

SPITFIRE & GT6

for enthusiasts, by enthusiasts

MAGAZINE

features



NASS Spit-Together II



Kentucky to Canada



SpitCat Part 6

- TECH TIPS
- READERS' CARS
- READERS' STORIES
- ON THE TRACK
- SHOWS AND EVENTS

1968 GT6 owned by Aaron Hartman, Georgia

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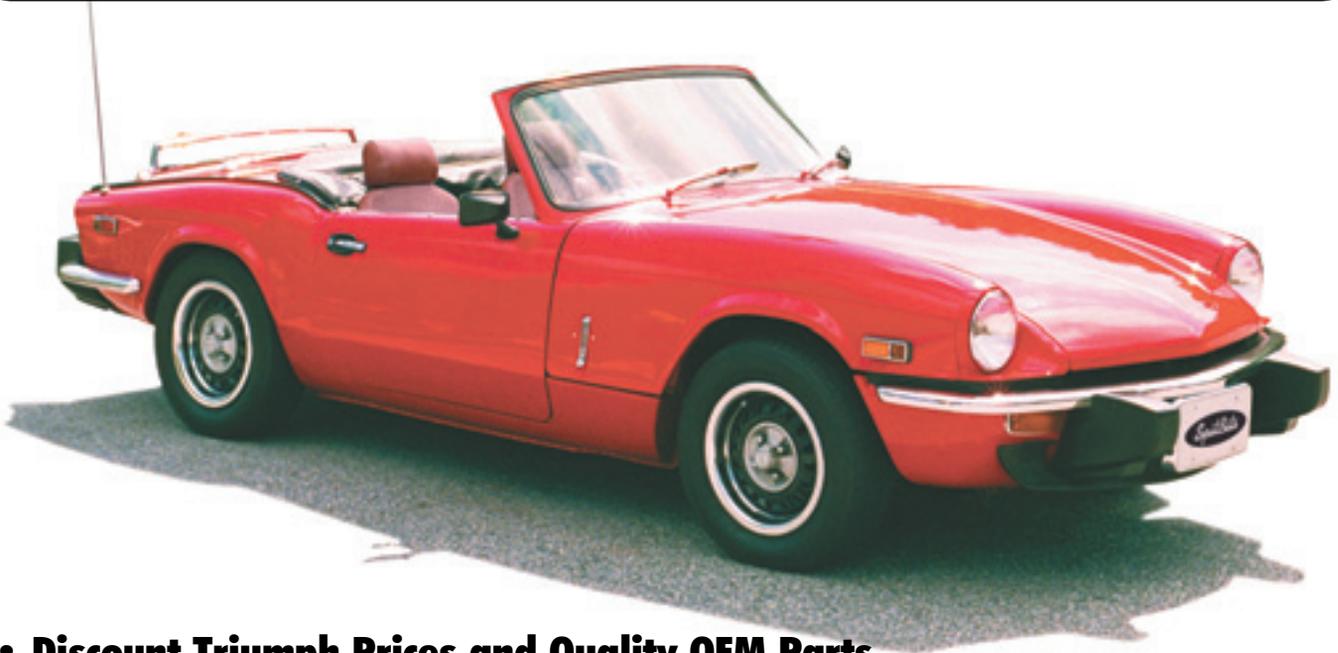
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Look for us a British car show near you!



Four months ago my wife and I had our first child... a bouncing baby boy we named Cooper; a family name but also a British car marque. Depending on who we are talking to we will claim either as the inspiration.

Cooper has really turned our lives upside down. In the past four months I have only spent a few hours working on my "first baby" because of my "most recent baby". I miss that time we spent together but it is nothing compared to the time I spend with my first child. It is not bad, just different. Since Cooper's schedule allows me very small windows of time to work on Kermit I have been perfecting the art of "working without day-dreaming". Tinkering on my cars used to be like fishing for me; it was as much about relaxing/thinking/planning/dreaming as actually getting something done. No more! If something needs attention, do it quick or it won't get done.

A while back I was finishing up a putting new brake shoes on my car and realized Cooper has more in common with British cars than his name:

1. Both are a lot of fun (most of the time)...
2. They can both be extremely unpredictable; as soon as you think you have it figured out...bam, you don't!
3. People, especially women, gravitate to you making comments that contain the word cute...or I remember when...
4. There are few "experts" when it comes to diagnosing problems but many willing to offer friendly advise...
5. If they sit too long in one place there will probably be a puddle under them...

I could go on and on!

Next time you are out in your car enjoying the sun and breeze remember me changing a diaper or searching frantically for a lost "passi" at the exact same moment. Get your Spits out and drive...for me!

John Goethert
editor



Thank you everyone who has sent in articles for this issue. And to those whose stories did not make it in time to get into this issue, they will appear in the next issue.

SPITFIRE & GT6

Volume 3, Issue 1

MAGAZINE

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It is not our intent to breach any copyright or offend anyone with this magazine only glorify Triumph name and their wonderful cars. This magazine is in no way affiliated with Triumph, Leyland Motor Corp. or BMW, although that would be nice!

**Correspondents wanted for
Spitfire & GT6 Magazine!**

email Tom@TriumphSpitfire.com
for more information



To send anything Spitfire or GT6 related to
info@triumphspitfire.com

or

P.O. Box 30806,
Knoxville, TN USA 37930-0806



Susan Hensley and her 1969 Spitfire at this year's Triumph Celebration & NASS Spit-Together this June.



I've been receiving Spitfire & GT6 since it's first issue and I'm happy to report that I really enjoy each mangled issue that I receive. Volume 2 issue 4 came in with the top of the cover ripped to shreds again and it's a little disappointing that the mail service can be so abusive to this magazine while junk mail looks pristine. As one of your subscribers pointed out in the mailbox section, we as subscribers would be very willing to pay an addition cost for bagging the magazine for mail protection.

I tried in the past to read another Triumph magazine but so few articles ever focused on the Spitfire or GT6 that when I saw the launch of your magazine on Triumphspitfire.com I had to try it out. Now my only problem is I can't remember if I have renewed my subscription. Maybe you could forward this to the right people, or yell across the hall, and have them email me when money is due.

As for the content of the articles, I really enjoy the written by owner viewpoint as opposed to the supposed experts that write for other automobile magazines. I know the temptation is to upgrade the "quality" of the content, however, the homespun humor and informative lessons of those who have done it with duct tape far outweighs the viewpoint of some overpaid writer that is obviously getting perks on the side to exclaim what a superb car the new BMW is (see *Road & Track*, *Car & Driver*, etc...). And where else can you get pictures of so many beautiful cars, before and after?

I'd like to relate one small event that I partook in that made a certain BRG 1972 Triumph Spitfire infamous. I would like to claim this honor but it must go to an unknown, having forgotten the mans name over the years. My friend and I have been attending the Monterey Car show for the last 13 years and every year it gets bigger and more expensive. A few years ago the theme at the Concourse Di Italiano was everything Italian; "a tribute to Italian design". Showcased and featured was the work of Italian designs of all kinds, the Boomerang and Ferrari Rainbow were pulled out of museums for display. If was Italian designed it was displayed,

so all of the mutant Fiats were in their glory along with Alfa Romeos, Maseratis, Lamborghinis and of course Ferrari. Sitting nearly in the middle of all this was one very lonely looking guy, with nearly a thirty foot circle of grass between him and the rest of the cars, standing by his BRG 1972 Triumph Spitfire. With his hood up to show off all his British glory the poor guy was an outcast, and was loving it too. I spoke with him and it seems he heard of the event and all the application was looking for was the Italian Designers name, not the make of the car. Figuring he would be turned down he filled in the name of the designer and sent it in as a joke. He was sent a complete set of parking passes and participant badges in the mail and decided then to make the trip. Imagine the surprise of the event coordinators when a British car, a Spitfire no less rolled up on the green with a participants badge!

There was no request for his car on the showcase podium that day and no event personnel came by to judge his vehicle for show quality, but that didn't phase him one bit. He was happy enough to know that after nearly two thousand years the British finally invaded Italy and there wasn't a damn thing the Romans could do about it. Later that evening, in the same spirit, my friend and I entered a new camshaft cover, that he bought for his car at home, as an Alfa Romeo "Partially" at the Alfa Romeo Fan Club party in the parking lot of one of the hotels. It lost out to a guy who was towing a Fiat 600 behind a bumble bee yellow Fiat 128 Rally. How he convinced the judges it was an Alfa Romeo we assume was in usual mafia style, but then maybe the drinking had something to do with it. Cars shows are not always so stiff necked.

From then on the rules for entering cars at the Concorso Di Italiano (not the Alfa club parking lot party) requires the car was not only designed by Italians, but a significant amount of the car must come from Italy. This puts the kabosh on little known Italian designs dressed in BRG from spoiling their fun.

Keep up the good work.
Eric Notti
Owner 1969 Triumph
Spitfire MkIII Partially

Hi, just want to thank you for the use of your classifieds to find my 1st Spitfire. Not only did my "Cars Wanted" ad get a lot of response, I ended up buying one of if not the best Mark 1 in the US. I am enjoying the magazine and the website...keep up the good work!

Regards,
Lewis Britner

Thank you for an excellent magazine, and website. I have subscribed to the magazine for years and enjoy the articles and pictures. My car was in there a couple years ago (before the slick new format). I will save that magazine forever!

Shelley Rasmussen

John, quick note...

Got the latest issue today. Great work... Will be renewing for another yr.

Andre Rousseau
1968 GT6 MK I - Ottawa

I just received my first copy of the magazine - great! I recently filled a 25-year void in my life and bought my 3rd GT6. I had 2 GT6+ in the 70's. It will look better when I am finished, but it still looks good enough to show off a bit. I bought it on eBay and drove it 650 miles from Huntsville, AL to Farmersville, TX. (OK, call me a fool!!) I hope you find space for it in the next issue.

Thanks.
Mark Saffian
'73 GT6 Mk III

Hi my name is Rozanna, I have written a story for your magazine. I was wondering if I had to send a photo of the car or the car and me or none at all?

Please let me know,
Rozanna

Dear Mr. Broberg:

Your company's list of the "10 Best Tools of All Time" on the website www.triumphspitfire.com has recently come to our attention. American Tool has manufactured and sold locking pliers under the VISE-GRIP trademark for over 75 years, so we are very pleased to see we made it onto your list of the 10 best tools of all time, second only to duct tape.

I'm writing to ask a small favor. The way our mark is presented on your site could be con-

strued as a generic use of our valuable trademark, especially where you say "vise grips are the only tool designed..." Such use degrades our trademark to the status of a generic object, as opposed to a brand name for a product. We are concerned because continued misuse of a trademark as a generic term can seriously damage valuable trademark rights.

To correct this, we ask that the text of your site be amended to read as follows:

2. Vise-Grip locking pliers - Equally adept as a wrench, etc The heavy artillery of your tool box, locking pliers are the only tool"

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this, and best of luck to you with your interesting and informative site.

Very truly yours,
John M. Wilke
Assistant General Counsel
- Intellectual Property

John

This little message is to inform you that we have received the box of show materials that you so kindly supplied to us. There will be an official summary/thank you letter coming in early July. But in the interim please accept my personal thank you for helping our start up Triumph club. Watch the mails for the letter, an article and pics are even possible.

Thanks again
Chris Horant
69 Spit/71 GT6
TRiumphs Around the
Chesapeake

In the latest issue of Spitfire and GT6 Mr. Andy Prevelig stated that two 2" pipes have a total area less than a 3" pipe. His assumption is correct but he solved the circle area problem incorrectly by inadvertently multiplying the radius of a circle by the constant pi THEN squaring the product. The correct method is to square the radius FIRST then multiply by pi.

The areas then become (for the 2" pipe)
 $(1X1) X (3.1415) = 3.1415$ square inches (or 6.283 square inches for two pipes

For the 3" pipe $(1.5x1.5) X (3.1415) = 7.06$ square inches

Dave King, PE/LS

Story Requests

"I would like to see an article about the colors of paint used under the bonnet including gloss/flat/semi and paint codes or brands of off-the-shelf paints."

-John Goethert

"I am putting (restoring) the hardtop for my 72 Spit back together. Can someone do an article showing a set of procedures for doing this? A list of suppliers that have parts would also be nice."

-Frank Drummond

Send us anything
Spitfire or GT6 related!
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Wierd, Wacky & Wonderful!



LITTLE BITS OF SPITS

WHO NEEDS A GT6?

Michael Hargreave Mawson ran across this car recently. "I have a wife and child, with another on the way, and I really need a four-seater car. I've seen this 4-seater Spitfire Estate conversion and I really like the idea. Can anyone tell me what is involved? Presumably a slimline, flat, petrol tank goes underneath the two rear seats and into the boot space. Is there anything else major that needs changing? Does anyone have a spare Estate hard-top for sale?"

Anyone having any information about it email us here at info@triumphspitfire.com and we will pass it on.



AND YOU THOUGHT YOUR SPITFIRE WAS UNDERPOWERED!

Robert Q. Riley Enterprises is selling plans for its Centurion, a 128-mpg Diesel-Powered Sports Car that is built on a Spitfire frame.

"Centurion is one of our most expensive cars to build, primarily because of the cost of the diesel engine - new, about \$2,500. Its Triumph Spitfire chassis, however, is relatively inexpensive if you purchase it from a wrecking yard or private party. The remainder of the cost is in fiberglass, paint, fixtures, and accessories. Total cost will be in the order of \$5,000 - \$7,000, depending on how the car is detailed."

The Centurion is powered by a 46.5 cubic inch Kubota #D 750 BB Diesel rated 17 hp @ 3000 rpm. To have one of your very own Centurions visit www.rqriley.com.

NOW YOU KNOW YOUR SPITFIRE IS UNDERPOWERED!

This Triumph Spitfire Pro Street Race Car is clearly one of a kind, nothing else like it. Stretched 26" with a 105" wheelbase. Double frame rail chassis with A arms in front and a solid mounted 8 3/4 Mopar rear with 488 gears. GM LS6 454cid with tunnel ram backed by a turbo 400 transmission. The description states that it has been street driven regularly!?!?



This car is currently for sale at a price of \$15,000 or best offer. For more information visit cars-on-line.com.



IT SHOULD LOOK BETTER AFTER A FRESH COAT OF PAINT!

eBay sells thousands of cars everyday but none like this one.

The description says that is car is "A 69 triumph gt coupe with a stretched frame and body! project car! Has a fresh Jasper 350 chevy, 4,000 miles on rebuilt four bolt! Accel distributor and coil, Mickey Thompson covers,chrome pan and pulleys, tach and gauges, new corvette radiator, headers, new Hurst click shifter, T.C.I trans shield, new aluminum power glide trans, Pontiac 4:11 rearend, stock suspension fully rebuilt and fresh,car needs finishing but is extremely solid, no heavy duty welding needed anywhere! i am listing this for a friend"

At auction's end the final bid was \$660 but the reserve was not met!



WHAT SPITFIRE? I DON'T SEE ANY SPITFIRE.

Reuben Chapman sent us a few photos of his pre-restoration, camo painted Spitfire.

"When I bought my first and still only Spitfire (1300cc Mark IV) it was a bit of a wreck, black 1974. However, I decided for a laugh to paint it up like a real Spitfire WWII fighter plane. Some grey/blue primer and green hammerite and a day later and she was transformed. A friend and I took 'Molly' to Duxford Air Show a few weeks ago and here are the pictures!"



MK3 TRIUMPH BENZ

An anonymous German emailer sent us this photo of a "gullwing" Mk3 Spitfire. Can anyone send us any more info about this car?

Spitfire Spotters

NICOLAS CAGE IS THE ACTOR HE IS TODAY BECAUSE OF A SPITFIRE

Tim Parli sent us word that the May 6 *Autoweek Magazine* chose the 1975 Spitfire as the car to feature in its "Escape Roads" section calling it "A Real Triumph".

The article, written by Eric Tegler, gives a general Spitfire history as well as describing a nicely updated 1975 Spitfire.



The very next page is a sidebar telling about a Spitfire that was sold for \$13,200 at the RM Auction in Florida this March. Seeing that price alerts us that this was no ordinary Spitfire. It was the car Nicolas Cage's first car. Rumored to have had \$30,000 spent on its restoration, Mr. Cage says he originally "had to find small acting jobs to pay for fixing it up. It always broke down."

It is surprising that the auction house sold it as a 1975 when the car clearly has 1976 wheels.



NEW SPITFIRE, ONLY 17 EUROS!

Yet again Greg Hertel has sent us another "Little Bits of Spits" entry. This one is a 1:43 scale die cast model of a 1968 Spitfire as seen in the Past Times catalog.



BRITISH CAR COVER SPIT

The June-July issue of *British Car Magazine* featured a BRG racing Mk3 Spitfire on its cover and an interesting article about its restoration inside.

-Tom Broberg

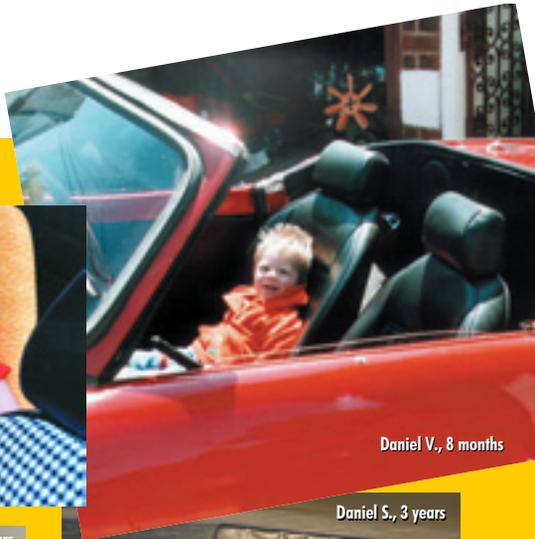
British Car Kids

Bob Spruck and I were recently discussing my son's name and realized we both knew many other people whose children were named the same as British Car companies. I thought it would be fun to see the photos.

Here are a few readers' children with British Car Company names.



Fabienne S., 28 months



Daniel V., 8 months



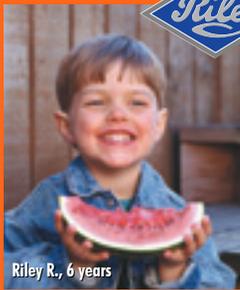
Cooper G., 3 months



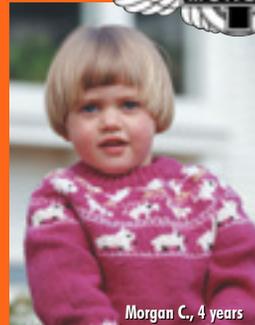
Ryan E., 5 years



Daniel S., 3 years



Riley R., 6 years



Morgan C., 4 years



Austin S., 7 years



Next Issue:

Send us your wedding pictures that include your Spitfire or GT6.



The Sweet Sound of Spit

Last quarter's "Quik Quiz" on the website asked readers the best music to listen to when driving their Spitfire or GT6.

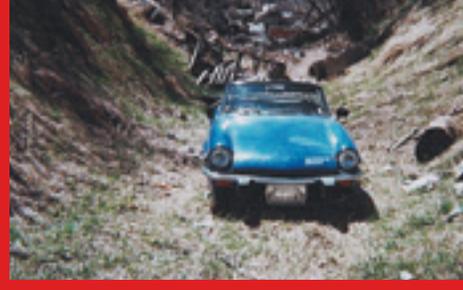
Engine/exhaust was the clear winner with the Beach Boys and Beatles coming in a close second. Surprisingly, the gambit of others ranged from rap to country to reggae.

Below are a few of the suggestions.

Definitely period rock & roll. The type that was playing on the radio when my Spitfire was new.
 Mid-to late 70's sweet music!
 The Sound of Your Engine!
 "Route 66" by Depeche Mode
 Beach Boys
 A little song called, "Exhaust Note". . . I never get tired of listening to it!
 NO radio. If I listen to music, I won't be able to hear the parts fall off.
 ZZ Top, "Tres Hombres/Fandango"
 The wind mixed with a throaty exhaust note.
 Best music in the world.
 "Don't fear the reaper" by Blue Oyster Cult
 A Monza exhaust that is just louder than the wife's complaining that I am driving too fast!
 Country
 The sound of the motor!
 Techno Hiphop Reggae
 Classic Rock
 Sting
 Pink Floyd
 Beach Boys
 ska
 Pink Floyd, The Beatles: British cars, British music
 Oasis "Cigarettes and Alcohol"
 The Monkeys
 "I can't drive 55!" - Sammy Hagar
 Take three
 Meatloaf: Bat out of Hell
 Big Band...Swing
 phish
 Classic British Rock, of course!
 the car
 The best music is Rush!
 Beatles, (British Rock/British car)
 Where do I begin? Emerson, Lake & Palmer.
 Santana. Chicago.
 Hardcore/punk (Kid Dynamite, NOFX, AFI)
 None. The music of the engine is the best.
 Any Live Grateful Dead
 Bob Marley, when cruising in the sunshine.
 The exhaust note at 7,000rpm ;o)
 The Apaches Plaid by the Shadows
 The sound of the straight pipe coming off my 1500
 Oldies!
 Delbert McClinton "The Fortunate Few"
 ZZ Top - give me all you loving

The noise of the engine & exhaust, because they are so loud I can't hear a radio anyway.
 NOFX - California Punk
 How would you do that if you were so inclined?
 60's
 All we need this love (The Beatles)
 Beach Boys!
 No music, just the sound of the Spit going down the road
 "I can't drive 55" - Sammy Hagar
 Slayer
 The engine
 Jackson Brown
 Born to be Wild
 Pink Floyd - The Wall
 Four pistons pumping at redline.
 Phil Collins
 "Autobahn" by Kraftwerk
 rock and roll
 The wind and the sound of the 1500cc's propelling me down the road
 Rock...David Wilcox, The Natural Edge
 The sound of the engine actually running would be music to my ears!
 Rap
 Rolling Stones
 none
 In Chicago, fm 104.3
 Anything with an edge to it. And for heavens sake, NOT COUNTRY!
 Doobie Brothers
 Girl from Ipanema
 None, the exhaust notes are musical enough.
 Any mid-60's Brit invasion on my 67 Spit AM radio. But the best? "Paperback writer".
 The Beach Boys
 TOTO
 Meatloaf...bat out of hell
 Chicofski
 Reggae - Bob Marley
 Queen its the best. Greatest Hits!
 little feet
 the who, American woman
 The engine. Hopefully, it's NOT singing!! ;o)
 Highway Star by Deep Purple
 Exhaust Note! (I removed my radio)
 the ZOMBIES!
 In my Spit @ 50mph+
 Silence is Golden (If only)
Beethoven's 1147cc Symphony in 4000RPM minor

Recovered



Dear John and Spitfire & GT6 Readers:
 Believe it or not Little Blue was found. A Pine Ridge policeman spotted it in a 30ft. deep gully 10 miles north of Pine Ridge, South Dakota on Apr. 20, 2002. It has minor body wounds but no broken glass. The wheels, tires, battery and other items were taken.

I would like to thank all the loyal, compassionate people who made this a TRIUMPHant day for me. Thanks for all your moral support and kind responses. Without your help Little Blue would probably have been destroyed.

A special thanks to you John for creating the Stolen Car page on TriumphSpitfire.com. Sincerely,
 Jim Knispel
 North Platte, NE

Stolen

Hi,
 Just wondered if I could post details of my car. It was stolen in Edinburgh either the 6th or 7th June 2002. It is a yellow Triumph Spitfire 1500 convertible, reg XGE 626S, it has 41,000 miles on the clock.

