

# SPITFIRE & GT6

*for enthusiasts, by enthusiasts*

MAGAZINE

*features*



**Don't Race That Car!**



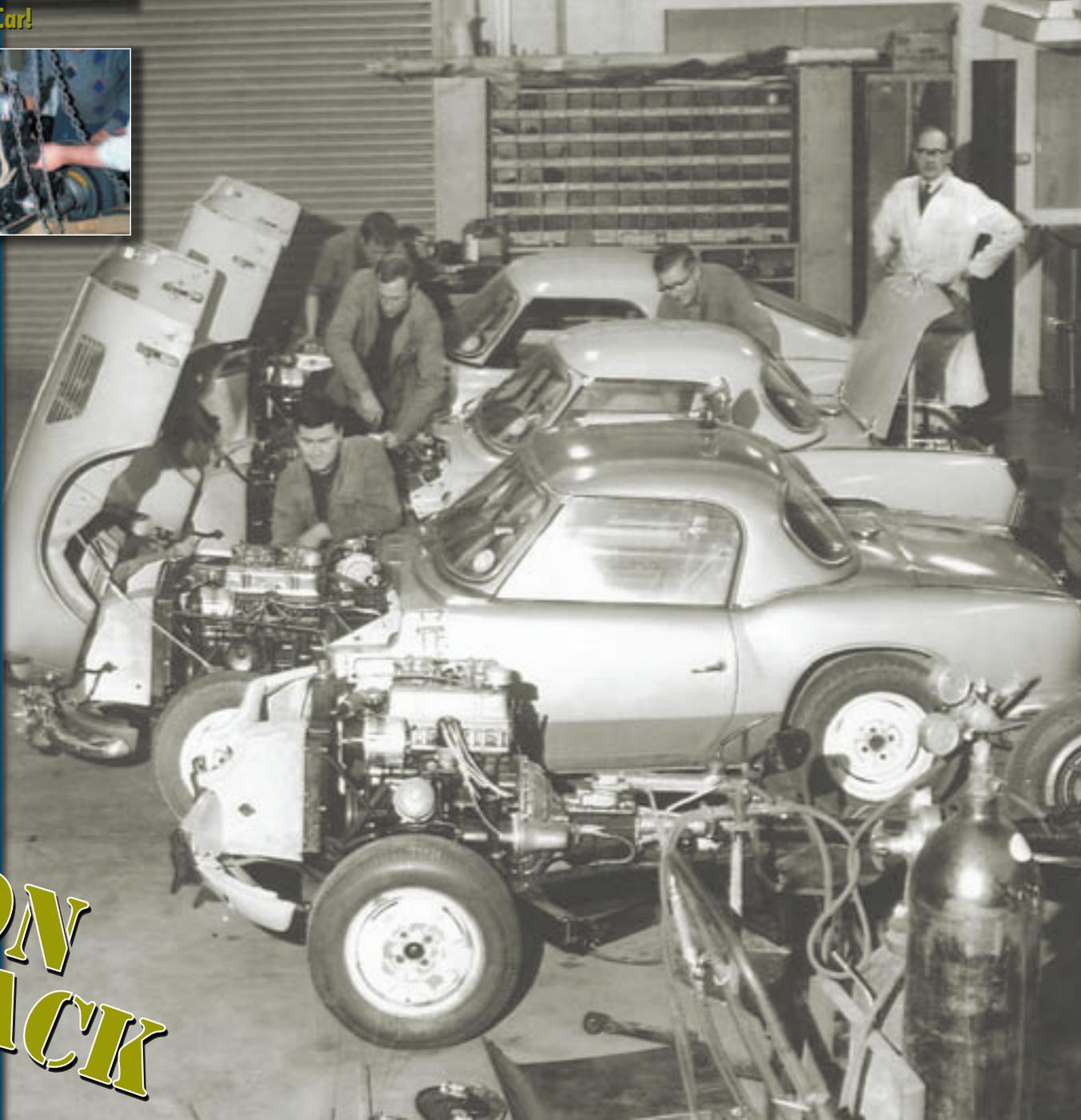
**Spitty's Revenge**

Ray Henderson (right), manager of the competition shop and later competition supervisor, looks on while Factory rally cars are being prepped. Under the bonnets are (front to back) Dave Sheperd, Peter Clarke, and Peter Cox.

**ON TRACK**  
edition

## The Racing Spitfires

A HISTORY OF EARLY FACTORY RACING EFFORTS



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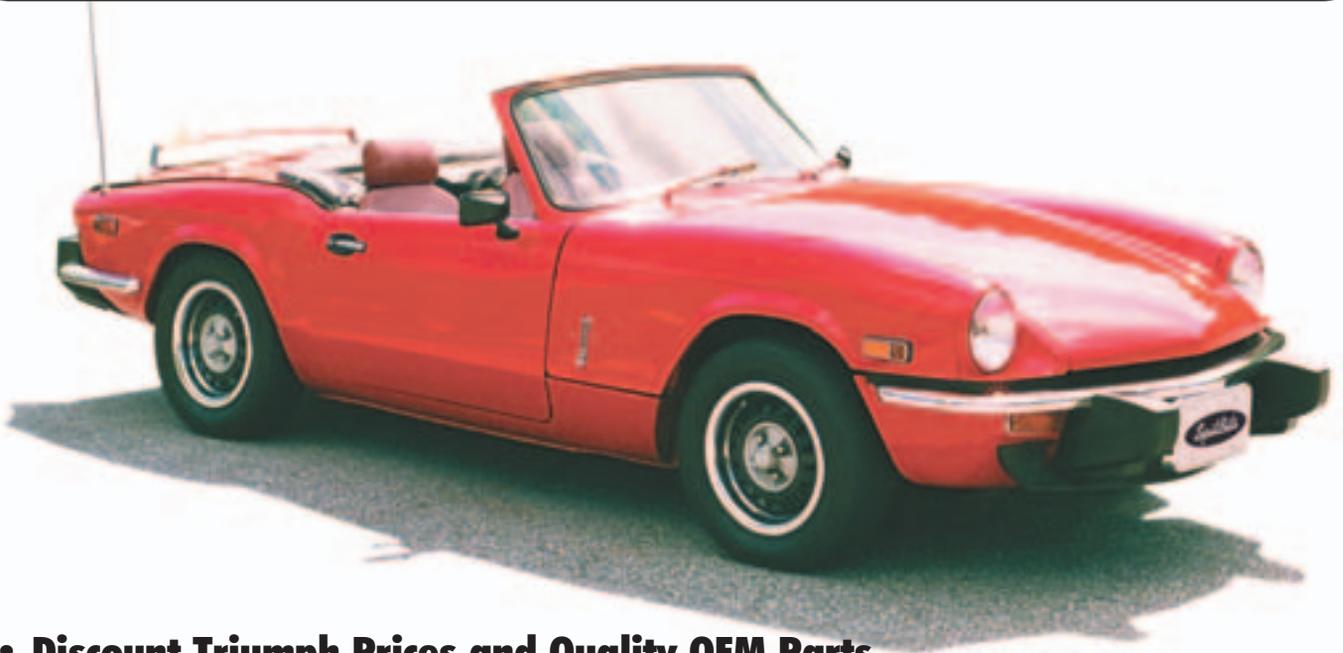
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## Spitfire Excitement is Building!

Recently we had our first real spring day. 65 and sunny. It took all I could do not to drop everything, grab Kermit's keys and head out into world.

The excitement got me thinking about Spitfire/GT6 ownership in general. Having much exposure with many British marques (webmaster of our local British Car club, editor for Spitfire & B+Midget magazines, NASS vice president, British Car show junkie, etc.) I talk with many different people in the hobby and I have come to the conclusion: Spitfire/GT6 owners are the most enthusiastic group of owners! Look around, of the many British Car clubs in North America it seems almost every one has a Spit owner as President, webmaster, or newsletter editor. Every large club that comes to mind has either one or all these positions held by one of your fellow Spitfire or GT6 owners.

It seems to be true in the world of magazines too. Spitfire & GT6 magazine is steadily growing while our MG magazine has had to merge with another MG magazine just to stay afloat. British Car magazine, after many years pushing uphill to keep running, has been sold to the owners of Grassroots Motorsport (isn't it Grassroots that is building a firebreathing Spitfire? Hummmmm). Triumph World's June/July issue will be its 50th! Impressive. It would be nice to see a Spitfire or GT6 on the cover.

So, why are we so enthusiastic? I have not idea. I just know it to be true. We are so enthusiastic that there will be THREE NASS Spit-Togethers not just one. And this excited Spit owner is doing his best to be at the Mid-US event with at least one Spitfire. We have already started working out the details. What needs to be fixed before May? Will the parts I ordered be delivered soon? Can we get two cars on a trailer? Who will watch the office if both Tom & I are gone? Hopefully you are asking similar questions at this moment. I hope to meet many old friends & new faces. This morning I heard that the weather this weekend will be sunny and near 70! I have a feeling Kermit will be awakened from his long winter nap and breath new life Saturday afternoon. I am getting revved up thinking about it!

John Goethert  
editor

p.s. As always, thanks to everyone who has sent articles.

In addition to your regular stories next issue will have special features on Shows/Events and Safety & Wrecks. As usual, we welcome any and all submissions.

And to those whose stories did not make it in this issue, look for them in an upcoming issue.

Spitfire & GT6 Magazine • "for enthusiasts, by enthusiasts"

# SPITFIRE & GT6

Issue #11 magazine

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James Bellis	Charles Edmonson	Paul Richardson
Bob Buxbaum	Fred Griffiths	Andre Rousseau
James Carruthers	Greek Spitfire Club	Ted Schumacher
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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**



**Send us anything Spitfire or GT6 related!  
info@triumphspitfire.com**

or

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



Ian Cowie of Victoria Australia "turns a wheel in anger" in his "Spitty".



Thank you for the copies of Spitfire Magazine. It turned out beautiful and our stories back to back are really inspir-

ing. Picking out the quote was really good.

Kermit just got me "holy road" license plates for "Faith."  
Always,  
lizzie west

Spitfire Magazine,  
Thanks for the reminder about renewing my subscription to the one magazine I look forward to getting. Enclosed you will find my endorsement for another year of your hard work to produce a great magazine as you always do.

I am still in the process of rebuilding the two Spitfires I found. I am using a V-6 to power one (this has become a project from hell), the other will be stock. As I am in the middle of the Mojave desert this has been a fun summer. I have take a lot of pictures would it be possible to send a few when done?

Rex Willis  
California

John;  
My wife contacted you around last Father's Day to get a copy of the #8 issue cover featuring my car. You sent her a copy of the magazine and she had the cover framed for me for my Father's Day gift. This was quite a shock as you could imagine! She told me that I had to contact you and do a story for the magazine. Well two problems... First (as you can understand) I have a son who is about 2 1/2 years old and I really don't know where the times goes anymore. Secondly, my job requires me to be out of town 3 or 4 days week.

Anyway, here we are today. I would sincerely like to uphold my end of the deal, albeit late. Please let me know what I can do in the way of an article, interview, pictures, what-ever.

Thanks!  
Troy J. Smith  
Virginia

Hello,  
My sister had given me a new subscription to your magazine around Christmas time. Seeing as how I'm a Spitfire owner, I am really looking forward to your magazine. I have a 1978 1500 that I have had for

about 5 years, and have customized it very nicely. I will enclose a couple of photos. Let me know if you want more info.

Jeffrey Widmann  
Indiana

Dear editor (J.G.),  
The magazine is great and growing and the website is even better! Congratulations and please keep up the good work. I have too many parts cars so I'll be starting an ad soon. I'm interested in finding what used to be called "Brooklands" style folding windscreens (pair) or a one piece full length version if any reader has seen such for a '65 Spitfire project.

Enjoy the letters and the swap articles, even the weird ones. Anti-swap folks lighten up - Spitfires are not exactly incredibly rare and expensive. For every swap there are a dozen OE's around. A worse problem are cars being crushed because they don't have enough value or storage, even the parts are lost forever. Some older cars are now rather dangerous to drive around today's traffic. More power to weight, better brakes, more reliable gauges and electricals, more comfort, what's not to like about upgrading your ride? Keep one stock for your personal museum and make one a daily or weekend fun-to-driver. You could do both for less than the cost of a (not so) late model used car. Just avoid driving your museum piece among the suburban assault vehicles on the interstate.

Larry Sutton

John,  
The new issue came today. It looks great - can't wait to dig into the articles tonight!

By the way, I agree with your wife's theory about SUV drivers... SUV's driven like cars are owned by people that don't know driving can be fun!!

Thanks,  
Larry Griffin

A group of helpful people motivated by a local DJ friend, helped gather and pack some care packages for our troops over there!

Yesterday we sent 5 boxes out with homemade cookies, envelopes, writing tablets, pens, cans of peanuts, CD's, and a few British Car mags (I supplied) for the troops to read. I even sent the new Spitfire & GT6 Magazine to them. You may pick up some more readers. :-)

Howard Baugues

Hi John,  
Just got the last issue. Two articles in the same issue? Wow, thanks for the compliments.  
Cheers till I think up something else,  
Fred

Hi John,  
Issue #10 came out great!  
Thanks for running my story. I really hope the paint job on my current project comes out as nice as the one on the sapphire blue GT6 from England (Wow).  
Hope all is well with you and your family.  
Dennis Fitzpatrick

Hi John.  
Greetings from the Great White North, and when I say North I do mean C-O-L-D! The thermometer today is reading -25 celsius which is about -12F. BRRRRRRRRR.  
Thank goodness that Spring is only two and a half weeks away.  
I received Issue #10 in the mail a few days ago. Another brilliant issue! It's great to see even more contributors from all over the world. You must be very satisfied and proud to see such growth over two plus years. Pretty soon you'll have to go public and list on the NYSE...  
Gregory Hertel

Dear John  
TRIBUTE TO THE SPITFIRE  
This two-day event is being staged at Newark Air Museum in eastern Nottinghamshire to honour the legendary World War 2 fighter and it will take place on Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th May 2003. A host of special displays relating to this famous RAF combat fighter are being organised.

In view of your group's name association with this aircraft, we wondered whether your members might like to participate or display their vehicles at the event?  
Regards,  
Howard Heeley  
Secretary & Museum Trustee  
Tel: 0115 920 1536

I love the Spitfire/GT6 magazine. I have yet to get tired of the articles. And like most people, I get tired of repetitious nature of specialty magazines really fast. It has a lot going for it, which I don't think you need in detail.  
Terry Thompson

I wanted to take a minute and thank you guys for the great magazine. I

enjoy it very much. I also wanted to tell you about a project I recently completed. I wanted to put some cool after market wheels on my '73 MK IV Spitfire. I looked at several different types and finally found a set on Ebay that I liked. I made sure they were in good condition and included the lug nuts. I neglected to ask the condition of the lug nuts. When my shipment arrived I found the lug nuts were in poor condition. They were chipped, with the chrome off and rusted. I looked around for replacements and found that there are NO 3/8" lug nuts made for any after market wheels any more. I remembered an article that I had read in your mag

by Mike Nelson. He described his process for replacing the lug studs with 7/16" x 20 studs from a Mercury Capri. I was able to get the studs off the shelf at my local parts store, they are Dorman part number 610-175. I was the able to press out the old studs and pull the new studs in with a lug nut. Now I am able to buy my lug nuts off the shelf and fit my "new" Western Wheels to my Spitfire. A project that would have been difficult to complete with out the information from Spitfire & GT6 Magazine.



Thanks and keep up the good work.  
Ted Bush-mechanic  
Cindee Bush-owner  
1973 Spitfire MK IV

I own a '79 Spit in superb running shape several years ago, when I last drove it. It's now in relatively rough condition, but a restoration would make it museum-worthy. Which is where I'd like to get this little green and tan jewel: into a museum. The folks from the Petersen Museum came down and said they would indeed want it for their collection in L.A., but that, at least currently, they couldn't undertake the restoration. My thought is to find a magazine willing to cover the restoration and a good restoration shop willing to donate their time (for the cause, and the coverage, and a museum plaque). Any thoughts appreciated.  
Kim Williamson,  
California

## Story Requests

"An article on body styling (spoilers and wings) would be cool."  
-Thomas Burke

"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

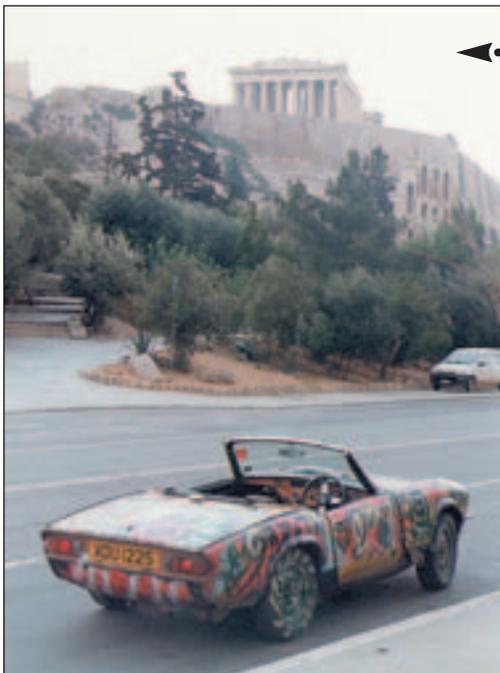
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# Weird, Wacky & Wonderful!

## EXCUSE ME, YOU HAVE A BEE ON YOUR SHIRT!

Otto Kemp, a regular submitter, sent us t-shirt iron-on's he made using his computer and ink jet printer on special transfer paper. "Here are a few iron-on's for your favorite t-shirt. Hope you know how to iron them on."

We will wear them with pride.



## ALL IT NEEDED WAS A LITTLE PAINT...

Sent by an anonymous Greek emailer this Spitfire's "new" paint job brightens up an already very picturesque setting.

Visit [www.triumph-club.gr](http://www.triumph-club.gr) for more fun photos.

## TROPHY WIFE

With a big imagination and powerful photo editing equipment Bob Beaulieu imagines the prize at the end of the race.



## CUSTOM FIT INTERIOR

This 1979 Spitfire owned by Christine & Jim Davis gives a new meaning to the having your interior tailor-made to your liking. The interior is made from denim pants and dresses! The pockets on the back of the seats are great storage for CD's etc.

"This car is my wife's toy and my hobby. I did all the

mechanical work including engine rebuild and body work. It was stripped completely and sanded to bare metal before receiving paint" remarks Jim.

Don't overlook the rest of the interior...the dash is one piece of beautifully finished teak with "only the necessary gauges and switches installed".

# Spitfire Spotters in the media

## RED SPIT IN RED SHOES

Showtime Networks produces a series show here in Canada called "The Red Shoes Diaries". On a recent episode entitled "Bounty Hunter" a red Mk IV was the getaway car for a fleeing male felon. Unfortunately, a torrential rain prevented a quick escape as the rear wire wheels became stuck in some mud. (As if a Spitfire would really get stuck in mud - those Hollywood writers don't know anything about Spitfires...) As the wheels spun, a large carving knife, held by the female bounty hunter, ripped through the roof and immediately the felon jumped out of the car and ran off into the storm. Guess the cockpit got wet after that...

-Greg Hertel

## NO RESPECT

"Seems like even the models of or cars are relegated to the off-price discount stores. Note the Spitfire models are reduced to \$9.99. When I visited the store, there was only one black model on the shelves.

-Charles Edmonson



## 50¢ PER MILE

In the World News section of the April 2003 *European Car Magazine* there is an article about Sports Car Rentals, a specialized auto rental agency in Batesville Virginia. The company allows customers to use their 57 Austin-Healey 100-6, 59 MGA, 60 TR2, 81 Fiat Spider and 72 Triumph Spitfire.

Not surprisingly the Healey is the favorite rental but the an even bigger surprise is the Spitfire "has a loyal following" says John Pollock, proprietor. "Customers are only interested in the really old hardware" he explains. The MGB's, TR7's and TR8's are now history for that very reason. Astonishingly, the TR6 was also sent packing, but not the little Spitfire. "I had several MGB's but they just didn't rent."

For more information call 434-832-4442 or visit [www.SportsCarRentals.com](http://www.SportsCarRentals.com)

Rentals are limited to 200 miles per day at a cost of \$95/day. As much as I have spent on my Spitfire... sounds about right!

-Tom Broberg

## PRACTICAL RACER

The Nov. 2002 issue of *Practical Classics* had a special racing feature "Classic Racing" featuring a Mk3 GT6. The story tells tries to answer the question "is it possible to build a classic racer that can be used everyday to commute to work?"

Interesting article but they leave you wanting more.



## fun photos



Last issue....



Much closer but more to go Andre!



Who isn't?!  
-anonymous sender

# Spitfire Spotters in the media

LITTLE BITS OF SPITS

## SPITTING AROUND THE WORLD

During a recent cruise around the Pacific Rim, Fred Griffiths kept an eye out for Spitfires and sportscars in general. In French Polynesia he didn't see any sports cars, only an ad for Mobil Oil to prove that they had been there.

## AND IN JAPAN

"In Japan I saw only 1 - a TR6, oh well, at least it was a Triumph. In Sydney I passed another Triumph, this time a Stag and snapped its picture out of my driver's window."

"In Japan I found an interesting car magazine, *Tipo*. Below is a translation of two small articles on Spitfire and GT6."

The translation looks broken and disjointed, but Fred's translator says Japanese does not translate easily into smooth flowing English:

**GT6 Review:** *Strong English flavour. Difficult to get hands on. Maintenance very expensive.*

Competitive with MGBGT. Like E type coupe Jaguar, styling is fantastic even for today's streets.

The 6cyl engine is bigger than the speed you actually get.

Even on today's highway, it is more than sufficient, and this is one of the biggest advantage.

Using Spitfire, 6cyl 2 liter engine, body shape is given by fast-back coupe.

The body was shown in Spitfire works cars, at Lemans 1964.

Quietness is the same as the Herald saloon, being improved out of it.

Debut 1966, passed North American safety standard only in 1968, that was Mark 2.

In 1970, changed design of tail light, became Mark 3. 1973, the last car of this model.

**Triumph Spitfire:** *Very English. Difficult to get. Maintenance average.*

Compares in head to head competition with Spridget.

More beautiful Italian design made it so charming.

Has large pumper of 1500cc, on today's road of design conscious, it still attracts a lot of attention wherever found.

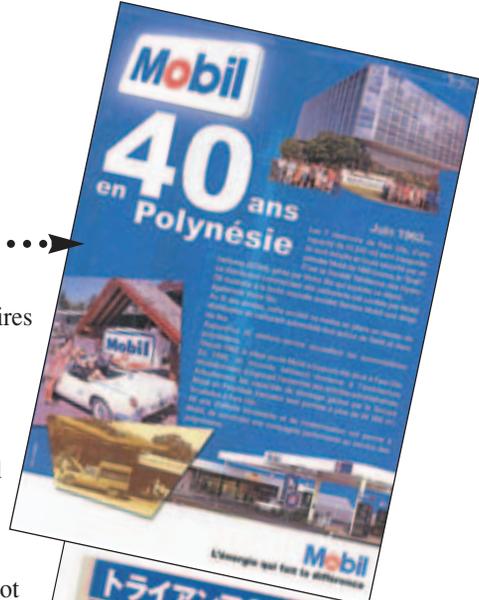
Although the speed and smoothness is one step behind Spridget, however, it is a better cruising car.

It is simple and sharp, even this last generation of Triumph it is still a masterpiece.

Debut in 1962 as a Spridget competitive, a small light sports car, with Herald commonality and a Michelotti designed body.

With 1.2 litre 4 cyl ohv engine, at first called Spitfire 4, then changed to Spitfire MK2. In 1964 came with the more efficient engine. In '67 changed to 1.3 litre engine and also lift-ed position of bumper as improvement and became MK 3.

Since 1970 it meets North American safety standards, with changed front and back bumper and make it bigger, became MK IV. In 1974 enlarged to 1.5 liter to incorporate gas regulation, called 1500. Until 1980, 132,000 cars manufactured.



Tipo "Dramatic Car-Magazine" - Japanese Auto Magazine Issue 161, 11th month, 2002 cost 590 Yen (at 120 yen to the US\$) Magazine on exotic sports cars, Italian, British, etc

## SHE STAYED WARM (THE TRANSMISSION TUNNEL LEAKS AIR)

"Imagine my surprise when reading a decidedly "girlie" novel by Nora Roberts called *True Betrayals* (written in 1995) when she mentions the Spitfire."

"I quote from page 5: 'She'd rushed out of her apartment without her coat, and had neglected to turn on the heater in her Spitfire, but she didn't feel the chill of the February evening.'"

-Kristi Richardson

## PASSION FOR SPITFIRES

The 23 Apr. 2003 issue of *Rétro Passion Magazine* featured the Triumph Spitfire with wonderful photos of a maroon Mk3. If you can read French visit [www.retro-passion.com](http://www.retro-passion.com) to view the article.



## Bumper Sticker of the Issue



-Rick Fredericks "here is the bumper sticker on the back of 'the worlds toughest Spitfire'"



# You write the caption



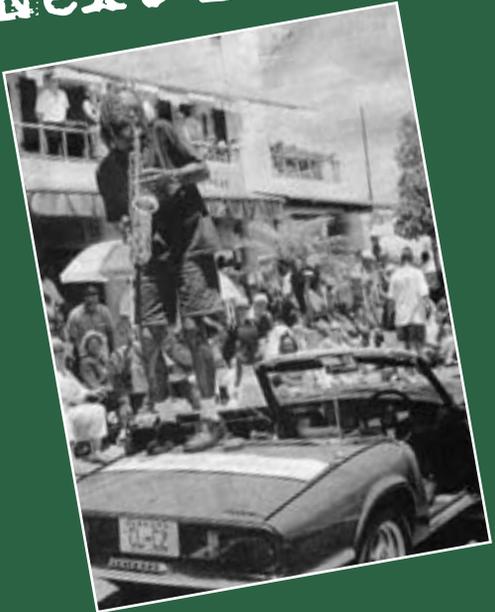
Last issue we asked readers to send in suggestions for a caption for the photo above. Here they are.

