

Triumph Newsletter



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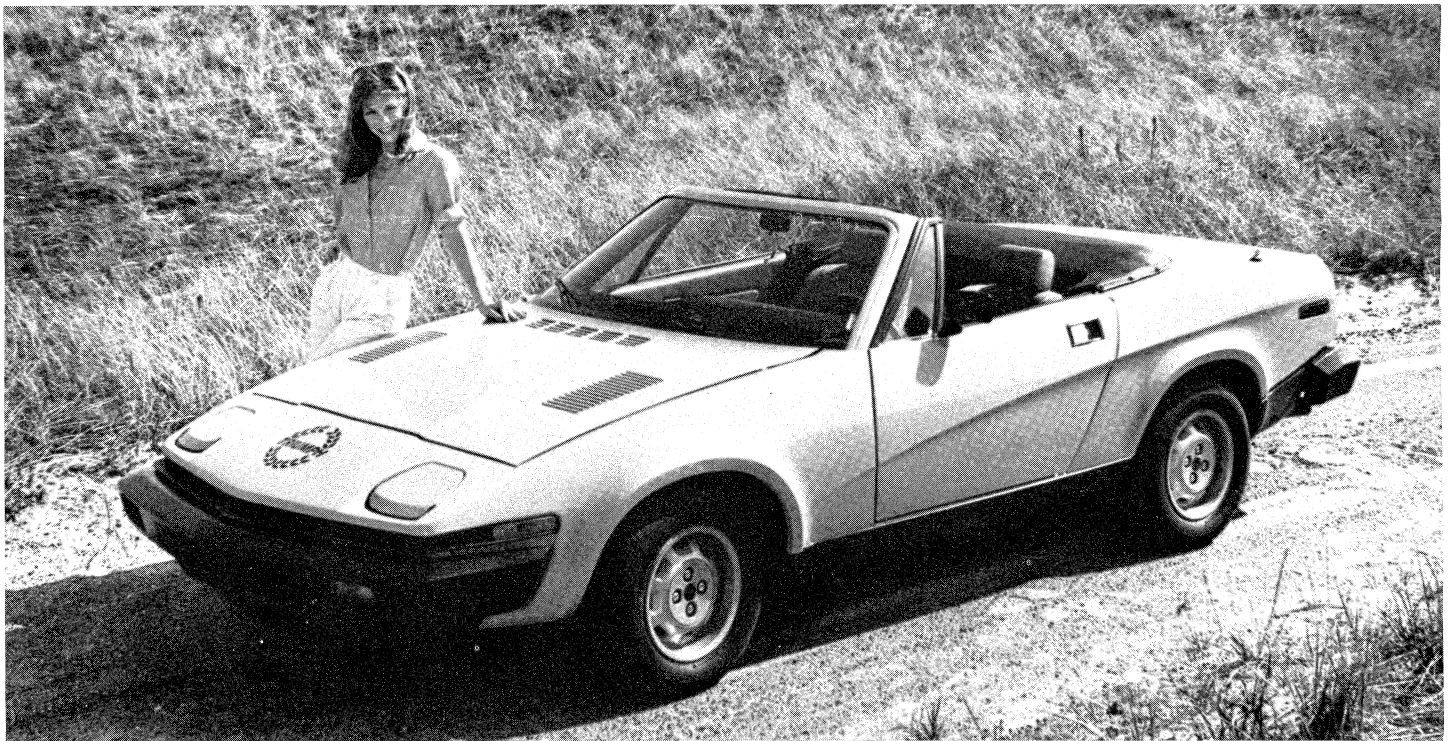
TRIUMPH SPORTS OWNERS ASSOCIATION



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MAY-JUNE, 1979



The rare joys of open air motoring with the top down are now offered to TR7 fans.

And Now—The TR7 Convertible

Triumph of Coventry introduces exciting new two-litre convertible roadster.

The Triumph TR7 convertible, the first new, volume-produced soft top of the decade, has been introduced by Jaguar Rover Triumph Inc., the largest supplier of convertibles in the U.S.

Manufacturer's suggested list price for the new Triumph is \$7,995 at ports of entry. Jaguar Rover Triumph expects sales of the new soft top to average 25,000 per year, according to Graham W. Whitehead, president.