Any information regarding its whereabouts would be greatly appreciated...!
 Thanks
 Jim Park
 27a Coates Gardens
 Edinburgh
 EH12 5LG
 tel: 0131 346 8385

Stop light conversation with a Miata driver goes like this...

TRIUMPH DRIVER: "So, is your top hard to put down?"
MIATA DRIVER: "I don't know, I've never put it down? Why, is yours hard to put down?"
TRIUMPH DRIVER: "I don't know, I've never put it up."
 -Ray James

SPITFIRE SPECIALS

Ball Joint Set (2)	\$40.00
Tie Rod Set (2)	\$18.00
Front Trunnion w/kit	\$31.00
Front Wheel Bearing Kit	\$21.00
Rear Wheel Bearing Kit Major	\$27.00
Heavy Duty Rear Spring	\$138.00
Front Standard Shocks (2)	\$70.00
Front Heavy duty Gas Shocks (2)	\$130.00
Rear Standard Shocks (2)	\$45.00
Rear Heavy duty Gas Shocks (2)	\$75.00
Fully Adjustable Spax Shocks (4)	\$330.00
Brake Hose Set (4)	\$42.00
Brake Hose Set Stainless	\$73.00
Rebuilt Calipers 67-80 Ex	\$71.00
Caliper Kit 67-80 (2)	\$10.00
Front Rotor w/HD Pads	\$54.00
Slotted & Vented Rotor set	\$68.00
Rear Wheel Cylinder Set (2)	\$26.00
Rear Shoe Set	\$18.00
3-pc B&B Clutch kit 66-72	\$90.00
3-pc B&B Clutch kit 73-80	\$105.00
Water Pump (all years)	\$53.00
Starter (exchange)	\$76.00
Starter HD Gear Reduction	\$195.00
Cap, points, cond., rotor 62-74	\$15.00
Cap & rotor 75-80	\$10.00
Alternator 73-80 (exchange)	\$75.00
Crane Electric Ignition Kit	\$109.00
Piston Set 1300cc 9:1	\$155.00
Piston Set 1500cc 9:1	\$155.00
Stainless Exhaust Valve Set (4)	\$30.00
Tappet Set 66-80 (8)	\$30.00
Hot Street Cam (exchange)	\$91.00
Chain and Gear Set (3-pc)	\$60.00
Full Gasket Set w/Seals	\$39.00
Oil Pump Late Style	\$78.00
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I have received so many questions about paint lately that from now on I would like to include the paint colors to the other info in "Reader's Cars" section. The color will be the Triumph Paint Code followed by the color name. If the paint is not a factory color, it will be in italic.

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



Mark Saffian, Texas, 1973 Mk3 GT6



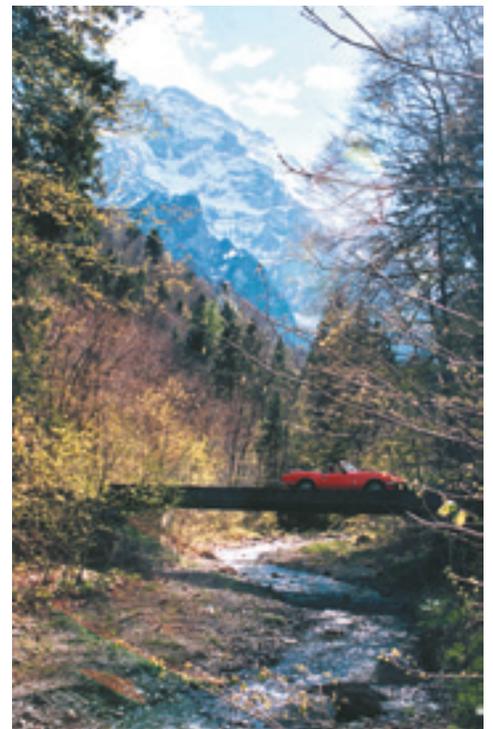
Steve Ellwood, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1975 1500
She's now got a nice 1600 Toyota powering her with a four speed Toyota again. New set of feet (a bit wider than standard) makes her stick like glue to the tar. New paint and dash, carpets. Just need some new seats...I will get there.



David Saunders, Texas, USA, 1976 Spitfire (84-Topaz)



David MacKenzie, Prince Edward Island, Canada, 1976 1500 (146-Tahiti Blue)



Stephan und Elisabeth Sieburg, Switzerland



Jean-Marc Dion, Quebec, Canada, 1967 Mk2



Alan Lemen, Idaho, USA, 1976 1500 (126-French Blue)



Stephan Wrase, Hamburg, Germany, 1977 1500 (94-Inca)



Philip Patrick, Ontario, Canada, 1976 1500



Angelo Guarasci, Ontario, Canada, 1975 1500 (Chrysler emerald green)



Jose Solis, Indiana, USA, 1976 1500 (82-Carmine Red)



Martin Pearce, Wiltshire, England, 1963 Spitfire 4



Tim Clark, Washington, USA, 1978 1500 (75-BRG)



Barbara & Carl Drewett, Texas USA, 1968 Mk3, "Bab's"



Simon Thomas, Swansea, Wales, 1975 1500 (85-Java Green)



Ree Gurley, Maryland, USA, 1978 1500



Bob & Mary Buxbaum, Virginia, USA, 1970 GT6+



Bruce Forbes, Nebraska, USA, 1972 Mk3 GT6 (72-Pimento Red)



Martin Secrest, Virginia, 73 GT6



Orlando Tato and friend, Espinho, Portugal, 1974 Mk4



Gary Libertini, Ohio, USA, 1969 GT6+



Byron Shapiro, Nebraska, USA, 1967 Mk2



Steve Remmers, Connecticut, USA, 1967 GT6 MK1



Lee Mitchell, Georgia, USA, 1979 1500 (1973 Jaguar racing green: JAG 8461)



Marco Rodriguez, California, USA, 1970 Mk3

Triumph Travails

BY LAURA GHARAZEDDINE, CALIFORNIA, USA



Main Entry: tra·vail
Pronunciation: tre·vAl', trav'Al
Function: noun

- 1. TOIL:** work especially of a painful or difficult nature
- 2. AGONY, TORMENT:** Middle English travail "hard labor", from early French travail (same meaning), from travailler (verb) "to labor hard, torture"

Well, I think that gives a good idea of what I'm talking about. And British car owners especially know the definition of the word!

Sometimes, when I read the Spitfire Mailing List, or NASS or talk to fellow British car owners, I get the feeling not so much as we're giving and getting updates-but progress reports for critically ill patients-but with mostly manageable illnesses! (At least we don't have to deal with HMOs in these cases-can you imagine if you had an HMO for the "health" of your LBC? The mere thought sends chills!)

But seriously, let's talk about Triumph Travails...

On the Fourth of July, I took Nigel for a "date" with our friend Gregg-aka "Mr. Spitfire" (in my eyes at least.) I've known Gregg off and on for the last 10 years or so, since my terrible, may he rest in peace, previous Spitfire. The reason for the date was to replace some valve springs...but lo and behold, as with most "simple" Triumph repairs, bigger news came" You're engine's shot...yeah, it's not so much the springs as it is the valves..." and then came all the evidence to support the verdict.

Happy Fourth of July...it no longer felt like a holiday, but a death sentence on my beloved Spitfire. And of course, on a holiday Thursday of what was for many people, a four day weekend, what is one to do? I wanted to take charge immediately, to find a solution, a miracle cure and save Nigel's life! So, I started calling friends who have nearly as many automotive travails or are in the business, as possible. What started in tears, ended in hope. A plan was devised.

A simple plan really for what seemed to be a complicated situation for me. As many of you know, my Triumph Spitfire is my one and only means of

transportation. So the idea of the head coming off and being rebuilt was a daunting prospect. Dave, my mechanic, doesn't even remember which valves he used 13 years ago when he built it! And there was a lot of hand polishing. But the solution is simple: find another head, have a valve job done on it, and switch the heads, leaving me with a car (albeit with lowered performance, but I can live with that, to save my beloved!) and the head with Dave to do the rebuild as his time allows. Perfect!

So, this girl learned about head assemblies, fair prices, what a valve job entails, and went "shopping". By the end of the week, I had a head, on it's way to the machine shop. Thanks to the generous response from the Spitfire Mailing List. Sometimes I think it should be called the "Spitfire Special Support Unit"! And thanks to a lot of really great people-car and non-car. In a couple of weeks, it should be installed and I'll see how much the performance differs. "Watch this space" as they say.

Which brings us around to "Girls Can Too!" (and fitting in with the definition of "travails") I must say that for the most part, in the British car hobby, a woman seems to be accepted as knowledgeable about her LBC rather more than she seems to be when she has to take her Toyota (just an example) in for service. Just a thought, a bit of experience to ponder.

Speaking of women being accepted in automotives, I had the pleasure and privilege of taking part in another Great Race, as a competitor this time, rather than as a support team member for Steve and Janet Hedke's 1957 TR3. A little strange to be on the other side of the event-and won-

derful! Though I did have a little pang at not being a member of Team Scrappy. Joining the Triumph's team this year was quite a remarkable young lady-the Hedke's niece. A lovely, petite young woman with long hair-who is in the Ford program, training to become an auto mechanic. So far, it's been hard for her to find a position at a dealership. All the guys have offers and places, but even though she really knows her stuff and achieves high scores, she has yet to place. Some of the excuses are just downright flimsy- "We don't have a ladies locker room". Amazing to think that in 2002, women go into space; they sit in the Senate; they work in long distance trucking-we're here, there and everywhere-except they still can't get jobs in the industry except as a counter person in a parts store. Heather is definitely a Girl Who Can Too! Now, we'll just have to convert her to the LBC hobby-every girl needs a Triumph! ;-)

In the past, I've given a tip of the hat to Penny Sternbeck and her lovely 1970 Spitfire-which she did herself. This time I'd like to doff my chapeau to Livia Haasper of



Ontario, Canada who is now driving her very nice 1967 MKIII Spitfire named "Firefly" (Like Stradivari- they all have

names!). If you've been on the Spitfire Mailing List, you've followed the adventures of Liv and her Spitfire. Well done, Liv!

Until next time, "Happy Trails to you" and may all your travails end in Triumph! ■

By the Light of the Moon (In a Spitfire)

FICTIONAL STORY BY RANDY ROBISON, TENNESSEE, USA

One cool evening, while cruising the back roads in my 1976 Spitfire Lil'Bit, Honey drew my attention to the full moon filtering through the trees. Knowing Honey the way I do, I knew romance was in the air. I gave her a quick wink and flashed my patented dopey grin.

Honey, her dark eyes sparkling and golden hair flowing in the wind, smiled demurely at me and said, "What the hell's wrong with your face?"

"Bug in my eye," I said. Romance apparently doesn't have a time limit and even a brief romantic interlude is better than nothing. Time to pull out all the stops and rekindle the flames of desire. Honey's always has been drawn to intelligent men, which explains her being with me. "Do you know that once upon a time people actually thought that moon was made of green cheese?" I asked.

"Do you know that once upon a time I had an intelligent conversation with you?" Honey shot back, "Now on a beautiful night you want to make faces and talk about green cheese."

I laughed to myself at Honey's wit because I knew she was trying to start an argument so that we'd have the opportunity to make up. What a girl!

"What are you laughing at?" Honey demanded. "If you don't stop being such an idiot, you can stop this tin can you refer to as a car, and let me out!"

Well, I had to laugh out loud. She actually called me an idiot, which put me in a great position, when we do make up, and besides I knew she couldn't get out

of the car. The release on the seat belt broke last week and I had to use needle nose pliers and a screwdriver to release the catch on the buckle. As I have said before, Honey has a great sense of humor as anyone can tell by the way she's always joking with me, still in all I think it wise to wait awhile to tell her about the seatbelt. Of course, now is the perfect time to have a flat tire, and that's exactly what happened. I said to Honey, "I just need into the boot and get the torch and change the tyre now."

Honey replied, "You get the flashlight out of the trunk and I'll find the torch, but I won't put it in your boot! By the way, how do you spell tire?"

Once again, her playful wit amused me, and I found myself giggling.

"Stop that right now, you pea-brain!!!!" Honey whispered demurely.

"I'm not laughing at you, My Love, It's simply the joy of being alive and sharing it with someone I love", I said. This may be an old line, but she always fell for it, besides it would give her chance to make up and that's all she really wants.

"Do you know what I'd like to do know?" Honey purred.

"I think I do, Baby," I said. Slowly I looked into her eyes and leaned toward her...

My black eye is healing nicely now. Honey claims she was just trying to get that bug out of my eye and I didn't have the heart to tell her I was just kidding about the bug. ■

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The Rumble-B & The Rumble-B Express



BY RUMBLE-B (OWNED OTTO KEMP), NORTH CAROLINA, USA

I am two toned and I look good to. I am a 1972 Triumph GT6MKIII that is painted yellow and black, the yellow part on the sides & top and the black part is the hood and the window frame area, and the taillight area.

It all started in the summer of 1990, I was rusting away at the side of an old repair shop in down town Raleigh. I had not had any human contact in quite a few weeks; just sitting wondering what was going to happen to me. The guy that owned me had gotten tired of putting more money into me and had just stopped and I haven't seen him in over 3 month, I guess he's feed up with my constant need to be worked on, the dam clutch that he had put in the last time only lasted for a summer, but most of the trouble was in the fact that he (the old man) had lost a lot of leg power and kept shifting badly and screwed up my clutch. Well enough about him.

As I was saying here, I was rusting away, when out of nowhere this guy appeared and said that he was an Triumph owner. Seems that when he was in his thirties he had a TR4. Now he was looking for a sports car and had seen me sitting here, (boy was I lucky that he saw me), for he went in the shop and talked to the mechanic and got my owner's address and left. I thought that I had lost out on being bought again. But a few more day's went buy and the guy came back. He bought me from the old guy that gave up on me. Two days later I was sitting in my new owner's back yard, In the shade, and with a new tarp tied over my tired red body. Boy did I like the tarp and the new home. Oh yea, the guy that bought me; his name is Otto, just heard his wife call him that. He was out there every day in the evening's doing some thing with me working on various prob-

lems that I had: he was fixing my clutch problem and starting to clean me up and paint (with spray cans) various places that needed attention.

Then I hear a few year's later Otto and his wife were going to separate and I was going to go with Otto to our new home, some trailer park place nearby called All Star. Well Otto has a guy with a flat bed wrecker truck come to the house and pick me up on his roll back and off we go to my new home in the All Star (what ever that is). With the move to the new home, I was put on hold for awhile, so Otto can get his new home in shape. I am put under the tarp again and not do know for how long (only time will tell).

TIME PASSES...

After a while Otto brings a new guy out and uncovers me and starts to brag about saving me (ha,ha,ha). Heck, I have been under these tarps for 8 years now, still torn apart and see no future of ever being put back together. Well it turns out that the Guy Otto showed me to has a Spitfire he drives every day. Oh yea, his name is Kenny, Well Kenny and Otto uncover me one day and roll me into the back of Otto's Lot. There is an brand new garage with a ramp and door's and lights and a/c and phone. I have never seen such a wonderful sight! Kenny and Otto roll me into my new home. No more tarps!

1998 & 1999

The next two years are quite a active time. Kenny and Otto are always out here in my garage working on me or my new little friend Snoopy (Kenny's Spitfire's name). Snoopy and I are really getting the treatment, Snoopy is getting a rebuilt TR6 2500 cc engine and I am getting a

new paint job, Yellow & Black. Otto bought all of the parts that I need to get back into shape: new interior parts, new rug's, door panels, etc. Otto is also putting on a new exhaust system called a Monza exhaust. I did not know what it was I would find out. I sounded more throaty and Otto started calling me The Rumble-B. He even bought me a special license tag with RUMBLE-B on it. Boy do I like that tag. I now am known on the road as the Rumble-B and I do sound like a rumbling Bee (vroom-vroom-vroom).

It is sure nice to be back together again and on the road again. I am lucky this time with my owner Otto. He will not take me out when he knows it's going to rain, I guess he does not want to have me rust again like I was when he found me. Now when it rains I sit high and dry in the Rumble-B Garage (what every one around here calls my garage). Pretty cool don't you think?

Well since I talked Otto and Kenny have gotten me on the road. I have been taking Otto & Toto (my four legged friend) for drives around the local area and meetings with other Triumphs. Boy is it nice to see some of my kind again. I have heard that the company that made me is no longer in business and there are fewer and fewer of us Triumph's in the world do to wrecks, rust, and lack of care by the people that owned us. But Otto knows where to find anything that I need through the computer thing in his office and he always comes up with whatever I need to be operational: my speedo is on the fritz now and I do not know how fast I am going (but Otto will fix me, I hope).

In 2000 Otto, Toto and I went to a place far away called The Roadster Factory for a weekend. There must have been thousands of people there with their cars (all British don't you know) and boy

was that fun. We meet a nice bunch of people that call themselves The Flamingo Group and they sure like to party (we fit right in).

At the end of this party there was a car show and don't you know I won Third Place! and got a White Ribbon!

Otto, Toto and I went back to The Roadster Factory in Aug. of 2001 and I'll be danged if I didn't win another ribbon but this time it was for second place and is a red ribbon. I will have to say that it was probably because of a new trailer.

Otto built for me a car shaped trailer to be able to carry all his camping equipment and if I do say it my self it is fun to drive around with my new little buddy on the back. When we go down the road it look's like I am racing with the trailer (now called "Express" according to Otto) right on my tail. Every one that see us



likes us and has something to say like (nice cars and does the one on the trailer run and is it a r/c car or what). Now called the RUMBLE-B EXPRESS. I like the name and it fits, don't you think.

I have seen some cool art that was done for me and my little buddy. It was done by a guy that lives up north near Washington D.C. area. His name is Terry Thompson and the cool art is called The Rumble-B Express From The Rumble-B Garage. I do appreciate the work that Terry Thompson put into the drawing and every one that see it thinks that it is cool to.

My life has just begun for a second time with my new owner even though we have been together for 12 years I have been assured that I will be taken care of for as long as Otto has me. I have heard him say that he loves me but I have also heard him cuss me, I guess we have what you might call a love-hate relationship (do not tell him but I love Him if for



nothing else but for saving me from the slow death that was happening while I was wasting away beside that old repair shop in down town Raleigh.).

Otto has a computer (what ever that is) and I here that he has something called a web page that is about me and my garage. I think that it is called The Rumble-B Garage web site and according to Otto it is at <http://uk.geocities.com/gt6rumbleb/index.html> If you have read my story up to now

please come and visit me at my web site. All people's friend, the little British sports car, named The Rumble-B. ■



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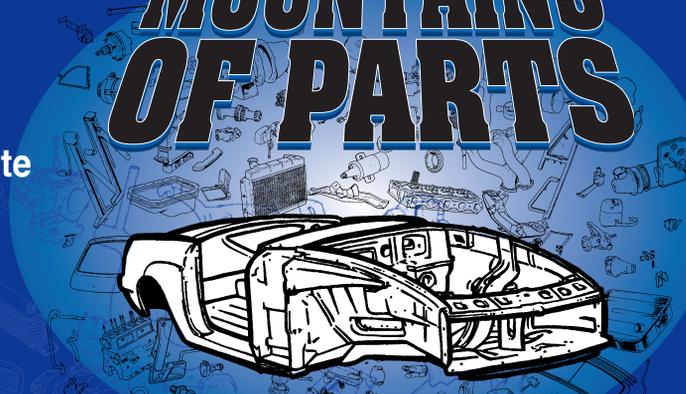


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The Lil Bit Spit Trip

BY ANN & MARK JONES AND SAM CHANDLER, NOVA SCOTIA CANADA

This is the story of the 1980 Triumph Spitfire dubbed "Lil Bit" for reasons that will unfold later, that made the almost trouble free trip from Jenkins, Kentucky to Seaforth, Nova Scotia.

Part One - Preparation

BY SAM CHANDLER,
JENKINS, KENTUCKY

A few short years ago, I became acquainted with Mark, when he responded to my post on the MGB Experience bulletin board, offering to trade for a 1971 MGB GT manual for anything of comparable value. (We are both proud owners of MGBs: Mark a 1973 MGB GT, myself a 1979 MGB plus a 1971 MGB GT.) Thus, began a friendship that principally involved trading local interest items across the international border.

This past winter, Mark became aware that I had a Spitfire for sale, and had read my posts on the MGB bulletin boards about an attorney colleague from Whitesburg, Kentucky, who had been trying to trade his 1990 Jaguar XJ Sovereign straight-up for the Spitfire. To the consternation of my fellow attorney, I declined to trade the Spitfire for a big Jag that wasn't running, and had some electrical issues. Mark in the meantime was hatching a scheme to purchase the Spitfire for his wife's (Ann's) upcoming birthday, and failing to completely convince her that one English sports car was not enough for one household ("but it has overdrive", he futilely explained, adding "and we don't have a roadster"), a vacation to Jenkins, Kentucky was planned to meet and to see the mountains of eastern Kentucky (and well, at least have a look at the car).

So, with adventure alarms going off like the Queen's Jubilee, and wind-in-the-hair images of driving through the countryside from Kentucky to Nova Scotia, Mark and Ann bought airline tickets to the Cincinnati airport, located in northern Kentucky. The arrival date was set for Sunday, May 12, 2002. Anticipating their arrival and knowing that the Spit needed to be prepared for some serious travel (just in case), I set about having the Spit checked out by my "free" mechanic, Paul. This involved new tires, new brake pads and shoes, one new and one rebuilt wheel cylinder, dif-

ferential seals, rear axle half shaft seals, plugs, ignition wires, oil change, new gear oil, etc. The UPS man was bewildered at the almost daily deliveries he was making to my house from places like Moss Motors, British Racing Green, SpitBits, and Little British Car Co. The fix-up was relatively painless, thanks to a mechanic working off an attorney fee. "So far, so good", I thought.

But alas, the day before Mark and Ann were to arrive, my mechanic phoned with a frantic message that the Spitfire had caught on fire in his yard. Apparently, Paul had gone inside his home to call me and happily report that the repairs were finished and he planned to drive it back to my house, when "Canoe", his brother-in-law, who was relaxing with a beer in the front yard, yelled that the car was on fire. A screw had backed out of the choke assembly, allowing gas to spurt onto the hot intake. Poof! A real SpitFIRE! That evening, I sadly informed the Canadians of the dire course of events, but the bags were already packed and those plane tickets were nonrefundable, so Mark and Ann (still in adventure mode) were coming anyway. Of course, as I later found out, my previous enticements via e-mail, including Memphis ribs, Chesapeake Bay crab cakes, warm weather, among other things, aided the decision to proceed as planned.

After meeting at the Cincinnati airport on Sunday afternoon (I was readily identified by an Appalachian British Car Society ball cap), the trip to my home in Jenkins and a few days of R&R and car repair began. At this point, Mark and Ann were even more determined to return home by motorcar, after encountering horrible air turbulence that caused their enroute drinks to hit the above baggage compartments and drip down on them during the final leg of their flight. They found the beauty of eastern Kentucky's lush fields and handsome horses, as well as the contrasting mountains most striking. They also discovered, contrary to the US Customs official's remarks when his query revealed their

destination, that shoes are indeed worn in Kentucky!

The next day (Monday) found us at Paul's house at the head of Round the Mountain holler (aka hollow), near



Mayking, quite a bit off the beaten track, even for eastern Kentucky. This was an adventure in itself. Paul lives at the end of a one-mile dirt road, high in the hills, with his wife, three kids, four dogs, five ducks, a host of game chickens, and a tough old tomcat that rules the farm except the house Chihuahua. Most of the day was spent on the phone with various parts houses, British car mechanics and fellow club members, before deciding the course of action. For the road trip back to take place, Mark and Ann would have to be on the road home by Thursday; time was of the essence. A carb rebuild kit, throttle cable and mechanism from Victoria British were ordered. The melted hoses and battery were replaced locally. Overnight delivery of the parts from Vicky B, didn't happen, so a trip to the



Pikeville, Kentucky UPS hub at the break of dawn on Wednesday morning was necessary to intercept the order before it got on the route truck.