## The Real Story...

Imagine this: you are given a tool chest but there is a catch, it had to be removed immediately and no you have no other method of transport other than your Spitfire.

Howard Baugues had just such luck and his factory luggage rack did the trick.

# Next issue...



## The Real Story...

Alvin Woods serenades the crowds during the 2002 Bermuda Day Celebration parade.

Send your caption suggestions to info@triumphspitfire.com or

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

# the captions

"Cool Tool Caddy"  
 I'm driving to Canada  
 Have tools will travel  
 Always prepared  
 In the words of Clint Eastwood "Go Ahead Break Today"  
 For sale, 78 spitfire with added trunk storage  
 This model comes with the Boy Scout Swiss Army package.  
 The air compressor is in the boot  
 So, ummm... What do you carry in your continental touring kit?  
 What do you get when you cross a British car with a redneck owner.  
 Go ahead wee little car, spitty on me now!!  
 Winter Driving Tip: Put extra weight over the drive wheels for better traction.  
 What should have been standard equipment!  
 You packed yet dear?  
 ...and it adds downforce!  
 You never know when you'll have to help out an Midget owner  
 I have a trailer with spare parts too.  
 Tool's and spitfire's go together  
 I knew that these spit's some time broke but I did not know that I would need these many tools  
 I know that my tool box need wheels but this is too much  
 Modern technology and traditional styling meet in the new limited edition Spitfire which features  
 on board "tools" to diagnose and remedy both mechanical and electrical trouble!  
 For Sale -- Dependable 1978 Spitfire complete with toolkit  
 I'd prefer a monkey  
 Glad I didn't drive my mini cooper  
 Honey, I promise I will only take the essential emergency tools!  
 Cannon Ball Run Here I Come  
 The Triumph Toolbox: Don't leave home without it!  
 And they say you can't take it all with you.  
 The things I have to do to keep this bloody car running!!!  
 "Tools"... don't leave home without them.  
 Spitfire for sale.comes with extensive history file.  
 Have Tools, Will Travel  
 Ready for a road trip  
 The new spoiler design never really caught on...  
 'For Sale' comes complete with tool kit  
 Few people remember the optional matching travel tool kit  
 The only way to fix the oil leaks!  
**IF YOU'RE GONNA DRIVE A SPITFIRE - YOU'RE GONNA NEED SOME TOOLS!!**  
 The Boy Scout Motto: Be Prepared!!  
 (quote from owners manual)"For emergency repairs, BL urges all Spitfire drivers to carry at least a  
 minimum assortment of tools"  
 The Triumph roadside assistance program was doomed from the start...  
 The more tools I bring with me, the less chance I will ever need to use them!  
 Anticipation  
 Spare Parts! I'll never be stranded again.  
 Who says they are not reliable?  
 Going to the market  
 "...and now I can carry enough OilDri for the tow truck, too!"  
 Not content to leave well enough alone, Howard proves that you CAN take it with you.  
 OK Honey, we're ready! You go ahead in the MG and we'll follow in case there's a problem....  
 Are you finished packing? The car's all ready for our cross-country trip...  
 If the car breaks down, you can drive the tool chest.  
 I knew that some "tweaking" was needed, but this is ridiculous.  
 It was only going to be a short (100 mile) trip so Howard only packed the bare essential tools  
 needed for a British car trip.  
 Its the new gasoline powered roll-around tool chest from Binford AARROOOGH AARROOW.  
 I'm glad I brought half of the tools I'll need for the car  
 Spare Electrics  
 Spitfire Portable Toolbox: The bare minimums to keep you spit running on long trips..  
 New from Triumph... Bolt-on child seat  
 I think were gonna need a bigger boot  
 and

...and adding practicality to the Spitfire was the seldom opted matching luggage

# SPITFIRE SPECIALS

Ball Joint Set (2)	\$32.00
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
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Brake Hose Set Stainless	\$73.00
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We have received so many questions about paint that we want to include the paint colors with the other info in "Reader's Cars" section. The color will be the Triumph Paint Code followed by the color name. No code indicates a non-factory paint.

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



Michael Paserchia, New Jersey, 1979 Spitfire 1500 (CAA-Carmine Red)



Bob Owsinski, Michigan, 1976 1500 (Ford Taurus Denim Blue)



John & Jean Scott Gauldin, Oklahoma, 1980 1500 (JAG-Pageant Blue) "Leroy"



Rodney C. Widner, Utah, 1964 Spitfire 4 (26-Wedgewood)



Bernie Thompson, Michigan, 1965 Mk2



Jeff & Lauren Widmann, Indiana, 1978 1500



Sandy & Mike Tilley, Michigan, 1976 1500  
They have been married 24 years, and dated in college when Mike owned a 73 and 75 Spitfire. Both missed owning one for years, and found this 76 to work on and enjoy.



Nello Cristiano, Wisconsin, 1976 1500



Ken Fegely, Texas, 1964 Spitfire 4 (11-Black)



Andrea Censi, Italy, 1976 (California spec.) 1500, (11-Black)



Steve Carr, Minnesota, 1977 1500 (75-British Racing Green)



Richard Kaplan, Pennsylvania, 1979 1500 (CAA-Carmine Red)



Pascal Quesnel, France, 1969 Mk3



Richard, England, GT6 Mk3



James Bellis, North Wales, 1966 Mk2



Christian Bonin, Québec, 1976 1500 (136-Delft Blue)



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Yousuke Hiraoka, Yokohama, Japan, 1974 MkIV



Kelvin Tan, Singapore, 1963 Spitfire 4



Don Sterne, Oklahoma, 1972 Spitfire MKIV (65-Emerald Green)



Christine Davis, Florida, 1979 1500



Kevin Wildner, Texas, 1976 1500 Spitfire (since I'm in Texas paint is Cowboy blue)



Chris & Kiel-sons of Mike & Sandy Tilley, Michigan, 1976 1500 (75-BRG)  
Pics are my boys, Chris, on his high school graduation day in my Spitfire, and his brother Kiel. Chris was going, and is now at Michigan State University, whose school colors are just about British Racing Green, like the car. This is the first time I ever let them drive my Spit, and I let them take it to all the graduation "open houses" with the green MSU flag attached.

# A Spit-firey Romance

BY BILL HEREAU, CHICAGO, IL



I've admired the lines, stance, size and sportiness of the spitfires since seeing the first one parked in the high school lot. But that was in the age of muscle cars. My crowd would not accept any car with so little horsepower and a back seat was a social requirement.

A few years later I was reconsidering one when the draft sent me into the Air Force from '67 to '71. After a '61 T-Bird, a marriage, '63 Riviera, new career, '69 LeMans, Kid, '76 Camaro, divorce, Peugeot, born again bachelor, SAAB and remarriage, I was picking up Chinese food from the neighborhood place one rainy night when a pristine '80 Spitfire pulled up behind us with a for sale sign in the window. Twenty years of dormant urge surged forward as I approached the young Hispanic and asked how much he was selling it for. By then my new wife joined us. She definitely knows the look of lust in me when she sees it. I was ready to write the \$3,000 check in the rain, but we have this dual agreement thing. After explaining my long time desire, our finances and how much she spent on new furniture, we had a semi soft OK. I called the owner of the Chinese joint who told me his delivery guy had just sold the Spitfire and quit. Major fit to follow. We agreed to make up and shop for another Spitfire.

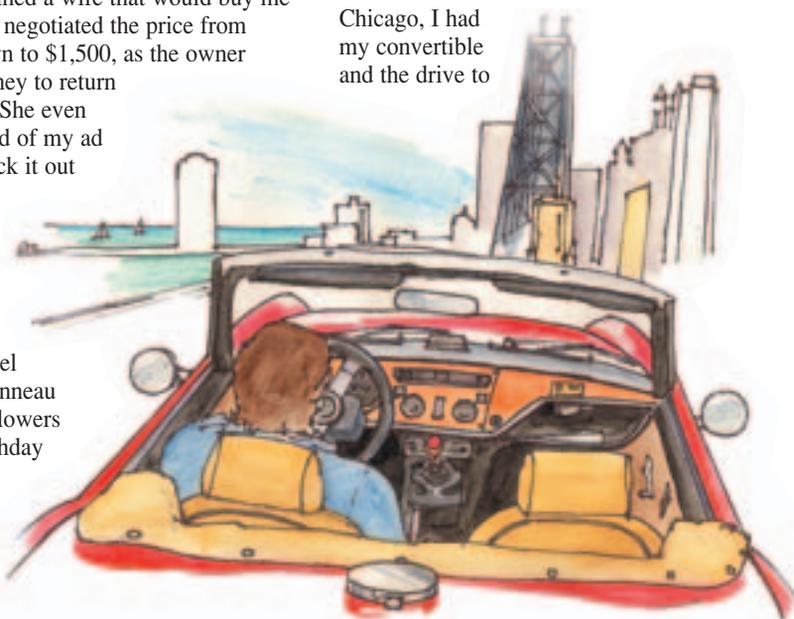
Two weeks later I was hectically

racing a deadline directing a photo shoot on my wives' Birthday. My beautiful wife showed up at the studio as I was woefully late for our dinner date. When she asked, I happily took a break and went for a walk. Halfway down the block she turned and said "Happy Birthday." There was the beautiful little Spitfire. I was stunned, elated and speechless all at the same time. My exwife took my cars. I never imagined a wife that would buy me one. She'd negotiated the price from \$3,000 down to \$1,500, as the owner needed money to return to Mexico. She even had the head of my ad agency check it out with a mechanic for her. When the owner showed up with the steel hard top, tonneau cover and flowers for her Birthday she said "Oh Thank you so much, but the

price is still \$1,500." At that point Patti rose beyond mere trophy wife. However, that started the affair. The more everyone put down my little used car, the more I loved it.

I was a totally happy, daily driving Triumph owner oblivious to British mechanicals till the day I flunked the emissions exam. Even though the meter showed that it passed the emissions standard, the dork with the mirror on a stick discovered that the catalytic converter was removed. To be a responsible citizen I parked the car till I could buy the equipment and some of the other details that needed work. The next spring when I had the converter, new brake shoes and muffler I was ready to go again but with no time, or ability for that matter, to work on it. My brother Joe had a cheap mechanic that he had a deal with who could do what I thought was basic bolt on work. When the barely intelligible Asian called to tell me there wasn't enough room under the car to install the converter, even I knew we were in trouble. After much sign language, The Haynes manual and delays it finally fired up. I drove out of there as fast as I could and discovered on the expressway that the new brakes were hardly slowing the car with both feet on the pedal. With a little adjustment a friend made they're better but not good. They really have to be totally redone.

But now it was Summer in Chicago, I had my convertible and the drive to



work down Michigan Avenue's Magnificent Mile was a challenge of dodging Taxis that never saw me and a delight, from that view, of secretaries in short skirts. Driving a four speed in downtown rush hour traffic is not what this car was designed for. It seemed to overheat a lot. But I took off early one afternoon and decided to wind it out a little on Lake Shore Drive. I had sun and wind in my face, sunbathers on the beach, boats in the harbors and little traffic. Heading back toward the city, my eyes saw Lake Shore Drive but my Walter Mitty brain saw Monte Carlo. I whipped off the drive to try the windy road in Lincoln Park. As I jauntily stopped and waited at the first light, I noticed the hood start to bubble, then flames started licking out of the wheel well. I exploded out of the car and ripped open the hood to confront a good sized fire. I took off my shirt and tried to smother the carburetor that I thought was the source of the fire. Now I had a flaming shirt and car. A CTA bus driver stopped and said "I don't know how it works but you can use my extinguisher."

With all the traffic I'd now backed up, some concerned citizen dialed 911. An ambulance showed up and I told them I was fine. They said, "That's good there's a fire truck on the way anyway." Sure enough Chicago's big red pulled up followed by a squad. The firefighter said, "You want us to douse ya or what?" I replied, "No thanks, I've got it." When the cops came up I realized that my plates were two years out of date and I wasn't sure if my insurance was still on. They said, "Hop in we'll push you to the curb." I said, "(Gulp) It's OK it's like pushing a Radio Flyer." The cop said, "Get in." I got behind the wheel waiting for them to see my plates. The cop said, "Hey, it is like pushing a wagon." Thanking Chicago's finest and escaping a ticket, I waved them good bye and called my other lover. on the cell phone. "What?, Fire?, Is it out?, Your shirt?, Where are you?" While I waited in the park, shirtless with my smoldering car,

with soot on my face and chest, The homeless locals assumed I was one of theirs.

My wife finally showed up to meet me with my new friends, not with another shirt, but with our dog. That's when I think her hidden jealousy finally showed. "Damn car needs a hundred parts, Can't drive it, Death trap, You're gonna get killed, We don't need it, Let's sell it right where it is." Luckily I had a tow already on the way. When I finally got it back from the recommended "Euro Sport" mechanic, I had a long list of new parts and a lame excuse of where the fire came from. The car didn't seem to run much better and the brakes still didn't stop for spit.

The next Summer my Brother, a doctorate in mechanics, moved back to Chicago and with a few hours of tinkering had my Spitfire rumbling better than

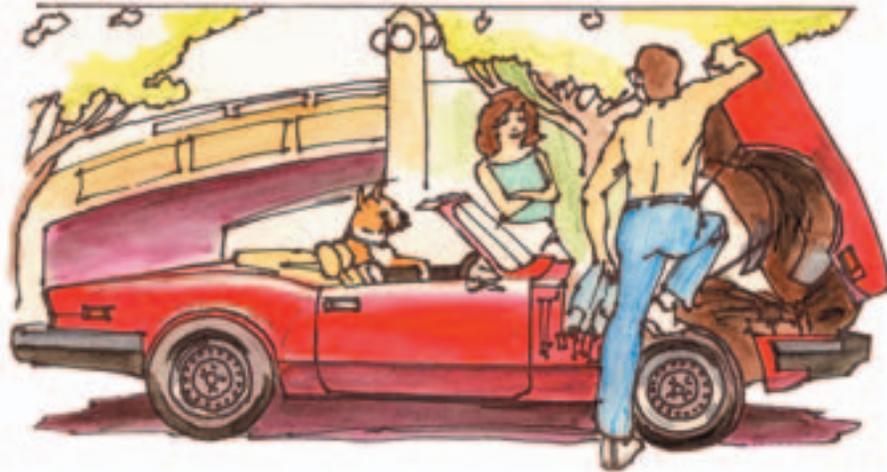
with the wife and dog following and probably telling Spitfire jokes. In about 12 miles the temp was up again I asked, "Can we make it one and a half more miles to the exit with a station?" My mechanic said, "Go for it." In a half mile the anti freeze started to bubble then engulfed us even coming out of the steering column. I said, "It doesn't smell like anti freeze anymore." We coasted all the way to the station and stopped. When my wife pulled in behind we were already out and blowing on the last few flames. We had to give up and get it towed up the next morning.

When the flat bed showed up I had even more humiliation, now from my Wisconsin neighbors. By the end of Summer I had most of the fried parts replaced and sort of running. Here it is Spring again and as soon as I can get my brother, Dr. Bob, to teach me how to be a

mechanic and get a fire extinguisher, I can't wait to get on the winding country roads up there.

I'm sorry I couldn't submit a photo of my Spitfire. She refuses to pose with a scorched nose. But after defending my little car and taking all the humiliation I'm happy to find Spitfire & GT6 magazine and

so many fellow enthusiasts that share the joy of driving Spitfires. I'll follow up in the future with more positive adventures and pictures of a healthy, happy, less flammable Spitfire. ■



ever. We decided after a few weeks to take my illegally plated, uninsured baby up to the Wisconsin lake house. Like motorists of old, I took my mechanic with me. Once on the Tollway he said "I've got to get one of these, every hot woman is looking at me." I didn't break his bubble. About halfway to the lake he said, "The temp is way up, pull over." I knew the next exit in about Two miles had a garage near a watering hole and went for that. The last half mile we were boiling anti freeze. I called my wife who was a ways behind us and she met us at the bar by walking in and saying, "I saw the brat on the side of the road, what now?" After a beer and a little anti freeze for the car everything seemed fine again. We took off



# The Spitfire and the Snow

ANDREA CENSI, GENOVA, ITALY

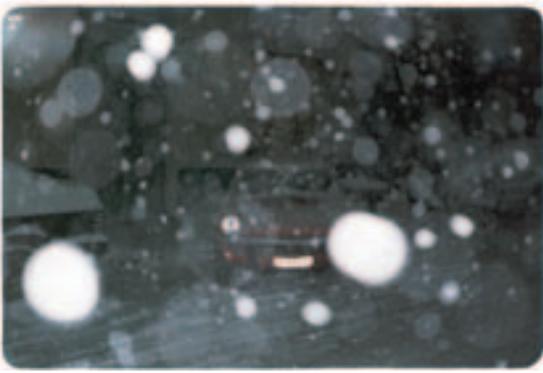


“What do you need a summertime only car for?” Thousands of times I have been asked that; even many of us, Spitfire owners, say that the use of our beautiful spider is limited to those few warm months, when you can fully enjoy the pleasure of the wind in your hair (for those who still have hair and is not my case). But the thing I can not stand to hear is “it is not the season anymore”.

ALWAYS is the season for the SPITFIRE! And it is proved by the fact that this thirty year old lady commands more attention than all of those cartoonish Japanese coupes. So, my friends, do



not be afraid to use her wintertime, with the inclement weather, try the pleasure of driving a true car, without all of those fancy gadgets like ABS, GPS, GSM, RDS, ESP,... that makes me think of a Playstation.



I drive my Spit all year long, with the sunshine and with the rain but also with the snow!

It is a unique feeling...December 31st 1996, the sky is completely covered by a thick layer of white clouds and I am thinking of a classic fairy tale... snowy new year's eve. In the afternoon it starts snowing and unusual for Genoa, it starts to pile up a little on the roads.

Immediately I check if on the Lancia Thema I had the snow chains, because “you never know”. Everything is alright, but while I am closing the garage door my little darling tells me that I am selfish, that I want to keep that snow all for myself. True! She had never touched the snow and at 27 she was ready for it! It is time to go out; I open the garage door, I start to warm up the engine while I look at the sky: it was snowing big time.

There is only one thing to do: to put the chains on.

The operation took a while because, in spite of the label “NO PROBLEM”, there was a problem: I had to pay attention that the chains did not touch the spokes. Finally we are ready to go!

Already on the first ramp outside the garage I realize my little friend is happy. She wags the tail like man's best friend.

There is nobody on the streets so anything goes: braking without hope of stopping anywhere near, downhill bends that become breathtaking straights, uphill sideways curves... All this feeling the pressure of the snow under-



neath the car that was making me feel in heaven...

I can not describe all the excitement that my dear old Spit gave me that day, being so full of gratitude for having taken her with me, but I can invite all of you to try and to drive your cars all year long. They deserve it. ■




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# Shaken Not Stirred

BY BOB BUXBAUM, VIRGINIA

This is the story of the rehabilitation of a 1970 Triumph GT6+. This is also the story of a 51-year-old man who didn't learn ANY lessons from his first car at the age of 17 (a 1965 Sunbeam Imp!). Lastly, it is a lesson for all that read this that one should never, EVER, making ANY buying decision while consuming a first or second martini.



In September of 2000, I saw a gleaming white GT6 sitting in a shopping mall lot with a for sale sign in the windshield. Later that day curiosity got the best of me, and upon returning to the mall, found the car gone. Oh, well. A month later it was there again and I found the owner. After some discussion it was agreed that I could drive it around. In about three blocks I had determined that 1) the "slight miss" the owner referred to was a dead cylinder, 2) it drove about as well as one expect for a loaded 45 year dump truck, and 3) I had to be about out of my mind. So I took it home for a closer look. A fresh set of spark plugs got the car running on all six... for a while. The owner explained that he had suspected a bad fuel pump, and he would be glad to come by my house and install a new one. I said yes, he did as he said, and the next morning when I started the car, fuel spilled out of the air box. I pulled the carbs, cleaned out the float needles, and after reassembly the car ran great. For 15 minutes! I called the owner and told him I would be glad to pay to have the car towed to his house, with the offer that I would pay his asking price if he could have the car run for more than half a hour.

Enter now the advice about martinis. He informed me that he and his wife were relocating out of the area in a matter of weeks and he had NO time to mess

with the car. I was offered the car for \$1000.00. Well, there I was, enjoying said martini. In front of me was a dead GT6, complete and without rust, and a new set of Panasports. In front of my house was my Snap-On Tools truck, just full of the right stuff to work on a simple little car. In my right hand was my phone, in my left hand was that damn martini, and in front of me was that innocent little white GT6 with those nice Panasports. I figured the wheels alone would be worth most of the money. So I said yes. Damn martinis. The project grew from there, and so did my affliction of making my newly acquired hobby run well, and do everything it was supposed to do. Five thousand dollars and countless enjoyable hours later I have a GT6 that starts with the slightest touch of the key and runs just great.

Most of the story of this car was my involvement with the ongoing challenge of bringing back to health a 30 year old car that, at its prime, was only a modestly designed and produced little sports car. Of course, it gave me the opportunity to do something I hadn't done with a car for MANY years, namely use SAE sized tools instead of metric! And, as I said in an article in the local Triumph club newspaper, my wife would rather me fool around with a 30 year car than a 30 year old woman!!!

So why didn't the car run? It would start and go for a while and then just sort of go flat and die. Into the tool truck for a KV meter and I found the coil was collapsing after about 10 minutes. A new coil and we were going. I had absolutely NO faith that the car would not let me down, so I kept my "test drives" VERY close to home, making sure that I had my mobile phone with me at all times and that my wife was home. As my confidence grew I wandered further away and flogged the car a bit more each drive. This brought about the next problem; it liked to deposit its coolant all around the engine compartment via the overflow bottle. Back to the truck for a few more test items to discover that ANY revving of the engine pressurized the cooling system. Can you say "head gasket" boys and girls?!?!?! Now came the SAE tools and

off to a machine shop to surface the warped head. Oh, did I mention all the work that was supposedly done by a previous owner? No? Did I mention that the p.o. had no shop manual? (Hey, you don't need a manual to fix these things.") Please refer back to the lesson about buying decisions made with the aid of adult beverages.

A few days later and all was buttoned up and running again. Of course, now we had more "issues" to address. The car was purchased in September 2000 and it was now November. So why was it hotter than the sun inside the car? This proved to be one of the major challenges for this project, and was not finally addressed for many months. In the meanwhile, I just tooled around in toasty bliss until one evening after the Triumph club monthly dinner meeting. I decided to get on the interstate to come home and let the tach needle visit the far right side of the gauge. As the needle went UP, the oil pressure would go DOWN, and I decided that the ugly noises near my feet were those of very unhappy metal parts that wanted to ventilate their home. So I eased the 6 home, with the knowledge that I really may have been lucky that I paid so little for the car. I was going to find out I was.

I would soon learn that I needed the missing shop manual just to get the engine OUT. After removing the hood, I was profoundly disappointed to learn that the engine WOULD NOT come out by itself! Yup, the transmission had to come with it!

At this point I had already done some Internet surfing and discovered good old Nigel at SpitBits in California. I am sure I helped his 2001 P&L statement, and he earned it all. He confirmed my fears, rushed me a shop manual (now MUCH worse for the wear), and I was on my way. Right into the garage with the complete interior, power train, and I can't now remember what else. With 110,000 miles on this little guy it was about all used up, with bad bores, out of round crank, and other engine woes, and the transmission was not too much better. Nigel to the rescue with a rebuilt trans, and a local machine shop did the deed on

the engine machining. All went well during the reassembly and the piles of parts grew into a completed drive train. Back together, and the 6 sat in the driveway again. A wondrously long list of minor electrical problems (what a surprise, huh?) were resolved at this time, so I no longer had to worry about when (not if) the headlights would shut off at night, and other switches, horns, and other things would properly function, and oh yes, the battery would get a charge. Also, I took the time to properly seal the trans cover to the body, cover all sorts of open spots in the firewall, and foil insulate the entire firewall and floor area. The hopes for these last steps were to keep the "hot" out. It would work, but not until the cooling system was later addressed.

More lessons (due to 20/20 hindsight) were rapidly being learned. One that would haunt me some time later was my failure to replace the clutch slave cylinder. The surprise of jumping in the car, starting it up, and having the clutch pedal fall away from my left foot was only surpassed by the agony of knowing I had to pull the interior apart to get the trans cover off again. Well, I didn't do that. I DID chop a nice little door in the cover. Crude, but effective. This lesson was that one SHOULD replace things that are hard to get to while they are still easy to replace. But I am getting ahead of myself.

The shakedown test drives began. And stopped. The car STILL handled like the dump truck I referred to. The rear tires scraped the fenders, the steering was heavy, the brakes were a joke, and the ride could separate ones skull from ones spinal column. But the engine and transmission were great. The old mismatched tires were replaced, the Spax rear shocks were softened, and the brakes were completely rebuilt or replaced as needed. Braided steel lines completed this task. While digging around under the car it was decided to replace the RotoFlex couplers. Oh, now THAT is a fun job!!! The added benefit of this little project was that I found the u-joints were just about seized solid. No more funny noises from the back end when leaving the driveway. POOF, a new car!!!!

But the engine was still nearly pegging the temp gauge even in cool weather. Thus began "The Quest". The Quest was the search for the reason for the excessive heat. To make a 3 month story

very much shorter, it was quite a search. The car would run over 210deg in 75deg weather, and ANY thermostat would make it worse. When I bought the car there was only one electric fan, no engine fan, and it DID have the engine skirts and radiator shroud. I bought a new electric fan, front mounted it as a "pusher", installed a thermostat for it, and installed an engine driven fan. Very little help. The radiator was pulled, disassembled, and was found to be completely clear! After pulling the front cover to recheck the cam timing, inspecting the distributor for proper operation, intake leaks, and rebuilding/retuning the carbs again it still ran hot. The sending unit was replaced, gauge checked, and temperature tests were done. The car ran even better after all this, but still was hot. With nowhere else to go, I had the radiator core replaced with a racing core. The only conclusion was that the radiator simply was not transferring heat to the fins. Jackpot!! Now I HAD to put in a thermostat to even have the car warm up at all. With the car running properly the interior temps dropped by 30 degrees! It was now a "driver", and I was thrilled.