The new convertible is based on the TR7 hardtop coupe but it has a number of structural changes to make its body more rigid. The body has been braced behind the seats, across the rear deck and at the windshield. The front suspension turrets and the front cross member have also been reinforced.

The rear deck has a lower line than the coupe to conform with its topless body line. This new styling treatment makes the convertible look both lower and, from the rear,

wider. The manually-operated soft top has an extra large zip-out rear window for maximum visibility. It can be easily raised or lowered by one person.

Powering both the new convertible and the coupe is a four-cylinder, overhead camshaft engine slant-mounted at 45 degrees to allow a dramatically low front end. The two-liter (122 cubic inch) displacement engine has twin Zenith carburetors and develops 85.5 SAE net horsepower at 5,500 RPM. Both the convertible and the coupe have five speed manual transmissions as standard equipment along with rack and pinion steering and MacPherson strut front suspension. The sway bar-equipped rear suspension has a full eight inches of up and down travel to iron out bumps.

Brakes are power assisted, with discs up front, and both models come with steel belted radial ply tires. Automatic transmission* and factory-installed air conditioning are available for both models and the coupe can be ordered

And Now—The TR7 Convertible!—Continued



Preview of the new convertible was at Auto Expo' Los Angeles in May. Note optional stripe kit. (Photo: Rich Scullin)

with an optional sun roof. Manufacturer's suggested list prices for these options are: automatic transmission \$215; air conditioning \$530; sun roof \$245. A front air spoiler and ventilated wheel covers are standard.

The convertible is available in five colors, two of them being extra cost (\$75) optional metallic hues. Interiors are beige or a red or green tartan. The fabric top is black.

The last all-new, volume-produced convertible from a major manufacturer was the 1970 Dodge Challenger introduced in 1969. At present there are only eleven soft tops on sale in this country with four of them limited production models with five figure prices.

*automatic transmission not available in California.

Survival of An Endangered Species

The British first called attention to the precarious position of the convertible in the U.S. market with a 1976 Triumph ad which urged: "Help save an endangered species, buy one." Now they expect the new Triumph TR7 convertible will help ensure the survival of the species.

"We are convinced that there are a significant number of people in America who want to enjoy the option of top-down driving and we intend to keep offering them that choice," declared Graham W. Whitehead, president of Jaguar Rover Triumph Inc., the firm which markets Triumphs along with MGs and Jaguars.

"Sales of our other convertibles have remained firm for several years with MGB scoring a record in 1977. TR7 convertible sales will be plus sales for us and will not come at the expense of the Triumph Spitfire, MGB or MG Midget soft tops," Mr. Whitehead asserts.

The introduction of the TR7 convertible brings the total number of soft tops available in the U.S. to eleven. Four of them, the Rolls Royce Corniche, the Aston Martin Volante, the Mercedes 450SL and the TVR are available only in limited numbers and all four have five figure price tags. The remaining seven are the Alfa Spider, the Fiat Spider, the Volkswagen Beetle convertible, the MGB, the MG Midget and the Triumph Spitfire.

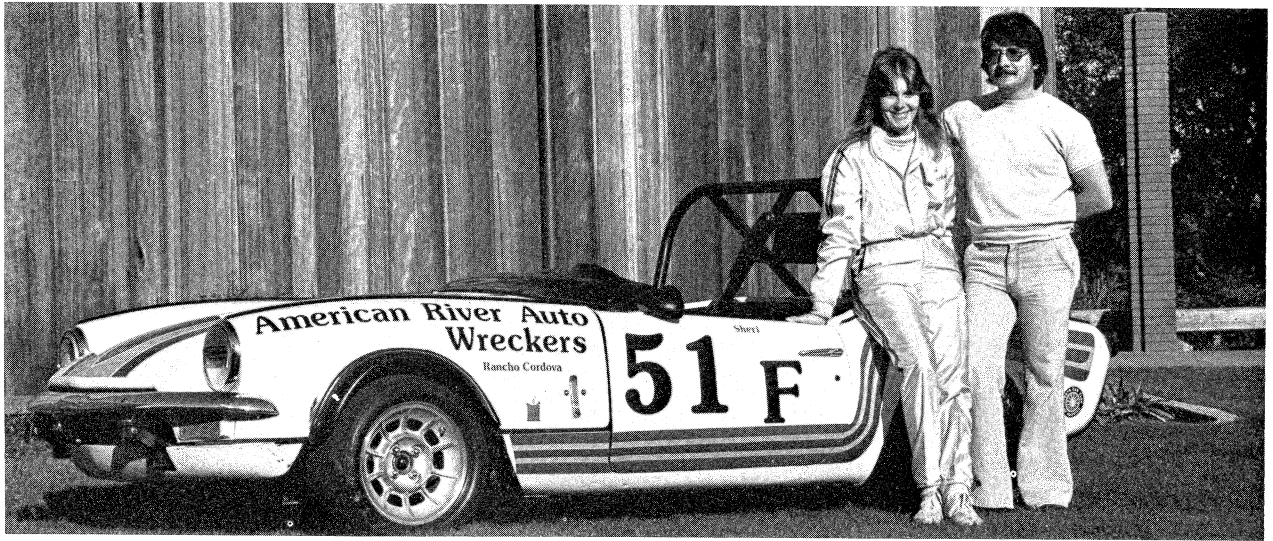
The heyday of the convertible business in the U.S. was in 1965 when 50 U.S. models accounted for a half million sales. Imported models added approximately 100,000 more. By 1970, domestic rag top sales had slowed to less than 100,000 units. U.S. car makers dropped convertibles altogether during the 1976 model year when Cadillac turned out 200 Bicentennial Eldorados.