The remainder of Wednesday, the hottest day since their arrival, was spent at Round the Mountain holler, repairing the fire damage. We watched and waited



as Paul, who was not to be interrupted by frequent calls from "Canoe", worked diligently. Naps and other lounging activities by the lookers-on were interrupted, however, by visits from Paul's three outdoor dogs, a Rottweiler and two hyper Jack Russell mixes, and the tomcat. The indoor Chihuahua, an oddity both in its name and the fact that it was so out of place in these Kentucky hills, made only one brief appearance.

Finally, everything appeared in order, but the little Spit would not hold an idle. Ann, in a stroke of true genius, attached the new leather Triumph key fob to the ignition key, and VVROOM! The engine churned over (Ann's view) and started purring like a happy kitten (Mark's and my view). More fiddling permitted a hair-raising test drive (that is for myself and Ann who were in the chase Jeep and not able to keep up) by Mark on the twisty mountain back roads. Top down, of



course, Mark and Ann drove the Spitfire to my house late that evening.

The time spent together in Kentucky was not all work and anxiety, fortunately. In between carburetor re-build activities, Mark, Ann, Ricki (my better half) and I managed to drive my MGBs, enjoy scenic drives, such as the one to Breaks Interstate Park, and take pleasure in lots of fun activities and feasting. The Memphis barbequed ribs, fresh Maryland crab cakes, Grainger County strawberries, and Ricki's southern home cooking,

thereby sharing the name with Paul's out of the ordinary Chihuahua.

That night though, Mark began to worry. Insisting that daily calls be made to check-in on the trip back, Ricki and I too were somewhat concerned. Many questions haunted us: Will the Prince of Darkness make an appearance? Will the little Zenith carb hold out? Will the magical Triumph key fob continue to guide them home, through Virginia, New England and beyond?

Continued on page 22



is good! After a brief shopping spree for gifts for the folks back home, we headed north (US 522) and east (US 30 to US 233), through the Caledonia forest. Glimpses of Fiats and MGs were caught in Carlisle (US 34), where the Import Auto Show was being held. Back window unzipped, we continued east (US 11

Part Two - The Journey Home

BY ANN MACLEAN JONES,
SEAFORTH, NOVA SCOTIA

On Thursday, May 16, 2002 at 1:30 pm, Mark and I left Jenkins, anxious to get on the road but sad to leave our new found friends. It was a sunny day and temperatures were in the 80's, a great day to start out! Armed with Ricki's knowledgeable recommendation of historic towns, we headed for Abingdon, Virginia (Highways 23 and 19). Here, we stopped at a coffee/gift shop and being fine wine connoisseurs, picked up a white wine labeled "Our Dog Blue". Caffeine in hand, we cruised into Salem, Virginia (US 11), where we arrived in time for a great Mexican feast at the "El Rodeo".



Continuing north the next morning, top down in the sunshine, we traveled through Roanoke, Virginia and into the Blue Ridge Mountains for a short stint on the Parkway. The mountains were magnificent.

A lunch stop in the historic town of Staunton permitted the sampling of Sierra Nevada's Flying Dog's In Heat Wheat (we are also fine beer connoisseurs) and the purchase of red "Fat Bastard" wine (there's a theme developing here!) Cloudy skies, cool temperatures and spitting showers accompanied us into



Berkeley Springs, West Virginia (Highway 522). Here, we checked into what was later found out to be a very religious B&B, complete with chapel, ornaments, and brochures depicting where said ornaments could be purchased. There was a small Italian restaurant here; the marinara sauce was fresh

and US 322) through the rolling countryside of Pennsylvania into Harrisburg and then Hershey. Being in Chocolate Town, and with visions of dipping fingers into vats of fresh chocolate, a visit to the Hershey factory was in order. To our dismay, the closest thing to fresh chocolate was a large Hershey double chocolate



chip cookie, after eating which we became as hopped up on sugar as the majority of the little people in the Hershey park. Adding to the disappointment, the only specialty chocolates were made in Dartmouth, NS, not 20 minutes from our home town of Seaforth!

and the spaghetti and balls and lasagna were satisfying. The main interest was the hot springs, however, where George Washington was known to have spent his summers bathing. Before heading out on Saturday, I convinced Mark to "take to the bath", a 100°F and very invigorating mineral water Roman Bath, which was followed by a refreshing crisp morning walk. Life

An overcast day that eventually became sunny, we continued through the rolling hills and farmlands, following the base of the Appalachian Mountains, until Stroudsburg (US 422 to US 501 to Interstate 78 to Route 61 to Route 443 to Route 895 to US 209), located at the beginning of the Delaware Water Gap. Here a smelly room in a budget motel was a sign not to chance the restaurant;



a feast from the grocery store, including Vermont cheddar, crackers, New Brunswick sardines, apples, rye bread, pastrami, avocado & hummus, and the Our Dog Blue topped off the day.

The next day, we followed the Delaware River (US 209) through the Water Gap to Bushkill, where we stopped to hike into the Bushkill Falls. \$16 less and 2 hours later, the roaring falls and creeks dubbed the “Niagara of PA” were experienced as well as the not so friendly hospitality of those trekking to the Poconos from the nearby cities (some folks need a lesson in southern manners). Anxious to be on the road again, as the temperature had climbed at least 15 degrees while on the hike, we headed out top down and reached Middletown, NY by early afternoon (US 6). Seeing a sign at a country store for Hershey’s ice cream, and determined to have a good Hershey’s experience, we stopped. But alas, the Heavenly Hash in a pint size box turned out to be a heavenly blob of marshmallow, most of which became a heavenly mess (on US 211). So much for the Hershey experience!

Opting to head northeast (US 17K and Route 9D), we entered into the very busy area of Poughkeepsie before continuing on along the Hudson River (the stop-and-go Routes 9/9G). Hindsight

being what it is, north into the Shawangunk Mountains would have been better. At Hudson, the Berkshire Hills were calling, so we headed to Pittsfield, Massachusetts (Routes 66 and 295), then into Vermont (US 7) through the Green Mountains. This was a very nice drive, however, the temperature had dropped into the 50’s. Tired, cold and hungry, we found a small inn called the Killington Pico and later a pub in the Cortina Inn at the base of Killington Peak near Mendon (outside of Rutland, Vermont) (US 4). A couple of large local Rutland brews, a burger and pizza, and the final predictable episode of Survivor ended the day.

Now Day 5, Monday, Mark and I woke to a frosty sunny morning, and after taking a outdoor hot tub and finishing a quick continental breakfast, we buckled up anticipating a leisurely two day drive back home in familiar territory.

Unfortunately Lil Bit had other things in mind. Being that it was at near freezing temperatures, it figured that the Spit would be a bit cranky starting. After chugging up and coasting down hills for 17 miles, however, it was evident that something was not as it should be. Literally coasting into a gas station at West Bridgewater (no cell phone service here), Mark found a pay phone and called a British car service shop in Putney, Vermont. The mechanic recommended tapping the carburetor float bowl to release a potentially stuck

needle valve, which was thought to be allowing fuel to spill out of various ports. He also provided the name of a local shop in Wilder, Vermont. After traveling a trouble-free 955 miles, the Spit hobbled another 6 miles to Bridgewater, and came to a halt on a sharp turn. It was 10 am and time to call AAA.

One hour and 15 minutes later found us in the tow truck heading to Wilder. Three Audi/BMW/Mercedes “experts”, as evidenced by the parking lot, examined the Spit and determined that it had “issues”. Other than the carburetor, they concluded that the Spit had a loose front-end, bad connecting rod bearings, cracked exhaust manifold, a slipping clutch, and possibly body work around the sills. Uh, oh. The carburetor problem turned out to be a faulty float, which had filled with fuel. Draining the fuel and coating the float with a gas-resistant sealant fixed the problem. The rat-a-tat-tat, deemed to be the rod bearings, was thought to be a result of low oil pressure and worn bearings. It was recommended that the 20W50 oil be replaced with straight 40 weight. This done, but not prepared to spend all our life savings at a garage in Vermont, we left Wilder, confidence shaken by what later turned out to be an alarmist bunch of mechanics. Tuned into every noise, rev and bump, we gingerly drove to Bethel, Maine (US 5, US 302/115, US 2), arriving late in the evening.

Hoping for a day that would take us to the border, we left Bethel behind at dawn. At Bangor, Maine a stop for a much needed coffee at the Vault Café





(best coffee ever!) picked up our spirits. A straight run was made into Calais (US 9), where a six-pack of Sea Dog Old East India Pale Ale was obtained (in keeping with the theme). Only quizzical looks at the car and the plates were encountered at US Customs. Waiting at Canadian Customs, Mark collapsed in a chair at the far corner of the room, relieved to have reached the border, but looking mighty guilty at the same time. My insistent glance brought him to the desk, where, after seeing the declaration form, the official cheerily announced, "Oh you have a car, I need a form". He checked out the VIN, deducted the \$750

allowance, and of course charged the obligatory 6.1% duty and 7% GST. It took half an hour. Wow! The Kentucky plates must have made it seem that this was too crazy to be of concern!

Now in New Brunswick, it was 2 pm, and a nutrition stop was required. A small restaurant conveniently located on the side of the highway in Pocologan on the Bay of Fundy fitted the bill with a feed of clams before heading to Sussex (Rt 1). The windshield wipers had previously quit working in Saint John, and as fate would have it, intermittent showers began. Not to be out done, Mark wiped the windshield with Rainex at a gas sta-

tion outside of Moncton. (Just hang on Lil Bit!). On the Trans Canada Highway near Memramcook, an Royal Canadian Mounted Police car zoomed by then quickly shrank back and slipped behind the Spit, where he tailed for several miles before deciding that it wasn't as suspicious looking as originally thought. Black clouds, blue skies and rainbows accompanied us through New Brunswick and into Nova Scotia. Not until arriving home in Seaforth did the skies finally clear. Home at last, after a long but relatively uneventful day.

1675 miles later, Lil Bit had made it! ■



Carla- The Spitfire Mechanic

BY KEITH RICE, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

Just got back from British Car Day South held a couple hours from my home. I really enjoy looking and taking snapshots of all the LBC's. Got a lot of great ideas for my own Spit and talked to a lot of interesting people.

However, a problem occurred after I arrived home from the event. As it was when I left the car show I took the Interstate highway home. It was a pleasant 80 degree sunny day. I had the top down on the Spit and with the radio blaring I really let it rip down I-40. My wife Carla, who was following in our ZX-2, said I simply roared out of sight (I am sure an exaggeration on her part!) and see me anymore until we arrived home. I explained I was just being cautious of all the 18-wheelers on the Interstate and I wanted to stay out of their way. To this she replied "Driving like James Bond is not being cautious!" But what can I say, getting behind the wheel of my

Triumph Spitfire seems to make the world my oyster. (I also imagine a martini in hand, shaken not stirred or coarse.)

Anyway, back to reality. The next day as I zip down to the local quick mart in the Spit for a fillup of premium petrol - I noticed the engine isn't idling smooth at all. As a matter of fact, when I'm sitting at the stop sign in front of my house - "Ginger" (my Spits name) cuts off completely. Trying to restart simply flooded the engine. I quickly pushed her back into the driveway (thank God she hardly weighs more than I do!) and lift the bonnet to take a look. I gather all of my necessary tools - my Haynes 1500 Manual, my TR owners manual and spec sheet, and phone to call a local mechanic who has some LBC experience. I discover the sparkplugs are fouled so it is time to replace them. I figured work on the carburetor particularly adjustments to the idle screw and throttle stepped screw are also in order. O'boy, I think this is a big problem!

About this time Carla walks over and observes my "panic stricken state" and says she wants to take a look. I snicker to myself and roll my eyes as only I can and say "go ahead". Carla has

up, but still with a rough idle almost flooding out. Carla, standing behind me at this point says "go ahead and change the air filter and "Ginger" will run great. There is no need to work on the carb as it



solved a lot of dilemmas and calmed my "somewhat manic disposition" in the past, but hey, this is the internal combustion engine. You know, a realm of masculinity, a mans world so to speak. So I'm waiting for a reply like, did you check the tires, maybe the fan belt is loose, or could it be the car just needs washing. Guffaw, Guffaw!! I can hardly wait! After a few minutes of silence Carla looks up and says, well, the plugs are obviously fouled, but the carb is not getting clean air. Just put in a new air filter and clean or replace the plugs and she'll be fine. I practically roll on the ground with laughter.

A while later we head to the local Advance Auto Center and I select some Bosch platinum plugs and with a grin and a wink, a purrolater air filter. And yes, it's just like the factory filter. When I get home, I replace the plugs, making sure the gap is between .024 to .026 just like the manual states and torque the plugs in just right. I turn the key and the Spit fires

was running great before this happened". Once again I grin and roll my eyes while I take the cover off to replace the filter. As I pulled the old filter out I notice it has Birmingham, England 1979 printed on it. Well I'll be I exclaim! This filter has been in for over 20 years. Now it is Carlas turn to laugh as I can also see the "I told you so" look in here eyes. I finished putting the new filter in and secured the cover. "Ginger" fire right up with that familiar English growl at a steady 1200 rpm's. Carla pats me on the shoulder and says in a somewhat consoling (or actually humorous) voice, "The plugs probably did help". The she hops in the Drivers seat - sticks it in 1st gear-gives me a grin and roars off down the highway.

Come to think of it, I don't recall James Bond being mechanically inclined. But it is great having a mechanic in the family. ■

The GT6 Addiction

BY DAVID MOORE, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

Many romantics have said that there is something special about your first, whatever it might be. In this case it was not a GT6 but a lowly red, 1957 Morris Minor 1000, my first car. She was rough but you didn't get much for \$25 back in 1966. She would pop out of second and her right front frame section was gone only because it did not have the good fortune of being under the engine breather pipe like the one on the other side. I had driven her only a month before the guy I bought her from had to have her back. He could live no longer without her, so for a \$10 profit she went back.

Unfortunately, the damage was done. I was hooked, hooked on English cars. It was only a month or so before I was able to locate another Morris. This one a gray 1960, 2 door, in a much better condition. The price was premium, \$125. She lasted through high school and into college but that little hose between the head and the block sprung a leak in a New England cold snap. For a couple days I got away with draining the block each night, but one day it was just to darn cold and she froze by lunch time. It cracked the block but she still ran great. I repaired the hose on the next warm spell but I was getting a lot of oil in the radiator. There was no way I could swap an engine outside in the winter, even if I could find one and I could not afford another set of wheels. I was over come with a crazy idea. It didn't look like the oil was causing a real big problem in the radiator so why not replace all the water with light oil. I was desperate and had nothing to lose. I got another 2 months out of her before the warm weather set in and she lost her cool. Gas station attendants were shocked when I would pour oil into the radiator. In spite of their pleas, I told them it was good to lubricate the water pump.

I tried Volvos, VW's, Fiats and even a Chevy but it was never the same. They didn't require any love, you just drove them. The dealer that I used to get my Morris parts was also a MG/Triumph dealer and he was just a few miles away from my house. I could not help but to dream each time I road by but my part time job would only support college and cheap cars.

Uncle Sam intervened; I lost my draft deferment and had to leave college. That didn't last long because of a convenient undiscovered medical condition - and I was home in 2 months. I had missed the semester so I went to work full time in the foundry. The year off from college worked out great because it gave me enough money to make a serious visit to the friendly MG/Triumph dealer. A friend, who had also started with a Morris and caught the bug, had just purchased a TR4A. I wanted a MG, but it just so happened that a 3 year old, 67 GT6 had just come in. "Take her for a spin" the salesman said - and that is what I did. My dad had to hold me back and do the bargaining. I was in love. She was beautiful, white, wire wheels and a new set of sneakers. I had to wait a few sleepless days and nights for some spots to be repainted. She ran like a top, the only warranty work was to go back and have all the tubes replaced. The dealer that put on the new tires used old 12" tubes in my new 13" Dunlops and they would not hold air. After about 6 months I had her painted in 1968 Chevy Fathom Blue lacquer. The man did an awesome job with all 15 coats. The paint looked so deep you could see the world in it.

I lived in that car for the next two years with very few repairs. I did put in a clutch and had a terrible time keeping wheel weights on those wires. I went back to college and began working at Sears in the garage on the tire line. Balancing the front wheels was a weekly event. I seriously considered getting rid of the wires because I kept loosing spines on the front ones. No matter how tight I tried to get those knock offs - I would spin a spline about every 6 months. I think I cleaned out every junkyard in the area of wire wheels and hubs, even the one with the big mean dog. One afternoon I was liberating another wheel and hub assembly and this great big German Shepherd came up from behind and took a piece out of my back side. The owner called him off but it was to late. When I went to the office to pay for my parts I asked for a discount for the "pound of flesh" I left behind. They didn't believe me so I dropped my pants in front of the patrons of this fine establishment. All I got was laughs but no break.

When she was tuned and balanced, she would fly. I tried my friend's cars,

Austin 3000, Datsun 240Z, Jag E type, MGB but there was nothing like the intimacy of my GT6. I could always tell when the gasoline dealer was filling the hi-test tank with cheap stuff. I had installed an 8 track behind the passenger's seat under the deck. Good tunes and an open road were hypnotic. One day I was headed home from school on a brand new stretch of Interstate 495. It was so new I was the only car in sight at 11 AM on a Friday morning. Good tunes in the deck, mind off in space somewhere and just enjoying the trip, when out of no where, there is a trooper standing on the side of the road, flagging me down. I could have seen him from miles away - but I hadn't. I immediately hit the brakes and by the time the shock wore off and I looked at the speedometer, I saw the needle slide past 75, I finally pulled over and had to back up about a mile but I figured this was it. I killed the tape, rolled down the window and looked at him, "How do you like your car?" he asked. This was an opening line of a big problem, he was going to have it towed, me cuffed, arrested, the whole deal. I knew I was traveling Mach I. I timidly replied with "Its really nice." The next question was about the motor, then how did it handle... and so on. Then I got out and opened the bonnet, he gave me a lesson on the radar gun...and so on.

He was only a year older than me, just out of the academy and bored. In the next half hour, I don't think 4 cars came by. Well it was time for me to move on - and I think he was on his way to look for a Triumph dealer on his next day off. He did ask me how fast I thought I was going and I said maybe 75 - but the car was running so great I sort of lost track. He said he clocked me at 94. She was running so smooth that day I never would have guessed it. He said he had to give me a warning but only for 70, and with a little advice to be careful, not every trooper enjoys Triumphs.

All went well for about three years until I developed a noise in the back of the car. It sounded like a rear wheel bearing so I replaced them. That seemed to work for a while but the noise returned. Next were the universal joints in the axles but it was still there. This was getting expensive so I called in the professionals. It was an intermittent problem and it just would not rattle when the mechanic took her out. After 3 years I knew every nuance of the car and I knew something was wrong but could never

nail it down. It never got any worse but it was annoying.

I was near the end of college and was about to begin my student teaching assignment. The first day, all decked out and I was off for my first time in front of the kids, about 25 miles from home. She was running great that day, 65 on the highway and my mind is in front of the kids, plotting my classroom strategy. Here comes the exit, and I back off the accelerator and KABOOM!! My first reaction, from that God awful bang, was to duck. I still had control of the car, I look around and I see no signs of trouble. What the hell had just happened? I continued to coast over to the side of the road, just trying to figure out what had just happened. There was now a noise similar to a loose wheel but still nothing like that explosion. I came to a stop and got out of the car. Here I am, jacket and tie, and I am suppose to be in front of my first class in 30 minutes...and now I have a major problem with my Triumph. The first thing I noticed was that the rear wheels now have a slightly positive camber like a Corvette with a fat man inside. I got down on my knees and looked under the back. There is oil everywhere and the differential seems to be lower than it was...the last time I looked under there.

I figured there is no way I am going to repair this problem so I might as well get in and see if she moves. I did and she did, but it definitely did not sound good. I figured, what the heck, I have got to get to school and there is nothing I can do to fix it. It was a different world before cell phones. I was almost to the school, rolling along at 25 MPH and I made a wrong turn. No problem, we will just pull into this driveway and turn around. When I went to back out - the rear end locked up. It would not even roll backwards down a hill. What next, stuck in somebodies driveway, and I'm running out of time. I jumped out and went to the door to to the homeowner that I would have to turn the car around in her backyard, on her lawn, and I would be on my way. I must have been babbling, near panic and she had no idea what I was taking about but she said fine anyway. I jumped back into the car and just hoped that the car would move forward again. She moved forward, but as I pulled into her backyard I realized that there was not enough room to turn, even with that small radius. The only way out was to start down the road, through a few back yards until I found a

way out. There just wasn't time to tell the story to the whole neighborhood and what if someone said NO! I lost count of the yards and gardens, 3,4,5,...I don't know but I finally got back out into the street.

After the rough ride I finally arrived at the school and survived the first day. There was no way I wanted to have it towed 25 miles and the rear end was shot anyway so I headed out home on the back roads. The racket got louder and louder as I got closer to home. It was agony to listen to that screaming rear end but I had no choice. I got to within 2 miles of the house when I had to call it quits. It had gotten too hot and I was afraid of fire so I pulled into a friendly garage and said, "tow it please". The post mortem revealed that the bolts in the ring gear had all come loose and one of them had backed out enough to get caught on an internal web. This was just enough to temporarily stop things from turning at 65 MPH, thus the loud noise. The temporary seizure was enough to rip the differential free from the top mount, thus the positive camber. After disconnecting the axles and drive shaft, the differential dropped to the ground. There was no need to open it up because of the fist size hole in the top where the spring mount used to be.

I scoured every junkyard within 100 miles and no rear ends, just cavities. It seems as though this was a common problem in early GT6's. I ended up waiting for a friend to sell his to an idiot who rolled it over, about three months later. It was like waiting for someone to die for a transplant. I took time to disassemble this one before installation and found the same loose bolts. A little Loc-tite and I was able to sleep a little better after the first horror show. Although it was a special car, I had just gotten married and it was not very practical so it was soon sold.

After about a year the bug bit again and I bought a 1958 MGA from a friend. It was a project car that he had lost interest in. A little TLC and it was road worthy again- but it was never the same as the GT6. After about 5 years I found another GT6,

who had an owner, that had to have a MGA. The 1967 GT6 was a little rough but for it and \$1000 he got the MGA. This was a sign of GT6 madness and not one of wise economics. The first order of business was to pull the rear end and Loc-tite those ring gear bolts. I drove this one for about 2 years with no complications other than a broken key way on the rear axle. As much as I tried on a limited budget I could not keep ahead of the rust and the floors finally got the best of her. I put her on the blocks but she was eventually sold off as a parts car years later.

About 15 years ago I picked up a basket case 63 TR4 and have been slowly picking away restoration. It has gotten to the point that she is painted and ready for the finer details but there was always something missing. I kept saying "Once you drive her, you will love it". In spite of the self pep talks I always kept an eye out for another GT6. At a cruise night not long ago, in the midst of fields of muscle cars and pristine antiques I spotted a gent with a GT6. My heart stopped and I spent the better part of the night drooling on his car and dreaming. As far as I was concerned there was no other cars in the field.