I now have a completely dependable 32 year old British sports car that gets more stares than when I drove a DeLorean as a demo from the dealership I worked for in that time frame. I have installed a D-type overdrive transmission that I found on e-bay (more practice stripping the interior!) and now enjoy VERY good fuel mileage and much quieter cruising at quite high speeds. The "kids" my age mostly know what it is and really enjoy looking it over. The kids a generation or two back are nearly clueless about the car ("No, it's not a kit car, but thanks for asking!", "No, Triumph cars were different than the motorcycle company", "No, I said Triumph, not

Toyota."). Also, I have met a lot of terrific people both locally and through the internet. All the countless busted knuckles and expenses were worth it. I continue to turn down good offers to sell the car. There are a lot of miles left in it for me before it finds a new home.

Now. Fade slowly to black. The months go by and we fade back to the now 53 year old GT6 owner, cruising e-bay, enjoying an evening martini. Please, now refer to the warning at the end of the first paragraph.

In the driveway, sitting next to the still healthy GT6+, is proof that this old dog did not learn any new tricks. After driving it around to sort it out (and having the huge, silly, grin removed from my face) I am receiving all the parts to hop up, stiffen, and fix the laundry list of little things before putting everything back in to have a 220 horsepower 1980 TR8. Booden, booden, booden!!!!!! Here we go again! ■



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# Mini Convert

BY JAMES BELLIS, NORTH WALES, ENGLAND

In 1994 I was driving near my home and spotted a blue Spitfire 1500 stopped at the side of the road with the bonnet up. I immediately stopped and the car had snapped its fan belt. I drove the owner round all afternoon in my 1989 Mini



looking for a fan belt. That was the start of my obsession with Spitfires.



Five years down the line, in February 1999, leafing through my local paper I came

across a Mk 2 (UTD364D) for restoration. The car was about 25 miles away and I viewed it with my brother who was also enthusiastic about getting one. The car was in a sorry state looking rusty and full of holes but it still drove with no brakes!

I snapped the owners hand off and gave him £500 and in return got the original green log book and some history as well as its last tax disc from the 1970's. We towed it home and I parked it in the garage with plans to restore it a year later.

A week later I went to New York and my brother told me he had sent the Spitfire away for restoration. I was happy but had no idea how to pay for it. I had to sell my 1992 Golf and my brother chipped in about £750 a month for a year to pay for it.

He had sent the car away to a guy called Neil who restored classic cars not too far away. Neil soon started and pretty much just the tub, hard top and engine were kept, It needed a new chassis and all body panels. The engine was very good and was overhauled and converted to unleaded. In a bid to keep costs down, Neil bought a partly restored Mk 3, stripping and making use of its decent chassis, a couple of new body panels and the floor.

I went nearly every week for a year to see its progress and decided to spray it bright red instead of the "tangerine" orange it used to be. The car was fantastic when it was finished in February 2000 and the day after we picked it up we took it on a 300 mile trip to a show in Warwickshire. Just some 5 miles from home the car came to a halt as the bolts holding the carbs on had come undone and then about 2 miles from the show I hit a rock in the middle of the road and broke the exhaust manifold, dragging the exhaust behind me.

I made it to the show but had to be towed home. I then went in search of a manifold. I placed adverts on the Internet and rang up companies and eventually found one at a breakers in London. Two days after it was fitted I had a phone call from a guy from Stafford who offered to sell me a restoration car. I thought it would be useful for spares so I went up with my brother in law and bought this £300 wreck (FUT159D). The car had been dismantled with parts in boxes and the previous owner had started but then given up on the body restoration.

I parked this car in my shed and



then left it alone not needing any parts. In January 2001 we moved house so I took both Spitfires with me and they now have a double garage to share together. In May 2002 I decided to drive my Spitfire to work (about 37 miles) but it never made it. About 18 miles into the journey the bottom half of the engine died by pushing out a rod either side which at 70 mph sounded like a shopping trolley being emptied underneath the car. The car then came to a standstill and I was towed to my local garage.

My mechanic Pete told me it needed a new engine so we took the engine from the spare Spitfire and had it reconditioned. Pete then added my top half with the unleaded head. Whilst the car was having surgery I decided to buy a stainless steel exhaust, some K&N filters and a new rear leaf spring. A month later after a whopping bill UTD364D was back on the road.

Apart from having a Mk3 or GT6 grille, the car is totally standard. The final restoration costs topped around £7000 with more spent on finishing touches like a Moto Lita steering wheel, minilite replica wheels, an authentic 1969 Motorola radio which has been converted to FM and I recently had the dials changed into white from [www.shedload.co.uk](http://www.shedload.co.uk).

Since owning the two Spitfires I have bought various Spitfire related domain names such as: [www.triumphspitfire.net](http://www.triumphspitfire.net) and [www.triumphspitfires.co.uk](http://www.triumphspitfires.co.uk). ■

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# Is That A 1980 or a 1981 Spitfire?

BY GREGORY HERTEL, CANADA

Among the many Spitfires displayed at last September's British Car Day, hosted by the Toronto Triumph Club, was a "Brand New" Spitfire owned by Dick Harling. Mr. Harling's son Bruce distributed a fact sheet which described the car as a "1981 bright green Spitfire, with tan seats, a black top, an unused tonneau and 400 km's on the odometer."

As I closely inspected the car, it was clear that TFLD2BT006928 had indeed been preserved, as the fact sheet described, untouched in a heated garage for almost twenty years. It was truly amazing to see such a pristine model with no corrosion, no dirt in the engine bay and no wear and tear in the cockpit. As I continued my inspection of the car I looked closely at the manufacturer's information plate found on the driver's side door pillar. The date of manufacture was April 1980, yet this car was described as a 1981 model. Now wait a minute, my own Spitfire was manufactured in June of 1980 and was also registered originally as a 1981 model. How come another 1980 model, built earlier

than mine is also described as a 1981 model? Hmmmm...

About five years ago, the ruling Conservative Government in the Province of Ontario introduced a testing program for all automobiles to allegedly reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions. The political motivations behind the introduction of this program were indeed suspect, but like many jurisdictions in the U.S. and Europe, annual, or in Ontario's case, bi-annual vehicle testing, is now a prerequisite to the renewing of one's annual permit.

When I purchased my current Spitfire in the summer of 1998 from the original owner, one of the documents I received was a "Passport To Service" booklet which indicated that the car had been originally sold in May of 1981, and consequently registered with the Ministry Of Transportation as a 1981 vehicle. The more I started thinking about it the odder it seemed that a car manufactured in June of 1980 was registered as a 1981 vehicle. Especially as I knew that 1980 was the last year that Spitfires were built.

Hmmm...

A quick check of Graham Robson's book *Triumph Spitfire and GT6* revealed the following information, "The end came in August 1980, when the last Spitfire rolled off the assembly line at Canley." As well, John Thomason's book, *Triumph Spitfire and GT6: A Guide To Originality* also stated that, "In August of 1980, the last Spitfire 1500, an Inca Yellow UK overdrive model, commission number TFADW5AT009898 rolled off the production line at Canley, marking the end of an era." If the last Spitfire was built in August of 1980 then how could it be that my car was an 1981 model? Maybe I could convince the M.O.T. that they had incorrectly registered my car and that there was no such thing as a 1981 Spitfire, and therefore I could avoid the potentially costly emissions test. Hmmmm...

In late February of 2000, I received notification from the M.O.T. that my 1981 Spitfire was due to be tested before my permit would be renewed. I learned from a fellow British car enthusiast that



if your car was twenty years old or more, it would be exempt from the testing. To confirm this information, on a blustery early March afternoon, I visited a Ministry of the Environment office in mid-town Toronto. A copy of the "Drive Clean Guide" was quickly provided to me by an efficient civil servant who confirmed that any vehicles over twenty years of age would be exempt from the test. I gave her the Reader's Digest version of my story and she suggested that I should contact the M.O.T. head office located in the north end of the city.

The next day I called the general information number of the M.O.T. and was referred to the Driver Improvement Office. I gave the shortened version of my story to an official at the D.I.O. who referred me to the Licensing Office. The L.O. official listened intently to my story and directed me to the Licensing Assistance Section. Finally, a thoughtful L.A.S. operative let me tell my story once

again and then proceeded to tell me what to do. I was instructed to send a cover letter with my request to change the registration, along with all the supporting documentation to the L.A.S. Great, I was finally getting somewhere.

The next week I faxed to the attention of the L.A.S. operative the following letter: 'The Triumph Spitfire which I purchased two years ago was built on June 12, 1980. The last Triumph Spitfire was built on August 25, 1980. My Spitfire, VIN TFLDW6BT008253 was sold to the original owner in May of 1981 and was incorrectly registered as a 1981 vehicle. I wish to have the registration corrected in order to have the vehicle exempted from the Drive Clean Program as the vehicle is now twenty years old.' I also included copies of the relevant pages from Graham Robson's and John Thomason's books, as well as a photocopy of a Production Record Trace Certificate from the British Motor



Industry Heritage Trust signed by none other than the arch B.M.I.H.T. archivist himself, Anders Ditlev Clausager. There is no higher authority than Anders Ditlev Clausager let me tell you. Now I was really getting somewhere. How could any civil servant question such a weight of evidence?

A quick phone call to the thoughtful L.A.S. operative confirmed that she had received the fax. She confidently assured me that I'd hear back from her in about a week and that everything looked in order for a fairly routine change of registration. I thanked her for her help, smugly thinking how easy it had all been.

Three weeks passed and no word from the L.A.S. Hmm... Guess I better call her back. Funny how the elapsing of three weeks seemed to erase from memory banks of the thoughtful L.A.S. operative any knowledge of me, my file or the fax I had sent three weeks earlier. When I finally jogged her memory enough to clear the fog, she informed me that due to the complexity of my file, it had been referred to her superior. "Oh. Will your superior call me back?" "Most definitely within a day or so." "Oh, good. I'll look forward to hearing from your superior. Would you give me her name please?" "Certainly." And with that, the bureaucratic buck was passed up the ladder.

Another week passed. Hmm... Guess I better call the superior. I called and left a voice mail with a request that the superior call me back. Nothing, no call back. I called again the next day. Nothing, no call back. Now I was starting to get a little steamed. A quick phone call to a friend who works for the provincial government got me a copy of the government phone directory. Everyone who works for the Government of Ontario is listed, group by group, office by office, manager by manager. Now I had the leverage I needed. I looked up the L.A.S. and found the name of the manager of the superior. I called the superior once more and this time left a message complaining about the lack of customer service and demanded that the superior call me back. If she didn't return my call I would complain to her manager. I knew I had the upper hand now.

Remarkably, an assistant to the superior called me back later that day, (Surprise, surprise) and informed me that due to the complex legal implications of my file, it had been referred to the Support Office in Kingston (about a four



hour drive east of Toronto) for a special appraisal by an Official Policy Officer. I was further informed by the assistant to the superior that I could not talk to the O.P.O. as O.P.O.'s did not deal directly with the public. "What? A public servant who doesn't deal with the a member of the public?" Holy Orwellian irony Batman! The assistant to the superior concluded her remarks by telling me that I would be contacted by phone as soon as a decision on the file had been made. Right, I heard that one before.

Yet another week passed and finally the assistant to the superior called me back and informed me that the S.O. and the O.P.O would consider changing the registration of my Spitfire, if, I could provide documentation from either the dealer where the car was purchased, or someone with signing authority for the manufacturer who would corroborate my assertion, written, of course, on company letterhead. I humbly informed the assistant to the superior that the dealership had long since gone out of business as had the manufacturer, British Leyland. With a metaphorical shrug of her shoulders that would have done Joseph Heller proud, the assistant to the superior wished me luck and hung up. Right, what did Aristotle say about hubris?

Okay, on with the thinking cap - what to do? Hmm... British Leyland had been out of business in Canada for almost twenty years. I looked in my files for any clues. On the "Passport To Service" there were a number of corporate logos including British Leyland, Triumph, Rover and Jaguar. Jaguar - of course! That company still exists. I wonder if anybody at Jaguar Canada would be able to help me?

A helpful records clerk at Jaguar Canada suggested that I contact U.S. Jaguar Heritage in New Jersey as they might have some of the corporate records left over from the British Leyland era. Unfortunately, the archivist at U.S.J.H. told me that all the North American records for British Leyland, Jaguar, Rover and Triumph had been destroyed when British Leyland went out of business. Rats.

Another call to Jaguar Canada proved to be the break in the case, as I asked the records clerk if there was anyone on staff who worked for Jaguar during the late Seventies and early Eighties. To my delight, I was referred to a Mr. Tony Parker, now a Parts Customer Assistance Representative who had

worked for Jaguar, Rover, Triumph Canada during the time when my Spitfire was imported. Mr. Parker was most sympathetic and kindly agreed to provide written confirmation supporting my request. The next day I faxed Mr. Parker the same package of information I had originally sent to the L.A.S. office of the M.O.T.

The following week Mr. Parker faxed me his letter. It read:

'To Whom It May Concern: Re: Triumph Spitfire 1500 Chassis Number - TFLDW6BT008253/Date of Manufacture/June 12 1980

The above mentioned vehicle was imported into Canada by this company (Jaguar Canada) when we were owned and operated by Jaguar Rover Triumph in the U.K. This company is now owned by the Ford Motor Company and operates as Jaguar Canada (Division of Ford Motor Co.).

The vehicle in question was sold as a 1980 model, and to the best of our knowledge was the last year of production for the Triumph Spitfire. There were no 1981 models of this type sold in Canada. We would also like to confirm that our model year at that time began late in October of the previous year, and ran through until the same month of the following year. This vehicle was obviously in a dealer's stock and not sold until the 1980 model year had come to an end. The importation of Triumph vehicles into Canada ceased at this point in time (1980).

It is our understanding that 1980 model year vehicles are not required to go through a government emission test.'

Finally, I had the evidence I needed. I immediately left a voice mail with the superior back at the L.A.S. and informed her that the evidence the O.P.O. required at the S.O. in Kingston would be faxed A.S.A.P. and I expected a final resolution to this matter P.D.Q., otherwise I would complain to my M.P.P.

Later that same day, after receiving my fax, a customer service representative from the S.O. contacted me and informed me that the registration would be changed effective immediately. All I had to do was visit a M.O.T. office and pick up my new registration free of charge. The car would also be exempted

from the emissions test.

Three days later, on a balmy early May day, with the top down and the stereo playing loudly, I drove my Spitfire to my nearest M.O.T. office and picked up the registration. The sweet smell of victory was mine!

The happy ending of my story leads me to the question which is central to this article - Is that a 1980 or 1981 Spitfire? The answer is of course that is a 1980 Spitfire. There may be 1980 models that were registered as 1981 models in many jurisdictions around the world. Some of you out there may own one. There may also be British Car meets that have judging categories for Spitfires up to 1981, and books and publications that list 1981 Spitfires. The evidence, however, confirms that there never were any 1981 models manufactured.

As a post-script to my epic journey through the labyrinth of M.O.T. bureaucracy, a few days after receiving the new registration for my 1980 Spitfire, I happened to look carefully at the Vehicle Identification Number printed on the new ownership certificate. It was wrong! Rather than reading TFLDW6BTOO8253 it read TFLDWGBTOO8253. The V.I.N. must have been incorrectly recorded in 1981 when the car was originally registered. For a fleeting moment I thought, well I have all the phone numbers and contact names, it should be easy to make a simple correction to a government record... Shouldn't it? ■

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# The Racing Spitfires

BY PAUL RICHARDSON, LINCOLNSHIRE ENGLAND



Peter Boltion at Sebring in 1965 prior to his crash.

In 1961 the Leyland Motor Corporation rescued Standard Triumph from certain bankruptcy and, after the Le Mans race where three TRS twin cam prototypes won the team prize, the highly successful competition department was closed by the new Leyland management.

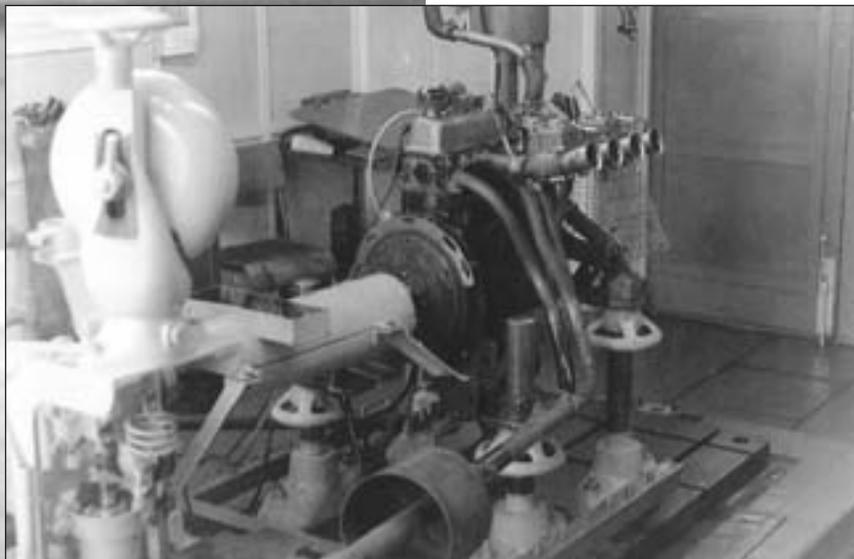
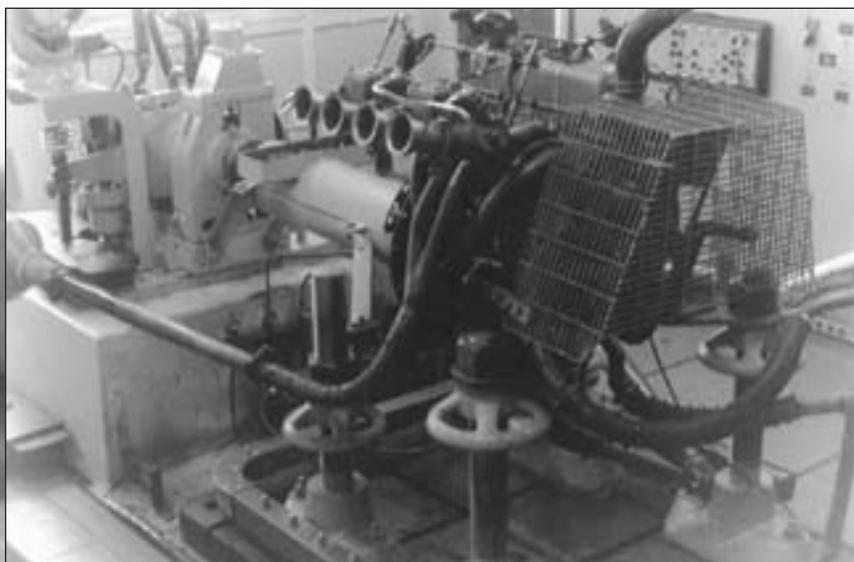
Meanwhile, experimental engineer, Dennis Barbet, had recently joined the company from Alford and Alder – a subsidiary of Standard Triumph. He was an intuitive engineer with a flair for new design and, whilst at Alford and Alder, he designed the new concept ‘diaphragm’ constant vacuum carburettor that eventually became known as the Stromberg.

Dennis began work on engine development at Standard Triumph and his first job was to brake test and report on the twin cam Le Mans engines. After this, very little was happening in the experimental department pending new Leyland policies. The New TR4 was due to go into production in September, and the new Spitfire small sports car project had been shelved well before the takeover because of lack of finance to produce it. Apparently, the main concern of most people in the experimental department at that time was trying to look busy.

Dennis said of this period. “To save getting bored I began power development

work on the 1147cc engine, which was developing 42bhp at the time. This was a ‘hush hush’ project because there was no official programme for the work. Graham Sykes, who also worked in experimental, had just come back from the Commonwealth games having won another gold medal for swimming. He hadn’t got much to do either, so we talked a lot about engines and gas flow etc.”

Dennis came up with an inspired idea that was to prove a major forward step in air flow and combustion chamber efficiency for the 1147cc engine. He related, “Whilst looking around experi-



mental for a few ideas, I came across two eight port cylinder heads that your father Ken had been developing for the 948 cc engine. An eight port head made sense so, although the bore centres were different on the 948 cc head, I decided to fettle out the combustion chambers on one of the heads and mate it to an 1147 cc block. Probably the most important change I made to the eight port head was to move the plug positions. I blocked out the original 14-mm spark plug holes and re-cut them to take a 10-mm plugs so positioned that the spark plug electrodes faced the exhaust valve head. This made a very considerable improvement and

allowed us to use a much higher compression ratio, and with one and a half inch SU carbs and other mods the power went up to 75bhp. Later, I found a pair of Solex twin choke carbs and with a manifold to my own design, a tuned exhaust system and constant gas flow and camshaft work the power just kept rising.”

“As time went by Leyland began more projects and decided to produce the Spitfire. A competition department was also started again, with the workshop being very ably run by my old friend Ray Henderson. I became heavily involved with developing the ‘Weber’ TR4 engine

and the new six cylinder engines, so my work on what was to become the racing Spitfire engine spanned some two years because of other experimental commitments.”

I asked Dennis when the 1147cc racing engine became a reality.

“Well interest in the engine’s potential as a racing unit for the Spitfire must have started at the end of 1962. Our experimental shop Manager, John Lloyd, eventually got to know about the power increases I was achieving with the ‘eight port’ engine and told higher management about it. The next thing I knew the company began talking about entering a

Spitfire in the 1963 Sebring 12-hour race. I managed to stop this because I knew there was more power to be had with further camshaft, inlet manifold, valve and exhaust system improvements which would take time to develop, and developing reliability with the extra power was obviously a major concern. My initial efforts did produce enough enthusiasm to start the ball rolling, however, and special new components were made to order so that I could develop further.”

As we know, as well as a rally programme, plans were made to enter a team of Spitfires in the 1964 Le Mans race which accelerated development. This led to extensive testing with the first Spitfires at MIRA in 1963. The cars were driven for many hours on the banked high-speed circuit at 130 mph and Dennis was always present on those test days to make final adjustments to the ignition and carburation until he was satisfied with the overall performance. The Spits were also tested at Silverstone and the Oulton Park circuit by racing drivers Peter Bolton, Roy Fidler and David Hobbs. Dennis also tested every single one of the cars he was involved with and a point worth noting here is that Dennis raced himself from the mid fifties until the late nineties - and has won many trophies with his racing Rileys.

Finally, with 42 DCOE Webers fitted and a camshaft timing of 52/76, the 1147cc engine was developing about 97 BHP and became known as the ‘70X’ (displacement in inches). After several 24-hour endurance tests on the test brake with the engine at full power Dennis was satisfied that the engine could be used to effect in international events. By now the compression ratio was 10.5 to 1 and the engine was revving at 7000 RPM. Main engine components consisted of a standard but race prepared crankshaft which was shot peened, balanced and fitted with a vibration damper. Slipper pistons were used with standard con rods which were shot peened, polished and balanced. All was now ready for the 1964 Le Mans race.

There is no doubt that it was Dennis’ initiative and power development work on the 1147 cc engine that led to the works Spitfire race and rally programmes becoming a reality. Without his engine development skills there would have been no Spitfire competition programme of any sort in time for the 1964/65 seasons. It must also be realised that Dennis was working under his own initiative on those

engines - with no pre-conceived ‘development directions’ whatsoever from senior engineering management. Dennis emphasised, however, that he was helped considerably by other members of the technical staff including Ray Bates.

The preparation of the rally and race Spitfires was naturally quite different. Firstly, the rally Spits had to conform to rally regulations. The Le Mans Spitfires, on the other hand, were entered in the ‘prototype’ category. This left full scope for lightening the cars to improve the power to weight ratio and for making aerodynamic improvements. For obvious reasons the 24 hour Le Mans race was

considered far more important for the company than any rally, and this had a direct bearing on the preparation of the cars - whereby no risks were taken with any component that presented any reliability problems. With this in mind, it was decided to fit the cast iron eight port heads to the Le Mans cars (aluminum ones being fitted to the rally cars) because the aluminum heads presented reliability problems. They sometimes became porous, and distortion was another problem - which caused head gasket failure. Problems with the casting process also caused a percentage of heads to have partially restricted waterways which

The factory lineup at the 1964 LeMans



could cause overheating.

The first Le Mans Spitfires were fitted with sturdy TR4 gearboxes fitted with TRS ratios, as problems with the Vitesse boxes (which were fitted to the rally cars) were experienced whereby mainshafts sometimes sheared under racing conditions. The Le Mans Spitfire shells were as light as they possibly could be. The main bulkhead, bonnet and front wing section, inner and outer sills, floor pans, doors and rear wings were all fabricated in aluminum and were actually stamped out on the production line presses. The only non-aluminum item in the body structure was the fibreglass 'fastback'

roof and tail section. This was moulded off the GT6 prototype and was used to improve aerodynamics. Further weight reduction was achieved by fitting magnesium alloy wheels.

