
CAR and DRIVER

ROAD TEST

*Triumph builds a
four-seater sports
car with a smooth
six-cylinder engine*



Interior of the Sports Six is simple and nicely finished. The controls are well placed and the few but basic instruments are easily read. Dashboard is walnut.

Triumph Sports Six

Standard-Triumph has made an outstanding car which does not belong in any normal category and may, perhaps, belong in several categories, as the requirements it fills are unusually varied. It is a light four-seater with ample luggage capacity and an exceptionally smooth and economical engine which gives it a top speed of 97 mph. The company has not broken new ground in creating the Sports Six, for small six-cylinder models were popular in England during the 1930s, but must be complimented for re-introducing it.

The new Sports Six is particularly important, as it shows that one of Britain's largest manufacturers believes in a revival of the small six-cylinder engine, not for competition cars but for a popular model. In recent times, improved engine-mounting methods and materials have contributed vastly to overcoming the inherent secondary harmonic unbalance of four-cylinder engines, but the six-cylinder unit nevertheless offers better balance and improved smoothness, detectable even by passengers, which helps reduce noise and vibration throughout the drive train.

The Sports Six engine is derived from the two-liter Vanguard six, with its bore reduced from 2.94 inches to 2.63 inches. Vanguard crankshaft and connecting rods are used without alterations. The small-bore version has an improved cooling system, as it allows water passages between all cylinders (the Vanguard engine has slanted bores). Fitting this power unit into the Triumph 1200 chassis has been neatly accomplished, although the installation above the front cross-member has necessitated the use of a sharply stepped oil sump, reducing its capacity from 10½ pints in the Vanguard to seven as used in the new Triumph Sports Six.

The engine starts as instantly as the four-cylinder 1200's (June C/D) and idles smoothly. It also has good response to the throttle, in spite of the cable control to the twin Solex carburetors.

The added power has had a tremendous influence on the car's handling characteristics. The extra 130 pounds on the front wheels has improved directional stability, and also slightly increased the initial understeer. In tight corners, it is invariably the rear end which breaks loose, but even when steering left on a right-hand corner on a wet road, the car felt stable and was under full control. The very quick rack-and-pinion steering



Low and narrow downflow-type radiator has small header tank mounted above the intake manifold to get it high enough.

TRIUMPH SPORTS SIX *CONTINUED*

has comparatively low return action and no play at all.

The steering box is carried on special rubber mountings in order to reduce the transference of road shocks. It permits only 3/8-inch movement and will remain in position even if the rubber should collapse.

Springing is firm and body roll negligible. The result is satisfactory for both comfort and stability on good surfaces, but on rough surfaces the car dances and is often displaced sideways, on straight stretches as well as on curves.

Gearbox operation was fairly smooth in spite of its not being fully run in, and the lever is correctly placed. The indirect ratios are not completely silent—a discovery made possible by the smoothness of the engine—and first gear is not synchronized, but could be engaged easily by double-clutching, without fear of expensive noises. Reverse is located left of first, and requires downward pressure on the lever to be engaged.

The Sports Six has a beefed-up frame compared with the 1200, and the whole construction is more rigid. We drove the car on several rainy days and found no water leaks anywhere. The only water that got inside crept in through the half-open vent windows in the doors. The test car had no rattles and gave an impression of having been put together with great care.

Instrumentation is simple but well laid out. In contrast with the TR-4, the Sports Six has a headlight flasher, but the windshield wipers have only one speed—a disadvantage on a car capable of almost 100 mph, with a comfortable 80-mph cruising speed.

The view from the driver's seat is excellent. The seats were on the hard side, but once in the right position would not tire the driver. We would also like the front seats to give more lateral support. Seat adjust-



Cornering behavior of the Sports Six is good and the swing-axle rear suspension's inherent oversteer is not a problem.

ment offers a large number of possibilities, but only fore-and-aft changes can be made while the car is in motion. Backrest-angle changes require hand tools, but are relatively quick once you have made up your mind to make them.

Entry to the front seats is very easy, but as rear-seat legroom is short and the doors do not match the passage, rear-seat passengers need some agility.

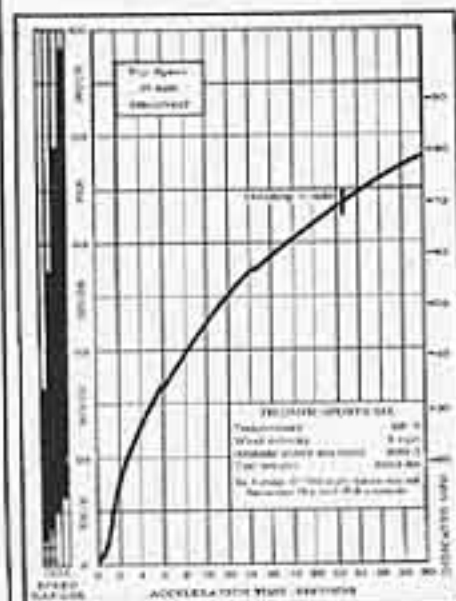
As on the 1200, engine accessibility is very good, the forward-tilting hood permitting everything under it to be reached fairly easily from either side.

The Sports Six is even easier to drive than the 1200, its more flexible engine requiring fewer gear changes, which should increase its appeal to female drivers. The sporty male will find it a nimble and responsive car of far greater usefulness than a two-seater, and yet it may prove to have some competition potential beyond its obvious suitability as a rally car. **cfo**

TRIUMPH SPORTS SIX

Price as tested: \$3,495

Importer: Standard-Triumph, Inc.
875 Madison Avenue
New York, New York



ENGINE:

Displacement 97.4 cu in. 1,394 cc
Dimensions 6-cyl, 2.43-in bore, 2.99-in stroke
Valve gear Pushrod-operated overhead valves
Compression ratio 8.45 to one
Power (SAE) 70 bhp @ 3,600 rpm
Torque 111 lb-ft @ 2,800 rpm
Usable range of engine speeds 710-4,900 rpm
Carburetion: Twin semi-downdraft Solex 22 PPH carburetors
Fuel recommended Premium
Mileage 16-21 mpg
Range on 18.5-gallon tank 290-340 miles

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase 51 1/2 in
Track F 45 in, R 46 in
Length 153 in
Ground clearance 6 1/2 in
Suspension: F: Ind. wishbones and coil springs.
R: Ind. swing axles, radius arms and transverse leaf spring.
Steering Rack and pinion
Turns, lock to lock 3.76
Turning circle diameter between curbs 23 ft
Tire size 5.60 x 13
Pressures recommended F 22, R 23 psi
Brakes Gliding 8-in discs front, 8-in drums
Rear, 144 sq in swept area
Curb weight (full tank) 2,045 lbs
Percentage on the driving wheels 46

DRIVE TRAIN:

Clutch 8-inch single dry plate

Gear	Synchro	Ratio	Step	Overall	rpm
Rev	No	2.92		13.96	5.6
1st	No	2.92	65%	12.66	5.6
2nd	Yes	1.78	45%	7.31	5.2
3rd	Yes	1.22	25%	5.16	13.1
4th	Yes	1.00		4.10	16.4

Final drive ratio: 3.18 to one