It has been over 30 years since I drove my first GT6 and a lot of water has gone over the dam. The shortness of life has become a reality and I decided it was time to act on this dream. I had been surfing on the net for GT6's for years, dreaming, looking for the perfect deal that would fit the budget but with no luck until last week. I spotted one through the VTR web page in Orlando, not far from my brother-in-law mechanic. After much thought, and my wife's support, I finally made the decision to go for broke and do it. Today, a 1970 GT6+ is in the garage. She needs paint but she sure fills the void. ■

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The Ascetic In A Spitfire

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREGORY HERTEL, CANADA

Ritual. We're talking ritual man. The yearly cycle is not marked by the changing seasons or a calendar, but rather by the rituals of Spitfire ownership. These rituals are the yardsticks by which we measure our annual journey. An annual journey in time machines that restore the dreams of our youth, inspire us, motivate us, and makes the journey of our lives, the journey of our lives.

Historically, seasonal ritual has always had an implicit place in the belief systems of all world cultures. For example, in ancient Greece, the annual Festival of Dionysus celebrated the recurring patterns of birth, maturity, death and rebirth. To the adherents of Dionysus, seasonal ritual was necessary, vital, and a roadmap to their annual journey.

Likewise to the Spitfire owner, seasonal rituals mark the annual journey of ownership.

Spring

Aaron Copland's "Fanfare For The Common Man" blasts on the boombox. A neighbour pokes about his garden looking for the early signs of spring and looks briefly in my direction. The drums boom, then the trumpets blast. The overcast sky is still shedding a few faint end of winter, April 1st snowflakes. It's bloody cold out, but it is April 1st and that means the start of another Spitfire season no matter what the weather. The trumpets blare as I lift the garage door. The intoxicating, faint smell of stale oil greets me. The shrouded vehicle rests upon a moisture barrier - a blue vinyl tarpaulin. On top of which, is a layer of dense blue house insulation, covered with three large oil-stained sheets of plywood. It is still.

Copland's music plays on as I respectfully pull back the tarpaulin and lift the car cover with an, anticipatory, climactic tug. (Is this how Harry Webster did it on October 17, 1962 at the Earls Court Motor Show?) There it is. Three and a half months have elapsed. It looks just the same. Constant. Time standing still on four Dunlop radials.

Key in ignition. Unlock the steering. One hand on the steering wheel, one hand in the driver's side rear wheel arch, and PUSH. PUSH! (Flat spot.) Rock it. Rock it. Rock it and PUSH! A couple of squeaks, and ummph, it rolls out on to the driveway. Daylight. Lift the Michelotti bonnet latches and survey the dominion - sleeping. Waiting.

Ratchet the plugs in after an extra

squirt of oil. Be sure the battery terminals are clean and connect the leads. One more visual check. Open the door, sit in the seat leaving the door open, reach under the dash for the choke, pull it out and lock it. Double pump. Double pump. Turn the key... "Houston we have liftoff at thirty-two minutes past the hour."

It's chugging, it's shaking, it's smoking, but it's on. Let it warm up a bit. Let it warm up. As the revs slowly start to build, gently start releasing the choke. Keep your foot on the accelerator and gingerly keep the revs up. Let it warm up. Let it warm up. Snowflakes are fluttering a bit more. The convertible top is hard from the cold. Wait a few minutes.

Everything in the car seems stiff. My breath fogs up the windscreen. Still shaking, but the engine is getting stronger. It's almost idling where it should be. Close the bonnet. Do a circle check of all the lights. Test the horn. The radio works. All electrics a-ok. Let it warm up. Push the clutch. Push the clutch. Firm. Close the car door. Put the tangled seatbelt on. Clutch in, engage reverse. Accelerator up. Clutch out - slowly. Look through the slightly yellowed rear window. Moving. Narrow driveway - watch not to brush against the wall or the Volvo wagon. Reverse gear whine. Slight bump down. Brake - slight squeal. Turn the wheels. Forward. We're on the road again.

Quick spin around the neighbourhood. Engine sounds good. Brake squeal lessening. Clutch taking up smoothly. Most everyone is still in bed.

It's early Saturday morning. Only the odd cat sees me drive by - indifferent to this rite of spring.

Following Monday, early. Drive the car to Wilf Eden at Hub 94. There's always interesting British cars there for repair. Like today, there's a white XK 120 Jaguar convertible in the corner, a two-tone black and green Austin A40 wagon up on car jacks, and an engineless BRG 2.4 MK I Jaguar waiting to be brought back to life.

Give Wilf the list of spring maintenance to be carried out. In addition, ask to have the new gaiters installed on the tie-rod ends, new outer door window seals and a new front left wing sidemarker lamp plint. What are the odds of having a master mechanic that specializes in British cars, just around the corner, not more than three minutes from home? Can it get any better than this?

Early spring British car shows to attend. Swap meets. Club outings abound for the classic British car owner. Friends drop by: Don in his 71' TVR 2500 and Tom in his 70' Mk III. "Looks great you guys." Spring has sprung. The top can finally be put down. Feel the sun and wind. Inhale. Rejuvenating. Invigorating. First spring drive with the top down.

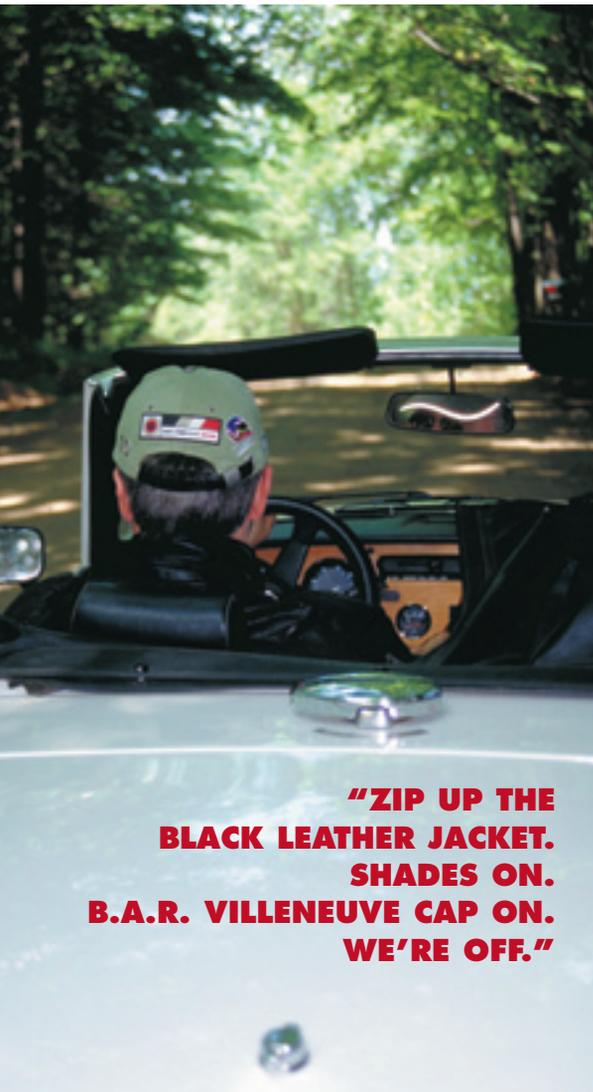
Summer

Weeks on. Not much time to drive. Life. Work. Family. Children. Commitments! Where are those moments to escape in the car? Make up any excuse to drive it. "Sure honey, I'll go pick up your pumps at the shoe repairman." (Rats, she'll do it herself later.)



Steal odd hours, like six a.m. Sunday morning (Oh god, it's so early...) to thoroughly clean, wash, polish, vacuum and treat the vinyl. Meguiarize those tires damn it! Gleaming. "Dear, are you finished yet?" "Sure honey, just five more minutes and then I thought I'd go for a quick spin if you don't mind..." Did the earth just stop spinning? Why the scowl and eyes rolling backwards? Did I say something wrong? Family. Children. Life.

Breakaway, finally! A roadtrip in the Spitfire and an early summer adventure. Sun is up. Barely. Dew on the grass. A slight early-morning fog. Chill in the air. Put the top down and the tonneau cover on. Windows up. It's going to be cold on the highway. Zip up the black leather jacket. Shades on. B.A.R. Villeneuve cap on. (I know, I know B.A.R. sucks.) Don arrives. We're off.



**"ZIP UP THE
BLACK LEATHER JACKET.
SHADES ON.
B.A.R. VILLENEUVE CAP ON.
WE'RE OFF."**

The Classic Vintage Weekend at Mosport is the destination.

Back country roads all the way, once we clear the city. The sun gets higher. Stop for coffee. Chat. Listen to the engine purr. "Chilly for sure, eh?"

Arrive at Mosport. Do the indifferently slow, drive into the car park slow drive, so everyone can see you arrive. Pretend you don't see them staring at you as you drive in. Park on the field with other British classics. Part of the club, the secret society, the subtle winking approval of other British car owners. God I love it.

Later, with a break in the races, a chance to drive some parade laps. "Let's do it Don." In the parade, seven or eight cars behind the pace car. "No passing and keep it under 60 km." (As if.) A Lotus Seven in front of me and a Mini Cooper behind me. God, what a track. The back straight elevation, after Moss Corner, must rise up one hundred feet! Engine straining. Suspension squishy in the corners. Now I understand why racing modifications are required. Feel like I'm barely moving compared to the vintage race cars I've seen duking it out on the track. Bring on all comers, I'm Graham Hill and this is the Canadian Gran Prix of 1969. (Great job Panoz Group. The track and pit improvements are long over-due.)

Buzz home. Take detours to find the most interesting and windy country roads. Up and down the Oak Ridges Moraine. Push the car in the corners and take the racing line. A bit of understeer. Bug splats on the windscreen. The sun is really hot now. A great day. Summer. Spitfire. Sublime.

Summer moves on. The days begin to get shorter. Do you ever wish that those top-down, warm summer nights would never end? That you could stop time and hold on to those perfect nights and cruise endlessly? The nights when you are alone with the tonneau cover on and some great tunes playing on the radio. It's on those warm summer nights that time does stand still in a Spitfire.

Fall

Chet Baker singing "Autumn Leaves" always does it. Regret, resignation to the inevitable death of love and the season. It's all in his voice and the lyrics of the song. Nobody does it better than Chet. It's fall man. Holiday's over. Back to school. Get serious again. Only a few more top-down weekend jaunts.

The death of play.

Late September. One glorious fall day. (The weather never disappoints.) It's the Toronto Triumph Club's annual British Car Day at Bronte Creek Provincial Park in Oakville. A nippy early morning pilgrimage - one of the last top-down trips of the year. Nine hundred plus cars on the field. Thousands of people. The coming out party for this year's restorations. Sixty plus Spitfires. Gleaming. Glittering. Gorgeous. So many models - mostly Mk III's, Mk IV's and 1500's. So many variations. So many colours. So many modifications. (A wooden block of 2 x 4 resting on a 1500 engine with the words, "Lucas block heater" hand written on it - cute!) So much enthusiasm for the marque.

Pass out postcards for Spitfire & GT6 Magazine - "You mean there's a magazine for Spitfire owners? Cool. Thanks." Kudos to the Toronto Triumph Club. Time standing still on the field. Perfect.

Gotta start making way in the garage rafters for the patio furniture. Don't want anything to fall on the car during the winter. The convertible top loses it's flexibility as the temperature drops. Steam comes out of the tailpipe and the defroster is required on the windscreen when you start up. Stealing a quick spin is rare. The fall progresses, and like an unused child's shovel and pail in a sandbox, a melancholy Spitfire waits in the garage. Waiting.

The last run of the season is unpredictable. No driving in the fall rain. Don't want moisture to collect underneath and stay there during the winter. Never know year to year when to put it away.

Got caught out one day two years ago when I drove it to work and it snowed! "Oh my god, snow! What's the moisture going to do to the undercarriage?" Nursed it home in the slushy, salt-laden, sloppy wet snow. "Oh my god. Oh my god." Had to wait till the weekend to hose the undercarriage and get the salt off. (No rust, PLEASE!) Left it in the garage for the next week with three electric fans blowing underneath to dry it out. Thank god it worked.

Just have to wait now for a cold dry weekend to take it out for a final run. "Always put it away hot" says Wilf.

Early December. The plants in the garden are frost-bitten dead. Cleaned the leaves out of the eavestrough. The rafters in the garage are jammed.

Today's the day. Put on the black armband. Last run of the year. Top up. Windows up. Heater on. Now I appreciate the engine heat in the cockpit. Go. Lakeshore Blvd. is clear. Buzz along by the lake on the expressway. The condensation behind the temperature gauge glass disappears as the needle hesitantly moves towards normal. Stay in the slow lane. Keep it around 120km. Nice to have overdrive on the highway. Tunes on CJRT all jazz radio. Geezes, it's Chet Baker singing "Autumn Leaves". Is this fate or what? Ritual closure man.

The blue vinyl tarpaulin goes up the sides of the garage again. On top of the blue insulation rests the three sheets of oil-soaked plywood. The car is hot. It was a good run. Everything's working as it should. Inch up to the plywood and gently crawl up on to the winter bed. Turn it off. Listen. Silence. Exhale. (It's only a car damnit, not the death of a loved one.)

Pull out the key. Let it cool for a few minutes. Fill up the gas tank with gas from a gas can. Don't want any condensation in the gas tank during the winter. Pop the bonnet latches. Disconnect the battery and take it out. Ratchet out

the plugs. Be sure to number the spark plug cables with masking tape so they go back on the right plugs next April 1st. Squirt a little motor oil into the the spark plug holes. Anything else? No. Drop the bonnet. Close the latches. Cover the car with the blue cotton car cover. Is it? Yes, it is. It's snowing. Stand back in the driveway. Draw up the blue tarpaulin. Close the garage door. Put the lock on. It's been a good Spitfire year.

Winter

Bummer. Tres quelle bummer man. Haunt magazine stores waiting for Classic and Sportscar, Practical Classics, Triumph World - anything British. Dust the diecast models. Re-read Graham Robson's, John Thomason's, James Taylor's and Michael Cook's books on the Spitfire. Look for "Legends of Motorsport" on Speedvision, especially the Spitfires at Le Mans in 1965 episode. Dream of spring and that first drive with the top down. Put on the trickle charger. Wait.

Every time it snows, trudge up the driveway to the garage to get the shovel. Open the garage door. There it is. Waiting.

Shovel. Shovel. Shovel. Look back up the driveway and there it sits. Waiting.

February is the half-way point. Clean the plugs. Check the gaps. Make excuses to go to the garage and peek under the car cover. It's still there. Waiting.

Dreary, rainy, foggy, mucky. Early perennials begin poking through the slush in the garden. The snowbank in the driveway shrinks. Everyday the clock ticks louder - It's half past March. Anticipation. Call the insurance company. "Yes, that's right. Put the coverage back on at 12:01 a.m. April 1st." Greater anticipation. Can hardly wait. Can't sleep the night before...

Spring

Aaron Copland's "Fanfare For The Common Man" blasts on the boombox and the cycle begins again.

It's not the destination, it's the journey. The journey of our lives and the lives of our journeys in our Spitfires. Ritual. We're talking ritual man. Go. ■

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The Making Of A SpitCat Part 6 (final)

BY ANDY PREVELIG, FLORIDA, USA

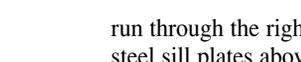
I had the beginnings of the brake system now with the installation of the two Tilton master cylinders. Now for the brake lines: Unfortunately you can't just order a set of brake lines for a SpitCat, and no other car that I know of has the same routing path and length for the lines, so all the lengths and bends of the lines must be custom fabricated to fit. I bought several 60" lengths of standard 3/16" steel brake lines and several line couplers from a local auto parts store. I would need particularly long lines at the rear because the E-type rear end assembly was from a right-hand-drive Jaguar and so the brake line from that unit needed to turn 180 degrees before running across the rear cockpit bulkhead and down and though the left rocker panel to the left-hand master cylinder.

Since I would be fabricating my own lines, I needed two special-purpose tools: a tubing bender and a double-flare tool. Both were bought via mail order for less than ten dollars each. The tubing bender does a nice job of curving the steel brake lines in a smooth curve (up to 180 degrees) without any kinking. To make a secure and leak-proof connection to the brake components, you need a double flare at the ends. As the name implies, this type of end flares out, and then flares back in, as illustrated below.

Standard Flare



Double Flare



I planned to route both the rear brake lines and the fuel lines through the left rocker panel, while the electrical cables from the rear would be

run through the right rocker panel. Both steel sill plates above the rocker panels are attached with pop rivets to allow easy removal in case any future repairs are needed.

Using the double flare tool turned out to be tricky. First, if the clamping system is not very, very tight, the tubing will be pushed out a little ways while screwing down the flaring bit. This results in a half-finished flare. Also, the height that the tubing end protrudes above the clamping block is critical; too low and you get that half-done flare men-

tioned above; too high and the double flare is fine, but it is formed at a tilted-over angle which would not provide the desired seal. But, with a little practice, the tool produced the proper double flares with little effort.

For the front, I wanted the lines to run as straight and as short as possible from the master cylinder and to run along either panels or frame members for protection. The line from the master cylinder was routed along the top of the left-hand sub-frame which connects the driver side footwell panel to the left shock tower. From there it branches out from a 'T' connector to run across the top of another brace bar that connects the two shock towers. I wanted stainless steel braided hose for the flexible sections that connect with the calipers, but all my restoration catalogs sold these as sets of four. Since the E-type rear end assembly features inboard stationary calipers, I only needed two braided lines for the front.

I found a racing catalog that offered individual stainless steel braided lines in varying lengths, and was able to order just two. BUT, when they arrived I found they had female connectors at both ends, whereas my system required male connectors between the stationary pipes and the calipers. Time for gender-changing adapters.

Since the braided lines connect directly down behind the shock towers to the calipers, a change in the bonnet props (yes, the SpitCat has two bonnet props) was now necessary. Originally the props hinged rearward as the bonnet was closed. But now that would position them too close to the new brake lines. A simple reversal of the props allowed them to toggle forward where they would not interfere with anything. Luckily they clear the cold-air intake tubes.

BETTER ENGINE COOLING:

While I was working on the front area, I decided to move the oil-cooler radiator up and forward (fortunately the length of the oil lines from the V-12 allowed this), and to install a steel plate which bridged between that unit and the water radiator. This created a configuration where the incoming air from the two

fans is forced to exit through both radiators, improving the cooling.

FRONT SWAY BAR:

A sway bar (along with proper springs/shocks) is used to limit body/chassis roll in hard corners or in extreme transitions such as a tight slalom. Pivoted below the frame, lever arms on a transverse bar connect the lower A-arms (wishbones) of the front suspension on either side so that vertical movement of one side relative to the other is resisted by the torsional stiffness of the bar. Since both the lever arms of the sway bar and the A-arms of the suspension move in different arcs, a ball joint is commonly used at the connections. In tuning the car's handling, various diameter bars are sometimes substituted to vary the torsional resistance. Some sway bars feature one or two additional holes in the lever arm ends to allow limited adjustment of the stiffness of the bar (by increasing or decreasing the leverage advantage) before going to a different diameter bar. Sway bars can be tubular or solid.

The sway bar for the SpitCat is fabricated from a GT-6 sway bar which has been lengthened to accommodate the extra width. The lengthening was done using the same method I had used to lengthen the half-shafts on the previous (ill-fated) rear end design, piecing together the center section of a spare sway bar between two sway bar halves and sleeving this with a length of heavy tubing welded on. This should increase the torsional resistance as well. One other change from the original GT-6 configuration is that the SpitCat sway bar is mounted to the rear of the A-arms rather than in front. This was necessary in order to have the sway bar pivoted to the main chassis frame which is much stronger than the front sub-frame forward of the A-arms. Brackets for the lever arm/ball joint connection to the A-arms were welded on the rear, essentially duplicating those in the front, except for the use of heavier gauge steel plate. "U" bolts through plates welded to the chassis frame underside hold the urethane bushings in which the sway bar pivots.

THE FRONT BUMPER:

If I wanted the option to drive the SpitCat on the street, there were several items that needed to be added to make the car street-legal, including horn, turn signals, lights and bumpers. For the front bumpers, sections of Mk III bumpers would be welded together to increase the width to fit the SpitCat. Although the SpitCat was 14" wider than a Mk III Spitfire, the bumper needed to be lengthened a full 16" because of its curve. (see beginnings of the front bumper below)



Welding would of course discolor the chrome, but this would not be a problem because I would paint the bumpers (probably black), in keeping with my intent to eliminate all chrome.

The earlier model Spitfires have the front bumper positioned below the grill area, and this was raised to almost the top of the grill on the Mk III's I had. I would position the SpitCat bumper as a compromise between these two positions, since that location would allow a cleaner airflow to the two cold-air intakes.

The bumper is attached to the tops of the bonnet hinge brackets and at the bonnet sides, so the bumper pivots with the bonnet, as on the Mk III. One further modification to the front: because the bumper's position now would block the turn signals, they would have to be relocated, later, to the valance directly below. (I realized this before I determined the location of the bumper, but thought that moving the turn signals to the stationary valance would have the additional advantage of fewer electrical wires which had to flex every time the bonnet was raised and lowered.)



THE REAR BUMPERS:

On the early Spitfires, the rear featured small corner bumpers (which would be replaced by a full-width bumper on the later models when they had to meet the new Federal standards in the U.S.A.). With the added width of the SpitCat, those corner bumpers really didn't look like they would offer much rear end protection. I extended each bumper 8 inches to give more protection and a better appearance. To strengthen these, an additional bracket was added near each inboard end.



THE BATTERY TRAY:

I wanted to mount the battery in the boot, on the right hand side for better weight balance, and as low as possible. There was just enough space between the rear sub-frame and the right inner wheel well to fit a frame/tray. The tray was made from 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" steel angle, welded to form a frame on which the battery sits. Two threaded rods connect to a transverse steel angle bar across the outermost top edge of the battery to hold it securely in place. The negative lead from the battery (4 gauge cable) is connected directly to the main chassis frame. The positive lead is bolted to an insulated 'through-bulkhead' connector on the rear firewall. From there, the cable leads through the right-hand rocker panel and up behind the instrument panel to connect to the emergency cut-off switch.

The cut-off switch is a safety device, mounted at the center of the instrument panel (for access from either side of the car) which cuts off all electrical power. This model of switch has an additional circuit which grounds the alternator output through a resistor. This is necessary because even with the main power cut off, the engine could keep running from the alternator output. With its removable key, the switch also functions as a theft deterrent.

THE COWLING REDESIGN:

In a previous part of this series I had mentioned the design of a hinged cowling to provide access to the rear fifth of the engine. One reader asked why I didn't simply make the bonnet that much longer instead. Well, there were two reasons for the 12" deep cowling as a separate piece: First, with that added foot of material, the bonnet would be much more of a chore for one person to raise. Second, if the bonnet were that one foot longer, it could not be fully raised when under the overhead garage door in my workshop.

I had originally designed the cowling to hinge on the cowling support bar (front roll hoop). Because the cowling is curved, the hinge method proved to present a problem. As it swung upward, the outer ends had to swing forward while the center area remained at the rear. Even with a double row of sealing flanges, it was not making a good enough seal to keep engine fumes out of the cockpit. One idea I tried was to use double-jointed hinges which would toggle to first lift upward before pivoting back. The problem with that system is that the steering wheel was in the way (it is very close to the instrument panel). The redesign now simply attaches the cowling at the hoop center and at each corner with DZUS fasteners. Since the removal of the cowling would only be necessary if I needed access to the rear fifth of the engine, it didn't need to be hinged for frequent access. Because the cowling is the full width of the SpitCat instrument panel and cockpit, it fits conveniently across the tops of the doors while removed.