The charm went off the convertible for many auto makers when it was feared that Federal safety standards would result in the convertible being outlawed. Triumph, in fact, first conceived the TR7 as a hardtop coupe in anticipation of roll-over standards that would have banned the soft top.

A Federal judge came to the rescue of the convertible ruling that Congress did not intend to ban any particular body style when it passed the legislation which established the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



A dramatic 25x17 in. color folder announces the TR7 convertible in dealer showrooms. It unfolds to show top up and top down.



With their racing Spitfire, Sheri and Charlie Archuleta. In spite of local sponsorship, they find "the money you have to work with never seems to be enough!"

A Woman Racing Driver on the Move Out West

How Sheri Archuleta got into road racing in Northern California

"Racing doesn't take anything away from me as a woman," says 31-year-old Sheri Archuleta of Orangevale, Calif. The 5 ft. 8 in. wife and mother of two has been racing her Triumph Spitfire for over six years and has just received her national license from the Sports Car Club of America.

For Sheri, racing is a means of self expression. "The car is like an extension of myself," she says. "I really like having the skill the sport requires."

Since Sheri started racing, the sport has become a major part of her life. In fact, racing has become a way of life for her entire family.

Charlie, Sheri's husband and crew chief, devotes most of his spare time to arranging Sheri's practice and racing schedule or working on the car in the family's garage. Sheri points, without hesitation, to her husband as the person most responsible for her successful racing career.

Just over six years ago, Charlie bought her a Spitfire and started her racing in autocross competition at Cal Expo. In autocross competition, you race on a course outlined by traffic cones against the clock, not wheel to wheel with other cars. Three years later, he suggested Sheri try her hand at road racing.

While Charlie was out knocking on doors in search of a sponsor, Sheri began studying for her novice racing license. "While the license is required, it's for your own protection," she says. "If you don't know the basics, you'll only wind up hurting yourself or getting killed."

The road to the national license was not easy for Sheri Archuleta. After obtaining her novice license, she had to enter the required number of races to obtain her regional license. After that, she had to complete the four races required for obtaining the national license.

There were seven races in the San Francisco region during the 1978 racing season and Sheri and her crew only

missed one. "Aside from the mental and physical drain, auto racing is a very expensive sport," Sheri notes. "Even with a decent sponsor, the money you have to work with never seems to be enough."

"We do all the work ourselves, and try to keep our maintenance cost down to the bare minimum," she explains. "We can't afford any major setbacks and our present finances keep us close to home."

While Sheri shrugs off the danger of auto racing, she is not one who takes the risks lightly. "I enjoy the speed," she says, "but only because I have complete confidence in my car, my crew and myself."

Sheri's most costly accident came during a Saturday qualifying race. "The car in front of me lost control and went flying off the road. The next thing I knew, he was heading toward me in a T-bone position—the front of his car smashed into my door."

The body of her Spitfire was badly damaged, the rear suspension was gone and the rear wheel was broken. But to Sheri, the real damage was her placement of 33 in a field of 37 in Sunday's race.

