



# TSOA NEWSLETTER

TRIUMPH SPORTS OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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## *A True Story . . . by an Adventurous Frenchman*

And it's quite a story, your editor thought as he went through the TSOA mail a few weeks back. Our first inclination was to print excerpts from it, along with some of the fine photographs the author — Jess G. Pourret from Paris, France — had very kindly sent us. But we think we knew that in the end, we would print the complete story, just as Jess had written it down. For this is his story, not to be tampered with by an over-zealous editor. . . .

"In the last NEWSLETTER it said that letters from members are welcome. Well, here's one from a French member of TSOA about a trip I made lately with my TR-4 in the Middle East. Last spring, 8,000 miles with 4,000 miles of dirt tracks. Start — border between France and Belgium. Destination — Iran (but I couldn't get any further than Ankara, Turkey) and back. Through — Paris, Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Iron Curtain with Bulgaria, then Turkey, return by Northern Greece, Yugoslavia with a visit to earthquake-shaken Skopje, then Italy, Switzerland and France-Belgium.

**Medium of transportation — 1962 TR-4, British Racing Green, O/D, W/W, with some racing mods., 35,000 miles on the odometer when leaving. Preparation for the trip was—valve grinding, new front brakes, new tires, undershield made of very strong fence wire, silk stockings on air filters, reserve of 10 quarts of oil, 2 oil filter elements, gear box oil, some spares, a strong GI trench tool, and a rope.**

Since I was travelling alone with my dog, I had plenty room for camping equipment and . . . dog food. I must also add that since the car was new, and since there are almost no speed limits in Europe, the car has always been driven between 90 and 100 mph.

The maintenance has been done by myself very accurately, and never before the trip had any breakdown of any sort. The car is never used in city driving, but is always pushed to 4,500 rpm. Since a TR with such options as mine cost in France \$4,200.00, I took all the caution possible to bring it back in the same shape. And I did. After the trip, everything was checked over, and but for the brakes nothing had to be replaced. Not even the shocks — which are original. Since the car was undercoated, also the interior done, not a rattle can be heard after those 4,000 miles of track.

**The Trip.** After I left France, I noticed that the muffler wouldn't go all the way, therefore I made a little detour in Italy to go to

the Abarth factory where they installed in no time an Abarth system, with the utmost kindness. I cannot do better than congratulate the Abarth factory for such a courtesy and agreeable service. Then, the Italian Freeways until Venice full blast. Then Trieste and the Yugoslavian border.

*I woke up in the morning after pitching my tent in some field at the border among a bunch of Italian Army armoured vehicles in manoeuvres, very interested in my kind of transport. After crossing the border, I hit the Yugoslavian Freeway through Ljubjana, Zagreb and Belgrade. No sweat, even if the pavement wasn't too good in some places, but night driving terrible because the said Freeway is full of carts, horses and cattle at night. And these cows don't use a 12-volt system. . . . After Belgrade, I turned east, and got on a nightmare of a road for 150 miles. There was a road on the map but in reality they were building it. Took me 6 hours, lots of shovelling and pushing, and since I didn't want to ruin the car a very slow pace.*

It started to rain alright and the earth was kind of sticky, the least I can say. Glad I had a compass on the car, otherwise I still would be there. . . . The natives were curious about the car and nice, but since they couldn't help with the weather and the road . . . I finally hit the Bulgarian border at Dimitrovgrad. Since the Yugoslav gas was better than last year I fill her up before getting in Bulgaria where everything is very expensive. Was well received in the Bulgarian customs with French speaking personnel. Left at 9 pm, hit a paved road made of a crazy granite, and more slippery than ice when wet.

**On the way to Sofia got drowned in a sea of 3,000 or more black sheep. Lasted one hour before I could get out. The car got away with no scratch. Slept in Sofia. Next morning I went looking around."**

*(continued over)*



*A Molotova truck is passing the TR just before Sofia.*

"Very disappointed by a poor and very expensive city and country. Nothing to buy. Then the paved road again, wet and slippery, the Molotova trucks (85 per cent of the traffic) going full blast, and the few Skoda and Moskvitch cars swerving left and right on that damn wet pavement.

In every village or town the streets were full of banners, flags, posters about commie propoganda. People used to crowd around the car like mad. Still they were eager to talk (in German or French) with me and very kind. Nevertheless, it was difficult sometimes to take pix of everything."



*Army post in Bulgaria . . . the posters mean: Communism uniting the Far East with Africa and 'commie' countries . . . the other: Communism against the imperialist "A" Bomb. I didn't waste no time for moving along after taking that 'flick'.*

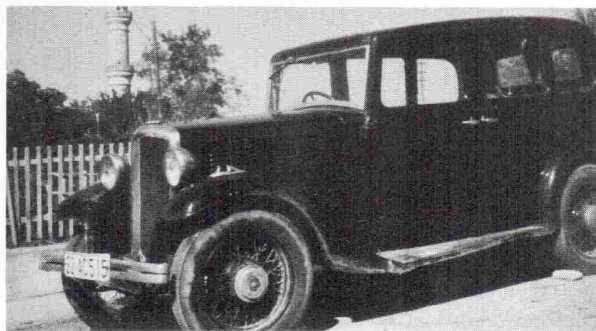
"On the way to Plovdiv and Maritsa the road was bordered with all kinds of Kolkhoses. With the productivity charts at the gates. Then, I began to see some Mosques and Minarets which meant that Turkey was getting close. The road disappeared again, the carts reappeared in great numbers, and it got bad driving again. The rain and mud forced me to put the top up again. The next day at night, I left behind the great neon sign with the hammer and sickle, and the iron gate opened on me to a glance of Western meaning. A Mobil station, a small restaurant with icy drinks available, and a . . . Pepsi Cola sign. This was Turkey."