After successful tests at the Le Mans test weekend at Easter 1964 final preparations were made for the race proper in June. By this time special bonnets had been made with fared-in headlamps. This, with the 'narrow slit' radiator apertures, further aided aerodynamics. In final race trim the cars weighed about 1630 lbs. Three 'Barbet' engined Spitfires started the 1964 Le Mans race and the David Hobbs/Robby Slotemaker

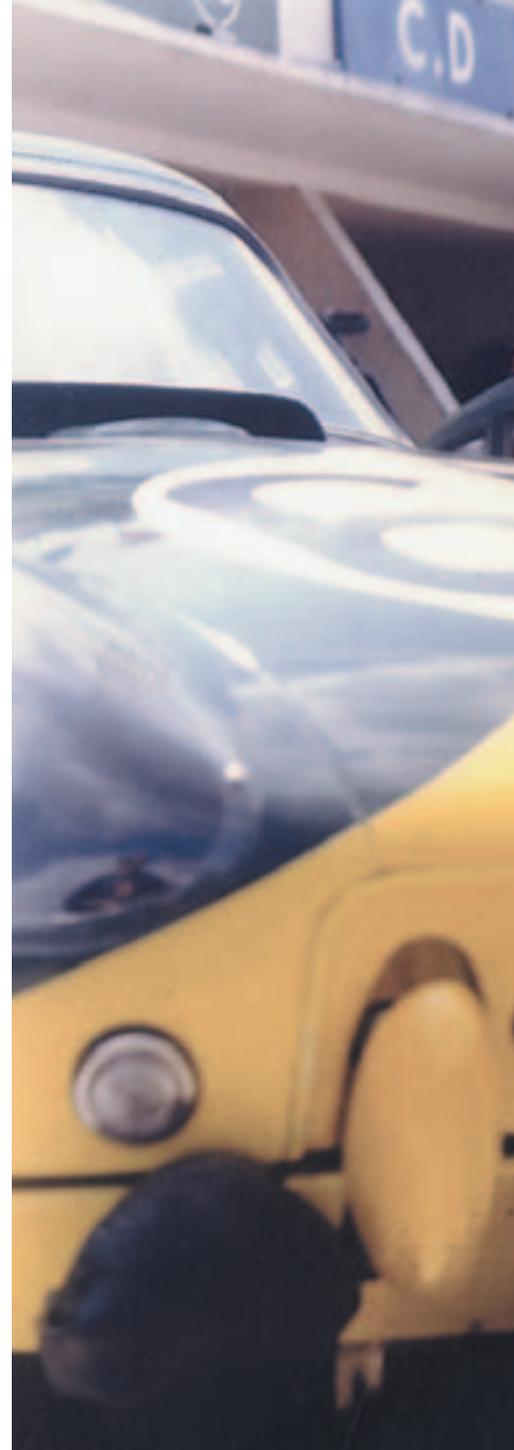
car (ADU 2B) proved very fast and reliable. This car averaged almost 95 MPH for the race and finished in a very creditable 21st place overall. Unfortunately this Le Mans became known as the race of crashes for the Triumph team. Mike Rothschild went off after the Dunlop Bridge (driving ADU 1B), and Jean-Louis Marnat actually crashed into the Dunlop Bridge footings in the last couple of hours of the race. Marnat's accident was due to another car running into the back of his Spitfire. The rear tyre access panel was knocked off and Marnat's judgement became seriously impaired by exhaust fume ingress, which was the



Mike Rothschild was seriously injured after losing control of ADU 1B



Jean-Louis Marnat's ADU 3B after being pushed into the Dunlop Bridge by another, faster car.



direct cause of his accident. Dennis remembers having to stand by this car, with Lew Webster, to stop French race goers 'nicking' parts for souvenirs.

I spoke to Mike Rothschild several times about his accident, which was extremely serious because he broke his neck and, unconscious, was actually given the last rights. Although accounts suggest he was blown off line by a passing Cobra, Mike was adamant that his accident was due to the handling of the car (due to the rear suspension design being far from ideal), which got worse on light fuel load and was particularly twitchy in the Dunlop Bridge area. Apparently, he lost control and shot into

a bank backwards at high speed.

On one of my last meetings with Mike in America he showed me a film clip of his accident. It was used in the motor racing film 'Un Homme et une Famme.'

In March 1965, two Spitfires finished 2nd and 3rd in class in the Sebring 12-hour race – an excellent result. This was the year of the cloudburst at Sebring – when pit crews experienced ankle deep water and tyres floating down the pitlane! Unfortunately, Peter Bolton had an accident in his car due to the aforementioned rear end handling problems.

For the 1965 Le Mans race, the engines developed over ten percent more

power (110 bhp). This was achieved with a compression ratio increase to 11.15 to 1, larger 45 DCOE Webers, a 60/80 camshaft and a megaphone exhaust system developed by Dennis. Four cars were entered for the race but it was very nearly only three!! After an engine change on one of the cars prior to the race Dennis was washing his hands at about 4am when he heard the Spitfire engine start. The car shot out of the garage only to be halted on the forecourt outside by experimental engineer Doug West. Doug coloured the driver, who was considerably the worst for drink and nothing to do with the team – he'd just decided he'd like a go in a works Spitfire. The car was



safely returned to the garage.

The 1965 Le Mans proved to be a superb achievement for the Triumph team. The Thuner/Lampinen car finished an excellent 13th overall and first in class, and the Dubois/Piot car finished 14th overall and second in class. Unfortunately the Hobbs/Slotemaker car had to retire after Slotemaker had an accident. He crashed at White House corner after accidentally switching the lights out whilst signalling faster cars through. The Bolton/Bradley car also retired with a burnt piston due to a leaking inlet manifold – this is motor racing.

The high overall placings and class awards must have been an extremely

gratifying result for the Triumph team, especially for Dennis Barbet. New regulations for 1966 made the Spitfires uncompetitive so the works Spitfires had had their last Le Mans. Similar regulations drew a halt to the Spitfire rally team.

There are two racing Spitfires that fully deserve a mention - as the cars were built by two Triumph competition mechanics as a private venture. After building an extremely fast championship winning 'Freddie Dixon Trophy' Spitfire, the late Peter Cox, and his pal Peter Clarke built two "Mugello Spitfires" in 1969 for the international (and notorious) Mugello Grand Prix in Italy. Peter Cox

gave me his exclusive account of this project (including full spec) before he sadly passed away. Peter's account of his horrendous practice accident prior to the 1969 race (he dropped down a 40 foot ravine and survived only badly bruised), and the aftermath, is truly hilarious and one of motor racing's classic stories. With the editors approval this story will appear in a future issue. ■

# Where is ADU 4B now?

Now owned by Vern Brannon, ADU 4B can be seen at many Triumph and vintage racing events throughout the North America. These photos were taken at The Roadster Factory's Summer Party this past August.



Photos by Howard Baugues

# Triumph at Riverside '64



**Triumph TR-4 finishes 1, 3 and 4 in CLASS D NATIONAL DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS. BEATS MGB, Austin-Healey.**

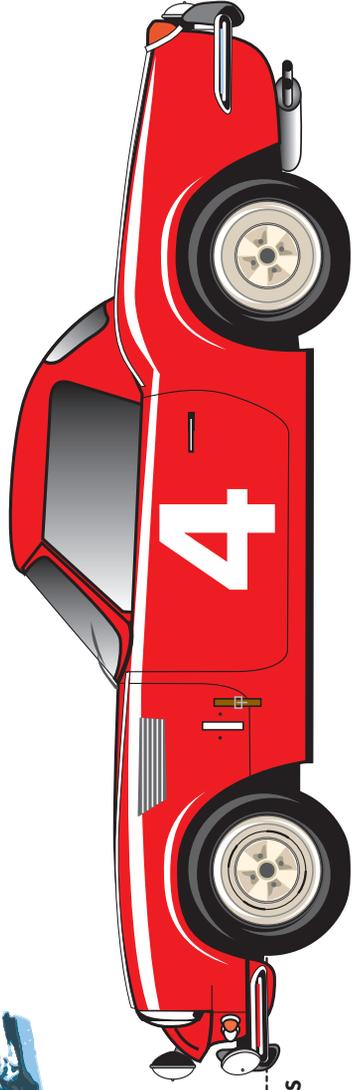


**Triumph Spitfire finishes 1, 3, 4 and 5 in CLASS G NATIONAL DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS. BEATS Sprite, Midget.**

**See your Triumph dealer and drive home a winner.**

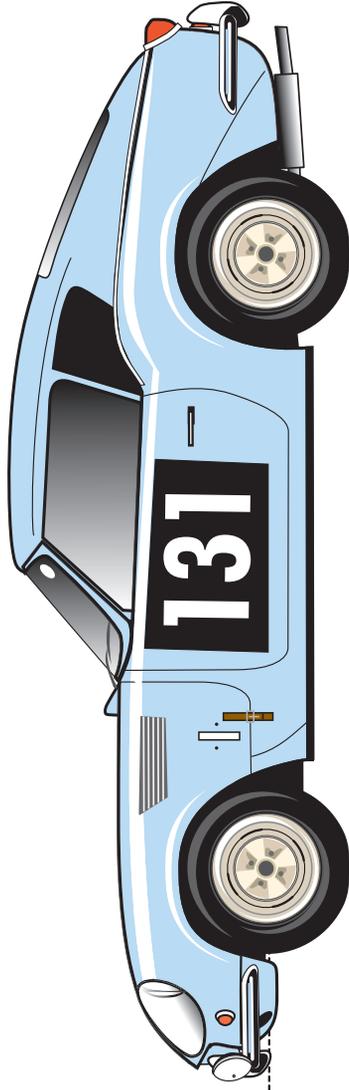
**Triumph TR-4: \$2849\* Triumph SPITFIRE: \$2199\***

\*Suggested retail price POE plus state and/or local taxes. Slightly higher in West. Look for dealer in Yellow Pages. Overseas delivery available. Standard-Triumph Motor Co., Inc., 575 Madison Ave., N.Y.C. Canada: Standard-Triumph (Canada) Ltd., 1463 Eglinton Ave. W., Toronto 10, Ont.



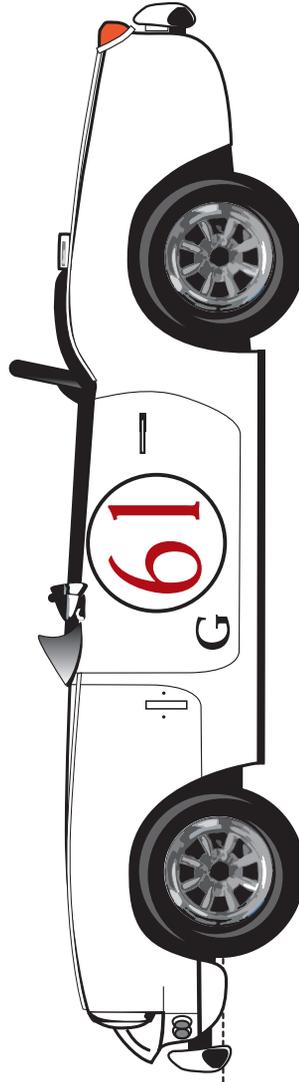
**412 VC**

1964 Welsh International Rally, 2nd in class



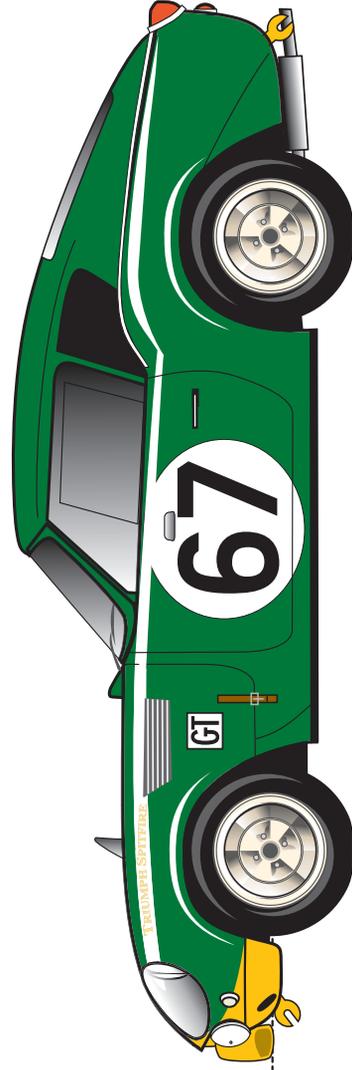
**ABDU7B**

1964 Tour de France class winner



**Ed Barker- Mk1**

1964 SCCA National Champion



**ABDU4B**

1964 Sebring, 2nd in class

1965 LeMans class winner

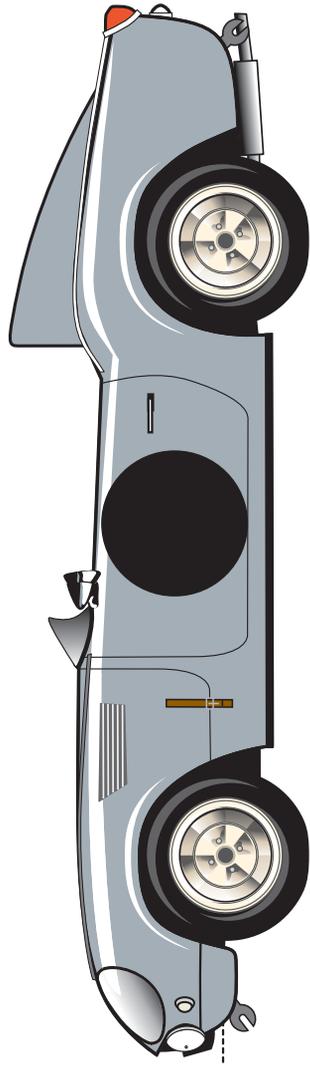
1965 LeMans class winner

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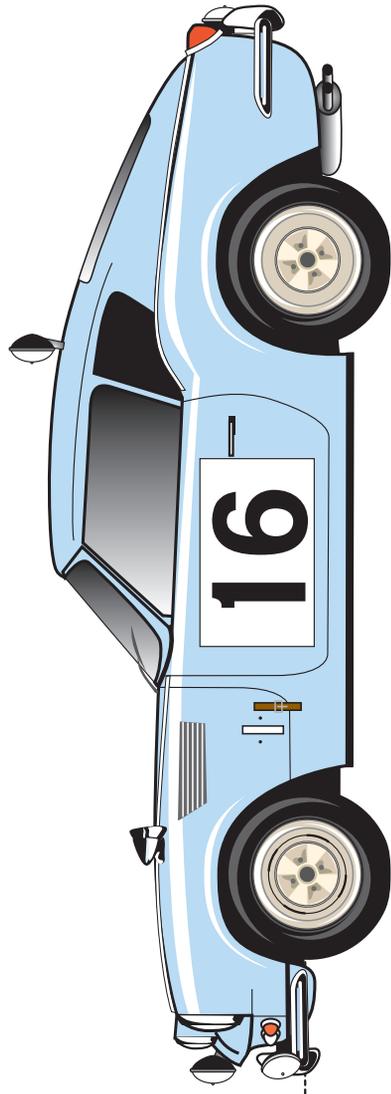
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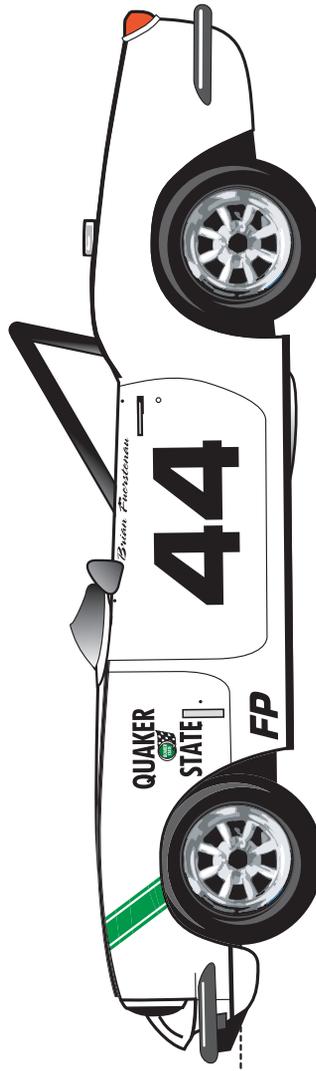
**"Macao" Spitfire**

1965 Auto Club of Portugal, 2nd in class  
1965 Macau Grand Prix, 3rd overall



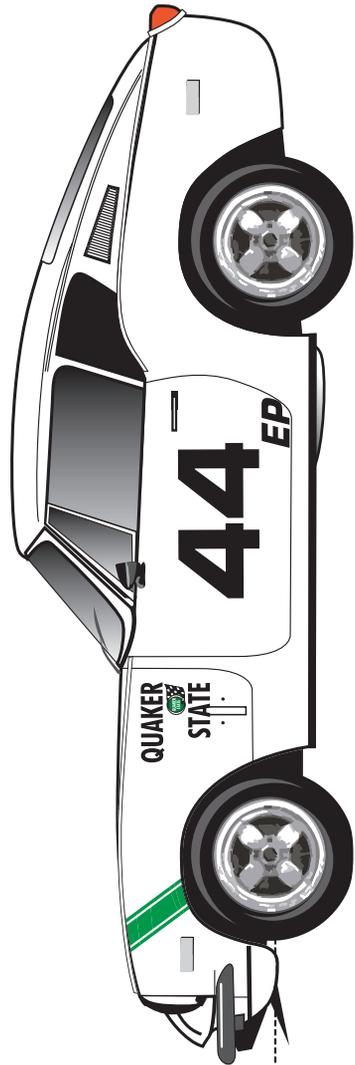
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1965 Monte Carlo Rally, 2nd in class



**Group 44 Mk3**

1968 SCCA National Champion, FP



**Group 44 Mk3 GT6**

1969 SCCA National Champion, EP

Shown are a few of the many Spitfires and GT6's that made an impact on the racing scene in the 1960's.



## Sports Car Club of America National Championship Records 1964-2001

From 1951 through 1964 the National Championships were decided by the total number of points received in the United States Road Racing Championships, the National race series of the times. It was only beginning in 1966 that the winners of the Interdivisional National Championship Event (the Runoffs) were considered the National Champions. Listed here are the Runoffs race winners since it's inception in 1964. "Title #" denotes total career National Championships to date for each driver.

### **E PRODUCTION**

Year	Driver, Car	Title #
1964	Alan Johnson, Porsche 356	1
1965	Allan Barker, Porsche 356	1
1966	Carl Swanson, Morgan	1
1967	Lee Midgley, Triumph TR3	1
1968	Mike Eyerly, Porsche 356	1
<b>1969</b>	<b>Mike Downs, GT6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1970</b>	<b>Don Devendorf, GT6</b>	<b>2</b>
1971	Logan Blackburn, MGB	1
1972	Logan Blackburn, MGB	2
<b>1973</b>	<b>Brian Fuerstenau, Spitfire 3</b>	<b>3</b>
1974	Bill Schmid, Porsche 356 S90	1
1975	Terry Visger, MGB	1
1976	Terry Visger, MGB	2
1977	Terry Visger, MGB	3
1978	Robert Overby, Porsche 356	1
1979	Robert Overby, Porsche 356	2
1980	Paul Brand, MGB	1
1981	John O'Steen, Porsche 365	1
1982	Joe Cogbill III, Porsche 356	1
1983	Joe Cogbill III, Porsche 356	2
1984	Robert Kirby, Porsche 914	1
1985	Paul Spruell, Alfa Romeo Spider	2
1986	Paul Spruell, Alfa Romeo Spider	3
1987	Bobby Studdard, Datsun 2000	1
1988	Paul Spruell, Alfa Romeo Spider	4
1989	Joe Cogbill III, Porsche 356	3
1990	Jack Wheeler, Triumph TR4	1
1991	Fletcher Williams, Triumph TR6	1
1992	Hardy Prentice, Triumph TR3	1
1993	Eric Kreuger, MGB	1
1994	Terry McCarthy, Mazda Miata	1
1995	Bruce Qvale, Jensen Healey	1
1996	John Baucom, Fiat Spider	1
1997	Pratt Cole, Mazda Miata	1
1998	Bob Boig, Mazda Miata	4
1999	Bob Endicott, Honda Prelude	1
2000	John Baucom, Fiat Spider	2
2001	Pratt Cole, Mazda Miata	2

### **F PRODUCTION**

Year	Driver, Car	Title
1964	Richard Hull, Volvo	1
1965	Brian Fuerstenau, TR3	1
1966	Dick Hull, Volvo 1800	1
1967	Bob Sharp, Datsun SRL311	1
<b>1968</b>	<b>Brian Fuerstenau, Spitfire 2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1969</b>	<b>Lee Mueller, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1970</b>	<b>John Kelly, Spitfire</b>	<b>2</b>
1971	Larry Campbell, AH Sprite	1
1972	Jon Woodner, MG Midget	1
<b>1973</b>	<b>John Kelly, Spitfire</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1974</b>	<b>Rick Cline, Spitfire</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1975</b>	<b>Ken Slagle, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
1976	Dick Blizzard, Alfa Romeo Spider	1
<b>1977</b>	<b>Tom Collier, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1978</b>	<b>Jack May, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1979</b>	<b>Steve Johnson, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1980</b>	<b>Jerry Barker, Spitfire</b>	<b>2</b>
1981	Richard Crissenbery, MG Midget	1
1982	Bob Criss, MG Midget	1
1983	John Lawrence, Saab Sonnet	1
1984	Larry Moulton, Turner 1500	1
1985	Rick Haynes, MG Midget	1
1986	Larry Moulton, Turner 1500	2
1987	James Knerr, MG Midget	1
1988	Danny Montee, MG Midget	1
1989	Larry Moulton, Turner 1500	3
1990	Bob Boig, Fiat X 1/9	3
1991	Jack Brock, MG Midget	1
1992	Joe Huffaker, MG Midget	1
1993	Danny Montee, MG Midget	2
1994	Craig Chima, MG Midget	1
1995	Harold Flescher, AH Sprite	1
1996	Jim Saurino, MG Midget	1
1997	Joe Huffaker, MG Midget	2
1998	Joe Huffaker, MG Midget	3
1999	Joe Huffaker, MG Midget	4
2000	Bill Niemeyer Jr., MG Midget	1
2001	Joe Huffaker, MG Midget	6

### **G PRODUCTION**

Year	Driver, Car	Title
<b>1964</b>	<b>Ed Barker, Triumph Spitfire 1</b>	<b>1</b>
1965	Emmett Brown, MG Midget	1
1966	Carson Baird, MG Midget	1
1967	Jerry Truitt, AH Sprite	1
<b>1968</b>	<b>Don Devendorf, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
1969	Paul Spruell, Alfa Romeo	1
1970	William Koch, MG Midget	1
<b>1971</b>	<b>Marshall Meyer, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1972</b>	<b>Rick Cline, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1973</b>	<b>Rick Cline, Spitfire</b>	<b>2</b>
1974	Joe Hauser, AH Sprite	1
<b>1975</b>	<b>Jerry Barker, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
1976	Joe Hauser, Datsun 1600	2
1977	John Anderson, Alfa Romeo	1
1978	Mike Pinney, MG Midget	1
1979	Bob Griffith, MG Midget	1
1980	Steve Schwitters, Alfa Spider	1
1981	Joe Hauser, Datsun 1600	3
1982	Joe Hauser, Datsun 1600	4
1983	Tom Mankin, Alfa Romeo Spider	1
1984	Bob Boig, Fiat X 1/9	1
1985	Bob Boig, Fiat X 1/9	2
1986	Kent Prather, MGA	1
1987	Bob Thomas, Fiat X 1/9	1
1988	Tom Mankin, Alfa Romeo Spider	2
1989	Tom Mankin, Alfa Romeo Spider	3
1990	Kent Prather, MGA	2
1991	Tom Reichenbach, Fiat X 1/9	1
<b>1992</b>	<b>Steve Sargis, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1993</b>	<b>Steve Sargis, Spitfire</b>	<b>2</b>
1994	Vic Skirmants, Porsche 356	1
1995	Kent Prather, MGA	3
<b>1996</b>	<b>Dean C. Johnson, Spitfire</b>	<b>1</b>
1997	Hugh Armstrong, MG Midget	1
1998	Tom Reichenbach, Fiat X 1/9	2
<b>1999</b>	<b>Steve Sargis, Spitfire</b>	<b>3</b>
2000	John Baucom, Fiat Spider	3
2001	Jeff Winter, Datsun 510	1



Rick Kristoff, Michigan, MkIII  
The photo was taken at Nelson Ledges race course at an SCCA race. It is a MarkIII 1296cc...full race prep only. I have raced it for about 15 yrs (counting 2 full rebuilds from frame up). It is in current F production class specs for SCCA Nationals or Regionals. There isn't much on the car that's still original or not modified or custom made. It has a full tube-frame type cage, integrated into frame and suspension. Mod front and rear suspensions with custom mounts, shocks and springs. Engine is highly modified 15:1 compression with plenty of internal work and head mods...1 1/2" SUs with flow-benched intakes and vel stacks. All blueprinted to the max. Electromotive crankfire system, TSI gear reduction starter, Quartermaster 5 1/2" clutch system, Houseman tranny, aluminum bell-housing, transcase, driveshaft, race axles, etc, custom made 2 1/2" full straight exhaust with tuned Stahl header, Aum fuel cell, dual pumps, all Aeroquip, Griffin custom radiator and shroud. Custom alum race seat, mod drive tunnel, full race gauges, adj brake prop valve and more.



Tom Feller, Michigan, 1969 MkIII at 2002 SCCA Nationals  
The car is a 69 mk III with an 1147 motor and GT6 trans (too cheap to pony up for a race tranny). Suspension is stock geometry, lowered, with the trailing links moved inboard on the body. Brakes are GT6 fronts with stock spit rear drums. Again, most guys run rear discs but we seem to do as well stopping with the drums.



Mk2 GT6 of undisclosed Spanish ownership.



Ian Cowie's GT6 racer.



Doug Kibbey, 1968 Mk I GT6

"I wish I still owned this '68 Mk I, which is pictured with me competing with it at Charlotte (now Loews') Motor Speedway in 1970 (note World 600 Press Box in background). I cheated a little for my class and had the big valves of the MkII's, like the white '70 version pictured to the left of mine. I routinely stomped Porsche 911T's, beat many a 911E (unless EXPERTLY driven) and of course, couldn't touch a 911S...the exotic street car of the day."



