

# TRIUMPH REVIEW

*Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club*  
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

www.detroittriumph.org



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



**LEARNING TO LOVE THE TR7:** Richard Truett tells why and how he added a TR7 Spider to his collection of TRs. *Page 6*

**WWJD:** You've seen the bracelets, now get the inside skinny. *Page 5*

**DUES ARE DUE:** It's that time of year again. Avoid that nasty phone call from our membership chair by using the form on the back cover. *Do it now!*

### WHO'S THE BABE?

Find out who's first Triumph plowed through snow, climbed hills and caught the eyes of vandals. Oh, and she got a husband in the process. *Page 11*



### JANUARY EVENTS:

- 7:** Board meeting, Royal Oak
- 11:** Year End Party, Sterling Heights
- 14:** Member Meeting, Royal Oak
- 15:** Winter British Knights, Roseville

## A 1938 Triumph-Powered Classic

### One student's modification of a 1938 Morgan 4/4

Taking a leaf from Mr. Zorn's book, he who recently wrote about his first Triumph which most unfortunately turned out to be an MG, I obtained our noble Editor's permission to slightly adjust the format of the series for this article. Although I have had the pleasure of owning many Triumphs, unlike our friend Mr. Z, who will at some point in the near future hopefully see the error of his ways, I am horribly short of photos. Thus the kind editorial concession for this article.

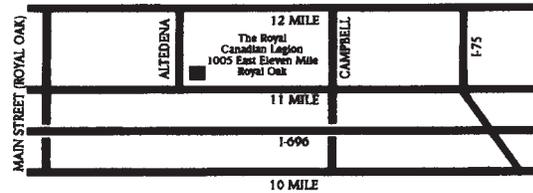
A few years ago when I was a student at Standard-Triumph, I bought a 1938 Morgan 4/4. This was powered by a Coventry Climax engine (overhead inlet, side exhaust valve layout), mated to a Moss 4 speed gearbox remote mounted between the seats, and a conventional rear axle. Front suspension was independent, and the rear was underslung semi-elliptic spring. I paid about £35 (about \$52) for the car since the engine was a shambles. We towed it home.

The engine was removed from the car, disassembled, cleaned, and brought into the family room, much to my dear mother's horror - father was supervising all operations, and loving every moment. The block, head, crank, etc, were machined as usual, and new babbit material applied to the bearing caps - both rods and mains. This was the make or break of the whole rebuild. If I accurately scraped this babbit to fit the crank journals, all would be well. If not, well, all would be so-so, and not for very long.

Scraping that babbit is not a job for the faint of heart! It is slow, painstaking, and

*Continued on page 6*

Above: The author, and owner of this 1938 Morgan 4/4 poses with the vehicle at the Standard-Triumph Service Department in London, England.



## Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club

Established 1959, our 44th year

*An official chapter of the Vintage Triumph Register*

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TR7/8	<b>Ivan Love</b>	517-694-5009	ivanlove@acd.net

Being a member of DTSC is fun, owning a Triumph is optional, you can drive whatever you want. Just send your dues of \$30 to our membership chair, Dave Jonker, 22609 Carolina, St. Clair Shores, MI 48080. Your dues help cover the costs associated with this newsletter.

**Talk to any club member and join today!**

**All members are welcome and encouraged to attend board meetings and regular meetings.**

Regular membership meetings of the Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. All meetings begin at 8:00pm at the Royal Canadian Legion, Post 84, 1005 East 11 Mile Road, Royal Oak, Michigan. Please see map above for location details.

*Triumph Review* is the official publication of the Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club and is published monthly for club members and editors of other British car clubs in the United States and Canada on a reciprocal basis. **The electronic version is available on the first of each month, the printed copy is mailed to arrive before the member meeting of each month.** The editor requests your contribution or submission be made either electronically or in writing by the 20th of the month preceding publication. Classified advertisements are free to members. Mail written materials to DTSC, Newsletter Editor, 1363 East Fisher Freeway, Suite 8, Detroit, MI 48207; electronic submissions should be emailed to [review@detroittriumph.org](mailto:review@detroittriumph.org). I will try to make it as easy as possible to get your submission published. Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the club as a whole.

Please visit our website: [www.detroittriumph.org](http://www.detroittriumph.org).

Ideas for articles relating to club activities or of general interest to Triumph and other British car owners are welcome!