*Somewhere in Bulgaria, not far from the Turkish border. The 'road' was getting a bad joke. . . .*

"The Turks got all out to look at that crazy guy in such a green contraption. When they heard that I was coming from Paris, with that they look at me with doubts. What else but a Chevy can get you there and across? The great track commenced then, no more rain, but what a dust — even at night.

I stopped over in Edirne (formerly Andrinople), an old city with the highest minarets in the world, and the nicest mosques. That's where I met what can well be the eldest Standard-Triumph in that side of the sea. Then the 200 miles treck towards Istanbul . . . Constantinople . . . started."



*I caught this Standard-Triumph product in Edirne, Turkey. Maybe the 'elder' was a "one owner, never driven in winter-time, no races, no wreck one?"*

"Man, I started to ask myself, what was I doing there with my beloved TR. Plain pot holes, rocks and grit. The dust . . . just forget about it. I crossed all kinds of small villages with open large markets, full of peasants, more colorful than any Hollywood flick.

There I started spending my money for all kinds of souvenirs . . . Turkish rugs, earthenware, copperware. Bargains, bargains . . . but the car was getting heavier and the billfold lighter. Finally, on my right, I saw the sea, and I knew Istanbul was near. Few hours afterwards, I got by a big, large, long brown wall, the protecting walls of old Constantinople. And suddenly, there I was in a monstrous sea of Plymouths, DeSotos, Chevys, Fords . . . everybody honking like mad to get by. I'm pretty used to Paris traffic, but believe you me this was it! I got to the Bosphorus not quite knowing how, parked the TR by some hotel, got the dog and got into a bar to get a good old scotch. I did really need that since Paris. . . ."

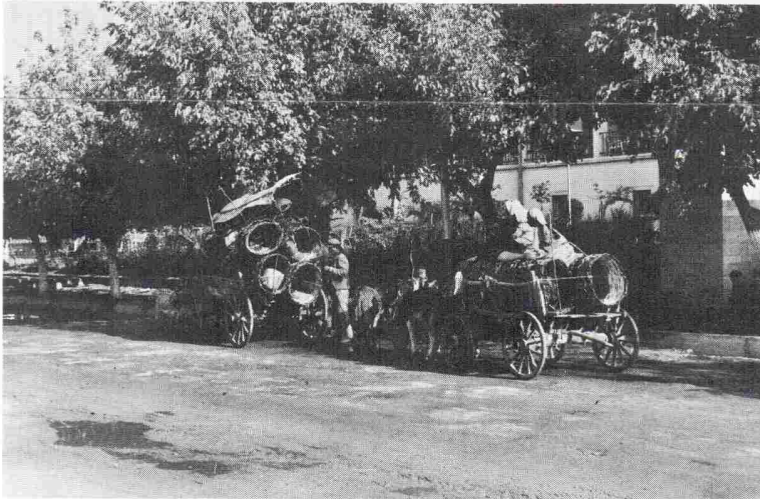
"After checking the car over, changing oil and filter, putting new stockings on the carbs and setting the distributor full retard on account of Turkish gas, I tried to get that coat of what-you-call-it off her. That was some task. I knew she was BR Green, but you couldn't have told after those tracks.

After 10 days of hanging around Istanbul and getting broke again while buying stuff in the Bazaar like it was going out of style, and after two more rolls of Kodachrome, I left for Ankara. This road was good but after the capital, on the way to the mountains toward Iran, I realized that if I wanted to bring the TR back, I had to call it quits.

Until then, with care, shovel, patience, I got away alright with ground clearance. But now, that was another story. After helping quite a few guys with broken axles on all kinds of Detroit irons, after miles of spare parts-covered tracks, I decided to go back to Ankara before it was my turn."



One landmark in Northern Greece which is seen quite often. Just don't get trapped by a breakdown, for that can happen. When you leave your car too long, standing there, everything can happen.



This kind of convoy is rather tricky to meet at night in Turkey!

"Back to Istanbul, back to Edirne . . . and then the Greek border. Even with the terrific heat, no overheating at all. But those Greeks forgot again to put tar on the road surface. Still, no flat tires since Paris. (My tires are Kleber-Colombes V 10 . . . French Goodrich in other words)."



Somewhere in Greece, At least a road. . . .