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# The Heat is On

**US VINTAGE GRAND PRIX, WATKINS GLEN, SEPTEMBER 6-8, 2002**

**STORY BY LIV HAASPER, PICTURES BY JAMES CARRUTHERS**



David Belden



British Racing Green was the color in Don Martin's stable.



Donn Sopp's 1966 Mk3



Ed Ceilley's 1969 Group 3 GT6

It was an unusually hot September day when Wilf, James Carruthers, and I drove through the gates of the Watkins Glen International race way, located on top of a mountain, providing a breathtaking vista of the hills and lakes of the Finger Lake area of New York State. Early in the morning, the sun already burned down on the land with a vengeance.

The heat was rising from the pavement, beating down mercilessly on the spectators and racers getting ready for the important 3-day event. Most of the participants had already set up in the paddock area, keeping their vintage racers, and themselves, out of the sun, under awnings and tents. Everyone seemed to be busy making last minute preparation and repairs.

The US Vintage Grand Prix was on its way, the SVRA technical inspections already finished, group practice and qualifying races had begun at 8 a.m.

We decided to check out the facilities, visit with some Spitfire racers, and concentrate on following the races of the Triumphs, especially the Spitfires and the GT6's. It was group one and three we came to see, Spitfires, classified as group one, as small displacement sports cars and sedans in production prior to 1973. H-modified and sports racers displacing less than 850 cc. Formula Vee, Formula 500, front engine F/jr. This group contained some Sprites, some Midgets, many Austin Minis, Mini Coopers, also a Saab, Lotus 7, MGA, Alfa Romeos, a Wolseley Hornet, a Lester MG, and many others.

The GT6's were classified as group three, as recognized series produced sports cars and sedans in production prior to 1972. This group consisted of some Datsun SPL's, Corvettes, MGA's, Volvos, an A. Healey, TR 4's, MGB's, Porsches, Alfas, and others.

We spotted the familiar faces of some of our racing friends, not too far from the pit area.

Donn Sopp's 66 Mk3 Spit was parked under a canopy, while Donn was pondering over the problem of a slipping clutch. In order to investigate this, the transmission had to be taken out to allow access to the clutch. "Hey kids, stay and help me take this tranny out" he request-

ed, sporting a big grin, cool as always in situations like this. He, d surely miss his qualifying race today. "It's all part of the game" he laughed, telling us the story of how he found this car at a rummage sale for \$75 and then proceeded, several thousand dollars later, to convert it to the racer it is today. While we were laughing at the tale, Wilf was already rolling up his sleeves, I therefore went to say hello to the Spit racer next "door" where

Russ Moore was hovering over his 63 Spitfire. Russ had just installed new 1 1/2 inch rebuild SU 4 carburetors, but was now lacking mid range power. He was working feverishly on getting the carbs synchronized and adjusted. Also, the Spit didn't want to start. But, Russ was optimistic that all would be in good running order soon. Last night, he worked into the early morning hours, getting Andy Konopka's 63 Spit running, which had burned a piston. As this was to be Andy's second race only, nobody wanted to see him miss it. In this racing community, help is never far away.

Andy had just finished modifying his Spitfire for vintage racing. He'd changed the engine of the original 1147 to an 1300 engine and installed the heavier suspension of a 1500 Spit. Also, a much heavier, stronger axle was installed, bigger valves and 0.20 over pistons. He hoped that he was ready for this race. As it turned out, the following day, he also had to deal with a broken transmission.

Another Spit racer caught my attention. It was Mark Ward in his 65 Mk 2. Mark had been racing since 1996. The Spit was running great, and Mark and his friends were relaxing in the shade before the qualifying races. Sporting an easy smile he explained, that the best thing about racing was the camaraderie of his school friends.

Not to be overlooked was the red hot Spit, number 7, of David Belden's. This Spit had been racing since 1968, when it was prepared by Charley Rainville. It had been raced very successfully in SCCA national and regional racing. It was sold in 1980, but then purchased back by David in the early 90ties. David has raced this Spit ever since and is well known to win with this famous little Triumph.

My explorations took me to another area of the paddock where I spotted a Spitfire and a Jaguar E-type, parked side by side, both sporting a racing green coat of paint. Both identified as number 27. This Spit, driven by Don Martin, was a 1500, powered by a 1298 engine. It was prepared to race three years ago, had never been raced previously, and was scheduled to run the 65 minutes enduro race.

There was only one GT6 entered to race this weekend. It was a black 1969 Mk1 of Ed Ceilleys. I decided to watch for this car in group 3.

As a lover of Vintage racing, the selection of cars was a sight to behold. Every vintage racer seemed to be represented here. The paddocks resembled an colourful buzzing bee hive of busy workers and shiny, polished racers of all marques. The deafening roar of revving engines and rumbling exhausts unmistakably demanding your attention.

You could watch the Corvettes, the Jags, Ferrari's, the powerhouses Ford GT 40's, the Triumphs in all of the old world beauty, the Lotos, the Mini's, the Saabs and Datsuns, the Mustangs, too many to mention, too much beauty to be easily absorbed.

We spend two days walking around the broiling hot pavement. We sat in the stands watching the activity on the track, roasted alive, at temperatures nearing the 100° F mark. We helped some friends in the pit area, we just simply suffered the heat and loved the activity.

Friday night, the re-enactment of the race of the early days of racing at Watkins took place, where many racers drive the former track along the main street of the village, then turn north toward the new track. This is a fun event, loved by all. Waving at the passing racers, cheering them on in anticipation, and then having a good laugh, when the only racer breaking down is a beloved Spitfire. Saturday night, the fireworks provided the highlight of the day, and on this very day the eerie, red glow of the northern lights, the aurora borealis, added a special touch to the festivities.

On Sunday, the big event of the final race was taking place late in the afternoon.

Earlier that day, Ed Ceilleys GT6, number 711, had run it's race in group number 3, and had finished somewhere in the middle of the pack, a good run, a good placing. There were some fine Triumphs in this group. A yellow

62 TR4, sporting the number 4, had been driving an electrifying race, some TR3's were not to be overlooked, some great Austin Healey's held their place, a few Porsches stood up to the test, and some fast MGB's, especially the white MBG "Black Jack" who drove like the devil in disguise, made this race fun to watch. First car getting the checkered flag was a 64 Alfa TZ.

The enduro race had taken place in the morning, where Marc Ward, driving his Triumph Spitfire, had finished 16 laps in 38th. Place. Don Martin, in his 70 Spitfire, finished 45th, completing 15 laps. Best time was held by Travis Engen, in his 62 Lotus.

We had been watching the races at the "boot" section of the track, just below a downturn hill, ending in a difficult left turn. Several cars had experienced mishaps at this place. A Lotus had blown a tire, an MGB had spun. Earlier, during the group 3 finals, a blue TR3 spun and crashed severely into the tires, having us scared and worried regarding the drivers safety. But, he seemed to recover and drove off, leaving behind his exhaust, and a lot of debris, and one frightened photographer who was picking himself up from behind a guard rail, where he'd jumped for safety. This was one tricky corner of the track.

Now, it was time for Group 1 to try out their luck.

Donn Sopp, relaxed as ever, had been spending the afternoon with us, watching and enjoying the races from a grassy knoll. He'd been working on the clutch problem all day. It couldn't be repaired but, optimistically, he was driving the Spit regardless. He was now with his car, doing last minute check-ups. We were all highly excited about the upcoming final race.

Suddenly, the pace car was coming down the turn, lights flashing, pursued by a bunch of restless Minis, some overanxious MGB's the Lotus's, then our group of Spits. A few minutes later, the first lap of the race was in progress. The Mini's seemed to lead the pack. They were racing flat out, not to be outrun. The little cars were sliding around the bend, one tire flying high above the tarmac, engines screaming in protest. Following were the Lotus, the Sprites, then our Spits, running smoothly, taking the turn fast, but cautiously, approaching a straight, then into the sharp curve of the boot, up a step incline, and... gone beyond our field of vision. Some slower cars were purring

by. The highlight of the group was a very old 1932 Alfa Romeo Monza 7, driven by Peter Giddings, who gave everyone a run for the inner circle. On the next lap, the chase was on, the race in full swing, action on the track. Donn Sopp's Spit number 18, was chasing Russ Moore's "48". David Belden, in number 7, was way ahead. Everybody was passing the



Saab and the 59 Cooper T42, that rattled by, ever so faithfully, sounding slightly like my old lawn mover. Flashes of cars raced by, round after round. Then, all of a sudden, Donn slid past us, the engine not sounding too steady. He was having some trouble maintaining speed. It was the condenser, giving him problems, we later confirmed. David Belden, in number 7, was also slowing down, trailing smoke behind him. He was going into the pits. Russ Moore also experienced difficulties, as his engine gave up. But, the rookie Andy, was rolling by nicely, waving at the spectators.

Group one finished with Jack Cassingham in a Midget and Larry Holloway in a Mini Cooper.

For the Spits, it was Don Sopp at number 14, Russ Moore, number 15, Andy Konopka, in position number 21.

As everyone told me, the race was fun, as always. The engines will be replaced shortly, the racing season will continue, see you next year at the track... You bet!!!!!!

# Quantity and Quality with VDCA

**VDCA ROEBLING ROAD RACEWAY, DECEMBER 2002**  
**BY BOB SPRUCK, MOTORMOUTH/SOUTH**

Skeptics claim you can't have both quantity and quality. Well, yes you can, if you plan it right. In the realm of vintage sports car racing, The Vintage Drivers Club of America does it right and you always get both. Quantity of track time and quality of racing were both in abundance at the December 13th to 15th event at the 2.02 mile long Roebling Road



Rob Stewart's 1967 Spitfire 1296, sporting his Scottish colors, put up a good fight in Class F Production.



The streamer on Rob's boot lid aptly says "Remove Before Flight"

Raceway near Savannah, Georgia. There were some quality racecars present as well. Many racers have been heard to scoff at the late date and the rather grass-roots venue, but those of us who have been there and done that are not among them. WE know how good the weekend can be. Those of us who want lots of track time and good racing in the true vintage spirit, make sure we reserve this weekend to close out our racing schedules each year. Despite sharing the track with the BMWCCA and with over 80 vintage racers registered, there was enough track time and racing excitement

for everyone. No complaints about getting shortchanged are ever heard around VDCA events.

The race format was fairly typical, i.e. two 30 minute sessions each day for each of the 8 race groups and a Fun Race and a one hour Endurance Race for all groups. That adds up to four and a half hours of track time for each Group. That's quantity! Because of the gentlemanly racing, all the sessions were the full 30 minutes. There was no track time lost due to hauling cars from the track, out of the boonies, or off each other. The relatively minor contretemps were few and far between. Every group had exciting races within races, usually with different cars each session. Even the BMW guys behaved themselves and neither group impinged on the schedule of the other. That's quality!

The weather, as is usual for coastal Georgia at the season change, was varied, very varied. Rain was forecast for Friday, cold for Saturday, and warm for Sunday. When I peeked out the hotel window at 6am Friday morning, it was raining and blowing so hard I wanted to return to the warm and cozy bed I had just left. But, we were here to race, not sleep. There would be plenty of winter weekends for that. This was the last opportunity to race this year and we were committed regardless of the conditions. By the time we got to the track at 8 am, the rain had stopped. The wind, however, did not. Wind is good because it tends to dry things out. The warmer the wind the faster things dry. The only problem was that the temperatures were still in the low and mid thirties with a wind that was estimated to be near 25 MPH. That makes for rather uncomfortable conditions. Even though the track and paddock dried out as the day progressed, the weather stayed cold and blustery. Saturday was the same but without the wet. Sunday was the Chamber of Commerce day: clear and sunny, imperceptible winds, and temps in the high 50s. Couldn't have been better.

The Friday and Saturday schedule provided plenty of practice and racing, tuning and fixing. The highlight was the Fun Race, dreamed up by Doug Meis and a crew of imaginative and diabolical

assistants. The only Spitfires in the Fun Race were those of Rob Stewart of Norcross, GA and Tim Slater, of West Palm Beach, FL. Rob has one of the fastest cars in the small bore group, a well prepared 1967 with a 1296 cc engine. He started 7th, rose as high as 4th, and finished in 6th overall and first in class. Tim races a 1962 1147 Spitfire and finished 18th overall and 2nd in class after starting in 21st. The Fun Race involved many rules and conditions, some made up as the race went along. They involved forming teams with a maximum displacement of 18,000 cc and a 10 car maximum per team. All 32 cars started based on previous lap times inverted. Points were awarded to each car based on 1 for last, 2 for next to last, etc. The sum of the finishing position points for each team determined the overall winning team. There were also a few random scoring factors thrown in for fun and surprises. I heard there might have been extra points based on the number of red cars on a team and an esoteric formula involving the ages of the drivers and the cars. You get the idea. Strategy and tactics abounded. Racing was good. Valuable awards were given out at the Saturday Night Party. There was plenty of laughing and groans, but everyone had a good time. After all, it was the Fun Race.

The Sunday morning one hour Endurance Race was a route for the big bore cars. Up front it was Camaro, Camaro, Porsche until the pit stops began around lap 20. Once again it was Rob Stewart and Tim Slater representing the Spitfire heritage in the race. Rob started in 15th out of the 32 starters, climbed as high as 11th on driving skill, but dropped to 25th after his pit stop. He clawed his way back to 11th and 1st in class at the end of the race. Tim had a more exciting race, starting in the 26th spot and working his way up to 10th before pitting on the 19th lap. He returned in 24th and was only able to get back up to 22nd by the time the checker was waved.

The Feature races for each Group began right after lunch. In Group 1 for small bore production cars, Bob Van Kirk in his 1965 MG Midget found himself

surrounded by Spitfires at the start. He let Fred Danovitz and Rob Stewart in Spitfires by just to toy with them (at least that's what he told me) but then dominated the rest of the race to finish ahead of Fred and Rob at the end. Tucker Morse, of Charleston, SC brought his 1964 Spitfire 1147 home in 5th overall. The seven 948 Bugeye Sprites, the five Spridgets, and the three Spitfires all mixed it up with the Turners, a Fiat Abarth 850 TC, Jimmy Dobbs' Alfa Sud, and Lotus's, Morgans, and a GSM Delta driven by James Shelton from Canada.

One of the great things about VDCA is that it provides an opportunity for racers with some really unusual and valuable race cars to exercise them in an aggressive yet safe manner. Although there were no Spitfires in Group 2, the Pre-War cars at Savannah were some of the best seen yet. It was thrilling to see the likes of John Kendall's 1932 Alfa Monza, Don Coleman's 1932 Maserati, Scott Ebert's 1939 flathead powered Dreyer Special, Harry Reynolds' 1953 Kieft FIII, Ben Bragg's 1927 Bugatti 39A, and George Holman's 1932 Plymouth PB Sprinter up close in the pits. It was even more thrilling to watch them on the track. It was most thrilling to pass them on the inside and the outside in the turns. Because of their beauty and value, we all gave them a wide berth if we were able to overtake and pass. It was worth a few slow laps just to ride behind and watch these men handle these old, precious cars at speed. VDCA style racing attracts these kinds of cars and we vintage enthusiasts surely appreciate that.

There was a nice variety of the larger displacement production cars in Group 3. Marques represented were MG, Triumph, Morgan, Turner, Porsche, BMW, Alfa, Mercedes, Jaguar, and Ferrari. Only nine of the sixteen registered cars made the final race, and it was pretty much a parade with only first lap leader Jack Poteet's Morgan 4/4 working it's way back from last on the second lap to finish fourth. Larry Wilson (1963 Porsche), Fred Danovitz (MGB), and Mike Muckle (1965 Turner Mk3) capitalized on Jack's misfortune and finished in that order.

The race for Groups 4, 5, and 7 also saw little changes in places. Just about everybody started and finished in the same place, except for Alex Quattlebaum and Brian MacEachern who traded positions in their Elva Mk 3 and Lotus 11 LeMans many times in the ten laps. Steve Olsen (Porsche Spyder), Larry Wilson (Elva Porsche), and Robert Gallagher (Lotus 23C) finished in the first three spots.

Quantity and Quality. VDCA has them both. The biggest improvement we all hope for in 2003 is an increase in quantity, i.e. the number of great events that the group puts on. The tentative 2003 schedule looks like there will be races at Virginia International Raceway in April, the new Barber track in Birmingham, Alabama, and again at Savannah in December. Tell your friends. Bring them to a VDCA race. I did and we now have two more racers who are convinced that VDCA has the right combination. Besides, there are always a lot of competitive Spitfires. Quantity and Quality, indeed. ■



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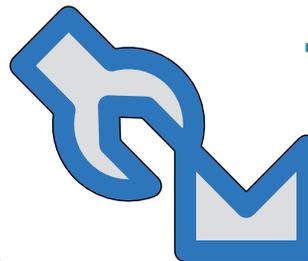
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# The Little Car That Could...Dani Senn's Story

BY LIV HAASPER, CANADA

What do you do when this picture appears on the screen of your computer monitor; you're totally hooked on vintage racing, and have to find out all about this cool little Spitfire? You bounce off an email to the driver and beg for information.

This is what I did, last fall, and was surprised to find out that the owner of this Spit, Daniel Senn, and his "Spiti" reside in Holderbank, a small community of 800 inhabitants, in Switzerland. Dani speaks the German language and, immediately, we had something in common besides the devotion to our little Triumphs.

Dani was delighted to share the story and the news of his racing courier with me.

The car is a 1964 Mk1 Spitfire, sporting a Triumph 1600 Vitesse transmission with overdrive in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th gear, an original factory motor with the specifications of X 70 and an 8-port cast iron Works cylinder head, a 4.11:1 limited slip differential, and Moss rally springs, Spax, front and rear. The car is equipped with twin racing instruments, trip master and stop watches. It also has special lights installed for instrument reading.

The Spit is modified after the rally car ADU 5B, ADU 6B, and ADU 7B. During his apprenticeship as an auto mechanic, Dani purchased the car as scrap. In 1984 he restored the Spit in the usual manner. But, when Dani realized that in Europe, during the 60ties, Spitfires were successfully raced, he started to get interested in modifications and the search for specific parts and components was on. Dani contacted some former racers, for instance J.J Thuner, winner in its class "Spitfire ADU 4B" in Le Mans in 1965, who helped him acquire diverse "specials" like the SAH rear end suspension, all of which were quickly installed.

Soon, Dani was off to his first rally, the Alpine Rally in 1996. Placing 3rd in this class and a 20th all around, he was immediately hooked. Then, in 1999, the terrible accident happened. "We were trying to drive under a truck", Dani explained with a laughing and a crying eye. The car was badly damaged, a crumbled mess of torn metal, the drivers side mangled. It was a miracle, the driver survived.

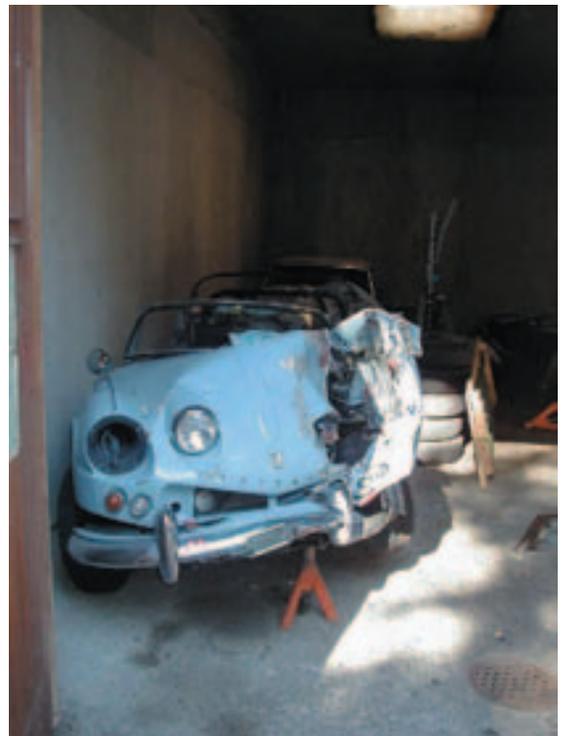
The accident couldn't hold Dani back from rebuilding the car and by spring 2000 Spiti was already taking part in club outings. The only parts he was able to use from the wreck was the boot lid, parts of the motor and the rear axle. The chassis and



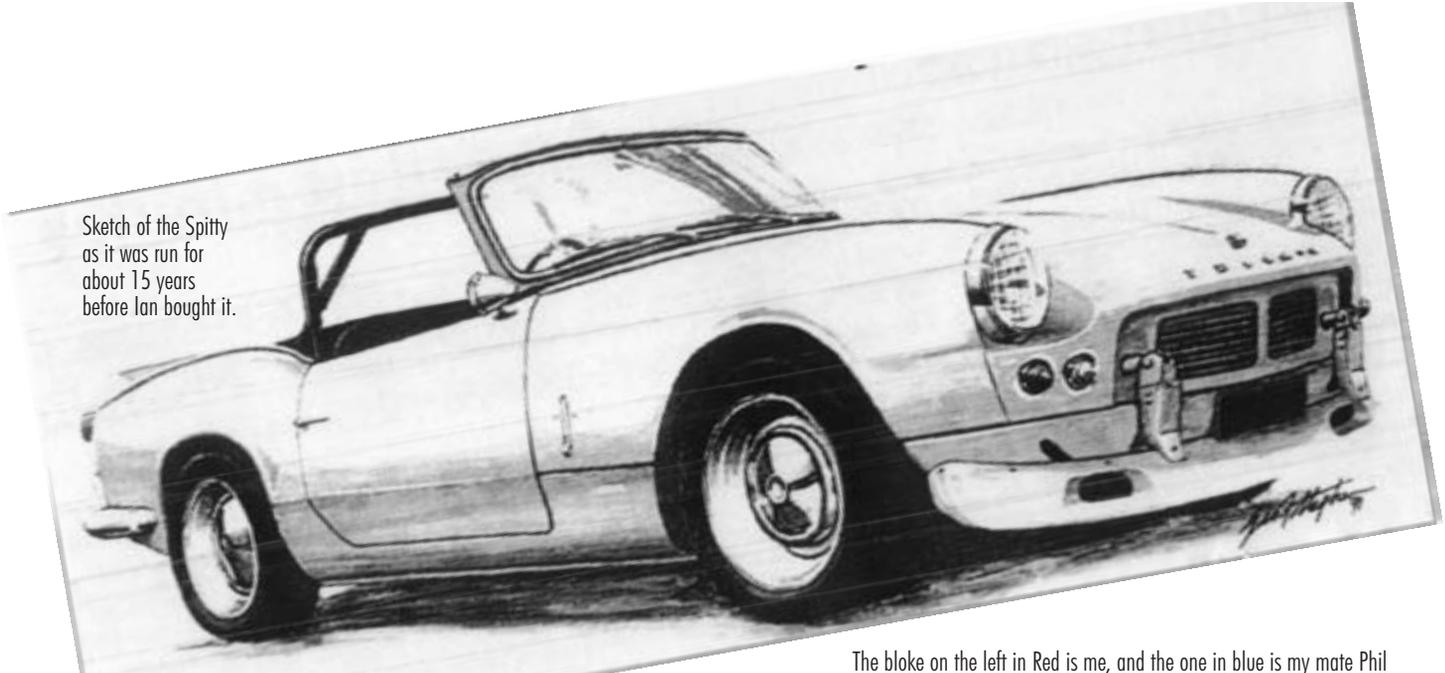
body tub were taking from a parts car. When the rebuild took place, Dani acquired the special bonnet from the UK. The hard top is an Ashley top.

Dani is now racing his "Spit" in different races within the British-race-challenge. He's participating in round rallies, slaloms, and mountain rallies, where timing and speed is of the essence. He's letting everyone know that spring has arrived in Switzerland and the first club outings and drives are already on their way.

For more info go to <http://www.british-race-challenge.ch> ■



Sketch of the Spitty as it was run for about 15 years before Ian bought it.



# Spitty's Revenge

BY IAN COWIE, VICTORIA AUSTRALIA

It seems such a short time ago that I purchased my first Triumph sports car, a beautifully resorted TR4A, which after some general tidying up was good enough to be a place-getter in the 2000 Concourse D' elegance. Nevertheless, due to my inherently competitive nature the 4A was destined to be involved in some form of competitive pursuit and inexorably one modification followed another until it was a reasonable competitor in MSCA sprints and hill climbs.

Motor racing is quite a different proposition to club sprints and while I was determined to race I soon realized I needed a more competitive package than my beloved 4A. Nevertheless, while working through the various issues I managed to take an Annual Class Championship for club competition and forged lasting friendships with many within the TSOA. Also influencing my decision to 'build a race car' was a fellow racer Phil Boulton, having totaled his TR6 at Phillip Island was looking for a run and was interested in sharing a car.

As time passed the 4A was showing signs of track wear and tear and a decision needed to be made before major cosmetic surgery was required... making acquisition of a full blown racer out of the question. The Social Secretary was already airing her disquiet about the possible appearance of yet another sports/race car. Therefore before any acquisitions could be made the 4A would need to be freshened up and sold.

Shortly after beginning to run sprints in the 4A I became a group member of FOT, a bunch of Triumph enthusiasts predominantly based in the USA,

however there is a global contingent with members in the UK, Europe and Australia. Various profiled individuals make regular contributions, not the least being the legendary Kas Kastner. And it was through a communication with Kas at one time regarding building a competitive TR that a fellow FOTer directed me to an Australian guy with an enviable reputation in the US for engine building.

The email I received explained that Chris Swingler maintained and raced the 'Playboy TR7' (formerly Group 44) using the Dolomite 2L Sprint engine. It went on to say that Chris has an enviable reputation, with recognized expertise in the TR7 in general and the Sprint engine in particular and that I should make his acquaintance and seek his advice and possible assistance in regard to how and or what to race. I was then surprised to discover that Chris Swingler was in fact a TSOA member and that I had often seen him at sprint events in his very quick sprint based TR7.