## EVENTS CALENDAR

<b>JANUARY</b>	7, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	11, Saturday	<b>Year End Party</b> Sterling Inn, St. Heights	Dan Campana
	14, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	15, Wednesday	<b>Winter British Knights</b> Page's Food & Spirits, Farmington	Carlsons/Snyders
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	4, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	9, Sunday	<b>Pinewood Derby</b> Canadian Legion	Sims/Walters/Dixon/Uloth
	11, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	19, Wednesday	<b>Winter British Knights</b> Bravo Restaurant, Roseville	
	23, Sunday	All British Swap Meet & Auto Jumble, Wheaton, IL	Zorns/Snyders
<b>MARCH</b>	4, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	11, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	19, Wednesday	<b>Winter British Knights</b> Page's Food & Spirits, Farmington	Carlsons/Snyders
<b>APRIL</b>	1, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	8, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	16, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Local Color Brewery, Novi	Carlsons/Snyders
	TBA	Volunteer day at CARRAIL, Detroit	Bill Goin
<b>MAY</b>	3, Saturday	15th Blount British Car Gathering, Townsend, TN	
	4, Sunday	<b>Brunch Run to the River Crab</b> St. Clair	Dave Murphy
	6, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	13, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	17, Saturday	<b>Spring Tour</b> Spring Arbor	Bill Goin
	21, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Bravo Restaurant, Roseville	Carlsons/Snyders
	Week of 24th	Drive Your British Car Week!	
<b>JUNE</b>	1, Sunday	Orphan Car Show, Ypsilanti	Dick Arend
	3, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	6-8	Chemung Canal Trust Historic Races, Watkins Glen	Carlsons
	7, Saturday	British Car Day, London, Ontario	Snyders
	7, Saturday	CEMA Car Show at Walter P Chrysler Museum, Auburn Hills	
	10, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	14, Saturday	4th Annual Cruisin' Gratiot, Eastpointe	Snyders
	18, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Local Color Brewery, Novi	Carlsons/Snyders
	20-22	Sprint Vintage Grand Prix, Mid-Ohio Race Course, Lexington, OH	
	22, Sunday	<b>"Loud Pants" Golf Open</b> Rochester	Mike Bilyk
	26-29	VARAC Vintage Festival, Bowmanville, Ontario	Mike Bilyk / Sue Snyder
	TBA	Lake Erie British Car Show at Ft. Meigs, Perrysburg, OH	
<b>JULY</b>	1, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	8, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	13, Sunday	<b>Larry's Great Lakes Tour</b> Toledo, OH	Larry & Sue Tomaszycski
	13, Sunday	Mad Dogs & Englishmen, Kalamazoo (tentative)	
	16, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Bravo Restaurant Roseville	Carlsons/Snyders
	27, Sunday	<b>7th Annual DTSC Family Picnic &amp; Pool Party</b> St. Heights	Snyders
	TBA	Scholz Autofest, Capac, MI	
<b>AUGUST</b>	1-3	Meadowbrook Festival Weekend	
	2, Saturday	<b>Wine &amp; Dine at Trackside</b> Waterford Hills Raceway	Roger Cotting
	5, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	6-10	<b>TRF Summer Party &amp; VTR Convention</b> Armagh, PA	Pat Barber
	9, Saturday	WAMBO, Wallaceburg, Ontario (tentative)	
	12, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	16, Saturday	<b>Woodward Dream Cruise Party at the Watches</b> Royal Oak	Jim & Sue Watch
	20, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Local Color Brewery, Novi	
22-24	British Car Triathlon V, Stratton Mountain Inn, Stratton, VT		
24, Sunday	<b>Larry's Island Beach Party!</b> Harsen's Island	Larry & Sye Tomaszycski	
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	3, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	10, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	14, Sunday	<b>21st Annual Battle of the Brits</b> Freedom Hill County Park	Sue Snyder
	17, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Bravo Restaurant, Roseville	Carlsons/Snyders
	21, Sunday	TTC British Car Day, Bronte Provincial Park, Ontario	
<b>OCTOBER</b>	5, Sunday	Oakland County Parks Colour Show, Location TBA	
	7, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	14, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	15, Wednesday	<b>Summer British Knights</b> Bravo Restaurant, Roseville	
	TBA	<b>Fall Colour Tour</b>	TBA
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	4, Tuesday	<b>Board Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	
	11, Tuesday	<b>Member Meeting</b> Canadian Legion	

## Courtesy of Standard Triumph, Morgan Gets a New Engine

*From page 1*

boring. Anyway, we finally got it as close as was considered reasonable. Also, the piston pins were not fully floating, and in order to fit them we boiled the pistons in water on the stove - poor mother. The engine was then rebuilt in the family room, ready for installation.