"After musing a couple of weeks around the coast, checking the TR, an oil change and tightening up again, I went through Thessaloniky, down to Larissa and further down Greece. The only alert came then. One night, the red light started to glow. Stop . . . check the fan belt. Nothing doing. The generator was leaving me. I got back to Thessaloniky in haste, and there I found a little shop where my French, English or German didn't get me nowheres, but the guy knew his trade and found out that the front plate of the generator was getting a little too big for the bearing."

"Well, he found a bigger bearing, and after two hours and two bucks I was away again, heading through some pretty hot and dusty roads towards south Yugoslavia. Some more terrible tracks. Thanks to the compass I did avoid going back to Greece. After much curiosity from the natives, much green pepper eating (food basic around here), some more Kodachrome and some more dust, we got to Skopje.

The city after the earthquake did remind me of the bombings during the war. A bunch of skulls and bones painted wherever the dead were grounded below the houses. A fine curtain of dust still darkens the vision in that town, for the earth still shakes and the ruins are too much. Then, on the way to Belgrade, where the car was checked again, oil and filter changed, oil in gearbox, new plugs and points, wash job . . . and still no flat. Away again to Zagrab, Trieste, Venice . . . a little stop over to let the TR and dog see the canals . . . and then Milano, the mountains of Switzerland, and back home.

After 6 weeks, 8,000 miles, I made the last 800' at an average of 70 . . . but I guess she was happy to see Paris again. Put her on blocks afterwards; checked the chassis and everything. Got the mud-transformed-cement off every bit of the chassis, oiled the works, got the carbs apart and cleaned them, dusted the brakes, renewed the front. Since she was getting to around 44,000 miles, I put in some new bearings, but the original ones were still in good shape. Pistons and valves in like-new shape, so was the transmission and rear end. Since there's not a scratch on the paint — well protected by wax — I don't see why I'll buy a new one yet.

That TR is still good for another 50,000 and what else can I say . . . ? If not that after two TR-3's, I have more pleasure and reliability with this one than I could expect for my money with any other 2-liter or more. To end a long letter, let's just add that if you care properly for her, a TR-4 is worth much more than what you pay for. Hoping that I didn't bore you too much with my parlez-vous-francais, I am, Sincerely yours,

Jess G. Pourret

9 Rue Gustave Courbet

Paris 16, France

# Spitfire GT Wins Class in Tortuous Tour de France!

Well here's a neat tie-in with our story we received from Jess Pourret . . . this sort of makes this issue of the TSOA NEWSLETTER très French. . . .

A factory prepared and entered SPITFIRE GT driven by Robbie Slotemaker from Holland and Terry Hunter from London scored its greatest success to date by winning outright the 1001 cc-1300 cc GT Class in this year's Tour de France. The SPITFIRE also recorded the best performance by a British GT car. More than 150 cars started the gruelling 4,000-mile 10-day event. However, only 36 cars finished, 19 in the Touring Category, 17 in the GT Category. Both these categories are run as separate events.

Only cars to finish ahead of the SPITFIRE were costly, near-

racing machines of much greater engine capacity. On handicap in the general classification, the car took 5th position beaten only by 3 Porsches and an Alfa Romeo, while on scratch the car placed 10th with only Ferraris, Porsches and the Alfa ahead of it. The Tour de France is among the elite of European motoring events, and consists of races on all of France's top racing circuits including Rheims, Rouen, Cognac, Pau, Le Mans and Albi, as well as Monza in Italy. These are interspersed with tough road sections which must be covered at high average speeds, as well as some of Europe's most famous hillclimbs. The performance of the little SPITFIRE with its 1147 cc engine startled everyone on the race track. On at least two occasions the car recorded best time of day on handicap.



Robbie Slotemaker at speed in the SPITFIRE GT at Rheims

## CLASSIFIED

**FOR SALE:** 1959 TR-3 roadster, black and red interior, white top, heater — never raced — 36,000 miles — excellent condition — \$700.00 Contact: John Kahbert, 278 McCarty Ave., Albany, New York.

**FOR SALE:** Roll Bar 3½ mansize inches diameter, very light, extra strong. SCCA approved, fits with top up — \$75.00. 14 quarts Castrol 40 R — \$.50 qt. 1 set new fender guards that attach to rear bumper — \$3.00. All prices F.O.B. Atlanta. Contact: G. Donald Ingebretson, 396 Copenhill, Atlanta, Georgia. Phone: (404) 688-7498.

**FOR SALE:** 2 new Pirelli, Inverno Snow Tires, size 5.60 x 15 for TR-3 or 4. Two for \$29.75. 1 Ski rack for TR-3 — \$9.00 Contact: R. P. Chambers, 1108 Wendell Drive, Alexandria 8, Virginia. Phone: (703) So 8-6804.

**FOR SALE:** 1960 TR-3A, white with black strips R-H, WSW, luggage rack, rear seat, seat belts, new paint, transmission — needs some work, never rallied, abarth, mud flaps — nice — \$995.00 Contact: Thomas J. Riley, 3165 A Perkins Ct., Indianapolis, Ind. 46203. Phone: ST 7-3743.

**WANTED:** Hardtop for 1960 TR-3 any color. Contact: John D. Odom, 12658 Lonsdale Dr. Bridgeton, Mo.

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