Now I would try to fabricate a widened version of a Spitfire Mk III grill, from one of those white plastic light-diffuser grids you see in office buildings and elevator ceilings (don't laugh, it could save me over \$150.00).

THE GRILL:

It was obvious that I needed a much wider grill for the SpitCat... a full 14 inches wider. Since none of my parts cars had a Mk III or 1500 grill in decent condition, (I had only a portion of a grill, and that was in pretty bad shape) I checked the various British car parts catalogs. Wow— \$80.00 for a plastic Mk III grill, and I would need two of these to piece together. I didn't like the idea of spending \$160.00 plus shipping and handling, and still have to cut, modify and

combine the pieces into the new wider grill.

I had one of those white plastic light diffuser panels for dropped ceiling installations. This is a 2' x 4' panel in a half-inch egg-grate grid pattern. I had bought this for another project a while ago (to make a leaf filter for our pond pump), and had some of this material left over. After some measuring, I found that if I cut away some of the grid cross-pieces, the remainder would be in the same spacing as a Mk III grill. I could also glue strips of the plastic back in to reinforce the grill and bring the members to the same thickness as an original. A bit of work, but using on-hand material (at the original cost of \$8.00) instead of \$160.00+, and a better fit, it would be worth it.

The Mk III grill had six horizontal bars, and the 1500 model had five. I decided to use the five bar design since it seemed like it would give a better air flow. See the various stages of the procedure, compared to an original black grill half, in the photograph below.



The first step was to cut away vertical members, leaving every fourth vertical. Next was to cut away every other horizontal member. This gave the

same vertical spacing as a Mk III grill. The diffuser grid consists of rather thin plastic, so I cemented an additional piece to each vertical member and two pieces to each horizontal, to increase the thickness for appearance and strength.

The two halves of the grill were joined together at the center with plastic horizontals cut into shallow 'V's to produce the proper angle. The assembly is bolted to the 2" lip of the bonnet which runs across the lower front edge. When the bonnet is closed, cut-out areas at each grill end provide clearance for the bonnet hinges, much like the original.

BUT... after the appropriate drying time for the plastic cement had passed, the grill was still a bit shall we say 'flexible'. It seems that the cement that was recommended for this type of plastic never really hardens but remains pliable. That may be fine for many applications,

but you want an automotive grill to be rigid. I was thinking that because the grill would be bolted along the underside lip of the bonnet, this would reinforce it, but after envisioning what would happen if a bird or large stone were to hit this grill at speed, I decided that the plastic grid design would not do.

A trip to Metal Supermarkets, (a local store that is a fabricator's wonderland with racks and shelves filled with all sizes of steel, aluminum and brass rods, bars, angles, tubes and sheets), where I bought lengths of 1/4" square tubing for the horizontals and of 1/8" x 3/8" flat steel bar for the verticals which would be welded behind. Total cost was \$14.36. The guys at this store would have even cut these pieces to my specified lengths at no charge, but I wanted to make sure everything would fit properly by building the grill up in place.

I made a welding jig from a piece of 1/2" plywood, the same width and height as the grill was to be. The positions for the horizontals and verticals were marked onto the plywood and the horizontal square tubes were clamped to the board, as shown in the photograph below.

The five inch vertical bars were



clamped across the verticals, one at a time and welded in place. Once all the verticals were welded on, the grill was bent at the center to the proper angle to match the front edge of the SpitCat bonnet. A section near each end was cut away to clear the bonnet hinges, as in the original grill design. The grill would be bolted to the bottom flange of the bonnet front and would pivot with the bonnet as it was raised and lowered.



So, my 'money-saving' idea of using the plastic grid turned out to be one of my trial-and-error ventures... but it was worth the try.

Relocating the front turn signals: As mentioned before, the position of the widened front bumper made it necessary to move the turn signals down to the valance, as they are on the 1500 model Spitfire.

Fortunately I had not yet discarded the original steel Spitfire bonnet that was used for the fiberglass mold. The front turn signal areas were cut out from this and grafted onto the SpitCat valance, over the locations which I had cut out for them. Then the molded turn signal areas were cut from the fiberglass bonnet and those areas were closed by 'glassing them over to obtain a smooth surface.

THE TRANSMISSION COVER:

One task in fabricating the interior of the cockpit was designing and building the transmission and driveshaft housing. One of the design aspects of this transmission cover was to think ahead a bit, to determine if any future performance modifications would affect the shape of the cover. A look through my Summit Racing Equipment catalog found a performance kit for the SpitCat's G.M. Turbo 400 unit that would convert it for fast, hard upshifts and downshifts at any r.p.m. The best feature is that this modification would not alter the external shape of the transmission, so no changes would be needed to the cover when I added this option.



There are two steel angles which function as vertical supports for the center area of the instrument panel and also form the inner corner of each foot well. The transmission extends into the cockpit between these two vertical

corners. The flat front section of the transmission housing would cover this area between the angles, and be blended into a tapered half-cylinder which covers the transmission and driveshaft back to the rear cockpit bulkhead. At each side it would be attached to the horizontal rails on either side of the transmission. Because the front two-thirds of the housing would be a tricky shape and include some compound curves, I decided to make that portion out of fiberglass instead of steel.

The flat front panel was simple to make. I made a cardboard mockup, fitting this to the angles and instrument panel, with a semicircular cutout at the bottom edge to clear the transmission. With wax paper laid over the mockup, three layers of fiberglass mat were applied and rolled out with resin. When working with fiberglass over a pattern or mold, it is a good idea to apply the mat generously, to extend a bit beyond the edges. The surplus can be trimmed back with a hacksaw blade or sanded after the resin has set, to give you a clean, smooth edge.

The tapered semicircle tunnel was molded inside of a tall Rubbermaid waste basket. This gave a nice smooth finish and didn't require mold release because the fiberglass will not stick to that material. Another advantage to using the Rubbermaid material is that I could deform it temporarily to get the taper that I wanted - from a wide front end to the narrower rear portion of the first section. This section was laid up as just one layer, to get the basic curve and gel-coat finish. When that layer was cured, it was removed from the wastebasket and the second and third layers were applied on the inside to strengthen the tunnel.



By deforming the wastebasket again — this time into an oval to get a smaller diameter cross-section — I was able to lay up the middle section of the tunnel,

reinforcing it on the inside as I had done on the first section. A temporary fitting in the SpitCat cockpit showed me the exact angle that the two sections needed to join at. A few marker pen lines preserved that overlap and angle so the sections could be clamped in the proper alignment again once they were taken off the transmission area and trimmed to eliminate the overlap. With the two sections trimmed and clamped together in the proper position, up-side-down, they were 'glassed together from the inside.

Now back to the SpitCat for fitting the lower edges to mate against the two horizontal rails between the seats. For this I used my usual pieces of cardboard, cut and taped in place to get the correct shapes. The cardboard pieces were then used as patterns for fabricating the fiberglass versions of the 'skirt' pieces. Once these skirts were molded, they were fitted between the transmission cover and rails. To get the exact placement and angles, they were 'glassed temporarily to the cover with small pieces of fiberglass mat as patches on the outside. Then the skirts and cover were removed from the SpitCat and the joints were 'glassed from the inside. Once those inside joints had cured, the temporary patches were sanded off. (Ah, the advantages of working with fiberglass!)

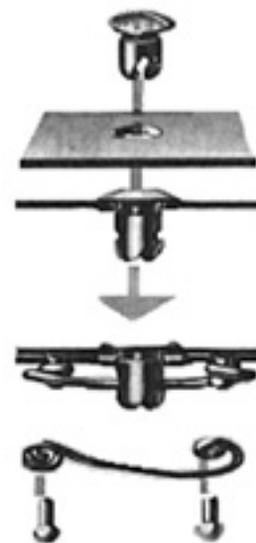


The driveshaft cover: Now that the fiberglass transmission cover was finished, I needed to extend it over the driveshaft area to attach to the rear bulkhead. As mentioned before, this rear section of the tunnel would be made of 11 gauge steel for safety. Using the fiberglass front section as a guide, I had the 'fun' of bending the heavy sheet steel into the proper diameter curve for the tunnel. After a pulled tendon and a bit of cursing, the steel was finally in the desired curve.

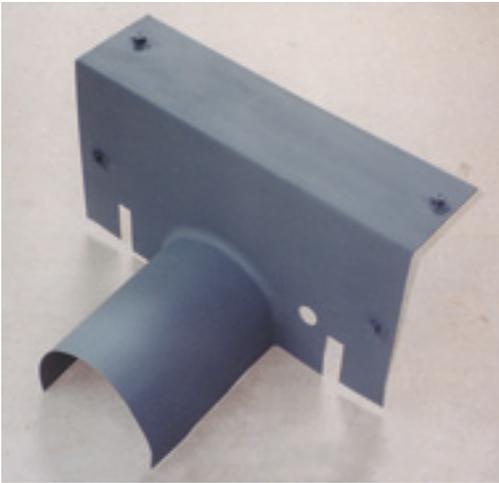
The rear vertical panel was a lot easier to fabricate since it was a flat piece and only 16 gauge. Using a cardboard mockup as a template, the panel was cut

out and bent to form a shelf. This panel would span between the two shelves at either side which formed the rear bulkhead, overlapping them at the top and front. A wide slot was cut at the bottom of the panel, near each side. These were needed to accommodate the racing harness lower mounting plates which extend forward from the vertical chassis members. A 1" hole was drilled near the left side, for the parking brake cable to pass through.

With the rear panel held in position spanning the two shelf sections, 1/8" holes were drilled through both panel and shelves in the four locations where the Dzus fasteners would be installed. The 1/8" rear third of the cover would house the driveshaft and terminate in a vertical panel that spans between the two 'shelf' halves of the rear bulkhead behind the seats. The driveshaft is only 9 1/2" long (and that includes the universal joints/flanges at each end) — short, but it still needed a housing as an extension of the transmission cover. This section would be made from 11 gauge steel for safety. (If one of those universals should fail at 6,000 r.p.m., I wanted more than just a fiberglass shell between a flailing driveshaft and my hip.) The fabrication of this rear steel section would be my next task before the final fitting of the cover to the cockpit with Dzus fasteners. guide holes were bored out to 9/16" for both the "S" springs on the shelf panels and the 1/4-turn fasteners on the new panel.



Typical Dzus Assembly



As with all the Dzus fasteners on the SpitCat, I used the pop-up style which has a coil spring which pops the fastener key up when it is unlocked. An advantage of this style is that the pop-up key is retained in the upper assembly so you can't lose it while a panel is detached.

Installing the 'S' springs for the fasteners proved very tricky. These had to be installed on the inside of both the ver-



tical and horizontal chassis members (2" X 3" steel tubing). Since these members were welded closed at each end, dropping a spring inside during installation would mean losing the spring and adding an annoying rattle. I began by centering the 'S' springs over the 9/16" chassis holes and drilling the 1/8" holes to which the spring ends would be pop-riveted. Next, I epoxied an 1/8" washer

over the attachment eyes at each end of the springs, for the pop rivets to bed down on.

Using a pair of surgical forceps (a handy addition to any tool box), each 'S' spring was angled through the hole, tilted against the rear of the surface and held against the inside surface while a pop rivet was inserted through each 1/8" hole in the spring eye. This was kind of like building a ship in a bottle in the delicacy required. A sigh of relief and a cold beer followed its successful completion.

I fitted the fiberglass and steel sections overlapped inside the SpitCat cockpit and temporarily pop-riveted them together, to see if the cover, as a single unit, could be easily removed for any servicing required. Not very easy! I would have to remove all the instru-

ment panel switches to allow the cover to be slid out vertically. I decided to install the cover as two sections, locked together with more Dzus fasteners, so each section could be removed separately. A layer of aluminized heat/sound insulation was cemented along the underside of the tunnel.

With the body relatively complete except for the final finishing before painting, I wanted to roll the SpitCat out onto the driveway, for two reasons. First, with it parked next to my Mk III Spitfire, I could see the direct size comparisons. Second, this would be the first time I could see the SpitCat profile from a distance, sort of the way an artist needs to step back some distance from the canvas to view the painting he/she is working on.

The next task before final finishing of the body and painting, would be to install some go-fast goodies, all the required engine peripherals (mass air-flow sensors, etc.) and get the V-12 running smoothly. Before too much longer I would be able to test drive the project and sort out the handling.

Stay tuned for the final pictures and all the specs for the SpitCat. ■

TRIUMPH

TR2 · TR3 · TR4-4A · TR6 · TR250 · SPITFIRE · GT6

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PAGEANT BLUE

There's a interesting discussion going on at www.spitfire.nl. There is confusion about the colors JAE and JMA on a 1978 Spitfire, as some people state that JAE is the Tahiti Blue color. Others state that JAE is the Pageant Blue color. Any ideas?

Also, are there both JMA and JNA or is this a misprint by the factory? My car says JMA but the only codes I can find are JNA.

-Menno van Rij

HARDTOP

Does anyone know anything about the hard top that I have. It came with the car when I bought it a few years ago, and I had always thought that it was an amateur job, but I have recently seen a picture on a French web site, of the same roof. The owner of the site thought that his was unique too.



It's made of fibre glass, and seems to be a mould taken from a standard Mk3 Hard top,

with two large, plastic tinted windows in the roof. There is no manufacturers name, or any sort of identification on it.

-Stuart Piercy

ENGINE NUMBERS

I have a 76 spitfire with an engine that I'm sure is older than the car. The # is FM2362UESS. From your website I have determined that it is a 1500 for the USA and is a factory supplied spare or special systems. But, I cannot seem to find the sequence # of 2362 anywhere. Does anyone have info about SS engines?

-Rudy Reyna

TRIUMPHS OWNERSHIP

Who currently owns the Triumph name?

-Tim Christian

FRONT LIGHTS/BLINKERS

I am confused about the color of front running lights and their locations on late 1963-64 North American Spitfires. What commission number did they change to the larger plastic light covers? Does anyone know how long the large, plastic orange ones ran?

-John Goethert

SUPERCHARGERS

Does anyone make a supercharger for a 1300 MK3 Triumph Spitfire?

-Martin Verity

Have an answer or a question?
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or
P.O. Box 30806,
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PULLING HUBS

Today I pulled the hub off the rear axle on a 68 spit. I used a bearing plate and a gear puller. I used a little WD 40 on the shaft and I gave it a couple of light taps with a hammer as I was increasing the pressure on the puller. The bearing plate fit behind the hub and it came off undamaged. I had the axle in a vice and apparently a great deal of pressure on the hub, because as soon as I stepped to the side, the hub popped off and flew across the garage. I did not get hit with it, but certainly could have. I just wanted to warn others that hubs can actually fly off when they finally get loose. Don't position yourself at the end of the axle when pulling the hub.

-Bill White

REAR END NOISES

Spitfires are famous for noise from the back end - tracking it down and changing the right part is not easy, I have come across numerous occasions where the differential is blamed, and sometimes after changing it the same noise would be blamed on the new diff (I was accused of not being able to build them properly "as this one knocks just like the old one - so I've put the old one back in").

Anyway, there can be knocks, rattles, whines or a combination of these - and changing everything gets rather expensive, and one of the most common noises of a knock or rattle when slowing down can sometimes be cured for \$1.

1. Knock or rattle when slowing down - can be one or both sides of the car but the noise will be worst when the pressure is taken of one UJ i.e. if going round a gentle left hand bend slowing down and the noise is worst it is the LH UJ. BUT the noise from the UJ can be the UJ itself (so if obviously old replace), sloppy yokes (the circlip leaves a shiny ring round the UJ cup) or just endfloat in the UJ. Sloppy yokes are a problem if the slop is in the halfshaft bit, the other part that attaches to the diff can be replaced with a new one, but this problem and particularly UJ endfloat (which you cannot check in place as little as .010" will make a noise) can be either cured or much alleviated by fitting thicker circlips. (Not all parts suppliers know this problem and don't keep the clips, they are certainly available from Canley Classics). We found under normal circumstances that one thicker clip each way in a UJ cured the problem.

2. Continuous 'bearing' type noise driving in a straight line, to some extent the noise will be less when the pressure is taken off it - again driving round a gentle left hand bend if the noise is worse then it is the RH side. It is 99% certain that a new halfshaft will be required with a new bearing set as the noise invariably comes from the needle roller eating into the shaft. Don't leave it too long otherwise the needle roller disappears entirely, the shaft runs on the bearing housing and this has to be replaced as well. Yes getting the hub of is very difficult without the correct tool, but

don't bend it otherwise this will need replacing as well and the job gets very expensive.

3. Continuous whining noise, often coming in around 35 mph and disappearing under deceleration. Classic signs of a worn crown wheel and pinion (usually as a result of low oil), replacement diff required. Note it is very unusual for any bearings in a diff to make a noise and invariably they will be the last thing to fail.

4. In twenty years of supplying diffs and working out noises I only once came across worn diff side bearings, it was a fairly simple matter of fitting replacement assemblies, getting the bearing off the shaft is not easy with normal tools. I have not listed any suspension type noises as these are usually associated with poor road surfaces and are generally easier to work out - happy listening and don't get too paranoid. The best way of preventing problems is to grease those rear hubs and check the oil level in the diff.

-John Kipping

COMPRESSION TESTING

In my 30-something years as a mechanic, I have seen on several occasions perfectly good engines torn down because of apparently low compression. The test is done pretty much as described in the article in the last issue, with one or more cylinders coming up low, with "bad valve" symptoms when given the wet test (oil in cylinder).

Upon teardown, everything measures up perfectly!! The culprit is this: When the spark plugs are removed, they sometimes cause combustion chamber deposits attached to the plug to flake off. During the compression test, these bits of carbon lodge between a valve and seat, and presto!! you have a low compression reading.

To ensure this doesn't happen, loosen the plugs one full turn, re-install the HT leads, then fire up the engine briefly. Now any loose bits of carbon have been blown out of the cylinder, and you can proceed with the test as described.

One final point. Well-worn cylinders or rings will allow enough oil around the rings to give false good readings, by virtue of the sealing effect of the oil. Similarly, carbon deposits on piston crowns or cylinder heads may mask a leakage problem by artificially elevating the compression ratio.

If your wallet will stand it, a "leakdown" tester is by far the best way to go. This tool applies compressed air to the cylinder (TDC, valves closed please!) and then measures its rate of escape. Diagnosis is simple, as valve leakage can be heard in either the tailpipe or intake. Acceptable leakage rates for most engines is up to 6% or so.

And speaking of "valves closed", don't forget that a tight valve can reduce your readings. Before doing a teardown, make sure all valves have at least some clearance.

-Bruce Barclay

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Off My Rocker(s)

BY KEVIN D. THOMPSON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

Attempting to do one's own body work, with no real previous experience can be an intimidating process. I have, however, done just that with a recently purchased 1969 Triumph Spitfire Mk3.

Allow me to first fill you in on the background of this purchase, and perhaps you'll have a better understanding of why I attempted this job at all.

Last year I finished a restoration of a '76 Triumph TR6. The only metalwork required were a few small holes in the rockers, which were easily repaired with the help of a borrowed mig welder, and a quick lesson from the welder's owner. A local painter in town did the final prep and paint. The result was exceptional, and made all the work on the car worthwhile. However, I realized I'd never be able to park in a tight parking lot, and that every vehicle on the road was a suspect looming over my nice shiny car with the intent of causing damage. My big dilemma was how to relax whenever my wife took the car out for a ride. After the first couple times, she told me she really didn't care for the TR6. She noticed how much harder it was to steer than the Spitfire we'd sold a few years before, and got nervous that it might get a scratch or damaged in a parking lot. After hearing this, I started to smile, figuring my worries were over. This meant she wouldn't be taking the TR6 anymore. As I turned around to go to the garage, she casually mentioned how much she missed the Spitfire. Needless to say, another adventure began with the search for that next Spit.

That one was found in Connecticut a few weeks later. My friend, Bob, and I arrived at the sellers home in the middle of a downpour, and ran into the garage. As soon as the cover was lifted off the car, we both knew it was coming back with us to Cape Cod, MA. All the original badging was on the car, the chrome was in nice shape, there were no dents, and the interior was perfect. The seller

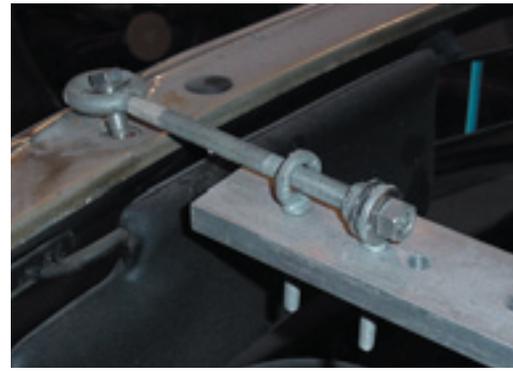
was, in fact, the second owner of the car but never registered it. The only problem was a "little" rust on one of the rockers and a soft front floor section in the passenger side. Anyone with experience here can figure out what else I found once I traileered it home and checked it out closer the next day, in the daylight.....

The entire drivers side rocker was rotted out, along with the front of the rear fender. The passenger side rocker wasn't even metal, but huge amounts of filler with pieces of metal tossed in for shape, and extended to the front section of the rear fender as well. Both front floor sections had been repaired with metal plates, and been secured with rivets, brazing rod, and screws.

After being scared to death that she might cause the TR to get a scratch, my wife gave me instructions not to make the Spitfire too nice, where she wouldn't be able to enjoy simply driving it anywhere she liked. This was fine with me. Hence, the feeling that it was alright to attempt a do-it-yourself auto body project.

I borrowed that mig welder once again. However, one of the toughest parts of the entire job was how, and where, to start. My first move was to consult the collective wisdom of the Spitfire e-mail list. From there, I got some excellent advice, and it proved invaluable as the first thing I needed to do was make sure to brace the door posts before I began cutting anything out. Otherwise, the car would be prone to sagging in the center as soon as I cut out the sills and floor. I made a bracket from a piece of scrap aluminum flat stock and bolted an eye bolt to the end with a few inches of thread on the end for an adjusting point. This was fastened to a soft-top frame rear rail hole, and then to the top of the windshield frame in order to keep the door opening from collapsing inward. I had heard of making this connection between the a-post and b-post, between the doors, but couldn't figure out just how to do that with the doors still in place. Remember, I'm a novice at this!!

After patting myself on the back for keeping the car from becoming instant junk, I proceeded to remove the remaining specs of metal which had been magically supporting itself in mid-air. A butter knife would have worked fine, but I had purchased a pneumatic body saw from a discount tool store and I was determined to use it. The front of the



NEEDED TOOLS:

Mig welder
Angle grinder with abrasive wheels of different grits and a wire wheel
Face shield
Welding gloves
Chisels and hammers
Torch, with Mapp gas
Pneumatic body saw
A-post to B-post support rod of some type
Patience.....and a patient wife!



floor was removed, leaving the better metal on the top couple inches as a place to weld the replacement floor to. Once out, I simply needed to take a wire brush on an angle grinder and clean the edge of the steel to which I would be welding the new piece to. Here's the first lesson on welding: the steel to be welded must be clean! No rust, no rot, no paint. Just clean metal. The cleaner the metal, the cleaner the weld. I learned this through experience when I figured the welding process would naturally heat all the impurities and simply make them disappear. I soon noticed the mig welder was simply spattering wire all over the place, with no real penetration of the metal. After a better cleaning of the surfaces the results were noticeably better. Another lesson: when using any kind of wire brush, whether on a bench top grinder, or in a drill or angle grinder set-up.....always use a face shield!! This became apparent when wire brushing with the angle grinder. I never knew how long those wires were until I had one come out of the wheel and lodge itself between two of my fingers. It actually went in about two inches and still had an inch sticking out, so I could remove it. A chill went up my spine when I thought what could happen without a face shield on and a wire aiming at my face or eye. Ouch!

