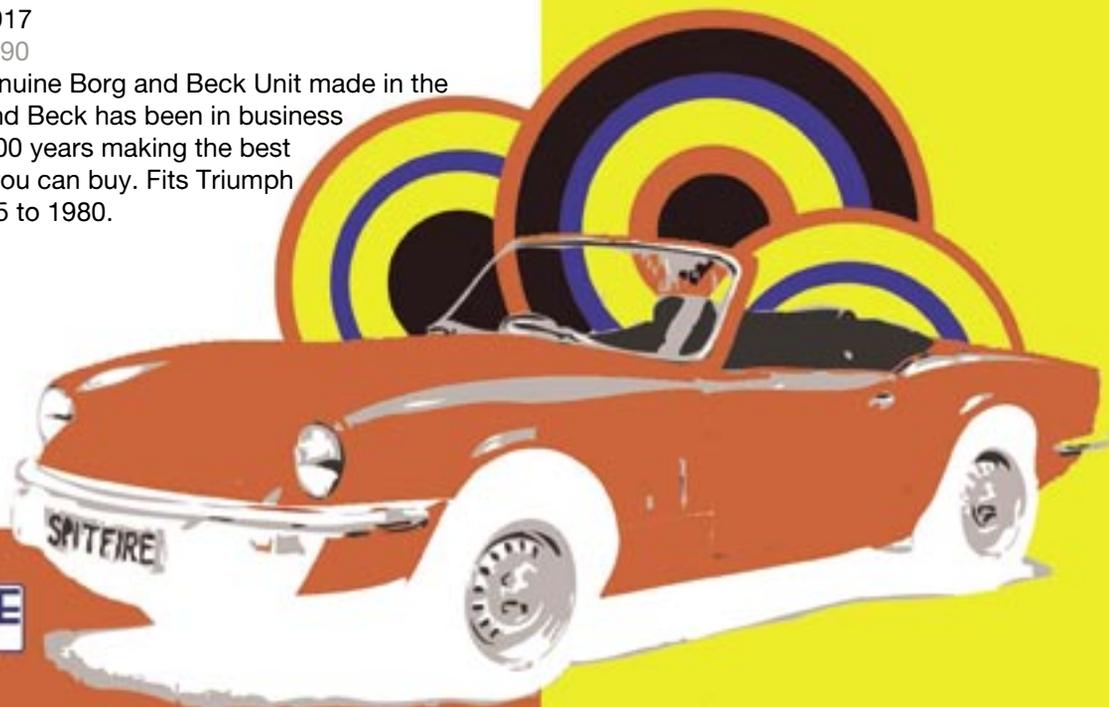
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