By Sunday the crew had completed all the mechanical repairs and Sheri was able to enter the race. To the surprise of everyone, she finished 12th overall and fourth in her class to take home a trophy.

Sheri's 8- and 10-year-old daughters are her biggest fans, and she loves nothing more than bringing home a trophy for the girls. "I'd like to see my daughters get into autocross racing competition one day," Sheri says. "It encourages a healthy respect for cars and it makes you a safer driver."

Sheri and Charlie now own three Spitfires. They use one for autocross competition, another for road racing and the third for street driving. "When the girls begin to drive, we'll just have to get two more," says Charlie.

Success at Le Mans for Triumph (Part Two)

Continuing the race history of the TRS
by Richard Langworth

For the 20X's first Le Mans, in 1959, it was agreed that the cars should look as much like TR3As as possible. However, to install the bulky Sabrina engine the chassis-frames needed to be lengthened (or so the engineers thought). New frames with many existing TR3A parts were laid-out on a 94 in. wheelbase, though with strengthened and deepened side-members. This was puzzling, as Le Mans was always noted for its billiard-table surface, and the TR's big problem was that it was already heavy. No one has ever given us a satisfactory explanation of the decision to build heavier frames when lightened units would have been perfectly adequate. On the Spitfires, a few years later, the lesson was learned, and no trouble was ever experienced.

The extra six inches on the wheelbase was accommodated in the region of the engine—effectively between the front suspension and the scuttle. A TR3A body-style was to be used (though in glass-fibre and with specially swept wind-screen and side-screens) and the body lines had to be altered slightly to suit—though as little as possible, to preserve the “standard-car” illusion.

Under the skin the Sabrina engine was allied to a special heavy-duty back axle, specially cooled four-wheel Girling disc brakes, a front anti-roll bar and stiffer-than-usual suspension.

Their performance in the race was a disappointment, for three cars started and all three retired. One disappointment, in view of the lengthy build period, the use of glass-fibre bodies and the light-alloy components used freely in the engine, was that the cars were very heavy. The lightest TR3S car weighed 2,125 lbs.; only four other cars in the race were heavier. Another feature impossible to justify was the use of fan blades on the engines (no car needs a fan when it spends nearly half the lap at or around its planned maximum speed) and in the race two cars retired because the blades fractured, puncturing the radiator shells, which swiftly cooked the engines.

Because the aerodynamics were no better than they had been in 1955, the car's maximum speed went up from about 120 mph to 135 mph, though faster acceleration helped the cars to lap speeds of about 4 min. 45 sec. if pushed (Sander-son's car recorded 4 min. 46 sec., 105.3 mph). The team were desperately unlucky not to bring one car home in a very creditable position. After the two fan-blade failures had occurred, the third car (driven by Peter Jopp and Dickie Stoop) was called in to have them removed. It pressed on and was lying seventh behind two Aston Martins and four Ferraris when, after 22 of the 24 hours, the oilpump drive failed.

In the short term the 1959 Le Mans race was a public disaster for Triumph, though the good news for the engineers was that the 20X Sabrina unit had proved itself to be



Crossing the line together before a huge crowd at the 1961 Le Mans 24-Hr race, the three Triumph TRS twin-cam sports cars won the team prize. No. 27 (right) was the highest placed British car.

basically sound. The fan-blade failures had been caused by a combination of constant high speed, slight out-of-balance problems and ultimate fatigue, while the oil-pump drive failure was a one-off problem, never repeated. If the engine was basically good enough to be raced for 24 hours, its prospects for road use looked good.

Le Mans, 1960

The new-shape Le Mans cars failed in 1960, though all three completed the 24 hours. None, however, qualified as an official finisher as they did not achieve the set target speeds, which were much higher than in 1959. Forgetting technicalities, however, the best of the three cars (crewed by Keith Ballisat and Marcel Becquart) should rightfully have been awarded fifteenth place, and actually average 89.56 mph. Even when fit the cars were substantially slower than in 1959 (the regulations which insisted on taller wind-screens cannot have helped)—the best lap being 4 min. 55.2 sec., 102 mph—and later in the race the valves stretched, all tappet clearance was lost, and power outputs suffered accordingly. The engines were running without fans and suffered no problems of any other nature. The weight, too, had crept up (the lightest weighed 2,180 lbs.), and the best recorded maximum speed was down to 128.6 mph.