For those interested in Group 44 history, the Australian Playboy TR7 was originally raced by 'Wild Bill' Evans to an Australian Championship and sponsored by both British Leyland and Playboy. The car was originally purchased from Group 44 and was campaigned in the SCCA DP by Tullius/McComb in their last year of SCCA club racing in 1976.

Needless to say I soon touched base

The bloke on the left in Red is me, and the one in blue is my mate Phil



with Chris and it wasn't long before we had decided a Spitfire would be the best competitor under Australian Historic Racing rules.

While a relative newcomer to TSOA every once in a while a wily old campaigner in a cute Spitty would have a run at one of the MSCA sprint meetings. Lionel March was a stalwart of the TSOA, and well known as a competitor and contributor to the Triumph cause and the TSOA. We were given to understand that Lionel's Spitty had been very competitive in its day and would make a worthy campaigner. It also transpired that Lionel was looking to go caravanning for a while and accordingly was looking for a new home for the Spitfire. So, without too much ado Phil and I decided to bite the bullet and begin the task of preparing it as a serious historic racer.

Task one was to assess the current state of the car, and Winton short track sprints seemed the ideal venue. Phil headed off around the tank a few times and was setting some respectable times. I too had a run or two setting a new TSOA class record, the little 1300 engine running easily to 8000 revs. Nevertheless, it was clear that there was a real need for some TLC before any serious racing could be considered. The gearbox selec-



tor seemed to have a mind of its own, and while handling was OK, if pushed, the car threatened to snap your head off when least expected, significantly increasing your anxiety levels when coming out of tight corners. This we discovered later was directly attributable to the ubiquitous 'Z bar' fitted. Phil had the final run for the day after which the engine gracefully expired with a head of steam worthy of the 'Stanley Steamer' and the little yellow buzz-box was retired to fight another day.

**2** The engine was to be something special, with Chris providing both the technical guidance and physical hard work. Nothing was to be spared from Chris' scrutiny and performance was the catch cry. The chassis was straight, however vertical links, trunnions, shockers, in fact everything mechanical had suffered the ravages of 15 years of sprint competition and was either bent, suffering fatigue or simply worn out and required repair or replacement. Sadly also some body panels were not suitable for historic classification and accordingly considerable effort was needed to remove and reshape the body to comply with historic rules requirements.



**3** While the little Spitty underwent its metamorphosis it was always a pleasure

to keep Lionel up-to-date with progress when we caught up with him at TSOA and elsewhere, and by the first dyno run we had literally repaired/replaced every nut and bolt.

In the meantime Phil had received an opportunity to acquire a pretty good chassis/body unit and was looking to get back into his TR6. So by mutual agreement we agreed that he should get his six running again, and I would continue on alone (financially speaking) with 'SuperSpit' as the Spitfire had been affectionately nicknamed by Chris.

With Phil busily dismantling what was left of his TR6 I set about getting a dyno run and organized a test day at Calder Raceway. The first dyno run was very disappointing. We were producing much less power than had been anticipated and we were concerned that the clamping pressure on the clutch was too high and clutch adjustment was problematic. Nevertheless, we agreed that the run at Calder will help us assess this other aspects of the car such as the chassis set-up, suspension and drive train. We pressed on.

**4** By the time we reached this stage we had fitted a steel crank, forged pistons and gapless rings all the way from USA, rods were made to order in Sydney and Chris had spent many hours whiling or is that filing away at the 8 port head in order to extract every ounce of power he could from what is historically a poor breather. In



addition there was a Detroit Locker, a straight-cut close ratio O/D gearbox all the way from Chris' early race days as well all new upper/lower suspension arms, vertical links, trunnions, wheel bearings and brakes, and a pair of 40mm Webers with custom made headers just to complete the package.

**5** It would be nice to be able to say that that first session at Calder Raceway went without a hitch. However, while we made a couple of runs the engine was not happy above 6500 revs, the gearbox was really notchy and my brand new Toyos got one hell of a flat spot as I came off



the back straight without first working out how much braking distance I needed. The day came to an abrupt end when while still trying to find some top end revs on the front straight all hell broke loose. Back in the pits Chris lifted the rocker cover off to find the rocker gear had disintegrated. Rocker outriggers had literally snapped off. I need not bore you with the rest of the details! Oh, well back

to the drawing board and rebuild number two.

While Chris set about reworking the head to get to the bottom of the lack of revs we asked Shuggie (Crankshaft Builders) to custom build a new rocker assembly. It was time too to approach CAMS in regard to an Sb (Historic) log-book. This was not as straightforward as one might expect either and required serious research, as there had never been a Spitfire classified in this category. Again the tutelage of Chris and advice from TSOAers such as Andy Ansell and others meant that I captured much of the history of both the production Spitfire as well as those racing in the seventies and eighties in Australia and elsewhere. One thing was abundantly clear, virtually all racing production sports cars of that era do not comply with current CAMS 5th Category group S Rules. Nevertheless, a compre-



hensive submission was prepared for CAMS, which included the history of Spitfire production and racing.

Engine dyno testing is worth its eight in gold! And while considering what to do about some of the issues we had to deal in regard to CAMS and my log book I came into contact with Gene Cook, well known racer and engine builder in ozzie NASCAR and AUSCAR. After several discussions he suggested it might be worthwhile running the new

On the left in blue suit is Gene Cook, a well known Auscar and Nascar racer. He currently has a Shell sponsored Nascar which he takes out to various shows. Unfortunately Nascar/Auscar has fallen on its ear in Oz, and no sign of it being resurrected at the moment. 'Cookie' when he drives is pretty competitive. Again the guy in green is moi, and the other guy is the Triumph genius, Chris Swingler.

engine up on his engine dyno. This would limit the need for track testing to sort out engine problems and might help us extract a bit more horse power, something much more difficult to do on a road dyno.

**6** Gene's enthusiasm combined with Chris' knowledge provided a unique opportunity for me to witness a formidable team as they worked their way through each aspect of measuring and adjusting the engine in a dynamic 'hands on' environment. Whereas previous efforts with road dyno tuning had been disappointing, almost immediately the engine dyno highlighted problems, not the least being a poorly fitting head gasket, which was clearly limiting power output. Needless to say we ran to two days of testing and spent that first evening running about gathering head gaskets in the hope one would give us a decent seal the next morning.

**7** Next day we began by running up the engine progressively as we torqued and retorqued the head. Success! In the blink of an eye we were running the engine in, and making plans for the test program for the rest of the day. Once run in, we made various adjustments to valve timing, plugs and carbies and on every power run we were making more horsepower and importantly more torque. In the end we satisfied ourselves in the knowledge we were approaching 100 horsepower/1000cc, which at least compensated in part for the fact that we seemed to still be lacking some top end flexibility. Indeed the results were entirely acceptable.

However, before we removed the engine from the dyno Gene mentioned he could not help but notice that we had carried in a piece of 2 1/2 inch exhaust pipe and extractors on arrival two days earlier. We indicated to him it was an experimental set of custom made extractors combined with a large bore exhaust. And given the results of the day's testing it was probably not worth the effort. Gene's reaction was to say that while he agreed it would be a lot of effort to fit the extractors, we should test the large bore pipe at least. We responded by saying pipes would need to be cut and somehow secured before we could measure its effect, if any. Gene was not to be denied, and out came the hacksaw. An hour or so later we ran up the engine again and against all expectations that lump of 2 1/2 pipe made four more horsepower and pushed the torque curve up as well. Wow!

**8** We dropped the engine back into its rightful place the next day and since coincidentally, there were sprints running at Winton that weekend we decided to take the opportunity to get some laps in on the famous 'short track' yet again.

**9** At the track all sorts of problems surfaced and it was gratifying to know that at least we need not worry about the engine. Suspension adjustments were needed, we were not quite sure what affect the anti-tuck bar was having and braking was problematic. However these issues paled into insignificance when around mid afternoon the rear end suddenly became very vague to say the least. A quick departure from the track fol-





9

lowed by a few minutes of deliberation and we realized that we had spun the keyway in the left rear wheel flange, completely destroying it. Oh well, back to the drawing board - again!

On closer inspection we also found that the rear brakes were in effect not working at all, and so it was back to Derry Robertson (BGT) for advice and problem solving. Fortunately I was off to the UK. No holiday though, I spent one weekend driving from Chester to the east coast to Moss to pick up a pair of new axles and a spare diff. In the meantime my logbook application was progressing having had a lengthy discussion and got the first signature required from Brian Beasey. Now it was a matter for the various State committees of CAMS to sign off. Nevertheless, I was hopeful of running at least one round of the VMRC for 2002. Back home Chris was busy building new axle/brake assemblies and preparing the car for my return.

With fingers crossed I submitted an entry for Round 4 of the VMRC at Sandown (Marque Sports Cars) and having abandoned our original plans to rebuild the standard axles we were waiting on a set of custom made (Alan at AMR in Nunawading) axle/flange assemblies consisting of a pair of TR7 axles suitably shortened, splined and modified to fit in the Spitty rear bearing housing. Our reasoning was that as the engine was producing more torque than expected it was contributing to axle flange failures. Well, we had to find some excuse, and this was as plausible as any other we could find.

**10** With the new axles fitted and new Log Book in hand we made it to Sandown. Saturday qualifying went without incident save for the fact that I was hopelessly outclassed in this class of racing with Porsche GT3s appearing in my rear view mirror with monotonous repetition. The first race also went without

incident and I was beginning to get comfortable setting a best lap of 1m39. By Sunday I was all fired up and was looking forward to at least finishing my second race. Alas I was counting my chickens yet again, as on the first lap at turn 12 something let go (to say the least). All I can recall is feeling a bit of a thump followed by an uncontrolled 360 in the middle of the corner, as Paul Stokell in his Diablo GTR loomed ever larger. Abject fear enveloped me for a moment while I waited for the car to come back under my control, following which I immediately hightailed it for the edge of the black stuff as Paul whizzed by. Phew that was close... I managed somehow to limp to the pits where we discovered that yet again the rear drive shafts had failed. This time it was the universal joint, which had simply snapped in half. The cause was still unclear, however whatever the cause it was now time for a serious review of the universal joints.

Unhindered by earlier events I decided to enter the VHRR Morewell Hill Climb to be run later in the year. We were satisfied that we had solved our flange failure problem, however neither Chris nor I was convinced that we had got to the bottom of the seemingly inherent rear end weakness, particularly the UJ's. I spoke again to Allen at AMR in the hope that we might come to some conclusion as to why we could not keep the drive train in one piece. I had the tailshaft re-balanced and new joints fitted and decided it was time to talk with Ken Hastings. He suggested that we use forged universal joints and accordingly



10



11

ordered a set. This would solve our problems, he suggested, and thought the theory of the little 1300 donk putting too much power down the back was probably stretching things a bit... a big bit!

With the new forged universal joints fitted, practice at the Morewell Hill Climb passed without incident and accordingly expectations were high for a successful weekend. Phil got a run, once he figured he needed about 3500 revs to get a 'SuperSpit' off the line. I even managed a timed practice run. But our good fortune was short-lived, as when entering the keyhole on the first timed run all hell broke loose again. This time I could not limp back to the pits; I stopped mid-circuit and waited for a recovery vehicle. Bloody Triumphs...!

On this occasion it was not a flange or axle or UJ but a yoke which, biblically speaking, had been torn asunder! Unbelievable!

11 Fresh discussions were held with Chris, Allen and Ken. All sorts of new theories were thrown up. Invariably we would argue that the axles were bent or in the alternative there was the slightest possibility we were putting a lot more

power to the rear wheels than we realized, causing the various bits and pieces to break progressively under the strain. On balance bent axles was a long shot and it was more likely something to do with the drive train itself. Whatever the problem one thing was clear, we had to fix it or give the project away. First we broke flanges, left and right, then the universal joints, and now the yokes were letting go. Clutching at straws was the order of the day and again we settled on strengthening the drive train even further. By now rear-axle assemblies were getting frightfully expensive, as everything was being custom made I could not go much longer because the cost was getting beyond my budget. I decided, mainly because my pig-headedness would not let me do otherwise, to have one more crack and got Ken to make up a pair of stronger yokes and universal joints. I fitted them into the car and decided to have a dry run using the hoist at my 'factory'. The two rear wheels wobbled all over the place... Oh NO!

I ripped the axle assemblies out yet again (gettin' sick o' this...) and took them back to Ken. He checked them over and discovered that the yoke splines had been machined off-centre (not Ken's fault). Again I waited a few more days for a replacement set and again I ran them up on the hoist, and this time, hey presto, no wobble!

It was early days but we were feel-

ing more confident now, and quietly believed that maybe, just maybe, we can forget about axles for a while and get on with sorting the rest of the car.

The 2002 Historics at Sandown in November came up very quickly. Friday's practice went without incident and the little SuperSpit seemed to be performing well. I would have liked an extra few hundred revs to play with, but that was surmountable by working-out shift changes around the peak of the torque curve. The good news was that nothing was breaking! The new rear end was working well and I was able to put the car just about anywhere without too much drama.

I qualified reasonably well on the Saturday being about 10 secs off the pace of the Sc cars. Quickest was Robert Bailey in his 3 liter Carrera at 1m28. Nevertheless I was a couple of seconds quicker than my effort in the VMRC Round 4 earlier in the year. On the Saturday afternoon, Lionel and a few of the TSOA members popped in to say hello, which was appreciated, and I was able to say confidently that I was looking forward to Sunday's races. My mate Phil had been beavering away on his TR6 and was progressing towards a finish later in the year. If not he would at least be ready for the Phillip Island Historics in early 2003. He too gave up his weekend to help me through the inevitable dramas of the weekend, which included the scruti-



12



13

neers knocking back my racing harness. It was Ok Friday! Nevertheless, Phil made a flying dash up Springy Road to get me a new one before Revolution closed in the early afternoon. I stayed at the track and quietly panicked as the time between Phil's return and my call to the grid approached one another. Somehow we fitted the new belt and made it in plenty of time.

Sunday morning was typically overcast and I had a short chat with Chris after he had helped organise Rob Hands' and John Harvey's cars for their morning runs. In my enthusiasm I ignored rule number one of motor racing. If it 'aint broke, don't fix it! Instead I decided that the engine had 'gone-off' a bit on the last run on Saturday afternoon. Maybe it's the timing I suggested. Chris, as always, was more than willing to check it out with me. Half an hour later on the first lap of that morning's race - I was history. At turn one I struggled through at barely half pace and by turn five there was nothing left. What a disaster! In my eagerness, I had given Chris the wrong timing mark and had therefore set the timing 30° in advance. The rest is history. My once lovely JE piston in no. 1 cylinder had a hole right through the centre of the crown. On the brighter side, the piston had reacted as it was designed to and there was seemingly no other damage to the engine. Nevertheless it brought an abrupt end to the weekend's racing and yet another engine rebuild waited.

Over the weekend I had camped beside Steve Schuler and his Group Sa Corvette. And Steve, it transpired, has a mate in the States named Randy, who just happens to own JE Pistons. Steve was kind enough to introduce me to Randy and I was able to re-order a complete set of new pistons (including spares this time) directly from JE.

While we eagerly awaited the arrival of a new set of pistons we decided to

check everything over... once again. We removed the clutch and gearbox and checked for any unexpected wear and tear and made any adjustments we thought necessary. Otherwise it was simply a matter of sitting back and waiting. This 'spare' time also provided the opportunity to get Phil organised and for me to acquire yet another racecar... a GT6; another story.

By early December timing was getting tight on the delivery of the pistons that for various reasons had been delayed several times. Phillip Island Classic was approaching fast, and with Christmas New Year holidays restricting our ability to get some bits manufactured until very late January or early February, timing was getting critical. When the pistons finally arrived they were checked and weighed and the engine completely reassembled from scratch. And since we were still not happy about top end revs we also decided to have another look at the valve train, camshaft and timing set-up. To our surprise the competition valve springs had gone off considerably. We changed them and increased the seating pressure somewhat in order stop valve bounce coming on quite so early. Valves and seats were freshened up and lift adjusted just a tad.

By the time Phillip Island came around Phil had the TR6 ready and so we convoyed our way to the optional Friday practice session. The weather was hanging in there but was not what it had been for most of the summer. Phil had decided that the meeting would be used as a shakedown for the 6 and accordingly his objective was to finish all three races. As for me while I wanted to finish sufficient races I was there to have a serious go. We had not run this latest engine but we were quietly confident.

**12** The 440 competitors set a record making this meeting one of the largest in Australia with group Sb... production

sports cars 1961-1969 and Sc - production sports cars 1970-1977 having 40 cars between them lined up on the grid for qualifying. The weekend was also chock full of highlights such as meeting Win Percy as well as watching him wag the tail of the 1955 Le Mans winning D type every time he headed for Siberia. Jack Brabham was there also as Patron with his BT19 Repco Brabham while other highlights included the gorgeous Alfa TZ2 Zagato of Kaid Marouf from the US, and Dean Butlers 4WD Miller... sensational.

**13** As for me, the little Spitty came up a treat and I was pretty pleased with my first attempt at Phillip Island in a Spitfire. The weather Gods were peed off with someone though and the weather was awful. Nevertheless, Friday practice provided an opportunity to make sure everything was where it was supposed to be and above all- the latest rebuild was OK. In fact there was considerably more power. I could run up to 8000+ revs down the main straight, pick up O/D and pull all the way down the straight back to 4th. and flat out through turn one, down to 3rd. and into turn 2, aiming for the middle of the black stuff, tuck into the inside just before the exit and head for the loop. **14** Pick up the outside ripple strip and into 4th while taking the inside line into turn 3, have a quick look around for Ross McKinnon and his little red TR (private joke between me and Ross), back into O/D and head for Honda, wow! This little beauty love this bit of the track!.. Back into 4th, 3rd and 2nd, and yank it out of Honda and run as straight as possible to turn 5 and Siberia, up to 3rd and feather the throttle around turn 6 holding the middle of the track (Siberia). Head for the outside ripple strip at turn 7 then aim for turn 8 taking 4th and flat out up the hill towards Lukey Heights. **15** Take 9 (Lukey) flat out, woops, she's get-



14

ting a bit light as she hits the crest, the off-camber making life really interesting, puts your stomach fair and square in your mouth... down into turn 10 and pick up 3rd and go wide and come out in 2nd. ... don't overdo it... **16** into 3rd quickly, don't muck up 11 and lose a couple of seconds, flat out to turn 12, feel for the engine and change up to 4th. on the torque and onto the straight ... good, now, check all the gauges... OK now rev it out and into O/D by the start/finish and head for turn 1.

I put in a best lap of 2.09 putting me towards the back of an impressive field of Alfas', ISOs', Corvettes, Morgans' and MGs'. I qualified 23rd on the grid and my first race Saturday was uneventful being run more or less on a drying track.

By Sunday the weather had got seriously fowl and the handicap event was run in the wet and wind. Oh how I

**16**

run, since having been placed on Pole and led from the front he was relying on his ability to win by not exceeding the slowest lap time by more than two seconds. He was truly saved by the weather! **17** The Spitty on the other hand came in fifth outright and was lapping well at 2.31 in the wet, a good second quicker than Tony's best lap time for the race.

Later, I sat in grid lane waiting for the last race of the day. I fired up the engine and suddenly realized I had lost

most of my throttle travel. There was no time to find out why (the throttle cable clamp had loosened) and decided to run at the back of the field. I was feeling very satisfied. I now had reliability, top end, plenty of horsepower and torque... what more is there? I spent the race acknowledging the flaggies for their efforts and looking forward to my next race with keen anticipation. ■

**17**

wished I had left the top on! Tony Dains had brought his TR6 down from Sydney and while we were running neck and neck in qualifying he started the handicap at the front of the grid, about 9 seconds in front of me. Why you ask? Well, Tony ran out of fuel in Saturday's race and consequently finished last. For the handicap, the stewards simply reversed the grid based on Saturday's race. Mind you I am sure Tony had some anxious moments once the handicap event was

**15**

# Don't Race That Car! (part 3—it's done...lets go racing!)

STORY BY ANDREW STARK, MISSOURI • PHOTOS BY MARK WEBER, EXCLUSIVE SPORTS CAR PHOTO

ON TRACK



From the title you would think I just hauled the car off to the local track and went racing. On the contrary, I took my time and did some testing first. In my warped mind taking the car to an Auto Cross was the best way to shake it down. If something obvious were going to break it would happen there.

Before I actually took it to a local Auto cross track I did have some finishing up to do on the detail stuff. Mostly it was cleaning up the interior and installing the transmission tunnel with a scatter shield. The whole idea of the interior was to be representative of what an older Production car looked like back in the 70's. Instead of gutting every thing including the dash I left a lot of the original mounts and fixtures the car already had. Like the rear deck, I made an aluminum replica of the original structure and deck. It was all new, but constructed like the car was originally made. I also used as much of the original seat mounts and seatbelt attachment points as possible. They all had to be beefed up to meet safety requirements, but they all fit pretty much into the original locations. When it

came to the dashboard, I wanted it to look very much like an original Triumph. Unfortunately my car had a pristine original wood dash. This was not going to work in a racecar. This one stumped me for a while. Until I made a decision I concentrated on the center console. I decided to use the original padded console with a blank radio faceplate. I then turned the faceplate into my switch panel. I now have the fuel, ignition and fan switch in one spot easily accessible, and it looks like a factory installation. I also still have room for more switches in the future. Now I came back to the dash again. The wood was definitely out of the question. I did not want to fabricate an aluminum dash because it would not meet the nature of the car. I started messing around with a dash out of a 72 Spitfire. For couple of years the Spitfire had a black plastic dash. It must have been a marketing screw up because they did not last long. Pretty much they were ugly compared to wood. But for my purpose the plastic would work. In order to help the dash out I decided to take some late model gauge rings and polish off the black anti-glare paint. Then I installed them onto my existing Gt-6 gauges. Then I put them into the black dash. Wouldn't you know it, it turned out to look pretty good? The tachometer and the speedometer were going to be stock. The speedometer was

not going to be hooked up. It was just there to fill the hole. For the water temp and the oil pressure I went out and purchased some Auto Meter gauges that fit the original holes were the gas and temperature gauges once were. I found some brushed aluminum rings that looked good and installed the whole dash into the car. The effect is quite nice. It looks like a



racecar but with a lot of the original charm. Once the dash was in I install the starter button and the fire bottle pull handle. I used all original holes to complete the effect. When it was done I was very happy with the results. Now it was time to test it out.

The weekend before the Auto Cross, the 50th anniversary of Triumph Racing in America was held at Mid Ohio race-track. I will not get into details and I



hope someone else writes an article on this event. Let me say this, I was really disappointed the car was not track legal yet. The best group of Triumphs I have ever seen was there. The racing was fantastic and the people were the nicest you could ever meet. I even got Kas Kastner to sign my car. If you don't know who he is, he was the Factory Race Team manager for Triumph in the 60's and 70's. Great weekend and will do it again in ten years when they have the 60th event.

Now it was time to test it out. There was a local Autocross near my house sponsored by the Corvette Club. It was close and low pressure. Best of all it was cheap and lots of runs.

I of course still managed to be nervous. Here was a year of work about to pay off or be a complete load of dung. The first run was both success and near catastrophe. The car pulled off the line really hard and handled pretty well. I did not push it real hard but found some of the limit in the slalom. The bad part was hitting the gas hard across the finish line and throttle stuck wide open. Complete panic as I reached for the kill switch and a foot hard on the brake!!!! Lucky it did not over rev and I did not hit anything. It was a simple fix, thank goodness. It turned out the pedal got hung up on the transmission tunnel fiberglass. A quick snipe with some shears and a piece of tape and I was back in action. A bit embarrassed. Second run was not much better. In my haste to get in line for the run I did not pin my door. The obvious

happened. Right turn left door opens. End of run! It was time to calm down and slow down. I took one run off and made sure I was absolutely ready for my next shot. I actually cooled off for two runs to really make sure I had my ducks in a row. On my actual third run it went perfect for the most part. The car pulled hard off the line. It pulled hard at any rpm!! All the way up to 7,000rpm! It works!! It also handled pretty well. I finished the run with FTD so far of the day! (Wouldn't last long but it was good for the ego at this point ;o)) The only thing that went wrong was an audible thump under the hood as I crossed the finish line. Turns out the fan belt did not like the high RPM's and came off. I put it back and tried again. I knew better but what the heck, see if it stays on. It didn't, this time it came off shredding itself beyond further use. I knew the problem and should have taken the time to fix it before I went to the Autocross. I had a 31-inch fan belt when it should have been a 31.5-inch belt. At the time I could not believe it but all the auto parts stores around me did not have any. 31 inch or 32 inch were my only choices. One was too loose the other too tight. Too tight was not the choice. The next heat was coming up and I decided to go looking again for the correct belt. It had been a couple of weeks since I last checked the local store. Lucky for me they had what I needed this time. I rushed back to the Autocross and installed the new belt. It was much easier to put on than the 31-

inch belt. By the time the belt was on, my next heat was ready and off I went for another try. I then completed five more runs without any ill effect other than some over zealous driving on my part. I darn near spun it and went off the course :o) The only other discovery, which was no surprise to me, was the car ran hot. It was running around 210 degrees. More than I liked. The pipe dream of using the stock radiator as a temporary unit was not going to work. I now had to engineer a new cooling system.

I would like to say the new system was easy, but I can't. I also can't say it was really all that hard either. It really came down to running around getting all the proper parts. I knew what I wanted to use, but coming up with it all proved to be a challenge and a larger expense that anticipated. The core ingredient was a Volkswagen Scirocco radiator. Several racers told me that this was a good, lightweight and cheap unit that worked great for Triumphs. They were right but finding a good used unit proved impossible and a new one ended up on back order for three weeks. By the time I got it, I had one week before my first race to fabricate and install the system. It did not help that we were going through a heat wave at the time. About a hundred trips to the hardware, auto parts and sheet metal store later it was done. It was a masterpiece of shade tree engineering. I was quite proud of myself. I even figured out how to use a drainpipe off of a

kitchen sink to make it work. The one dent I mentioned in my last article multiplied by five. Turns out that the radiator worked really well on Spitfires but not on the Gt-6. The Spitfire engine is much shorter than the Gt-6 engine. Therefore you can put the radiator farther back in the engine bay. On the Gt-6, the radiator is very far forward. It was a very tight squeeze, involving lots of trial and error. Several times I closed the hood and saw a reverse dimple show up when I thought for sure I had clearance. Very aggravating. :( I finished the radiator the night before the test and tune day that they always have before a race. I felt lucky that I would get a chance to run the car before the race on a real track.