Oil pressure was not what it might have been, but was "in the 40's", so we thought that was not too bad. It was of course great to drive the car, particularly with the first engine I had rebuilt, and it was then time to do some cosmetic work. The weak point was the back of the car, and it was really in need of some professional input since the wooden body frame was, fundamentally, shot. By a great stroke of luck, this undertaking was financed by the insurance company of the fellow whose car had brakes marginally worse than the Morgan, and who ran into the back of my car. I think he was quite surprised to see me smiling!

The car went well, looked good, and with its long 3rd gear was a great surprise to the owners of frog eye Sprites. As you will notice from the photo, one of its many features was the fold down windscreen and cut-away doors - ideal for free parking by driving out of the car parks underneath the barriers! It also had a delightful set of louvres on either side of the bonnet hinge. This feature though, was to prove something of a disadvantage when the oil feed pipe to the intake valve rockers fractured, spewing oil out of the louvres, underneath the folded windscreen, and you can imagine the rest! You'd be amazed how much oil came out in those few seconds, and it was hot too.

However, after a while the pressure was no longer "in the 40's". Finally, one sad day, on the M1 motorway, one of those bearings gave way. The racket was unbelievable! Babbit is thick, and there was plenty of slap of shell on crank journal.

So this is where the story really begins. Rebuild that engine again, or go Triumph power?

My father managed to get an extremely inexpensive Herald 1200 engine from Experimental Dept, a test unit they had finished with, but in very nice condition, and with only a minimum number of test hours on it. Why not a Spitfire unit you ask? Well, the Herald unit had at least 50%

more power and torque than the Coventry Climax unit, and the Moss gearbox was not in the best of health. Anyway, it was an easy matter to put a twin-carb installation on the Herald engine later on if necessary.

The big problem was installation. The rear mounts of the Coventry Climax engine were on the bell housing, not the gearbox, which as mentioned earlier was mounted between the seats, and connected to the engine by a torque tube and encased drive



Most of us know this Chris, a wee bit older than the one on the cover!

shaft. That bell housing and the Herald engine did not get near to a harmonious match.

So we got a Herald bell housing. As you may remember, those Herald/Spitfire/GT6 gearboxes were aluminium but with bolt on cast iron bell housings. So we made up a steel plate to bolt on to the bell housing, and fabricated mounting feet welded to the plate to line up with the original rear mount points in the car. A torque tube was then fabricated to fit into the bell housing and bolt on to the gearbox, and a modified drive shaft was made up to fit the Herald clutch at one end, and the Moss gearbox at the other. It was decided to fabricate the front mounts once the engine was in.

As you can imagine, this sort of work required special machine tools and operating skills, neither of which I possessed. However, the toolroom at the factory was awash with such equipment and talent. Those guys were used to doing "foreign-

ers", but this was rather a lot. Nonetheless, it all went well - I did the design, and they produced the components. So the great day came to install the new power plant - will it fit? It did! Success with the first engine transplant.

It transformed the car. Smooth, very fast, but stopping was hell!

So we called Morgan, and they said we could fit a set of +4 front brakes which would solve the problem, and if we liked to drive down, we could pick up the necessary parts. Great, but how much? Well we arrived at Morgan and they took us around the factory. It was like stepping back 50 years after Standard-Triumph's then new Assembly Hall, but it was a fabulous place. So much craftsmanship went into those cars, and still does - it truly is just something else. They then gave us two complete front hub and brake assemblies ready to slide straight on to the existing front suspension pillars, and charged us next to nothing. Wonderful people!

Of course, once those brakes were on then frog eye Sprites were a target at every traffic light, and that storming third gear was by then good for something approaching 70mph. Move over Roger Cotting!

I was at college at this time of course, paid for by Standard-Triumph, and the course I was taking was set up with some semesters for academic work, and others for industrial work. The industrial semesters were naturally at Standard-Triumph, and at one point I was assigned to the Service Dept in London. Since home was in Coventry, this meant that the Morgan was travelling up and down the M1 motorway twice a week 100 miles each way, and it did sterling service. The picture was taken at the Service Department in London by the guy who produced a divisional newsletter, and he featured the Morgan-Triumph in one of the issues.

I drove that car for several years, and it proved very reliable, and a lot of fun.

Having left college, and with my student days at Standard-Triumph then complete, I got a job at the factory Sales and Service Training Centre prior to joining Export Sales. At that point armed with a salary rather more than I was getting as a student, I was able to buy a car from the factory fleet, and so sold the Morgan to a friend at college. Sadly, he was not as careful with it as he might have been, and eventually it was ruined in an accident, though he was unscathed.