The breast-beating which followed the 1960 race can well be imagined. By now Alick Dick had set his heart on that elusive Le Mans team prize, and even though he was having to impose cut after cut on departmental budgets during that awful financial period of 1960/61, the Le Mans program was allowed to survive intact.

Le Mans, 1961

The result was a complete vindication of all his original hopes. In the 1961 race three TRS cars started and all three finished. In all major respects they were “as 1960”, though the engines were marginally more powerful (about 155 bhp). The best lap speed was cut by eight seconds (to 4 min. 46.9 sec., though this was no faster than the TR3S cars had achieved in 1959), and the best race average soared to 98.91 mph, with a total distance covered of 2,373 miles over the 24 hours. The cars finished ninth, eleventh and fifteenth

Le Mans (Continued)

(Keith Ballisat and Peter Bolton being in the leading car), and took that elusive team prize.

Following that successful outing Leyland (which had been overseeing the project since the beginning of the year) closed down the department and the cars were sold-off to the United States, where some of them sometimes appear at Triumph club meetings. Nothing, not even a spare engine, has been retained by Triumph in Britain.

(Excerpted from the new book "Triumph Cars: The Complete 75-Year History" by Richard Langworth and Graham Robson. Autographed copies (by both authors) available from Dragonwyck Publishing, Box 385-T, Contoocook, NH 03229, at \$25.95. Bookstore price \$29.95).

CLUB NEWS

Forthcoming Sports Events for Triumph Cars

| Date | Event and Club |
|-------------|---|
| July 21 | Rally/Tour (Long Island TA), Roosevelt Field to Southampton, N.Y. |
| Aug. 11/12 | Triumph Concours at New Hope Auto Show, New Hope, Pa. |
| Aug. 17/19 | N.A. Triumph Challenge IV (Detroit TSC), Waterford, Mich. |
| Sept. 2 | Rally for Muscular Dystrophy charity, (Triumph MC), Lake Forest Mall, Gaithersburg, Md. |
| Sept. 13/16 | International Rally ('STIR' IV), Dearborn, Mich. (Vintage TR) |



First Triumph marque club in the Northwest was the TYEE Triumph Club of Washington, founded 1964. Members own 21 Triumphs. Shown at the 15th Anniversary Party are (L to R) Karen May (1957 TR3) president, Janet Cornwall (1970 GT6+) secretary, and Dale Libby (1976 TR7) rally chairman. Good luck to them all for the TYEE club's future!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

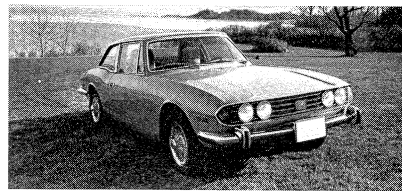
Triumph Stag Pictures Wanted

"I have owned a Triumph Stag since they were first imported to the United States. That has now been over six years, and with the exception of some repair problems, I enjoy the car immensely. During this time, my son used the car extensively. He has now left for college and would like a poster or any picture you may have of the Triumph Stag . . . If nothing is available, I'd appreciate your advice on where I might find such items."

William B. Patton, 2132 Pasco del Mar,
Palos Verdes Estates, Calif. 90274

(We were able to send Bill Patton Jr. a press photo of Stag but posters and sales literature are no longer in stock. Stag imports ceased in 1973. Maybe someone should start a Stag Register centre of TSOA? The Vintage Triumph Reg-

ister will accept Stag membership and there was talk of a Santa Anita, Calif. Triumph Stag Club back in 1977. Any news, anyone?—Ed)



The Stag V8, first introduced to the US in 1971, had chrome wire wheels and head restraints integral with the seats.

Stag V8 Research

"I recently purchased a Triumph Stag automobile which is registered as a 1971 vehicle. The identification plate on the door pillar shows the Manufacturer's date of August 1971, and serial #LE 3022L; engine #672. I have experienced some difficulty in acquiring parts for my Stag, which was in a state of moderate disrepair. I am attempting to restore the car to original condition in all respects.

It seems that this is a very 'early' Stag; there are quite a few differences between my Stag and the few others in the area, as well as what is shown in the parts book at the Dealer. Most Stags I've seen are automatic transmission, or have a 4 speed O/D. Mine is a straight 4 speed.