First time out I was really nervous. It was one of the hottest days of the year. Not exactly perfect weather to test a brand new car. I had decided to hold off on buying full slicks until I had at least one session under my belt with the car. I was on Improved Touring tires that are basically street legal slicks with tread. Unfortunately I had a really soft compound and it was going to prove nasty later on. First impression of the Gt-6 at high speed was good. It was very stable in strait line. Within few laps I had it up to around 100mph down the straight-

away. The brakes felt good and the handling not to bad. I was happy. It pulled hard, stopped well and actually turned with out doing anything silly. Oh yes it ran cool. It was 100+ degrees outside and it was running an even 190 degrees water temp. The car was sound! I, on the other hand, was a sweaty exhausted heap every time I stepped out of the car. It was a blast furnace in the drivers seat. I quickly learned to stuff ice packs in my drivers suit to keep marginally cool. By the last run of the day I was stretching the legs of the car every time I went down the Straightaway. It pulled to 7,000+ RPM's every time. This is well over 100mph. At the end of the day the only fault I could find with the car was a small oil leak coming from the transmission. I tried to find it, but could not locate the source. It was pretty small so I took the risk and decided not to worry about it. This proved to be ok and it made it through the weekend with out causing a major problem.

The next day was race day! My first race in my own car! This was going to be a treat. Again it was hot. The forecast was again for the hottest day of the year. Lucky for us our qualifier was in the morning before the temperature became unbearable. This day was also going to

be double duty for me. I also crew for a G-production Spitfire. It is a great car but takes constant attention to keep it running up front. First couple of laps into the Qualifier my car felt fine. I was staying with the pack and all my gauges looked good. Then everyone started to warm up. Cars including myself started getting faster and faster. Soon it became very evident that I was not pushing hard enough. I started to push a little deeper and harder into the turns and he car started to feel loose. It was getting loose and other cars seemed to be having no problem at all walking away from me in the turns. Then the car started having a funny response on the entry to any turn attempt. Just as I started to steer into a corner I would get momentary severe over-steer. It was spooky! I thought maybe something had come loose. I tried a few more cautious laps and pulled it into the pits. I asked Jack (my pit crew) if he saw anything loose. He assured me the car looked ok. By this time the qualifier was over so I pulled it in. Once in the pits I did a careful check on everything I could think of relating to the suspension. I then looked at some video that had been shot of the car as I was driving. It became pretty clear the car was too soft all the way around. Under braking it was nosing



over way too much causing the rear to get light and the front wheels to experience excessive chamber changes. This is what was causing the over steer entering turns. Another problem were the tires. They were melting under the heat. Most every one was having the same problem but mine was compounded by the suspension and the fact I was trying to keep up with cars on slicks while I was driving on D.O.T. Hoosier Improved Touring tires. These are excellent tires, but not for what I was doing. The Track temp was also a killer. It was something like 150+ on the pavement.

When race time came I decided there was not much I could do but try to finish the race without incident and learn what I could about my new car. Plus stay cool. It was around 130 degrees in the car. There is no wind in the world that will cool you off when it is that hot. The ice bags I had been using earlier would be warm water within a few laps during the mid afternoon race.

One of the best parts of the race is the start. I had of course qualified towards the back of the pack. I actually did go faster than a few people. It was hard to

believe but I did. An SCCA start is a rolling start like Nascar racing. One difference is that many times the cars in the front don't have the same horsepower as the ones in the back. The lower horsepower cars in many cases have better lap times than the bigger faster cars. When it comes to a rolling start it gets very crowded as the high horsepower cars over take the slower cars down the front strait at the green flag. It makes for some serious fun and sometimes the need to clean the shorts at the end of the race. For my first one it was lucky enough to be a fun one. At the green flag I just held the gas pedal to the floor and went for broke. All I can say is the Gt6 does not lack horsepower! It pulled so hard I almost hit the guy in front of me. This would not have been good because I crew for him. :o) I had to make a quick jog to the left to get by him. Once past him it was five more cars passed before I let up off the gas going into turn one. I was grinning from ear to ear. Take into account three of the six were much lower horsepower cars. But three of them were considerably surprised E-prod cars out of my class. By the time I completed the first lap I had let 4 of the

six cars I pass me by again. :o). Neither my tires nor my suspension would allow me to stay ahead of anyone for long. Trying to stay ahead of them would have been less than smart, and could have resulted in bent sheet metal. This was not my intent for the day. It was a day to learn not run door to door with the front-runners. I settled into a pace that would allow me to finish the race with out going to slow and not be a bother to other cars, and not risking an incident by overdriving a new car. The start was one of two times I actually hit full throttle during the entire race. Two laps into the race a really nice looking and fast MGB went off track and hit an outer wall on the track, then rolled over. It was a very spooky accident. I was about 100 ft behind him

when it happened. He was in pretty heavy traffic when it happened. He never even put his brakes on. We thought maybe it was heat related but found out later he had been bumped pretty hard by another car. Two weeks later both car driver were racing again. (He had a very well built cage.) We then spent several insanely hot laps under a full course yellow. By the time we had the green several guys called it quits due to the heat. It was really hot! I have to admit I was feeling a little woozy from the heat. Once under green we had a pretty nice clean race until the last lap. Myself and several other cars spun for one reason or another on the last lap. In my case it was poor judgment. On the second to last turn I decided to close the gap between my friend's Spitfire and myself so we could get glamour shot on video as we crossed the finish line. Unfortunately I could not hold the car through the turn and it snapped on me as I tried to power out of the slide. I would say I blushed with embarrassment but I was just to darn hot to care. I had recovered well facing the correct direction. Once the turn was clear of traffic, I just pulled back out onto the track and crossed the finish dead last. Not exactly a stellar first race for the car but it was still in one piece.

The post race inspection revealed a few little problems that would have to be fixed before the next race. The transmission decided it wanted to leak really bad towards the end of the race. Turned out I would have to do complete rebuild on it before the next race. The race showed that the suspension was terribly inadequate for road racing. Luckily the fix would be strait forward, but not cheap. The car is also hot as hell inside. It was the hottest day of the year but I needed to do something to get air into the driver's area. The heat caused me to be completely exhausted for two days after the race. For the most part the car proved out to be about what I expected. It was a first draft of sorts. I knew going into racing that I was going be developing the car as I went. I learned a lot from just the first race. By the second race I would make some improvements. These improvements are going to go on for years until the car hits its peak.

I had plenty of time to improve the car before the next race. More updates to come. ■

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# "What's It Like Out There?"

BY TED SCHUMACHER, OHIO, USA

This is the question that was credited to Chris Economacki (Chris did not do this). I thought you might enjoy hearing what it is like to drive a race car, in this case a Spitfire. I was fortunate to go racing at the time British Leyland was involved the factory level. We had a contract with Marathon Oil Company and a deal with Goodyear so we raced with some money behind us. Time-early November, 1973; location-Road Atlanta; event-practice for the Leyland racers. BL would rent the track for a day the week prior to the SCCA National Championship Run-offs. You had the track for an entire day to test, tune, adjust and in this case, LEARN. Having never driven Road Atlanta, a steep learning curve was needed. The track has a lot of elevation changes with turns on the back side of the change. You come up a hill and on the other side of the crest, the track turns, so you aim for where you think the track is located, hoping no one has moved the turn since the last time you went around the corner. We had the 1972 Group 44 Spitfire and Group 44 had the 1973 1500 they built to replace my car. John Kelly, Group 44 Spitfire driver, offered to lead me around the track. Since our 2 cars were identical, this was a quantum jump up on the learning curve, Off we went. One lap to warm things up an then do it for real. At this point you need a quick "1 lap of Road Atlanta" description. Turn 1 is a right angle bend that exits into a steep climb. Turns 2 and 3 are on the backside of the crest of the hill-a quick right-left flick of the wheel and then dive down a fairly long shallow "S" shaped straight ending in a 80 degree left that climbs as you exit. A short straight leads to a banked 90 degree bend. Through this turn and then hard on the brakes for another 90 degree turn that starts the 3/4 mile long back straight. At the end of the straight, you dive down into a MAJOR dip and then come right back up a turn under a bridge. The turn under the bridge is another 90 degree and it descends. As you come up the hill to the bridge, you aim the car where you think the turn is and hope. Since the turn is on the other side of the crest and is descending, it is exciting (They have since removed the dip and "neutered" the track). The last turn is a flat-out left. So there is one lap. Now, here is the way my driving lesson went. Down the front straight far deeper into turn 1 than I thought was reasonable and prudent. About the time my last will and testament is about to be exercised, John's brake lights flash on for a second and he is through the turn and climbing the hill. OK, we made it. The next few turns are done in the same manner and then, the turn under the bridge. Same deal as turn 1. There is no way this thing is going to make it. We do and continue for another few laps. John pulls in and I follow. The crews are checking the cars. I ask John what he uses for a braking point in #1 and under the bridge. His comment-"normally I go into the the 3rd MY GOD". About this time Lee Mueller, BL's west coast factory Spit driver, wanders up and says "I use" Oh Boy" for the braking point. OK Lee, how many? Mueller answers, not by number but by volume. When

you get so far into the corner you are going OOOHHH BBBOOOYYYYYY!, you brake. A memorable lesson from 2 very talented drivers. That was the intensity level of front row SCCA National racing.

We carried a complete spare engine, transmission and 5 different rear ends. You installed the rear that gave yo the correct gearing for that particular race track. A long track like Road Atlanta or Road America would have a 3.63. A short track would get a 4.1 or even a 4.5. After every race week-end, the head would pulled and valves lapped. Every 2 races would be bottom end bearings. Every 4 races and a rebuilt engine. These were meant to go fast, finish and satisfy the sponsor. Ah, the sponsor. These are the people you had to satisfy because they held the key to racing. All the talent, ability and equipment in the world would not work if you didn't have the backing to get to the track. We did car shows, TV talk shows, press releases, corporate outings and whatever else was needed. Our budget for 1973 was \$30,000. Remember gas was less than \$.30 per gallon so this was a lot of money. We spent it all and needed more. The story goes that racing makes millionaires-you start with \$3 million and have \$1 million at the end.

The Spitfire was a nice car to drive. It handled very well and could go fairly fast on a long track. The aerodynamics were actually very good at a time when we didn't know much about aerodynamics. The suspension was Koni coil-over. adjustable ride height front shocks. Solid suspension bushings and an adjustable front sway bar. Rear was by transverse spring, Koni shocks and adjustable trailing arms that were moved inboard to clear the tires. Tires were 8" wide Goodyear slicks up front. 8", 9" or 10" wide rear tires were used depending on the race track. If it was a long, fast course, we used the narrow rear tires. A short twisty course got the wider rears.

Some race stories: In 1977 we were running the Group 44 GT6 MKIII as an IMSA GTU car (this is the car featured in another article in this issue). It was slightly modified from the SCCA "D" production rules. We had 10" wide wheels, a 2.5 engine with 3 Webers, a Muncie M21 close ratio gearbox from a Corvette, 4 wheel disc brakes and some "other stuff". The car



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was really quick. At the Lime Rock IMSA race we had a car land on our roof during the race. At the end of the back straight, you have a climbing 90 degree bend. When you crest the hill there is a slight dip and the car gets airborne. 3 of us went into the turn side by side. We all crested the hill and we all got airborne. Unfortunately we all touched wheels. I was in the middle... nice, safe and nowhere to go. The car on the outside went off but saved it. The car on the inside-different story. I looked out my passenger side window and saw the floorboards of the car, just before he landed on my roof. There was a tire track that started at the top of the windshield pillar and went down the roof and out the back. We didn't have radio so after 2 laps of trying to give my crew hand signals to check the right side of the car, a pit stop was made. All was OK but a lot of time was lost. For a party game sometime, try to figure out the hand signals for "a car fell on my roof, what's the damage" while driving by your pit at 100 + mph.

Speaking of IMSA, we had the chance to co-drive another car at Daytona. This was in the early '80's. It was a GTU Nissan (sorry for the adult language content). By this time the GT cars were capable of 220-225 mph at Daytona. You would go down the back straight at 150-160 mph and someone would go blowing past you 60-70 mph faster. Very impressive and, very frustrating at the same time. A quick lap around Daytona. The infield is flat with a hairpin, a straight leaving the hairpin and some left right turns before you enter the banking in NASCAR turn 2, down the long back stretch into the turn 3 and 4 banking. The banking is so steep you can not see ahead, but rather look up through the windshield. Exit the banking and use most of the front straight before a quick exit into the infield portion of the course.

In the late 1970's we wound up with another Spitfire 155. This was one of the Leyland "West coast Competition Department cars. It was completely different from the ones done by Group 44.

The suspension was much stiffer and a completely different car to drive. Lee Mueller had done a "pick of the litter" program. You would drive his factory race car and one he had built. Test them both and pick the one you liked, pay the money and leave. This was one of those.

The Spitfires were good, solid race cars. My first Spit race car had a 3 digit serial number below 500. The GT6 was a rocketship. It was fragile in certain areas but what a ride. The racing we did was fun, extremely competitive and very intense. Would I recommend it for everyone? No. Do I have any regrets about the sacrifices...NONE. ■

**BIO:** Ted Schumacher has been 30+ years in the British car business. A former Austin-Healey, MG and Triumph dealer, he is now runs TS Imported Automotive, a full-line parts and specialized service business. To contact Ted, call 1-419-384-3022 or visit their web site at [www.tsimportedautomotive.com](http://www.tsimportedautomotive.com)



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# The Making of the SpitCat part 7(the details)

BY ANDY PREVELIG, FLORIDA, USA

Well, I was going to put the final finish and coats of paint on the SpitCat for some photos before too long, but there were several go-faster' goodies that I wanted to add first, and also make a few body changes, like flaring the front fenders and adding a windscreen. One of the go-faster items would be a "paddle shifter" to let me shift the Turbo 400 transmission from buttons on the steering wheel.

## FORMULA 1-TYPE PADDLE SHIFTER:

Perhaps you think that paddle shifters are the exclusive property of formula one racecars, and that incorporating one into a streetable car is a bit of overkill. Well, in a few years most new cars will have that option. In fact the 2003 models of several streetable cars offer this option. Among these are the Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin Vanquish, Ferrari, Maseratti, Toyota MR2 Spyder, SAAB 9-3 Sport Vector, Lamborghini and BMW M3. That's a pretty good testimony to the advantages of the new type of shifter.

The main advantage is that you keep your hands on the steering wheel even when you are shifting. Beyond the convenience and the safety of not swinging one arm down to grab a shift knob, the advantage in performance driving is that it frees you up a bit for focusing on the job at hand and can shave off those precious 10ths of a second that you would use as your hand goes from wheel to shifter knob and back again if you are autocrossing or racing.

The generic term for these systems is a 'paddle' shifter, although many use levers or electric buttons instead of paddles. Some operate an automatic transmission and others operate a sequential manual system. The one common feature is that they all are controlled from the steering wheel.

Originally operated by paddles behind the steering wheel, most Formula One cars now use buttons instead of the paddles, operated with the thumbs without changing the grip on the wheel. Since, with the installation of the performance shifter valving kit, the GM turbo 400 will essentially be converted to an in-line manual shift transmission (albeit with no clutch), it would be a good candidate for the application of a steering wheel shifter system.

How to design this? First, it must be durable and failsafe in operation. Next it must be quick... beyond the advantage of not taking a hand off the steering wheel

to shift, the system should shift at least as quick as operating the shift lever. Also, it should be cheap to build. Several companies on the internet offer such paddle' shifter systems, but just the steering wheel unit costs upwards of \$150.00, and that is around a fifth of what the transmission side of the system additionally costs. Last, the system must be easily engaged and disengaged from normal manual shifter operation.

Again, maybe some hard thinking could substitute for hard cash. I decided to use electrics instead of pneumatics or hydraulics because I didn't want the complication of an extra pressure pump (which would have to run by electricity anyway). Screw-type linear actuators would be too slow, and solenoids either lacked the power or had too short a movement. I had several new surplus windshield wiper motors, purchased several years ago. I took one of these and temporarily hooked the actuating crank to the shift lever with a connecting bar. Tests with a 12 volt input showed a surprising amount of torque..more than enough to operate the shift lever. So far so good. In the test the motor ran through all the shifter positions, because of the length of the crank. The shift movement would have to be reduced to move only between one gear and the next, either by using a shorter crank, by limiting the rotation of the motor, or both.

A preliminary design test: This particular wiper mechanism uses a worm gear drive inside a gear case on the end of the motor. Inside the case is a conductive circular plate and three contact brushes which control how far the drive gear rotates before returning to the "park" position. The circular plate is designed so that the three contact brushes run along three tracks or paths. The first brush is always in contact, while the second brush gets power for about 240 degrees of rotation, making the wiper arm sweep across and back. At the end of that rotation the power is transferred to the third brush which readies the motor for the next cycle unless the power had

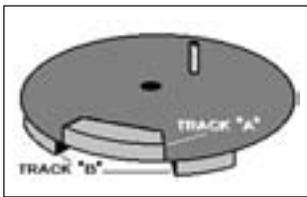
been turned off. I modified this plate to limit the gear movement to 180 degrees so it would move the shift lever just one speed (from first to second) and stop, waiting for the next input which would pull the lever back down into first. Then the unit was reassembled for testing.



Although the new configuration did cut the power at the 180 degree position, the torque from the motor caused the gear to coast a bit with the power off, even when tested under the resistance of the shifter lever. Rather than mess with the trial and error of trying different internal plate configurations, I decided to mount external adjustable micro-switches to control the crank movements. The external configuration would also allow me to design a system where I could shift through the entire forward gear range of D1 (first), D2 (second) and Drive (third). The new control system would consist of a metal disk surrounding the shaft of the output gear. Three micro-switches are mounted near the rim of this disk. Cam sections on the disk rim are profiled to

limit the rotation by tripping a micro-switch for that direction. Since this system would shift between all three forward speeds, a dual track configuration was necessary.

As can be seen in the diagram below, the segment cams are around the disk perimeter. The dual track is needed because in the '2' position, the disk must be able to move either forward (up to 'D') or backward (down to '1') controlled by track 'A', so that cam profile is twice as long as the others. The switches in the '1' and '3' positions only need to allow for one direction, controlled by track 'B'.

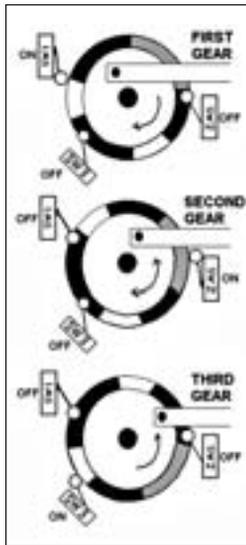


I opted to use external adjustable microswitches to control the movement of the shifter. In diagram "A", the segment cams

are around the disk perimeter. The dual track is needed because in the '2' position (grey section), the disk must be able to move either forward (up to 'D') or backward (down to '1'), so that cam profile is twice as long as the others (white sections). The switches in the '1' and '3' positions only need to allow for one direction.

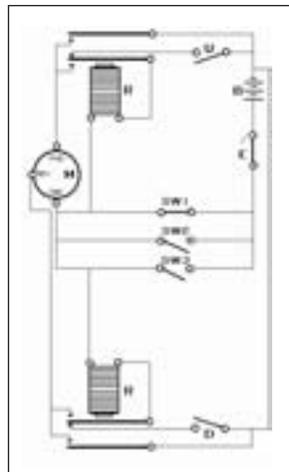
The micro-switches are the 'normally open' type, which means that they are only on while their lever is pressed in by the cam. Each switch is activated when its associated cam is adjacent to it. As the disk rotates, the cam profile ends and the micro-switch turns the motor off until the next steering wheel button press. To avoid having to press and hold these buttons, a circuit would be needed to allow just a brief push to start and complete each cycle. The electrical diagram in the next column shows how a quick button press starts and continues a shift cycle until the end of that cam segment. The easiest way to explain the circuit is to detail the "up" shift portion, as in the upper half of diagram "B" on the next page. Also refer to diagram "A" to see the relationship between the electric portion and the physical movement portion of the system. When steering wheel button "U" is pressed, it completes the circuit between the battery "B" and the inputs to relay coil "R". The relay coil pulls down the two armatures above it. The lower one breaks contact with the button and makes contact with the upper armature, which allows current to hold the relay in that position even if the steering wheel button is

released. This circuit also sends current to the motor "M" which turns the cam disk. As the cam disk rotates, an offset crank moves the shift lever to a new position. That same rotation moves the cam away from the associated micro-switch "SW1", stopping the motor. Switch "E" is mounted on the instrument panel and activates or deactivates the shifter system. Both steering wheel push-buttons will have their own circuit, although they share circuit components "B" and "E".



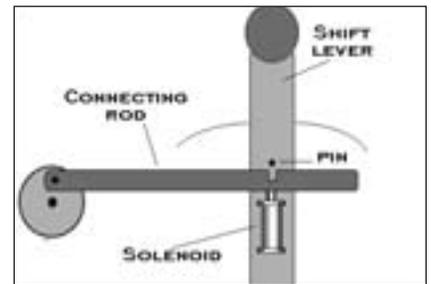
Two steering wheel-mounted push-buttons control the system. You press the right button to shift up, and the left button to shift down. There are four lights on the instrument panel behind the steering wheel. Each light is associated with one gear (and neutral) to indicate the current shift

lever position. Because of the cam profiles, if you try to shift up when the transmission is already in 'D', or try to shift down when the transmission is in '1', nothing happens.



As seen in diagram "C", the solenoid pushes the connecting shaft upward so the notch in it engages the pin on the shift lever. When switch "E" is off, the solenoid lets the connecting shaft drop down to the lower position where it is no longer linked to the lever movement. This of

course frees the shift lever for manual operation.



One aspect of the design of this system was the method of connecting the steering wheel buttons to the shifter mechanism. Since the steering wheel will be constantly turned, perhaps from lock to lock in some instances, the wires which connect each button to the shifter mechanism must allow for that movement, stretching and contracting as needed. The simplest method would be to just wrap excess loops of wire around the steering wheel column and let it unwrap and wrap as the wheel is turned. This, however, would mean a loose loop of wires hanging down from the column at times... something I didn't want. An alternative would be to install several contact rings and spring-loaded contacts, one for each of the three wires ('up' button, 'down' button and ground), much like the slip ring system used for the horn button. This multiple separate ring idea seemed like it would be overly complicated, so the next task would be to research just how some of the paddle shifters and steering wheel button applications were wired on a few race cars.

**STEERING WHEEL WIRING:**

Looking for details of how some race cars had their paddle shifter steering wheel buttons wired, I found an ideal solution in the salon section of the July/Aug 2001 issue of Vintage Motorsports. This article had several close-up photos of Brian Redman's Chevron B16, and one showed the wheel/button system used on that car. The Chevron had a coiled cord, a pig-tail cord similar to what is used on computer keyboards or corded phones, but thicker and with larger diameter coils. This was wrapped around the steering column (sans column shroud) and led off under the instrument panel. Some catalog browsing located this type of three-conductor coiled cord at Summit Racing Equipment.

To install this new cord, I removed the old Spitfire steering wheel column

shroud, back to the housing bushing/seal. This exposed the shaft for wrapping the cord. Now I could modify the steering wheel hub and spokes for the wiring and control buttons. Modifying the spokes was simple. My '70 Spitfire wheel had a long slot in each spoke, so enlarging the outer end of the slots in the two horizontal spokes would provide an area to mount the control buttons.

The first step in modifying the hub was to take off the wheel rim, which is held by six bolts. There is a hole at the rear of the hub for the horn wire to pass through. The wires from the coiled cord would pass through this into the hub. To get those wires out along the spokes to the buttons, a 3/16" hole was drilled near the hub rim, just between the two bolt areas, and straight through into the center of the aluminum casting on each side.



Since the coiled cord was only a three conductor cable, I spliced another length of wire to the ground wire so each button would have it's own ground. (Experiences with past Lucas problems have taught me not to rely on chassis parts as the ground.)

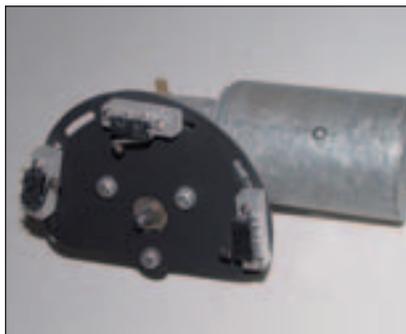


The installation of the shifter buttons can be seen in the photo above. Once the motor unit is mounted, the coiled wire you see will be routed under the dash.

#### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Now that the steering wheel buttons

were installed I could mount the shifter motor and its switch/cam system. As seen below (shown without the cam-wheel), the switches are mounted in slots, so their relative positions can be adjusted. This is necessary because the shifter motor 'coasts' a bit once the power is off. That coasting is what allows the system to work - ensuring that the power is off before the next switch is activated by it's cam. Otherwise, the system would just keep cycling from cam to cam (and gear to gear).