Well, back to the fun stuff. With the front floor section removed, I needed to think about where to get a replacement. This wasn't going to be easy due to the fact that just the front sections only aren't available, and I'm just too cheap to buy the whole floor and take off half of it. I decided to use one of the cut out pieces as a template, and bang a newly cut piece of metal into shape. This turned out to actually be easier than I thought it would. I used a large ball-peen hammer to shape the bends on a vise and the steel took the shape rather nicely. After many test fittings, the floor panels were ready to go in. Lots of weld, lots of grinding, then more weld. And still more grinding.

Next were the outer sills, or rockers. I used a torch with Mapp gas to remove the front of the rockers, as they're brazed in place. Mapp gas is hotter than propane, but not as hot as acetylene. With a chisel, I gently persuaded the pieces apart, but not before I found myself removing the A-post filler panel by mistake. It was welded in beneath the piece I was removing, so it all came out in one piece. Not much I could do about that, except order another... for each side. Once the rocker was removed, I needed to trace out the new rear fender repair patch so I could cut the rotten part of the fender out near the area that the repair

would end up. This proved to be a wise move, and made the job easier once I got to the replacement stage. The inner sills weren't too bad, so I decided to tighten things up with some metal patches, but I did put in new inner stiffeners on each side. The new parts were aligned and welded into place while putting the door on and off about 20 times. This was to check the door spacing on the car body. However, pay attention to this mistake I made to keep from repeating it on your own Spitfire!! I was so busy checking the door gaps on the front and rear of the door, that I neglected to look at the lower door spacing, and the lower door edge ended up being a little out from the upper rear section of the rocker panel. On this particular car, I didn't consider it a big deal, but if it were a concours, or show type vehicle, it would be unsatisfactory. When I discovered the gap, I assumed the adjustment at the hinges would take care of it, but no such luck.

Once the metalwork was done, all the welds were ground down flat, or at least as flat as I could get them. Then I used seam sealer on all the edges to smooth them out. The rear fender patch panel fix received a small bit of Bondo to hide the seam. Only a tiny bit was needed, unlike the five pounds or so from the previous repair.

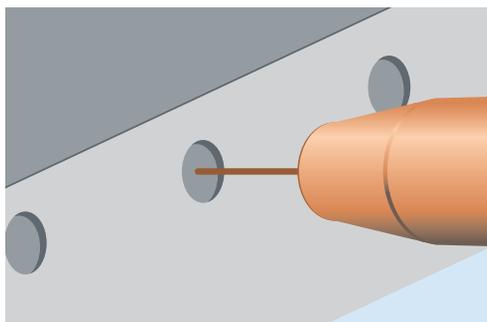
The local NAPA store mixed up a quart of Signal Red acrylic enamel paint for me, which was a closer match than I ever expected. After wet sanding the areas to be painted, applying the primer, and wet sanding again, the paint was applied by my good friend Steve.

Any welding flaws in the floor panels disappeared as soon as the new carpeting went in. The seams in the rocker panels look like the factory did them, and the patch panels at the rear fenders blended in very nicely. Those damned lower door gaps were the biggest flaw in the whole job. However, for the first time with this type repair, I was quite happy with the results. And so is my wife!! You can see the car in any number of shopping malls and restaurant parking lots, and it hasn't been touched by so much as one SUV door yet!! ■



Incoming MIGs

BY JEFF HOWARD, LOUISIANA



I just replaced my battery box on my GT6 restoration project. Triumph originally attached the box using spot welds and thought I would pass on how I duplicated them.

Being an aviation mechanic, I'm aware of a few special tools that really help. Within the industry they are called Cleco fasteners. I have seen them in the Eastwood catalog (www.eastwoodco.com, Item-no 19075). What they do is hold the two pieces of sheetmetal together and in place while a permanent fastener is installed.

STEP 1

The way they work, you drill a small hole, 1/8 inch, through both pieces. The Cleco extends through the two pieces and when released by the pliers (Eastwood Item-no 19074) the Cleco fastener pulls the material tight. After fitting the two pieces disassemble the parts and go to Step 2.

STEP 2

Mark a few locations on the top piece of metal about one to 1-1/2 inches apart and drill another hole (only through the top metal) about 3/16 of an inch in diameter. These 3/16 inch holes will be your spot welds. Take the MIG wire and place it in the center of the 3/16 inch hole contacting the bottom piece of metal, ensuring that the wire does not touch the top piece. I found it helpful to brace the hand operating the MIG torch. Pull the trigger and watch the 3/16 inch hole fill with the molten metal. When the hole is filled, stop welding. Check the back of the bottom metal to ensure good penetration. When you remove the Cleco fasteners there will be the 1/8 inch hole left.

STEP 3

Use the same method to fill the small holes by sticking the MIG wire through the hole touching the metal on the bottom of the repair and pull the trigger, watch the hole fill with molten metal. Don't worry about any extra fill metal, it can be ground off.

I only use .025 wire and never flux core. For the flux core to work properly it has to get hotter and is more likely to

burn through. Also when welding thin metal, only weld in small short welds.

I try to keep my welds to one inch or less and piece them together. Using flux core wire leaves a deposit on the weld that must be removed, MIG welding does not leave any deposits.

If I am welding in a floor or any large panel, I try to weld like applying torque, a little here then I move over and weld a little over there and work my way around the panel from four or more tack welds. It allows the work area to cool to prevent burn through and will prevent the panel from warping to the point that it will not fit properly. ■



"The Way We Were"

BY TED SCHUMACHER, OHIO, USA

For a change of pace from the tech stuff, let's go to what it was like to be a sports car dealer in the mid-'60's. We were a BMC/Standard Triumph as well as Rootes Group. BMC - British Motor Company - made Austin, MG and Morris. They actually made many more marques but these were the ones sold here. Standard Triumph supplied the TR2000 sedan, Herald, Spitfire, GT6 and TR4A. Rootes Group was Sunbeam. We stocked both the Alpine and the Tiger. These cars were sold and USED as daily driver's (trailers had not been invented). My family cars were a TR4A and a hotrod Mini.

There has been a perception that these cars were built by "craftsman". Wrong! They were built by people who worked in a factory with the same life as the rest of us - a mortgage, a beer with the boys, etc. There was a lot of hand labor. The British auto industry had no manufacturing technology compared to what we have in America. Quick example. The Morgan is built in 2 separate buildings. The chassis & driveline, engine, transmission, differential, are assembled in one location and the body is done in another location. Fairly standard. However, the chassis is done at the bottom of the hill. The body is in the building at the top of the hill. So, the chassis is pushed "up the hill" to the body. Push the heaviest unit up???

In an earlier article, we talked about the cars being a "bin box" car. The manufacturer went to the parts bins and used what was there. Example, the TR2000 sedan engine became the first GT6 engine - they already had it, why not use it? An example of the building process and hand labor. The headliner, let's say on a GT6, was glued into place by a worker who had glue in a can and applied it with a brush. Not a consistent application and why you see dark brown or tan spots on a light headliner. It's the glue. To make matters worse, the guy with the glue pot was in a different union than the engine installer. One union would get upset and stop and the whole thing ground to a halt.

We used to get requests from the factory asking "what can we do to improve the product. We reply, "stop the oil leaks". 6 months later a note would come back saying "we have surveyed our owners in the United Kingdom and they report no incidence of oil leaks". To the factory mind, this fixed the problem. What they didn't tell you you was 90% of the garage floors in England were dirt. This sucked up the oil. Hence, no problem!

Profit. A non-existent product. On a new Austin Healey Sprite, retail price of \$2100, we made \$300 if it sold for sticker price. Not a lot of margin. Our service and accessories business supported daily operations.

We could do some really unique things that can't be done anymore. Once in awhile someone will ask about a car that is titled as one year but the serial number shows it as an earlier car. What's the story? We used to be able to retitle the cars. Every new car in our showroom on Dec. 31st 1965 became a 1966 model. We just sent the paperwork back to the regional office and they issued a new certificate of origin. This ended in 1968 with advent of the early safety and emissions laws. It was possible to have '64 Spitfire with a '67 title from a dealer.

Another area on the "concours" end is a factory radio. We often installed our own radio's, rather than the StanPart unit. My feeling is "if it was billed on the original invoice as part of the sale" it's legit.

Accessories that were very popular were wire wheels, hardtops and tonneau covers. Remember, these cars were daily drivers. We also sold a lot of wood shift knobs and AMCO front and rear guards. Wood steering wheels were popular through 1967. Starting in '68 with the first of the collapsible steering columns, aftermarket wheel sales decreased. There was a chance of damaging the collapsible column so many places didn't do this. This was more prevalent on the MG's than on the TR's due to Triumph using a sliding inner column for the safety issue. This was the same column they had used for years to make the column adjustable.

The best year for Spitfire was 1967. You had the left-over MKII's and the too early to be "68 MKIII's. the MKIII had the 1296 engine with twin carbs and a fold down top. All of these were improvements on the MKII. The factory had a real deal bargain going to help get rid of the MK II's. We sold new '67 MKII's with wire wheels and tonneau cover, tax and title for \$2500. Truly a bargain.

Next article we'll take a look at the '68 - early '70's era. ■



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STORY BY HOWARD BAUGUES • PHOTOS BY GINNY BAUGUES, FRANK DRUMMOND, JOE GUINAN, LIV HAASPER, BILL MILLER, SAM WOOD

Since about January of this year, NASS, the North American Spitfire Squadron, had been planning to attend the Mid-Ohio Raceway's Triumph Celebration and Sprint Grand Prix races that were held June 14th through June 16th.

Time was drawing close as arrangements were being finalized by the officers and volunteers assisting with our planning. Contacts had been made with the Friends of Triumph and the Ohio Triumph clubs, in anticipation of a good turnout of GT6's and Spitfires. E-mails were flying around with NASS members making arrangements to meet along the journey to convoy to Lexington, Ohio. Members were coming from all directions, north, south, east, and west. This was the place to be if you owned a Triumph.

This writer made several attempts to start out for Ohio early on Thursday, June 13th, but each venture got me a few miles farther away from home before I would realize something else that I had left behind. Thanks to my wife's patience and good nature, we shared several laughs as the neighbors watched us leaving with Spitfire in tow, only to return a short time later to retrieve another item I needed. On our third return trip home, as we passed the same neighbor sitting in the lawn, I exclaimed loudly, "I think our trailer tests have proven OK. We can head out now." I hoped our neighbor would "overhear" and not just think I was forgetful... Once we had made that fourth departure, my wife and I agreed, anything else forgotten would remain at home so we could make the drive to

Ohio before darkness fell.

Several members and friends started arriving at our motel on Thursday afternoon. Other clubs had also made the Super 8 Motel their headquarters for the weekend so there were lots of Triumphs filling the parking lot. Many members had never met face to face before, and they got the opportunity to shake hands and share some stories without hitting the keys on a keyboard. Many had already bedded down for the night when this writer arrived near 11pm local time. But some of the more adventurous members had set out to explore the pubs of local Lexington.

FRIDAY

Friday dawned with even more Triumphs parked in the motel lot. As the morning passed, more eager NASS members arrived, ready to tear up the countryside with the roar of a Triumph engine breaking the peaceful valley area. A large group of us traveled to the Mid-Ohio track to see what was going on. Once we had our paddock/track/crew passes in hand, we headed toward the paddock. There were race cars of various types and sizes as far as you could see. Our NASS president was almost overcome with excitement. Hearing the engines roar as we walked through was enough to raise anyone's pulse rate. Never had I been so close to so many race cars in my life. The smell of high octane fuel filled the air. Our cameras never seemed to get any rest. There was something in any direction to cause you to click the shutter.

We found Ted & Doris Schumacher's stand, in the center of the



Joe and Howard's Spits at the hotel



The day started with Howard getting the NASS banner ready.



Ted & Doris Schumacher

paddock. Ted was busy giving driving instructions to a rookie driver behind his trailer. He was sharing all of the details of whether to come into a corner low and go out low, and how to place yourself in



the keyhole turn to come out ahead. We waited till Ted's driving class was over, and introduced ourselves. Ted has a lot of interesting and unique pins, license plates, and other regalia for sale in his booth. He and his wife, Doris, gave us the guided tour of their wares and reminded us to use their booth as a central meeting place when members got separated.

After visiting with Ted & Doris, we meandered through the rented garage stalls to see what cars were enjoying shaded rest spots while repairs and improvements were being made. Above the garage stalls was a viewing area, for track, pits, and paddock activity. Large V-8 cars were warming up on the track, and you couldn't hear yourself speak, let alone someone next to you. I missed several cell phone calls from members entering the raceway trying to locate us, due to the loud noise from all of those wonderful engines.

Soon I had to get away from the noise and while standing in the paddock area, we met up with our track coordinator and race driver, Brett Johnson and his wife, Julie, of Indianapolis. Brett had helped to coordinate our arrangements with the track and other organizations. Brett was mainly there to race his 1951 Porsche 356A during the weekend. Soon

more NASS members and friends were gathering to meet and greet each other. One lady tried to sneak up on me, but I caught a glimpse in the corner of my eye and turned to meet Liv & Wilf Haasper from Ontario, Canada, for the first time. Fortunately, I had seen photos of them before, so I knew who Liv was as she crept up. Several NASS members had encouraged Liv & Wilf to attend the Spit-Together to get to know everyone, and let us see the Haasper "Firefly" that was Liv's pride and joy.

As the day went on, the sky started to darken, so we decided it was time to return to the motel in preparation for our countryside drive through Lucas, Ohio, and some state parks in the nearby area. On the way back from the track, the sky opened up and gave us a good downpour, so everyone got to let Lucas wipe their windcreens, if they worked... When we got to the hotel parking lot, more Spitfires and GT6's had arrived. The officers passed out the T-shirts, pins and dash plaques to all of those that had registered for the Spit-Together, under the shelter of the lobby awning. It neared time for our drive, and luckily the rain stopped. Apparently Prince Lucas was challenging us to find his hidden town in Ohio.

About 15 cars lined up for the drive.





A mix of early and late Spitfires, one GT6, one TR6, one Sport 6, and one rental sedan driven by Bob Kimball of Florida. Joe Guinan took the lead and I took up position at the rear of the pack. About every other car had a family radio to communicate if we got spread out too far. Through the traffic light and under the Interstate, our line of vintage British metal made their way east into the country. The countryside consisted of rolling hills and valleys, beautiful homes and farms perched on scenic hilltops, and wandering streams following the valley contours. We found some very challenging roads with 90 degree corners and tight bends. After a while we arrived at the entrance to Malabar Farms State Park, totally missing Lucas in our first attempt. That's one for the Prince, zero for us. Malabar is situated on a beautiful hillside, with a large pond near the entrance. Many of the visitors there stopped to watch us cruise by. Near a camping and picnic area, we found a good spot to arrange the cars for some pictures. A couple of ladies across the road at a campsite must have thought we were crazy. Here were 16 cars trying to squeeze into a picnic area with some parking every way possible.

It took us a few minutes to pose the cars with some order to it. All facing the same direction, noses forward to the road, and move the TR4 from the

head of the shot down next to the Sport 6. Prince Lucas struck while rearranging the cars. Atwell Haines' surrogate Spitfire (on loan from a friend) decided it would not turn over to start, so a few helpful souls got behind and provided manpower in place of horsepower to move his Spit. That is two for Prince

Lucas, zero for us. A little work on the battery cable and some time for the starter to cool, and it was able to run again on its own. Once in place, the shutters started clicking. It looked like a paparazzi convention. Everyone was excited to see so many Spitfires and GT6's together in one spot. First were shots of the cars alone, then with the driver's present, then with bonnets up, then over the engine shots. There were uphill shots, downhill shots, so many that this magazine would surely have trouble choosing. Video cameras were recording the fun and excitement as everyone enjoyed the grouping of cars together. I received a call on my cell phone from a member that had just arrived at the motel and was looking to meet up with us. The reception faded in and out, like there was a strong electrical interference in the area. The caller asked where we were, and I told him we were somewhere close to Lucas and to wait there, we would be back soon.

About that same time the Prez called for us to mount up and attempt to locate Lucas Ohio one more time. After looking at a map for a few minutes, a plan was laid out on how to find Lucas. Off we went single file winding through the countryside again. What a beautiful area to drive an open topped car. Several more turns, winds, hills, valleys and intersections, and there we were, driving through Lucas Ohio, and all of our cars were running. We were looking for the perfect spot to park our cars to identify us as having safely landed in Lucas. The city limits signs were not situated well for a group photo, and try as we might, we could not locate the town hall. So the next best spot was a parking lot next to the now infamous "Lucas Car Wash & Storage".

We arranged our cars in formation,

pyramid-style. Several cars in the back row, fewer in the next, staggered in front of the back row, and repeated until we had two cars in the front row.

Again, the cameras were going crazy from most every angle. Every angle but up! This writer noticed the office building we were parked in front of, had a fairly gradual pitch on the roof, and the back roofline was only about 12 foot off the ground. I suggested we send a



younger member up there with a digital and a film camera to document our gathering from on high. Richard Campi of Indianapolis, Indiana volunteered. He was not one of the younger members, but he was light and agile enough to make the attempt. Geoff Bush, Joe Guinan and myself positioned ourselves as "human steps" so Richard could climb over us to reach the fence, then lift himself onto the roof. He proved this task was not beyond him. Once he gained his footing, I tossed up my digital camera, and Joe's 35mm to Richard and he took several aerial photos of our cars, with and without drivers present. When finished and sure we did not hear any sirens in the distance, we helped Richard back down the same way





he got up, and we had some wonderful pictures, courtesy of the "Photographer on the Roof"!

Of course, Mark Joslyn and his 62 Sport Six felt the need to take up the front spot on the pyramid for a few photos. After all, it was the Sport Six/Vitesse chassis that went under the GT6's. The TR6 owner begged off of being included in the photo, and Bob Kimball kept his rental away from the camera lens, but both did travel along on our trip.

We departed Lucas with all cars starting just fine.... One for us, 2 for the Prince. On the way back, the group kind of spread out a bit. Radio contact started to fade and each group followed what they thought was the correct route back to the motel. The lead group drove through greater Mansfield before returning to the motel. The second group went directly back to the track, and the third group went directly back to the motel, by following the setting sun! A few more members that had not gone on the drive were waiting for us at the motel. Once most members had gathered at the motel, we headed off toward the track to attend the Driver/Crew dinner. I met some of the members heading back from the track and they told me we were too late for the drivers dinner, so we all headed to Buck's Bar & Grill in Lexington for a nice meal. While in Buck's a sudden thundershower hit, and caused many of us to scramble out into the rain to raise our hoods, a little late, but better late than never.

After our meal at Buck's we headed back to the motel, where our President, Joe Guinan treated us to a champagne toast, in honor of the gathering. Another toast was made to Liv & Wilf Haasper of Ontario, celebrating their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary. Bottles of Spitfire Ale and other similar drinks started being passed around and we shared suds and stories for quite a while. It was a tailgate party to remember.

SATURDAY

Saturday started with a light rain and the members of NASS opting not to "clean" their cars before arriving at the car show at the Mid-Ohio Raceway. We drove in there in a group and started filling into what space was arranged for us, next to the TRF tent in the infield. Soon we could see there was not enough space, and we shifted cars around, bringing them closer so we could fit more in there. Still a few had to park down the hill from the group. We quickly set up our table and umbrella to give us a little shelter to conduct registrations, and display our 12 trophies. Soon the infield was packed with over 300 Triumphs of various models. Our area had almost 50 Spitfires and 4 GT6's packed in. As the rain changed to drizzle, we were told the panoramic photo would be taken soon, and that we should close any umbrellas and remove any ponchos that we did not want to show up in the photo. They took two photos of this field of Triumphs, while the rain was falling, but in the print it is difficult to tell it was raining.



The rain tapered off just in time for the noon parade laps around the track. We all piled in our cars and followed the flagmen to the "false grid" area approaching the pit & track. We were lined up in two rows in the pit, then a pace car lead the group around the track. There were more cars than the course could fit in one row, so some cars had to wait in the pit until the first group finished two laps. In watching a video of the laps, you could hear drivers and passengers shouting for joy as they made their way around the tight and winding



A row of award winners: Howard Baugues' Pimento 76 was 2nd best daily driver and Mike Ross' 70 GT6 won the best GT6.



Dave Pendergast won first place for the early Spitfire class



Joe Guinan's 80 Spitfire took first place in the daily driver category



Sue Snyder's beautiful Valencia colored 1973 GT6 took 2nd place



Bill Miller proudly stands by his Diamond in the Rough winner



Tom Beaver's 73 GT6 won the "Farthest Traveled" award

corners of the Mid-Ohio track. Just as we thought we would go for a third lap, a flagman guided us through a small opening in the wall that lead right back to the infield parking area. We again worked to fit as many cars in as possible. The rains stayed away and the sun peeked out for the remainder of the show.

In the afternoon, the NASS officers tallied the votes and the raffle was started to give out all of the great prizes our sponsors had supplied to us. One of the big hits was advertising "Roundels" for Spitfire Ale. They were like gold, and the winners of those were quite happy. Gift certificates, tools, 6-packs of Spitfire Ale, sweatshirts, and event shirts were given to lucky ticket holders. The final draw was made for the 50/50 prize and the lucky person was Atwell Haines of New Jersey, taking home \$60 cash as the winner. Joe Guinan (Pres.) And Atwell Haines (Sect.) Started announcing the winners of the "NASS, show within a show". Trophies for participants choice were awarded to the following people;

Class A-Early Model Spits First place:

- Dave Pendergast-NY (White 67);
- Second place: Liv Haasper-ONT. (Red 67);

Class B-Late Model Spits First place:

- Richard Campi-IN (Mimosa 75);
- Second place: Frank Drummond (Sr. & Jr.)-PA (Saffron 72);

Class C-GT6 First place:

- Mike Ross-OH (BRG 70);
- Second place: Sue Snyder-MI (BRG 73)

Class D-Daily Drivers First place:

- Joe Guinan-NE (Vermillion 80);
- Second place: Howard Baugues-IN (Pimento 76)

Class E-Diamond in the Rough Winner:

Bill Miller-IN (White 66). Bill was awarded a trophy plus a \$300 gift certificate donated by Nigel Cosh, owner of Spitbits in California.

Class F-All Other LBCs Winner:

Mark Joslyn-IL (Teal 62-Sport Six)



Richard Campi Mimosa colored 75 took best "square tailed" Spitfire



Liv Haasper's 1967 Spitfire

Two trophies were decided and awarded by the officers, those being: "Officers Choice" awarded to Tom Beaver of Indiana for his red 1973 GT6; and the "Farthest Traveled" was awarded to Robert Kimball of the Tampa Bay Florida area. His journey was 1100 miles one way. It is interesting to note, that NASS does not award the "Farthest Traveled" trophy based on the car that has traveled the farthest, whether driven or trailered, but rather to the member that traveled the farthest to attend the Spit-Together. They must be a paid member prior to attending the Spit-Together, but whether they have their car there or not, they are eligible to win this award. It is the hope of the officers that we increase interest in our gatherings, even when your car is not able to make the journey, and even if you do not own a GT6 or a Spitfire. YOU are what counts.

Saturday evening, the Triumph awards banquet was held for the overall Triumph winners. One NASS member, Sue Snyder received a trophy for her Valencia Blue 1973 MkIII GT6. After Kas Kastner had addressed the crowd, Tom Householder, main organizer of the Mid-Ohio Triumph gathering asked this writer to approach the microphone and speak about NASS. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to promote our

club, I addressed the audience and shared with them our history and how NASS came to be. After I exited the tent, one of the British team drivers, Steve Adams, came over to talk with me about NASS. Steve Adams and I shared some Spitfire stories and swapped email addresses for future correspondence.