I would greatly appreciate any documentation you could give me related to how many Stags were imported in 1971 and registered as 1971 models; also how many were automatics, how many were sticks with overdrive, and how many were like mine. Is this an unusual car? I know that of the few (7) other Stags in the K.C. area, only one still retains the original engine/transmission combination.

I feel that the Stag, a true European touring car, did not continue in this country due to the inability of most American owners to care for the auto properly; not understanding that such cars are not to be treated as a Chevrolet. The car has style and road manners comparable to much more expensive and exotic machinery and was/is in my estimation an excellent example of the quality of British Leyland."

—Gene A. Williams, Henexa, Kansas

(The original sales literature for the 1971 Stag shows that the base car was fitted with a four speed gearbox. The overdrive is shown under Options.

Your serial number indicates that it is a 1971 car which started with Serial No. LE I and continued to an unknown number. 1972 vehicles started with Serial No. LE 7501. According to our records, 200 Stags fitted with automatic transmission and 352 fitted with manual transmissions, both four-speed and four-speed and overdrive, were retailed in calendar year 1971.—Tech. Ed.)



The 1973 Stag, last to be imported, had GKN five-spoke cast wheels and smaller, adjustable head rests. A side stripe was added.

Letters to the Editor (Continued)

Alabama Enthusiast Restoring Four TR-Series

"Enclosed find a photo of my two pets, a '57 3A (2 years restoring) and my '64 TR4, which have not had tender loving care and which speaks well for the rugged nature of these fine cars. I also have begun restoration on a '59 3A and am in the process of building a slalom car out of a '67 4A.

Our club 'The Northwest Alabama Sportscar Club' has more Triumphs than any single make and this puts them to the test in rallies, slaloms and gymkhanas.

Enjoy your newsletter very much."

—Bob Brooks, Florence, Ala.



Bob Brooks' 1957 TR3A and 1964 TR4. He has a couple more!

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

1976 TR6, excellent condition, 14,000 miles, AM/FM radio, air conditioning. Stored winters. Richard Laugh, 22 9th Street, Youngsville, Pa. 16371. (814) 563-4060.

TR4, Spitfire, and Sprite chassis, body, eng., drive train and interior parts for sale or trade. My store shed needs emptying out and if you need a part cheap it's probably in there somewhere. Trade for TR4 tonneau cover, black. Write: Bob Snyder, RD2 Haskell Road, Cuba, N.Y. 14727.

1974½ TR6. Has 75-76 style front end. White, black interior. AM/FM cassette, original red line tires. Stebro exhaust system. Excellent mechanical and cosmetic condition. No rips or rust. Stored during winter months. \$4300. Colin Delpi, 3717 Parkside Drive, Baltimore, MD 21206. (301) 254-5507.

1971 TR6 being broken up for parts. Engine is good and transmission is newly rebuilt. Right front fender is missing and left rear suspension arm is broken. David Helwig, 42 Lynch Farm Drive, Newark, Del. 19713. (302) 737-8301.

1974½ Triumph TR6. Original owner, low mileage. Red outside, saddle inside. O/D, AM/FM cassette. Maintenance history available. \$4500. Write w/SASE to R. M. McCollough, 7535 So. 76th St., LaVista, Nebraska 68128.

TR3 side curtain windows (plexi-glass) reproductions same as original \$20 a pair plus \$2 handling and shipping—will sell separately. Fred Perry, R.D. #2, Putney, Vt. 05346.

1953 Swallow-Doretti. Aluminum body, two seat roadster convertible. Silver with navy stripe. TR2 engine, gearbox and rear. Excellent body and mechanical condition. Very rare. Moving, must sell. \$5,000. Michael D. Sender, 52-34 Littleneck Parkway, Little Neck, N.Y. 11362. (212) 229-7892.

Air conditioning: have access to a few out-of-production factory appearance A/C kits to fit all TR6, 72-74 Spitfire, 70-73 GT6-MK II & III. All units still in original cartons, \$375. Send \$1.00 for photocopy. Also, wanted: Factory parts book for 1971-73 GT6 MK III, reasonable. M. S. Moore, 1717 Mosstree Rd., Apt. 13, Charleston, S.C. 29406. (803) 554-4836.

Old/New bumper 98 percent like new, for 1978 Spitfire 1500. \$125. Rodney G. Ratcliffe, 3484 N. Tillotson Ave., Apt. 25, Muncie, Indiana 47304.