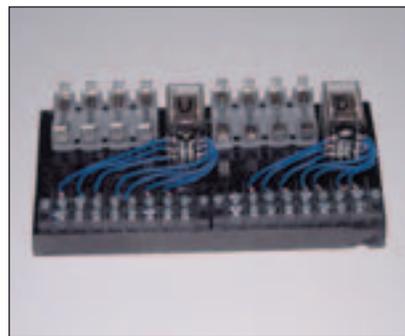


Switches on backing plate (cam disc removed)

To avoid confusion, a word about diagram "B": because it is a simplified schematic, it does not show two of the circuits. First, all three switches have a 'normally open' circuit, which means that they only complete the circuit when the lever is pressed in by the cam, but the switches for gear 1 and gear 3 have an additional contact which functions in just the opposite way ( i.e., when their lever is pressed in, one circuit is closed while the second circuit opens. Those second circuits are necessary to disable the opposite shifter button. For example, when switch 3 (for the top gear) is on its cam, that activates the 'down' shifter button, but it also opens the second circuit to disable the 'up' button. That is so you cannot shift up when the transmission is in top gear, and you cannot shift down when in first. Another section of the circuit which was not shown was the wiring from each switch (parallel with the 'closed' side) that lights the respective gear indicator bulbs 1, 2 and 3, and another microswitch located on the shift lever by the solenoid. The 'neutral' bulb is illuminated when the shifter system is turned on and the connecting bar is still in its lower position on the shift lever, as detected by the microswitch (this would happen if the shift lever pin was not aligned with the notch on the connecting bar.) This serves

as a reminder when you turn on the shifter system, to manually move the shift lever from neutral to the D1 position (where the solenoid can push the connecting bar up so that its notch engages the pin to couple it to the lever). Once that has been done, the 'neutral' light goes out and the '1' light comes on.

The relays for the motor/switch circuit were mounted on the board that contains the fuse blocks, behind the passenger side of the instrument panel, where there was still a lot of space, farther away from the engine. This board would be protected by a fiberglass box/cover and insulated with some of that reflective thermal material, just in case the heat might be excessive.



The motor itself was mounted to a bracket welded to the left vertical angle that spans from the bottom of the instrument panel to the chassis, along side of the transmission bell housing. This was necessary in order to have the connecting bar from the cam disk in alignment with the shift lever.



Of course that would mean that the front area of the transmission cover had to be modified, but that would be an easy task since I was dealing with a fiberglass structure. A shallow box was added to the flat vertical panel to house the cam wheel and another alongside the cover to house the shift lever and its linkage to the transmission.

Now I had the fun of wiring the various components together. This involved a three foot cable of wires from the motor and switches over to the relay/fuse board. The main power switch for the shifter system (E in diagram "B") gets routed from the safety cut-off switch, as all the power circuits do. Once the wiring was completed, the last task on the shifter system was to fabricate a shallow bracket on the shift lever. This was to hold the connecting bar against the lever (where it simply slides when the system is not engaged.)

With the system installed it was time for a final test. Turning on the main system switch lights the 'neutral' light. That is the indication that the connecting bar and shift lever are not aligned. Moving the lever from neutral into D1 allows the solenoid to push the bar upward where it's notch engages the pin on the shift lever. This turns off the 'neutral' light and lights the 'D1' light, indicating that the system is ready.

Pressing the steering wheel buttons caused the system to shift through the various gears. When the test was over, turning off the main switch allowed the connecting bar to drop to its disengaged position, where I could manually shift back to neutral. Not many of you would want to build this entire shifter system, but the steering wheel button portion of it might be a convenient addition to replace that overdrive button on the dash, if you have that on your LBC.

### FRONT FENDER FLARES:

For aesthetics, the front fenders really needed to be flared, similar to the rear. Another reason for front flares would be to provide for the option of using larger wheels and tires at the front. (Once the SpitCat was tested on the road, I might find that those GT-6 brakes were not big enough for adequate stopping power. If bigger discs were needed, that would mean wheels bigger than those 13" alloys, and the subsequent fender clearance they would need.) For the front, the work would be much easier than the rear since the changes would be in fiberglass, with no metal fabrication or welding.

The mold for the flares was a simple sheet of heavy cardboard, covered with wax paper. (I could use the wax paper here, as I had for the transmission front panel to prevent sticking, because the area had no compound curves. Compound curves or any complex shape and you really need to use a mold release

agent). Once the basic flare form was laid up and cured, it was temporarily attached to the reworked fender opening with small aluminum brackets on the inside.

The SCCA requires that modified fenders/flares have no sharp edges, so the front flares needed a thick blunt lip along the edge, just as the rear flares had. When I molded the flare, I had made it much wider than needed so that I could trim back the outer edge to the proper contour once it was attached. The trimmed-off material was in the same curvature as the flare, so by cutting this into long 1/2" wide strips I could laminate them under the edge of the flare to build it up as the required lip to eliminate any sharp edges. Additional fiberglass mat smoothed out the joint to the fenders, and the aluminum inside brackets were removed.



### THE WINDSCREEN:

One of the requirements for an automobile to be street legal is to have a windscreen. Motorcycles are not under this burden, but I don't think that I could convince the DOT that the SpitCat was just a four-wheeled motorcycle. There are a number of choices when it comes to the material for a windscreen. Glass, of course, is the most common, but it is very heavy, a pain to work with, and would have to be custom-made for the SpitCat by a commercial auto glass vendor. Plexiglass and acrylic are also offered, but Lexan has several advantages, although I've heard that it is expensive, and hard to locate.

As luck would have it, one of the email .nets that I subscribe to (jaglovers\_racing.net) had a discussion about Lexan, and one fellow stated that he bought this at the local Home Depot! I had called several local glass vendors and was told that they could "special order" this "exotic material" for me, and then quoted some outrageous prices. It turns out that Home Depot DOES carry this and can order it in any of several thicknesses, although they carry .095" (about 1/10") thickness in stock. I bought a 36" X 72" sheet for around \$70.00. What I needed was a piece approximately 12" X 72", but I bought the whole sheet because the only way they could cut it was by hand (a longitudinal cut of six feet cannot be done on their machine) and I didn't trust them to hand-cut it and not mess up the edge.

So, now I had enough Lexan XL to make three windscreens, or to use the extra pieces to laminate for a thicker screen. Lexan XL is an amazing material. It is 250 times more impact resistant than glass, at one half the weight. It is 30 percent stronger than acrylic and can be cut and drilled with ordinary hand tools. The makers (G.E.) of this polycarbonate material warranty it against breakage and yellowing for 10 years!

I left the protective paper covering on both sides and marked out my 1' X 6' section. Using a cardboard pattern, I laid out the end curves. A jigsaw zipped through it with no trouble and left a perfect edge. I drilled six equidistant 3/16" holes near the bottom edge to match those in the molded-in flange on the cowling. The Lexan would be attached by sandwiching the bottom portion between the flange and a long strip of steel behind, with six bolts holding it all together.

Because I was using the .095" thickness, I wanted to reinforce it with a frame. The frame would be made from 5/8" round steel tubing. I wanted to use round stock because that could be bent into curves without kinking. Once the tubing was cut to length and bent into the proper shape, I used a 3/16" wide grinding wheel to cut a slot down the entire length for the Lexan to fit into. Brackets were welded at each end of the tubing. The brackets bolt onto the cowling and make the windscreen sturdy enough (but you don't want to hang on it while getting in or out.)

As seen in the photo, I left the protective paper on both sides of the Lexan. Removing this would be one of the last things to do after the final finishing and painting.

Now that I had done my bodywork



stint with the flares, I could get back to the fun stuff! This would be to install and wire the instruments, and add a fire extinguisher and racing harnesses to complete the cockpit. First, I needed to install a speedometer if I wanted the SpitCat to be street-legal.

### CONVERTING A SPEEDOMETER:

Back in the “old days” when I had my ‘57 Chevy, I use to be annoyed by the 120 mph limitation on the speedometer. In my reckless youth, out on U.S. 19 south (much less traveled back then), whenever I ‘pegged’ the speedometer needle, I always wondered just how much faster than 120 I was actually going (the highway patrol guys that pulled you over would never tell you your exact speed). There are now venues where you can legally run your car as fast as it will go, and I didn’t want that 120 limitation on the SpitCat speedometer.

If I converted the instrument to, say 140 or 160, the dial face would be pretty weird, since the mph increments up to those speeds would figure out to be odd numbers or spacing, and the electronic conversion ratio would be a pain to get accurate. The easiest conversion would be to just double all the numbers. This would not be as extreme an overkill as it might seem at first- after all, the new Mercedes Benz SL55 APG’s speedometer reads to 200 mph. (Not that I anticipated the SpitCat could reach 240; or that

I would even try for this; it just was easier to double the numbers.) I could then hook up the speedometer through a 2-to-1 drive system.

The one disadvantage to this system is that the odometer reading would be

one half the actual mileage, but as long as you know that, it shouldn’t be a problem. First on the task list was to make a new dial face for the new speedometer. Here’s where a computer and graphics software really come in handy. I used PaintShop Pro to produce the dial face, and sprayed the printout with

a clear acrylic coating, front and back, to moisture-proof it. The bezel of the speedometer came off easily without any prying or bending of the rim because it was secured by tabs and slots. You align them for removal with a slight counterclockwise turn. Openings were cut out on the new dial face for the odometer and trip meter. I glued the new face over the original and reassembled the case.



Installing the various other instruments and switches was pretty straightforward, since the electrical hookups and plumbing were pretty standard. The six switches shown are for the fuel pump, fans (three position), headlights (three-position), shifter system, ignition and a spare, in case I need another circuit in the future. The large-handled switch in the center of the instrument panel is the main cut-off switch. The starter button is located to the left of the steering wheel.

### ONE OF THE LITTLE THINGS:

Although selecting and mounting a rear-view mirror might seem like a very trivial task, for the SpitCat there were a few things to consider.

Because the rear third of the car (from the cockpit back) is tilted up slightly to accommodate those large rear wheels/tires, a center-mounted mirror needed to be positioned up high enough for me to see over the rear deck. Another factor in the positioning of the mirror was the addition of five-point racing harnesses. Since these hold you firmly against the seat back, the mirror has to be located within your reach if you needed to adjust it while driving.

I decided to mount a mirror on the vertical rear edge of the cowl, where I could reach it from the driver’s seat. I didn’t want to mount it from the windscreen frame because I needed the mirror even if I removed the windscreen for racing. This meant that I had to find a mirror with a stalk which was high enough and could mount on a vertical surface. After paging through reams of catalogs I finally found the ideal mirror- one intended for a jeep- in a J. C. Whitney catalog. Mounting this up-side-down put it in the desired location at the rear cowl edge.

### FIRE EXTINGUISHER:

The S.C.C.A. requires that cars which run in E Modified (the class that the SpitCat would run in) have an on-board fire extinguisher of the B-C class. B-C means that the extinguishing chemical is rated for both electrical and oil/gasoline fires. A trip to Advanced Discount Auto brought a two-pound capacity unit. One problem with the one they sell is that it is designed for mounting on a wall, and features a plastic cradle with plastic straps.

I wanted the extinguisher mounted on the transmission/driveshaft cover, back against the rear bulwark. The cradle would be fine since there would be no stress placed on it, but the plastic straps had to go. I could buy one of those steel straps which locked by a toggle for quick release, but I do not trust a toggle system not to pop open under vibration. An alternate system would have to be designed.

The criteria for such a system were that it must hold the extinguisher in a rock-solid grip (you don’t want it to tear loose under hard driving and become a projectile), and it must be able to be released at a moment’s notice. The system I came up with uses a stainless steel

strap. I used steel brackets riveted to each half of the strap to lock the extinguisher against the cradle, like a hose clamp, only much longer. Since the cradle was bolted to the driveshaft cover by two 1/4" bolts, and held the extinguisher firmly, only one steel strap was needed.

I fabricated an angle bracket from 1/8" steel to mount one section of the strap to the driveshaft cover, close to the cradle. Two U-shaped brackets were fabricated, the lower one mounted on the driveshaft cover on the opposite side of the cradle. 3/8" holes were drilled in both brackets so they could be connected into a hinged assembly by a large steel pin (see photo of the parts below).



The other section of the strap was threaded through a slot in the upper U-bracket, bent at a right angle and riveted. A 3/8" steel pin goes through the holes in the upper and lower halves of this bracket, holding them together. A tight rubber bushing ensures that the pin will not slide out until pulled by the ring at the end. Once the cradle and brackets were mounted on the driveshaft cover, the extinguisher was snapped into place on the cradle. The slotted strap was fed into the worm-screw of the other strap section and tightened just a bit. Once the upper half of the bracket was pinned to its counterpart, the strap was tightened securely.

#### RACING HARNESES:

For comfort in driving the SpitCat on the street, I was not installing a racing seat, so to remain firmly held in place, racing harnesses were necessary. These are five-point systems from Racer Wholesale, mounted from the rollbar



cross-pieces for the shoulder sections, from the frame for the lap belt sections and from the floorboard for the anti-submarine section.

#### UNOBTAINIUM:

When I first bought the V-12 engine/transmission, I tried to make sure that it included at least the most important peripherals, such as the radiators and especially the expensive ECU (the Engine Control Unit which would cost over \$900 to replace). The fellow who was selling it had Jaguar stuff all over his garage, a utility building, and even in a spare bedroom, and we hunted for as many V-12 items as could be found. Stuff like a few wire cables and connectors that we didn't find didn't worry me too much. After all, I would have to make up a new wiring harness anyway for the SpitCat configuration. In retrospect I should have searched a bit more, for EVERY wire and cable connector.

Well now, three years later, I was finally ready to wire up the ignition and ECU, and I checked through all my British Car catalogs to find a connector for the ECU. This is small plastic part that mates up with the 35-pin interface on the ECU. None of the catalogs listed that part. I called several Jaguar dealers and parts suppliers and none of them had the part. Looking on Ebay and in Hemmings brought no results. This was a part made out of "Unobtainium". I contacted our local British Car Guru, J. K. Jackson, to see if he

could locate the ECU connector for me. A while later he called me to say he found a source for the connector, but it would cost over \$1,400.00! Apparently, in lieu that connector, they wanted to sell you a system that includes a custom-programmable chip to replace the old ECU. What to do??

If I couldn't find that simple 35-pin connector, I might have to convert the V-12 to a carb version instead of the ECU-controlled fuel injection. This would entail replacing the intake manifold, buying a set of carbs, and a lot of other custom work and expense. As a last-ditch effort, I sent out a wanted' message on one of the Jaguar discussion groups on the internet. The next day I got a reply from a fellow in New York who had the appropriate model Jaguar (under a few feet of snow at the time) that he was parting out. He could sell me the ECU connector and part of the wiring harness for \$75.00. Wow! Now that I have the connector, I am having the fun of using the Jag original wiring diagrams to map out just where those 35 wires go. Hopefully it will not be too long before the engine roars to life and I can start sorting out the handling of the SpitCat, and drive it out for a photo-op! ■

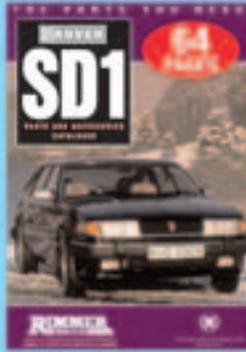
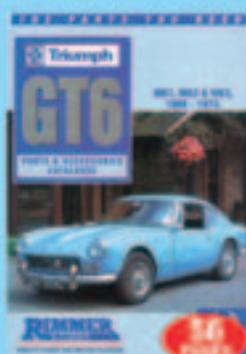
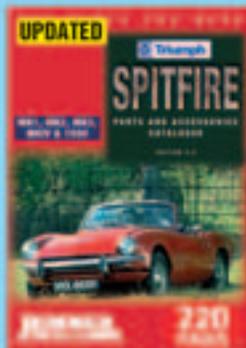
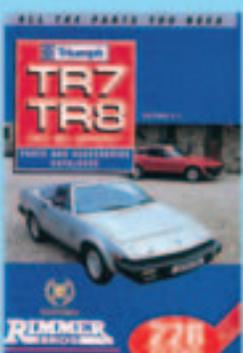
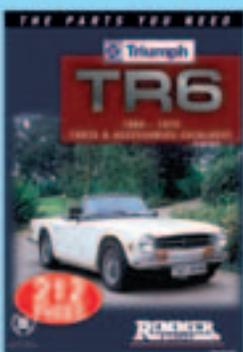
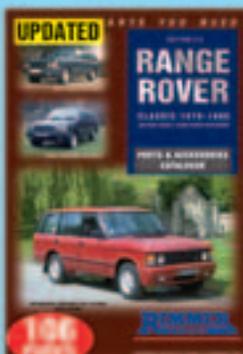


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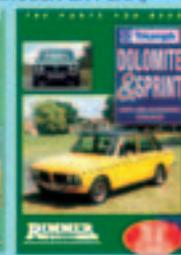
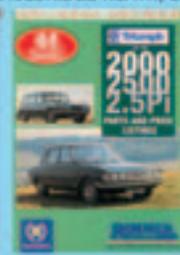
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# British Car Shows and Events 2003

For more events or to submit an event  
visit [www.TriumphSpitfire.com](http://www.TriumphSpitfire.com)

## JUNE

### Pennsylvania, Fort Washington, Hope Lodge, June 1

The Brits are Back!, Delaware Valley Triumphs, 610-825-2617, [klassicar@aol.com](mailto:klassicar@aol.com)

### Connecticut, Waterford, June 1

British Cars by the Sea, Connecticut MG Club, 1-860-693-4249, [MGTD52@attbi.com](mailto:MGTD52@attbi.com)

### Maryland, Saint Leonard, Little Cove Farm, June 1

British Car Week in So. Maryland, [Awgertoo@aol.com](mailto:Awgertoo@aol.com)

### New Jersey, Clinton, Red Mill Museum Village, June 1

8th Annual Red Mill British Car Day, MG Driver's Club, 908-713-6251

### Ohio, Perrysburg, June 1

The British Return to Fort Meig 5th Annual British Car Show, Lake Erie British Car Club, 419-855-8567, [lakeeriebritishnews@att.net](mailto:lakeeriebritishnews@att.net)

### Colorado, Glenwood Springs, June 6-8

51st Annual Rallye, MG Car Club Rocky Mountain Centre, (970) 225-6767, [jknopin@aol.com](mailto:jknopin@aol.com)

### Missouri, St. Joseph, June 6-7

14th Heartland MG Regional, 816 795-9628, [info@heartlandmg.com](mailto:info@heartlandmg.com)

### Nevada, Carson Valley, June 6-7

All British Celebration, Reno Jaguar Club, 775 588-6702, [Cjag@iglide.net](mailto:Cjag@iglide.net)

### Ohio, Cuyahoga Falls, June 6

Rockin on the River British day, Coors and Labatts, 330-945-4935

### Kentucky, Louisville,

### St. Joseph Catholic Orphan Society Home, June 7

"Marques on the Green" XIX, British Sports Car Club, [Information@britishsportsclub.com](mailto:Information@britishsportsclub.com)

### Virginia, Virginia Beach, June 7

Brits On The Bay, Tidewater Triumph Register, [jonesmp@prodigy.net](mailto:jonesmp@prodigy.net), 483-0889

### Indiana, South Bend, Bendix Woods County Park, June 8

16th Annual Michiana Brits Car Show, Michiana Brits Car Club, 574-277-0240, [kenacarp@aol.com](mailto:kenacarp@aol.com)

### New York, Long Island, Great River, June 8th

10th Annual "The British are Coming", MG Car Club - Long Island Centre, 516-794-9004, [DRDED@ix.netcom.com](mailto:DRDED@ix.netcom.com)

### Pennsylvania, Hellertown, June 8

10th Annual British Motorcar Gathering, Keystone Region MG Club, Inc. (215) 257-4457, [keystone@britautos.com](mailto:keystone@britautos.com), [kimdeb@ptd.net](mailto:kimdeb@ptd.net)

### Alabama, Birmingham, Barber Track & Museum, June 14

Birmingham British Car Fair 2003, Birmingham British Motoring Club, [dd@wvssp.com](mailto:dd@wvssp.com)

### Alberta, Edmonton, The Muttart Conservatory, June 14

Alberta All British Motoring Society Field Meet, Alberta All British Motoring Society, (780) 968-0359

### New Jersey, Hohokus, June 14

Touch of England, The New Jersey Triumph Association, 201-825-9754

### Maryland, Gaithersburg, June 15

The Original British Car Day, Chesapeake Chapter of the N.E. MG T Register, 301 831-5300, [tokarij@evols.com](mailto:tokarij@evols.com)

### New York, Cazenovia, Lorenzo State Park, June 15

Eurocar 2003 (all European car show), MG Car Club of Central NY, (315) 342-3234

### Wisconsin, Sussex, Sussex Village Park, June 15

British Car Field Day, British Car Field Day Ltd., 262-521-1072, [john.stockinger@gte.net](mailto:john.stockinger@gte.net)

### Missouri, St. Louis, June 18-22

MG 2003, The North American MGB Register/MG Club of St Louis, (314) 995-8664, [mgslime@svbell.net](mailto:mgslime@svbell.net)

### Indiana, Auburn, June 19-21

Triumph Register of America National Meet, Central Ohio Chapter of TRA, 260-925-6740 [lmtr4a@ctlnet.com](mailto:lmtr4a@ctlnet.com)

### California, Chico, June 22

15th Annual All British Car Meet, Chico Area British Car Club, 530-342-1821, [etyp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:etype@sbcglobal.net)

### Washington DC/Virginia, Tysons Corner, June 25-30

2003 Healey Conclave 2003, Capital Area Austin Healey Club, 301-251-1158, [mapper500@starpower.net](mailto:mapper500@starpower.net)

### Ontario, Mosport Int'l Raceway, June 27 - 29

24th International Vintage Racing Festival featuring Triumphs, VARA of Canada, 613-359-1013, [ronwanless@sympatico.ca](mailto:ronwanless@sympatico.ca)

## JULY

### British Columbia, Kelowna, July 3-6

10th Anniversary of Rally in the Valley, Okanagan British Car Club, [AskBijl@BritishRestorations.com](mailto:AskBijl@BritishRestorations.com)

### California, Eureka, July 7-11

2003 Healey Rendezvous 2003, [karen@telus.net](mailto:karen@telus.net), 604-261-1164

### Pennsylvania, Allentown, July 8

10th Annual British Motor Gathering, (215) 257-4457, [keystone@britautos.com](mailto:keystone@britautos.com)

### Prince Edward Island, So. Rustico, July 11th-13th

British Car Days Across The Bridge, British Motoring Assoc. Of Prince Edward Island

### Indiana, London, July 12

London to Brighton Run, Indiana British Car Union, 317-887-3867, [mgrd@quiknet.net](mailto:mgrd@quiknet.net)

### Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Schenley Park, July 12-20

Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, 724 776-9967, [kessler@icubed.com](mailto:kessler@icubed.com)

### Pennsylvania, Gettysburg, July 13

3rd Annual British Invade Gettysburg British Car show, LANCO MG Club, 717-979-9242, [tucker@carolalan@netscape.net](mailto:tucker@carolalan@netscape.net)

### Oregon, Welches, July 14-18

2003 Get Together (GT 28), Columbia Gorge MGA Club, 1-360-892-0890, [dtporg@pacifier.com](mailto:dtporg@pacifier.com)

### Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Schenley Park, July 19

23rd annual British Car Day, Western Pennsylvania Triumph Association, 412-561-5972

### Maryland, Gibson Island, July 26

Brits by the Bay, Triumphs Around the Chesapeake, LTD, [tr6green@aol.com](mailto:tr6green@aol.com)

### Washington, Bellevue, Bellevue Comm. College, July 26

15th Annual All British Field Meet, Puget Sound British Automotive Society, 425-644-7874, [ataub@worldnet.att.net](mailto:ataub@worldnet.att.net)

### Ohio, Columbus, Lewis Center, July 27

2nd Annual All Ohio MG Meet, Ohio MG Council, 614-899-2394, [MGOHIO@AOL.COM](mailto:MGOHIO@AOL.COM)

### New Hampshire, Jackson, July 31

Summit '03, Northeast Region Austin-Healey Club, (508) 947-3226, [dfalconeiri@hotmail.com](mailto:dfalconeiri@hotmail.com)

## AUGUST

### Ohio, Cleveland, Aug 2

British Car Day XVII, Northeastern Ohio British Car Council, 614-899-2394 [BRITSA@AOL.COM](mailto:BRITSA@AOL.COM)

### Ohio, Dayton, Eastwood MetroPark, Aug 2

British Car Day 2003, Miami Valley Triumphs & MG Car Club SW Ohio Centre, 937-293-2819 [MGBSkip@aol.com](mailto:MGBSkip@aol.com)

### Pennsylvania, Armagh, Aug. 7-10

TRF Summer Party 2003, The Roadster Factory, 800-283-3723

### British Columbia, Van., VanDusen Garden, Aug. 11-15

Mini Meet West, Victoria Minis & Vancouver Mini Club, (604) 736-6754

### Illinois, Galesburg/ Abingdon, August 14-17

Abingdon Summer Party, Chicagoland MG Club, 630-858-8192

### Iowa, Davenport, August 16

16th Annual Heartland British Autofest, Quad City British Auto Club, (309) 764-1423, [qcbac@mchsi.com](mailto:qcbac@mchsi.com)

### Vermont, Stratton, Stratton Mtn. Inn, Aug. 22-24

British Marque Car Club News Triathlon V, Hull Ass., 508-923-0020, [hullid@aol.com](mailto:hullid@aol.com)

### California, Monterey, Aug. 23-24

Monterey British Car Meet, (831) 372-9215, [saylor@redshift.com](mailto:saylor@redshift.com)

### Pennsylvania, Lancaster, Aug. 24

14th Annual "A Taste of Britain" Show & Polo Match, (717) 292-0579, [sh88keys@earthlink.net](mailto:sh88keys@earthlink.net)

### Oregon, Portland, Portland International Raceway, August 29-31

27th Annual All British Field Meet, (503) 504-ABFM, [registration@abfm-pdx.com](mailto:registration@abfm-pdx.com)

### New York, Lancaster (Buffalo), Aug. 31

Autumn Sports Classic Car Show, Buffalo Octagon Ass., 716-873-6873, [Sprigetboy1@aol.com](mailto:Sprigetboy1@aol.com)

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