When the banquet ended we all headed back to the motel to share some more “spirits” and friendship for another tailgate party in the motel parking lot. At that time, Joe Guinan announced that Sunday would be a bit more leisure, and to go to the track Sunday morning whenever we felt like it, rather than in one big group.

SUNDAY

Sunday morning several NASS members entered their cars in the Concour judging, that had a mixed field of British, Italian, Japanese, and American metal. Other members just parked in the spectators parking area and wandered the track grounds, visiting the vendors and watching the races.

I met up with British driver Dave Thompson, the second driver of the Green Spitfire from England. He was quite a nice fellow and shared some insight as to how the Enduro had gone on Friday, when he drove the Spitfire with a busted gearbox. In the All Triumph Feature race the Brits were 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th! Jon Wolfe took the checked flag in his TR7V8 followed by his teammates. The British Spitfire driven by Steve Adams did not finish the race. Earlier in the race, he had to clutch and swerve to avoid tagging another driver, and at 6000 rpms something deep in the engine let go requiring him to drop out of the race.

After the featured race was over, many NASS members wandered the paddock retrieving autographs of various drivers. At the British camp, they were very hospitable and enjoyed signed magazines, postcards, or whatever we handed to them. The Brits had already started a tear down on the 1300cc engine to determine the problem in the Spitfire, but simple repairs could not be made, so the car was shipped home for later repairs.

One by one, NASS members said their farewells and headed off toward home. Joe Guinan, my wife & I, went over to Liv & Wilf Haasper’s campsite to take a few more photos. While there, we heard an announcement over the PA system, that NASS had won the award for Best Club Participation in the Concour event on Sunday. Great news to hear, as we said our final good-byes. We promised to do it all over again next year, even bigger and better. ■



SPIT-TOGETHER



Vini, Vidi, Vici - Well Almost!

BY DAVE THOMPSON, BEDFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND



Don't get hung up on the title it's pure tongue in cheek - well almost! After all we run to different regs and we like big brakes (more of that later) whereas you guys like big horsepower (there's no substitute for cubic inches I believe is an old American war cry).

It all started back in January at our race club AGM (in case you didn't know we run one make championships in the UK so an all triumph grid is what we're used to).

Keith kind of snuck in the possibility of a race in the USA in AOB. You can bet that after 3 hours talking eligibility regs (snore) this got your attention (as I believe Ak Miller said of El Caballo Hierro).

Never ones to hold back on the credit card Steve Adams and myself were hooked at once, we had a GT6 without an engine and a Spitfire with a 3 season engine that oozed oil from every available orifice and some that even Standard Triumph hadn't dreamed of. We call it chassis lubrication - in our climate it keeps the dreaded tin worm at bay and the cloud of blue smoke laid down at full chat is a real James Bond style doodad (I picked that term up from BS Levy over a cold beer).

The plan formed and 8 cars were on their way; 3 TR7 V8s, 2 TR6s, 1 TR5, 1 TR3, 1 Spitfire (my engine still being in the hallowed vaults of the machine shop).



In order to transport this motley crew we enlisted the help of a racing buddy in the haulage business who built a trailer to fit the whole lot in. This required the removal of roll bars, exhausts, letting tyres down etc - it was a tight squeeze.

11 drivers plus assorted mechanics, family etc flew across to Columbus and picked up RVs. You have to believe that shopping at K-Mart at what is to you 1:30 am for pillows and towels is a pretty surreal experience. Heading out on the freeway we tuned in the radio and the first song we heard was 'You ain't seen



nothing yet' by Bachman Turner Overdrive which certainly summed up the trip and for us Brits and had us rolling around laughing as it's a key joke in a comedy show back home.

We arrived at Mid Ohio to find the circuit closed but Mordy and his mates made us welcome outside the gates and despite having been up for over 24 hrs we knocked back a few cold ones.

Wednesday morning Jack managed to sneak us in leading our convoy in his Mini Moke and we picked a prime spot next to the shower block. We all sat round chilling out me playing blues on my Dobro (mega ambition of mine to play the blues on an American guitar sat outside an RV in America) and watched the guys in the bike school falling off.

Thursday brought first practice and disaster. Steve went first and careful. I jumped into the Spitfire and after two laps was having difficulty getting any gear without a serious crunch. Turned out that the main bearing on the Layshaft

had disintegrated causing the needle bearing to weld to the shaft and shear off the last 1/2 inch thus wrecking fourth gear - still put up a reasonable time though!

We brought spares but had been supplied with the wrong clutch plate and try as we might along with the help of lots of American support we couldn't cobble together a race box.

Back in the paddock Susan Hensley (pretty fine racer Spit no. 42) and Mitch took pity on us and drove us out to a local junkyard. We were amazed at the number of British cars there - you don't get that at home and you think that parts are in short supply! - don't forget 90% went to you in the first place and your climate is a lot kinder than ours.

A 1500 Spit box and prop was found in a puddle and we were back in with a chance. A stop in an ice cream parlour on the way back refuelled us for the task ahead.

After grinding our alloy bellhousing to match we bolted the whole rusty gubbins back in. At this point if another well meaning yank had asked us why we weren't at the Triumph party and did we know where it was I think I would have inserted our spare propshaft where the sun don't shine. In fairness though we were being brought an endless supply of steaks and cold beers from the party - thank you.

And that's why we bolted the whole lot up with the clutch release rod the wrong side of the bellhousing - OK admit you've never done it! Out with the box again and get it right this time!

It was dark, we were very tired but it was rolling again and we even put the transducer on (don't tell Steve but in the dark I nearly drilled through the radiator fitting this).

Friday you all made us feel right at home by laying on cold wet weather (the sun burn ache was by now competing with the hangover ache).

We entered the enduro which was a real Laural and Hardy effort as we aren't



slammed on the brakes and had to change down suddenly, buzzing the engine.

50 minutes 'till the next race we had pistons, pushrods, beer all to

spare. Head off and where has no. 3 piston gone? No sign anywhere. Ok we can rebuild this. Bore's a bit scored but wet'n'dry'll fix that. Then I notice water weeping into the bore. It's over!

A couple of cold beers and we walk off to watch the rest of the team in the group 8 race. Brits get 1st and 2nd. Hoorah!

A few thoughts: Well done Chris Petch, Colin Pendle, Graham Millar and Jon Wolfe - these guys inspired the title of this piece of waffle.

You get a lot more track time per meeting in the USA and your tracks are fast and long. Bangs per buck (as I think you say), it's better value but you do far fewer races per season than us. Our cars are built for short sprints but seem to be faster, if less reliable (due to the distances?). Your regs are different so it wasn't a level playing field. You major on safety (fuel cells, roll cages etc) and yet you run standard brakes? I'm sure a lot of our advantage was gained in slowing down (perverse logic but it always was a front runner - Triumph, Jag had first discs on production cars and we always felt that stopping was an advantage - maybe due to our tighter narrow roads). Your cars generally are beautifully engineered and prepared and contact is not an option. Believe me, we played a lot cleaner than we normally do! And noise! We are limited in England and so our cars have to run silencers - yours are LOUD. Ever thought how back pressure aids the engine breathing?

used to these type of races and we soon realised why you all truck about in golf buggies - it's a hell of a long walk to the pits with fuel jugs, fire extinguishers, tools, pit boards, flasks of tea, sandwiches etc (and we thought you were just lazy).

With the dodgy gearbox we took it really slow and finished last - but hey we finished.

Meanwhile our TR5 had set fastest time in qualifying then swiped off its front end on the pit wall.

Everyone pulled together in a huge effort and Saturday saw it back together running and even painted (thanks to Sue and Mitch again). It made it out in the last session for a couple of laps and the gods were smiling.

Steve did well in the qualifying race and ended up mid grid well ahead of a load of other Spits let alone the bigger TRs with a 2 min lap and all on a dog of a junkyard 'box.

Sunday dawned (5 hours too early for us) and it was a frenzy of spit and polish. Kas Kastner even signed our cars ("Nothing to do with me, Kas Kastner" on the Spit).

What can I say - 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the Triumph race, Jon Wolfe parading with the Union Jack flying out of his window, it was heaven.

Except that the Spit having made four places and lapping 2nd fastest Spit (with a junkyard puddle gearbox remember and a sub 2 min lap) suddenly went thumped thump.

Back at the paddock Steve said he'd bent two pushrods. "Why?" A TR8 had cut across him to the pit lane and he'd

Finally I would like to thank everyone who said hello, bought us a beer, ice cream, ice, cigarettes, took us to a junkyard, fixed a prop shaft, argued Formula 1 vs Cart/Indy/Nascar, fast tracked us through the admin, fed us, put up with us and generally made us feel like family especially Jack, Sue, Mitch, Greg Petrolati, Tom Strange, Mordy Dunst, Howard Baugues, B.S. Levy, everyone at SVRA, North American Spitfire Squadron, Friends of Triumph and anyone who said hello, it was one hell of a party.

A final thought - thank god the Pilgrim Fathers didn't drink or have access to the infernal combustion engine or you guys would never have got anywhere - but then again? ■



Who says Spitfire rear ends are weak? Steve Adams would, he broke three last year!



Don't Race That Car! (part 1)

BY ANDREW STARK, MISSOURI, USA



“Don't race that car...it is way to pretty to ruin it racing.” I have heard that statement about ten times since I decided to make my 72 GT6 into a racer. Well yes, it is too pretty to be a racer but heck it is supposed to be racer not a show car. I have always looked at Triumphs as the cars you drive and you drive hard. My GT6 had been no exception. From the day I first saw it in 1986 I was sure that Triumph had actually made a sports car with some muscle to throw around. When I finally bought it in 1990 I was right. It took me a couple of weeks to get it running but when I did I was in love. Suddenly my little Spitfire was quickly losing favor to the GT6.

I should step back a little and introduce myself. My name is Andrew Stark and I am a Triumph addict. I have owned Spitfires since I was sixteen and I have not had a day since that I did not own at least one Spit and at times several at once. My first was a ratty old 1974 1500. From there my addiction has infected the whole family and many friends. The addiction still grows. In addition, I have autocrossed Spits since I first started owning them. The Spit is a natural autocrosser. I never really tried hard with the Spits. I just went out for fun and fun I had. It turned out that I became quite good with the Spits and after a couple of years started winning a lot locally. I started to think maybe I should start track racing. It was not to be. College and real life started to get in the way.

Once real life started getting in the way after college the Autocrossing and any hopes of track racing had to go on the back burner. Ten years slipped by and I

had become married then divorced. Changed jobs several times and basically forgotten any hopes of being a racer in my little white Spitfire. Don't get me wrong I still autocrossed a few times a year and always had a couple of Spits in the garage. But the real commitment/money to race slipped by year after year.

Finally I found myself settled down in 1998 and I was actually down to one Triumph in the garage and wonderful new wife and job. (I won't mention the eight Triumphs in the family barn.)

I had for the fun of it Autocrossed the GT6 a couple of times at car shows and it was pretty fun. Nothing near as good as the old white Spit but still a lot of fun. (The old white Spit had been sold off in pieces a few years earlier to pay off my divorce.) Anyway, the GT6 had a draw to it that I could not shake. I kept the car over all the other Spits due to the six cylinder engine and the way it worked out as such a nice daily driver. Plus the GT6 had to be in my opinion the best looking car Triumph ever made. It really wasn't my daily driver any more and it was fun to autocross. Hmm... should I see what it could do?? Yep !!

I bolted on some of the trick stuff I had left from the Spit and put on some nasty old Yokohamas and went Autocrossing SCCA style in 1999. Five races later I packed it in. The GT6 was the scariest damn car I had ever driven on the Autocross track!! I spent more time going backwards puckering up than going forwards. It was fine on the small car show tracks that were mostly were first and second gear. On the SCCA track were third gear was the norm the GT6 turned into an

evil beast that was intent on killing me and some course workers to boot. I have to laugh a little now. It got to the point every time I staged, the course workers would step behind light polls as extra protection. At the time it was blow to the ego. I parked it .

I started reading and studying the car and realized that Triumph should have shot the engineers that designed the engine layout. Way to much engine in front of the axles!!! Surely they could have figured out how to put the engine four inches back. I started trying to find out what other people had done to make these cars handle. I mostly received kind giggles when I talked to old racers and it was suggested to me to go buy a Honda if I wanted to go fast many times over. I could not believe that no one had had any success with this car!!!

I was almost about to give up when I came across a video that someone had given me years ago about Group 44. In this video Group 44 won races with their GT6!!! Granted it was road racing not autocrossing but they had to have some tricks that would apply to what I wanted to do. The video gave me the hope to look even harder for info, To shorten the story of my research I came up dry on the Group 44 info. Seems the car has been in many hands over the years and no one could get it to do what Brian Furstenau could get out of it. Most advice I got conflicted with friendly advice or the article I read the day before. Honestly, most of the advice was to stay away from racing a GT6.

What I decided to do was use the info that I had acquired and then try to use some of my own common sense. The winter of 1999 and 2000 was the winter of experimentation. I decided the car was fatally tail happy. To fix this I concluded I had to make the front very stiff and roll resistant and make the rear soft and roll resistant. I also had to control what the car would do when under full throttle and hard braking as well as the normal lift when entering a turn. My driving style also had to change completely. This was a tall order for this car. Oh yes there was the issue of budget. I could not spend thousands of dollars to get this done.

The front was pretty straight forward.

I purchased 480ftlb and 660ftlb springs from Triumph Tune, 1" sway bar from Addco, Poly bushings from British Parts NW and Spax shocks from Vicky Brit. I also fabbed aluminum blocks as lower chamber plates to give front wheels three degrees negative chamber.

The rear was more involved. I knew it had problems. I realized early on it was way to stiff. It also sat way to high. I also knew that one cure Triumph suggested and used in the late Mk3 was the Spitfires sliding spring arrangement. Lucky me I had a dozen or more of these springs I had picked up over the years. It took damn near the whole dozen to get the correct mix and match of partially cut leaves to get the car to sit the way I liked it. Finally the car sat level. Then I went about installing Poly Bushings and Koni shocks. I picked Konis over Spax because I could limit the down travel of the axle much better than with the Spax shocks. I added an Addco rear sway bar and thought I was done. It was then suggested to me that I get a Quaife differential for the car. Since I was going to have to rely on more power coming out of turns it was more important than ever to put that power to the pavement. Well Quaifes are expensive and hard to find for the small frame Triumphs. The home office of Quaife was very helpful in locating one for me and I installed it in time for the 2000 Autocross season.

I also purchased new tires. If you want any car to handle you have to choose the right tire for the application. I chose Hoosier. I went with 225/45R13's. These are really wide tires for an unflared GT6. The guy on the phone swore they would fit with the set back on my wheels with out much bodywork to the car. He was correct; I only had to roll the front fenders a little to allow for clearance.

In all by the first part of the 2000 Autocross season the GT6 suspension was done. It took the better part of four months tinkering in the garage to get it the way I wanted it. I also blew my budget by a huge margin. If I added it up I guess it was in the neighborhood of \$3,000 when all was said and done. I am afraid to really add it up. I am sure add in bearings and U-joints etc... into it and it starts pushing \$3,500. That is not going with the really trick stuff I could have bought. Pretty scary kiddies!!

Once all this was done I started to see results. It took awhile and I am still getting over the uneasy feeling that I am going to spin into a light pole at any second but I got faster and faster as the year went on. I did not have that much competition in my

class so I had to base my results against cars that had beat me really bad the year before. I used a GS Integra type R as my bench mark. This guy had been several seconds faster than me the year before. I am ashamed to say as much as seven seconds faster. Granted he was Region champ and a ProSolo national champ but still very sad in my book. The first race he was at that I attended I closed the gap to three seconds. At years end I could beat him by half a second and the GT6 and myself where getting faster each race. I decided to try out the SCCA Solo II nationals just for the experience. I still felt like I was under driving the car and I was sure the engine was getting tired. 28 years old without a major rebuild. Can you say blow by. The tranny also was a bit on the picky side in second gear. All that put aside I wanted to see what the big leagues of Solo II looked like any way.

If you have not seen a Solo II nationals before you have missed the biggest Grass Roots Motorsports event in the world. Twelve hundred cars entered!!!! To put it politely the GT6 and I did not have snowballs chance in hell of doing anything at this race. I realized that right off the bat and had a great time the whole week. The GT6 did do pretty well and I did place mid field in my class. Better than the hope that I would not finish last. I honestly think that a better driver could have made a much better showing in the car. I still had the uneasy feeling of not wanting to spin the car, especially at the nationals. I under drove the car badly the first day and did not do much better the second day. I had a blast none the less. Again if you ever have the chance even to just go and watch the nationals, do it. It is a complete blast.

Once back at home I decided to run one more club race and put the car up for the winter. It was time to work on the engine and tranny for the next season. Once the GT6 was put up I started the task of deciding how competitive did I want to get. I spent a lot of money just to be top dog locally and be mid pack nationally. Here is a real scary figure for you. I spent \$5,800 and some change to race the 2000 season. It worked out to be a \$128.00 per minute of seat time. Not counting that each race day was at least eight hours out in the sun or rain. I took into consideration that I still had a lot to learn just in driving the car, New engine, modify the tranny, new wider wheels, new tires, triple Webers, new ignition, aluminum flywheel, oil cooler and Accu Sump. Add in four more national events in 2001 and I was looking



ON THE TRACK



to at least double my expenditure over the 2000 season.

Even if I did decide to leave all common sense behind and do all this to the car for the 2001 season I and the car still did not have a snowballs chance in hell of doing anything at the nationals for at least four or five years until the car is worked out. A light went on in my head and I thought gees I could build a track car for that kind of money! In one weekend of road racing you can get two years of autocross seat time!!!! What the heck have I been doing??? If I am going to spend ten thousand or more dollars I am want more seat time!!!! If I run one super school and six races in a year I would get sixteen years of Autocross seat time. The choice had been made. I was going E-production racing in 2002.

That is my very long answer to why I want to take my pretty little GT6 road racing.

The decision to go road racing was pretty easy but actually following through is the hard part. I had several questions I had to ask myself.

Do I just drop a roll cage and fuel cell in a go racing?

Do I buy an existing car?

What is the cost going to be one vs the other.

Is the car I have solid enough to race?

Do I have the time and money to do this?

Can I get the parts to build my own car if I wanted to?

Most of these questions I could answer except do I buy or build. Just plain stubborn pride made that decision. I wanted to build my own car so I could really call it mine. I always kind of wince when guys say "Yeah I bought this car from so and so and it is really fast." Only to see that same guy frustrated as the car breaks or doesn't do what the owner said it would. Strait facts are that a racecar for sale is a car that is old and tired. Not always but I venture to say 90% of the time.

About the time I was making this decision it was winter 2000 and a guy named Frank Axelrod gave me a call. He had just purchased a G-prod Spitfire and was going to move to St. Louis in the spring. He had gotten my name from the local club and needed a crew for the 2001 season. I gladly said yes. This would give me the experience of what it takes to run my first season. Free experience is always a good thing. To make it short the 2001 season with Franks car was a success. It

was a pretty good car and Frank proved out to be a good driver that kept his head strait and used the season as a learning session and not as if he was going to win every race. The biggest thing I learned was that yes, I was definitely going to build my own car. While Franks car was pretty good it still needed a ton of work to be what he wanted. Decision made by his experience.

After my first meeting with Frank's car in March of 2001 my car began it's final voyage into a true racer. I did run it one more time after I had gutted it just to see how much 200lbs of junk had slowed the car down. It was not to be because the engine spun a rod bearing half way through my first run at a local Autocross and I had to shut it down.

Within a few weeks the car was completely torn apart and waiting for its next step. I took stock of what I had. I had a rusty bent frame, tired old engine, loose tranny, Great suspension and a good mostly rust free body. I decided to junk the frame and use one I had in storage that came from a good strait GT6 that had fatal body rust. I decided to build a completely new engine and transmission as well.

This is were the real work began. I stripped the car down to every last bolt. I then sent the donor frame off to the sand blaster and I went to work on freshening the suspension just to make sure everything was in perfect working order. Once the frame was back I welded any problems it had and strengthened a few other places like the differential mounts and transmission mounts with some doubled up metal and brackets. Once the welding was done I purchased some good quality Urethane paint and painted it the same color as the body. This is the expensive way to go but I wanted the car to have a factory look to it when it was all done. The small frame Triumphs for the most part always painted the frame and underbody the same as the topcoat color. In my case it is red and very expensive. Over all the paint for the car was around \$600 and I did all the work myself. If on a budget like I originally intended I suggest Macco. Once the frame was painted I reinstalled all of the suspension and plumbing then moved onto the body. The body was suffering from more rot than I would like to admit and had to be fixed. I cut out some sections of the floor and replaced them and had to rebuild the drivers side inner sill. Not really all that bad.

Once the repairs were done I wire brushed and stripped every inch of the fire wall and the bottom of the car. I swear I

will never do that again. This is the messiest nastiest job I have done on a Triumph to date. Almost thirty years of grime on top of rustproofing and rust makes for a really nasty task to remove. It took me the better part of a week to do it and some very sore arms and back. Even with a mask I was blowing some nasty black stuff out of my nose for days. My ears were not to pretty either. Once it was all clean I wiped it down with solvent and put a nice sealer coat and prime on it. I then followed up with a thin coat of body color. I took a lot of weight off by getting rid of all the rust proofing and did not want to add much back. The beauty of Urethane paints is that you don't have to put it on thick to get a nice finish and chemical protection. Plus this car was never going to see road salt or normal grime again. Once this was all done I had some friends come over and help me put the body back on the frame. This really went a lot better than I thought it would. It bolted right up and we were done in less than an hour. I had the steering in and brake plumbing in with in two hours and I had a complete rolling body and chassis by the end of the day.

Now it was time for the roll cage.

This is where I was nervous. I had no experience in this sort of thing and was totally at the mercy of who I brought it to. I shopped many different frame and body shops and even some individuals that worked out of their home. I finally went with a shop that mostly built drag cars and had done a few SCCA cars. I was really impressed with the quality of his work and also he was the first guy that said right off the bat that he would really like to try working on a Triumph. Also every thing I asked for he said he could do it without hesitation. He had a tone of confidence and that was what I was looking for. He also said he could do it in a week. The roll cage was not cheap. I spent \$1,800 on it, but I got what I wanted. I put in a 14 point cage that goes all the way from the rear frame mounts up to the engine mounts. It is very comprehensive. I am very happy with the work on the cage and it turned out just like I wanted it to.

Now it is time for the engine and transmission to be built. I also have to install the fuel system and fire safety. I will write about that next time. I have to go work on the new transmission and finish up my connecting rods so they can go to the machine shop this week. ■



ON THE TRACK



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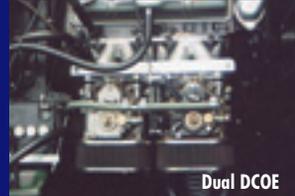
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10th Annual British Car Beach Bash

PANHANDLE BRITISH CAR ASSOC.