Parts: Full set, right and left wire wheel hub extensions with chrome winged spinner knock offs, also copper hammer. Will fit TR4, TR250, TR6 and Stag. (New) \$180 for all. Also one pr. 1973 Stag head (27,000 miles) not warped—good condition, make offer. Leyland competition distributor (Delco w/points) for TR7 with extra points and cap (unused) \$65. J. Garram, 4133 W. Layton Ave., Greenfield, Wisc. 53221. (414) 282-0564 after 8 P.M.

Spare parts catalogue: for Triumph Herald Saloon Coupe. Commission #GI, YI and future includes amendments 1961-1962; work shop manuals: for Triumph Herald Saloon & Coupe. Group one—engine, cooling, fuel and exhaust. Group five—body and underframe 2nd Ed.; provisional service manual: for Triumph sedan and estate wagon; service bulletins: for Triumphs—all types 1962-64; work shop manual: for Triumph 2.3 diesel engines high and low speed. Publication part No. 505526, 2nd edition. Donald Koutny, c/o Thomas Plumbing, 847 15th St. S.E., Cedar Rapid, Iowa 52403.

1976 TR7 yellow/tan 6,000 miles, all options, Air/sun roof, clean car \$4350. Bill Redinger, 12118 Erskine, Omaha, Nebr. 68164. (402) 496-2006.

1963 TR4 surrey top, body clean, rust free, interior needs work, 100% complete, engine condition unknown. This is a good, solid car to start from \$1900. Bill Redinger, 12118 Erskine, Omaha, Nebr. 68164. (402) 496-2006.

1958 smallmouth TR3. Virtual classic. Body good, not great—good, transmission excellent, rear-end ditto. 47,000 miles on car, 700 on completely rebuilt engine, fully documented and very expensive. New top, sidecurtains, tires, upholstery. All restoration work done to original spec. Must have \$2000 for my invested \$3000. Doug Toussaint, 315 Gordon, TTU, Lubbock, TX 79406. (806) 742-5888 or 704 McCoy, Irving, TX 75062. (214) 252-2367 after May 5.

1965 TR4, no rust or rot, excellent car for restoration, \$950. Contact: Bill Sohl, 29 Netcong Rd., Budd Lake, N.J. 07828. (201) 691-8116.

1976 TR6 yellow with black interior; overdrive; air-conditioned; AM/FM stereo radio. Only 1600 miles, \$7,500. Robert N. Cadrecna, 4414 Neptune St., Tampa, Florida 33609. (813) 247-4557.

TSOA SUPERMARKET

The following items are to be ordered from TSOA Leonia.

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Local TSOA Club "Calling Cards" | FREE |
| List of Triumph Dealers and Distributors | FREE |
| Replacement TSOA badge | \$2.50 |
| TSOA Handbook, 2nd Edition | \$2.50 |
| Supplement to TSOA Handbook, 1973 | \$.75 |
| TR-4/TR-4A Competition Preparation Manual | \$3.00 |
| SPITFIRE 1500 Competition Preparation Manual | \$3.00 |
| TR-250/TR-6 Competition Preparation Manual | \$3.00 |
| GT-6+ Competition Preparation Manual | \$3.00 |
| Competition Parts list (Specify model) | FREE |
| TSOA Jacket Emblem | \$1.00 |
| (Club Discount—1 Dozen) | \$10.00 |
| Official Triumph Jacket Emblem | \$.50 |
| Triumph Sportscar Champions Jacket Emblem | \$1.00 |
| British Leyland Competition Stickers, Mylar | 2 for \$1.00 |
| British Leyland Competition Patches (Helmet) | (12 for \$10.00) \$1.00 |
| British Leyland Patches | (12 for \$10.00) \$1.00 |
| Triumph history 34-page reprint ("Automobile Quarterly") | \$1.95 |
| "Triumph—50 Years of Sports Car" history poster | \$3.00 |

Send Check or Money Order. No C.O.D.'s please.

Please make checks payable to British Leyland Motors Inc.

THE TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER—for Triumph enthusiasts

EDITOR: JOHN F. DUGDALE

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We shall be pleased to consider for publication any reports, photos and results of newsworthy Triumph events submitted by readers. Original articles, illustrations and technical notes will be paid for at our current rates. Six issues are published each year, bi-monthly.

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