PENSACOLA BEACH, FLORIDA, APRIL 20, 2002

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MIKE JAPP

Six Spitfires and one GT6 was present at the Panhandle British Car Association's 10th Annual British Car Beach Bash held at Pensacola Beach, Florida. The Spitfire/GT6 class had two more entries than last year. The total number of cars appearing at our show also increased to 119 cars in 24 classes

which is our largest gathering yet! Our show site is next to the white sand beaches of Santa Rosa Island overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Our next show is scheduled for April 26, 2003. Put us on your calendar and help increase the Spitfire/GT6 class. ■



THE WINNERS:

1st Place: Pete & Norma Peterson
2nd Place: Bill & Melissa Silhan
3rd Place: Mike & Cherie Japp



Phil & Kim Vessenmeyer, 1978 Spitfire 1500



Kevin Eddins, 1979 Spitfire 1500



Mike & Cherie Japp, 1977 Spitfire 1500



Alex & Parker Bowab, 1976 Spitfire 1500



Emily Moses, 1980 Spitfire 1500



Pete & Norma Peterson, 1976 Spitfire 1500



Bill & Melissa Silhan, 1970 GT6

11th Annual British Car Days

BRITISH MOTORCAR CLUB OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO

LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO, APRIL 26-28, 2002

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY GEORGE DUCKWORTH

The British Motorcar Club of Southern New Mexico's 11th annual British Car Days was a bit overwhelming this year. 94 British Cars, more than expected, were squeezed around the historic Mesilla Plaza, and what a showing of British Cars it was. More British Cars were represented this

year than ever before including 3 Spitfires, 1 GT-6, and a work in progress Herald. Lots of TR series Triumphs, Austin-Healeys, MGs, MINIs, Jaguars, Morris and a few one of kind marques that are few and far between for this southwest area. ■



Cars like this deserve a shady spot.



1976 Spitfire owned by Robert & Evangeline Mikesell



Class winning 78 Spit owned by Ken & Sharon Snyder



1976 Spitfire owned by Benjamin Davenport



Benjamin Davenport's other entry: 1972 GT-6 Mk III

All British Car Show

BLOUNT BRITISH CARS LTD.

TOWNSEND, TENNESSEE, MAY 4, 2002

PHOTOS BY TOM & BRETT BROBERG

When I awoke on the morning of the 4th and looked outside; it was raining. An occasional spring rain would not have been a worry but the week before that weekend probably had the members of the Blount British Cars Ltd. worried. It rained the preceding Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and of course the morning of the 4th. I debated whether to go up myself for fear it might be rained out.

We decided to go for it as we had already decided to be there and had nothing else planned. We left late. Surprisingly the closer to the mountains the more promising the weather. When we arrive it looked as if the rain just might stay away... and it did. It never got sunny but that keep temperatures pleasant throughout the day.

As usual Townsend's beautiful setting brought out a large number of beautiful cars and the Spitfire/GT6 category was no exception. Some from very long distances. Mike Japp came up from Florida and The Snyders came down from Michigan.

In the Spitfire/GT6 category there were 7 Spitfires in various states of perfection and 2 GT6's in near perfect condition. These numbers did not include the many cars in the parking lot coming and going throughout the day. ■



Bill Hall's 78 Spitfire



Mike Japp's 77 Spitfire



Paul Louge's 77 Spitfire



Sue Snyder's 73 GT6



Matt Johnson's 78 Spitfire



Jim Clark's 76 Spitfire



George Mason's 64 Spitfire



Allan Harper's 70 GT6



This tasteful styled GT6 greeted us in the parking lot along with this not so subtle Spitfire with a Chevy V8 dropped in.



British Motorcar Day

BRITISH MOTORCAR CLUB

CHATEAU ELAN, BRASELTON, GEORGIA, MAY 18, 2002

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY TOM & BRYAN BROBERG

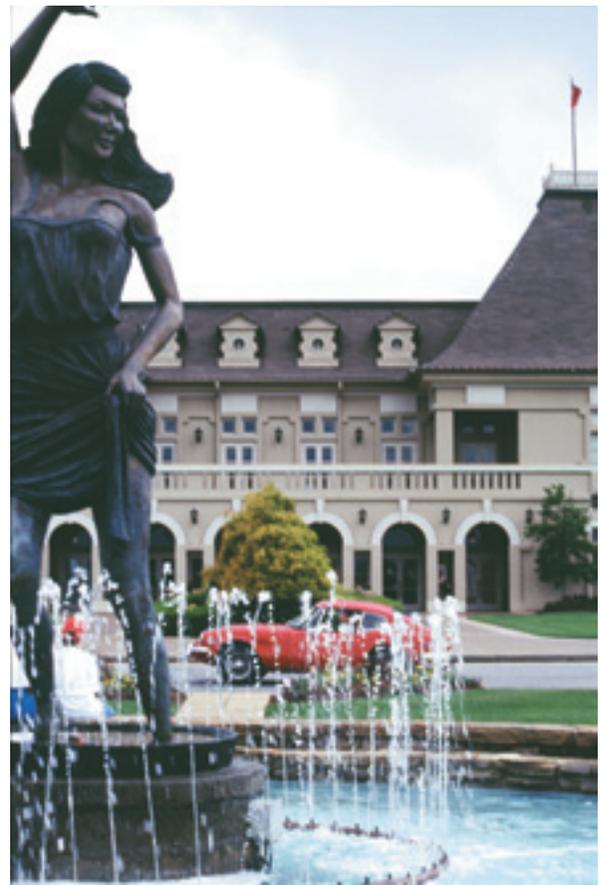


After surviving the Friday night storm in Atlanta on the Hotel's 5th floor, fighting the morning mist and the traffic delays due to construction on I-81 (it was good to see the fellow British Car owners assisting those whose cars were not fit for the long road delays) I arrived at the breathtaking setting of Chateau Elan which would figure to be more than just an average British Car show.

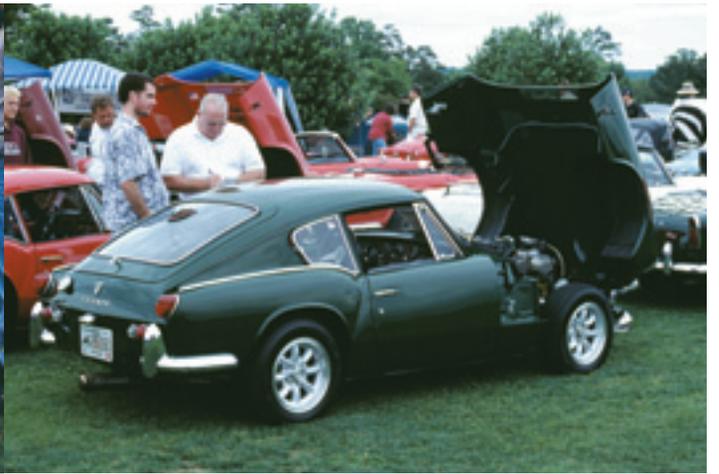
Arriving early with my 12 year old son Bryan there were many Cars of all Marques already on display. The continual stream of British Cars continued long into the early afternoon (they all must have come in on I-81 North). Once all the cars were parked in place or close to their marques there had to be over 500 British cars on display. Including the large numbers of British Cars scattered throughout the parking lot. The count had to be near a thousand.

If 1,000 British cars are not enough...throw in a British army of Kilt clad ladies and gentleman setting the mood with music, a vendors town square of British parts and products, a field full of cars for sale, grilled food and catering stations, the beautiful winery, store, and restaurant of Chateau Elan, the vineyard setting and you have the recipe that has to be defined as something more than a British Car show...it's a British car lovers heaven.

Now, I do not know if a lot of you get the opportunity to attend your areas' British Car shows, or put your vehicles on display- but it certainly has been great the past few years to see the growth and enthusiasm that has been going into the British Car events. And the Cars....some of them are just fabulous - to see the time and attention owners have paid to their restorations. ■







Triumph Car Show

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIUMPH CLUB

CASTLE ROCK, COLORADO, MAY 18, 2002

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY ANDREW DEVISSHER

SHOWING OFF



British Car Shows and Events

AUGUST

Ohio, Dayton, Eastwood MetroPark, Aug. 3
British Car Day 2002, Southwestern Ohio Centre of the MG Car Club & Miami Valley Triumphs, 937-293-2819, MGBSkip@aol.com

Massachusetts, Westminster, Wachusett Inn, August 8
Annual British Car Festival, British Motorcars of New England, (401) 944-8727

Pennsylvania, Armagh, Aug. 9-11
Summer Party, The Roadster Factory, 800 234-1104, TRFMail@aol.com

Washington, Westport, August 9-11
22nd Annual Northwest All Triumph Drive In, Tyeer Triumph Club, 206-622-3849

Michigan, Alden, August 11
Alden Classic Sports Car Show, Twin Bay British Car Club, (231)331-6431, shempi@torchlake.com

New York, Centerport, Long Island, Vanderbilt Mansion, Aug. 11
22nd Annual Vanderbilt Invitational Concours, N.Y. MG Car Club - Long Island Centre, mgzabc@optonline.net

New Jersey, Princeton, Princeton Marriott, August 14-18
Austin Healey Encounter, New Jersey Austin Healey Touring Club

Illinois, Abingdon, Aug. 15-18
Abingdon Summer Party, Chicagoland MG Club, (630) 858-8192

Florida, Helmsley, August 17
Sandcastle Outing, Suncoast British Car Club, (941) 753-3115

Iowa, Davenport, in the Village of East Davenport, August 17-8
Hearthland British Autofest, Quad City British Auto Club, (309) 764-1423

Illinois, Moline, August 24
Hearthland British Car Fest at Moline, Illinois & East Davenport, Iowa, (941) 753-3115

Ontario, Kingston, Aug. 25
13th Annual British Car Day, Boot 'N Bonnet Club, (613) 385-1947, Thomas1@post.queensu.ca

Pennsylvania, Rothesville, Aug. 25
13th Annual "Taste of Britain" Car Show, Lancaster Cnty. MG Club

Oregon, Portland, Aug. 30-Sept. 1
26th Annual All British Field Meet, 503-668-4073

Kansas, Kansas City, Park Place Hotel, August 31
Kansas City All British Car and Cycle Show, All British Committee, ptpower@worldnet.att.net

Tennessee, Newfound Gap on the TN/NC border to Mississippi River, August 31 - Sept. 1
Cross Tennessee IV, English Auto Society, 865-671-3935, minimoke@icx.net

SEPTEMBER

New York, Lancaster, Como Lake Park Casino, Sept. 1
19th Autumn Sports Classic Car Show, Buffalo Octagon Assoc., 716-937-6182

England, Sept. 5-14
3rd MG Heritage Tour of the UK, M.G. Drivers Club of NA., 908 713-6251, mgdriversclub@hotmail.com

New York, Watkins Glen, Sept. 6-8
"Minis at the Glen", SVRA, (585) 872-6560

Oregon, Portland International Raceway, Sept. 6
Portland All British Field Meet, dougurg@vintagead.com

California, Palo Alto, Sept. 7-8, 2002
Palo Alto British Car Meet 2002, The American MGB Assoc., 800 723-6464, meet@mgclub.org

Michigan, Boroda, Sept. 7
Lemon Creek Winery British Car Day, Northern Indiana Austin Healey Club, (219)622-7406

Pennsylvania, Tipton, Sept. 7-8
8th Annual British Car Festival, (814) 942-7742, mgnut@charter.net

Connecticut, Manchester, Sept. 8th
CTR Gathering & Picnic, Connecticut Triumph Register, (860) 482-8876, JStorrs@Snet.net

Illinois, Palos Hills, Marraone Valley CC, Sept. 8
16th Annual Chicago British Car Festival, The British Car Union, 708 442-7380, Reynaldo_Navarro@msn.com

Michigan, Sterling Heights, Sept. 8
20th Annual Battle of the Brits, Detroit Triumph Sports Car Club, (586) 979-4875, snyledydog@yahoo.com

Tennessee, Gatlinburg, Sept. 12
Southeastern Classic XVI, Smoky Mountain Austin-Healey Club, (865) 988-9819, bryan215@earthlink.net

Georgia, Dillard, Sept. 13-15
Southeast Regional MG Festival, Peachtree MG Registry, 770-428-5380, billg@intelsys.com

British Columbia, Victoria, Vancouver Island, Sept. 14-15
English Car Affair in the Park, 250-658-8614, dpsparks@telus.net

Calgary, Stanley Park, Sept. 14
European Classic Car Show & Vintage Bike Meet, Vintage Sports Car Club of Calgary, algarb@cadvision.com

Colorado, Arvada, Sept. 14
Ride the Rockies Tour, 303-477-0189, ktisdale@ix.netcom.com

Ohio, Warren, Sept. 15
Fall British Car Show, 330-274-0017, Cpalmer799@aol.com

Ohio, ? , September 15
11th Annual British Car Show & Swap Meet, (330) 896-3622

Indiana, Newburgh (10 minutes East of Evansville), Sept. 14
7th Annual British Car Day on the River, S.I.R. Brit, dmullen@sirbrit.com

New Jersey, Dover, Sept. 14
Fallfest at Dover, (908)879-3993, austinhealey@aol.com

Vermont, Stowe, Sept. 19-22
The British Invasion of Stowe, mgaetano@maainc.com

Indiana, Indianapolis, Sept. 20-22
Indy British Motor Days, Indiana British Car Union, 317 887-3867, mgdr@quiknet.net

Ohio, Put-in-Bay, Sept. 20-22
OHMOG XIX Morgans at the Bay, (419) 877-0515, slong93404@aol.com

Tennessee, Pigeon Forge, Grand Hotel, Sept. 20-22
Micros in the Mountains Car Show, lnewberry1@cs.com

Virginia, Richmond, September 21-22
18th Annual Richmond British Car Days, Central Virginia British Car Club, (804)-264-8551

Wisconsin, Lake Geneva, Abbey Resort, Sept. 20-23
Lotus Owners Gathering, Lotus Ltd., 815-469-2142, Lotusmark@aol.com

Florida, Titusville, Fox Lake Park, Sept. 21
All British Car Show, MG Car Club of Florida, 321-259-7926, euzierem@cfl.rr.com

Florida, St. Augustine, Sept. 21
British Car Classic Mk XIV, Triumph Club of North Florida

Missouri, St. Louis, Great Forest Park, Sept. 21-22
21st Annual British Car Days, St. Louis MG Club, 314-995-TOMG

Pennsylvania, Boiling Springs, Allenbarry Resort, Sept. 22
Meeting of the Marques, 717-259-0180, SVVSCC@usa.net

Ohio, Grandville, Sept. 26-29
Trials 2002 - 6-Pack National Convention, Buckeye Triumphs, 614 888-0838, TRSixer@yahoo.com

Missouri, Kimberling City, Sept. 27-29
Tri-Healey 2002, Gateway Healey Association, jlore26@aol.com, (314) 729-0044

Ohio, Dayton, Sept. 27
22nd Annual Fall Round Up, Miami Valley Austin-Healey Club, (937) 898-3620, mbbish@gateway.net

Alabama, Montgomery, Wynton Blount County Park, Sept. 28
8th Annual British Car Day, 256-234-3343, sgriffin@cacc.cc.al.us

California, Fresno, Sept. 28
Very British Car Meet, Valley British Car Club, 559-439-5062, valleybrits@yahoo.com

Maryland, Bel Air, Rocks State Park, Sept. 28
Brits on the Rocks, MGs of Baltimore, Ltd., 401-817-6862

North Carolina, Charlotte, NC Sept. 28
MGs on the Green, Metrolina MG Car Club 705-535-2323

North Carolina, Flat Rock, Highland Lake Inn, Sept. 28
Autumn in the Mountains, British Car Club of Western North Carolina, bccwnc@charter.net

Wisconsin, Lake Geneva, Sept. 28 & 29
25th Annual Lake Geneva Classic Car Rally, Corinne Kreissl Memorial Foundation, Inc. & American Cancer Society, (262) 248-2764

Connecticut, Somers, Pleasant View Golf Center, Sept. 29
British Autumn Autoshow and Autojumble, (203) 230-9782

Delaware, New Castle, Battery Park, Sept. 29
Annual Car Show, 302-378-1180, powellrn@hotmail.com

Texas, Round Rock, Old Settlers Park, Sept. 29
Texas All British Car Day, 512-442-4088, embee@io.com

OCTOBER

Tennessee, Memphis, Agricenter International, Oct. 4-5
2002 Memphis British Car & Motorcycle Fest, British Sports Car Club of Memphis, 901-324-0909, iduke002@midsouth.rr.com

Virginia, Waynesboro, Oct. 4-6 (show on Saturday)
21st Annual Fall British Car Festival, Shenandoah Valley British Car Club, 540-943-2907

Alabama, Fairhope, Oct. 5
Twelfth Annual British Car Festival, South Alabama British Car Club, mowog@sabcc.org

Pennsylvania, Bethlehem, Oct. 5
Autumn Leaf British Car Show, British Car Club of the Lehigh Valley, redising@fast.net

California, Bonsall, Fairbrook Farm, October 6
San Diego British Car Day, 619-575-5625

Massachusetts, Falmouth, October 12-14
Classic British Legends Weekend, Cape Cod British Car Club, ktnkt@cape.com

Mississippi, Natchez, Oct. 12
Brits on the Bluff Car Show, (601) 442-8684

Tennessee, Franklin, Carnton Plantation, October 12
All British Motorcar/motorbike Show, Nashville British Car Club, 615-395-4042 eve/wknd

New Jersey, Somerset, October 13
Out of the Woodwork 2002, TVR Car Club of North America, jloss@earthlink.net

Nevada, Laughlin, Oct. 17-20
Triumphfest 2002, Desert Centre Triumph Register of America, 602 997-2583, johnehorton@yahoo.com

South Carolina, Spartanburg, October 18-20
5th Annual "Gathering", MG Driver's Club of North America, 908-713-6251, mgdriversclub@hotmail.com

California, Watsonville, October 19-20
The California Autumn Classic, (831) 722-3253

Florida, Tampa Oct. 19
16th Annual All British Field Meet, Tampa Bay Austin Healey Club, (813) 752-0186, MBran89793@aol.com

Texas, Houston, Oct. 19
13th Annual Houston All British Motor Vehicle Expo, The Houston MG Car Club, 936 449-9029

Pennsylvania, Lancaster, October 20
5th Annual Poker Run, The Lanco MG Club's, (717) 285-7379, mg1lanco@cs.com

Virginia, Middleburg, October 20
Hunt Country Classic at Virginia, MG Car Club Wash. DC Centre, (703) 913-7550, george.marshall@leadscorp.com

Georgia, Jekyll Island, Oct. 24-27
VTR Southeast Regional, Georgia Triumph Association

Alabama, Florence, Oct. 25 - 26
Florence Alabama British Car Show, NABSMCM, 1-(888)-356-8687

South Carolina, Mt. Pleasant, Oct. 25th - 27th
18th Annual British Car Day, British Car Club of Charleston, dlambert@bennethofford.com

California, Van Nuys, Woodley Park, Oct. 27
2nd Annual DRIVE ALIVE Car Show, Granada Hills High School Cheer, (818) 365-2807, olsonteri@juno.com

Arizona, Sedona, October 31 - November 1-2
High Country Tour, RacerMoss@sedona.net

NOVEMBER

Florida, Homosassa, Riverside Inn, Nov. 1-3
Jamboree 12, The Florida Suncoast Classic MG Club, 727 321-3809, dave@tietzfamily.com

Florida, Zephyrhills, Nov. 14-17
18th Annual Zephyrhills Fall Autofest, 813-258-6726

If you would like your event listed here and on the TriumphSpitfire.com website, write to us at Spitfire & GT6 Magazine, P.O. Box 30806, Knoxville, TN 37930 USA or post it online at www.TriumphSpitfire.com

Spitfire & GT6 at



TRIUMPH!
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The Roadster Factory

New Parts

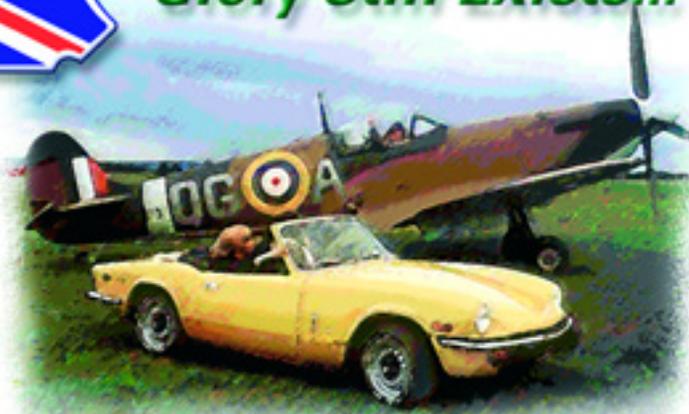
The Roadster Factory stocks a full range of new mechanical, hydraulic, and electrical components for Triumph Spitfire and GT6 models. Many parts have become hard to find, but we scour England to maintain availability. TRF is a major manufacturer of replica parts, and we are one of the few companies worldwide which actively manufactures Spitfire and GT6 Components...

Body Sheet Metal

TRF stocks all components manufactured by British Motor Heritage, including new components manufactured on original tooling and replica components. Availability of new components includes bonnets, rocker panels, front valances, and more. Replica components include replacement floor sections which perfectly replace originals that have been shot full of rust holes. Many other replica repair panels are also available.

Interior Components

TRF supplies carpet sets, interior panels, and seat kits with related items from a British Motor Heritage approved trim factory in England. Most of these components are available for all Spitfire and GT6 model variations.



Rebuilt Components

The Roadster Factory has its own rebuilding factory, known as C.A.R. Components. Items rebuilt there include engines, gearboxes, diffs, rear axles and hubs, steering racks, and carburetors. It is best to send your old units for rebuilding, but we can supply exchange units in many cases if necessary.

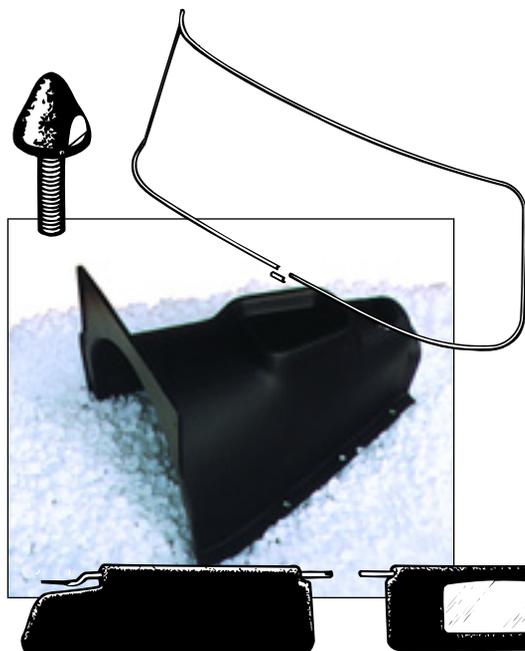
Technical Advice

The Roadster Factory offers technical support on a special phone line, which is open from 12:30 till 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call Tech Support at 814 446-4491.



The Roadster Factory

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Tel. 800 234 -1104 • Fax 814 446-6720
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Parts Specials, Good through Sept. 31, 2002—You must mention this ad...

Part No.	Description	List Price	SPECIAL
612962	Cone/bolt , bonnet locating, all Spitfire, GT6	3.90	1.95
REP312	Gearbox cover , black plastic, Spitfire	69.95	49.95
REP345	Gearbox cover , black plastic, GT6	69.95	49.95
823381	Sun visor , black, driver's side, no mirror, Spitfire mks. 3, 4, 1500, GT6+, GT6 mk.3	22.95	14.95
XKC2949PA	Sun visor , black, passenger's side, with mirror, Spitfire mks. 3, 4, 1500, GT6+ GT6 mk.3	27.95	16.95
RFK147	Windscreen trim kit , chromed plastic, incl. trim strip and clip, Spitfire mks. 1, 2, 3, GT6 mk.1, GT6+	10.95	6.95

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