That was really a great car!

*Written by Chris Holbrook*

## W.W.J.D. – Something to Ponder

If you were to look closely, you may notice people wearing cloth bracelets with the letters WWJD stitched into the fabric. People will tell you the letters stand for What Would Jesus Do? WWJD is actually not “What would Jesus do?” It really means, “What would Jesus drive?” There is a very heated debate about this issue.

One theory is that Jesus would tool around in an old Plymouth because the Bible says, “God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden in a Fury.”

But in Psalm 83, the Almighty clearly owns a Pontiac and a Geo. The passage urges the Lord to, “pursue your enemies with your Tempest and terrify them with your Storm.”

Perhaps, however, God also favors Dodge pickup trucks, because Moses’ followers are warned not to go up a mountain, “until the Ram’s horn sounds a long blast.”

Some scholars insist that Jesus drove a Honda but didn’t like to talk about it. As proof, they cite a verse in St. John’s gospel where Christ tells the crowd, “For I did not speak of my own Accord...”

Meanwhile, Moses rode an old British motorcycle, as evidenced by a Bible passage declaring that “the roar of Moses’ Triumph is heard in the hills.”

And Joshua drove a Triumph sports car with a hole in its muffler: “Joshua’s Triumph was heard throughout the land.”

Finally, perhaps following Jesus’ lead, the Apostles car pooled in a Honda: “The Apostles were in one Accord!”

## Ba-Da-Bing: Larry’s Big Thank You

It was an honor to serve as your vice president this past year as the DTSC moves towards greatness in achieving these goals:

**BA:** To enjoy all that motorsports has to offer with others of the same interest.

**DA:** To have in the club the spirit of youth, wide-eyed with awe and excitement, yet not being too serious; and always guiding with the wisdom of age.

**BING:** To continue to emphasize that when you belong to the DTSC all members are amongst friends.

So, you want to have a Rally? Thinking about a driving tour, a car show, a tech session? Hosting a national car event like the VTR, perhaps helping with the DTSC club newsletter or web site?

You know, all the above is not just wishful thinking, but in fact can and will happen. With your help of course. And all it will take is remembering three simple steps above. Ba-Da-Bing!

Thanks to all of you again. Serving as your vice president was the “funnest” thing I’ve done in a long time.

Sincerely,  
Larry Tomaszycski



Larry Tomaszycski last year at the Pinewood Derby event at the Royal Canadian Legion.

## Welcome New Member

*Please extend a warm welcome to our newest member!*

**Andre’ Bassick**  
**Julianna Bassick**  
8419 Stout Ave.  
Warren, MI 48093  
586-754-4781  
ADBSTANG@aol.com

1962 TR-3B black  
1967 TR-4A royal blue  
1968 TR 250 white  
1968 TR 250 BRG  
1968 TR 250 white  
1968 TR 250 valencia blue  
1967 Ford Mustang springtime yellow  
1930 Ford A Tudor black

## Winter British Knights

*A series of British-only Car Cruise-in nights to be held on the third Wednesday of each month through March, 2003. Evenings, from 6:30pm until whenever.*

*All British car clubs and owners are cordially invited to join the Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club in enjoying these summer evenings in the company of fellow British car enthusiasts, while also enjoying great food and spirits.*

### February:

**BRAVO!** Italian Restaurant  
29047 Utica Road, Roseville  
586-775-4500

### January & March:

Page’s Food & Spirits  
23621 Farmington Road, Farmington  
248-477-0099

For more information contact Dave & Laurie Carlson:  
davida49@aol.com 248-426-0124, or Sue Snyder:  
snyldog@yahoo.com 586-979-4875.

## Appreciating the Under-Appreciated Triumph TR7 Spider



Jenny Pawlak, of the Illinois Sports Owners Association, drives the autocross at the VTR convention in Red Wing, Minnesota this past summer. This photo is significant because it clearly shows the reflective red badging that was used on the Spider model of the TR7.

Written by Richard Truett

At a recent meeting of the Detroit Triumph Sports Car Club, a local dentist said he wanted to sell his 1980 TR7 convertible. Any reasonable offer, he said, would get it out of his garage. A picture revealed that it was no ordinary TR7, but one of the special edition Spider models built between April and August 1980. He was the original owner. The car had just 48,000 miles. As with most TR7s, it needed minor body, mechanical and electrical work.

The \$1,200 asking price was tempting. But I already had a restored 1971 TR6 and a 1982 TR8 occupying my two-car garage. The next day, Blake Discher, one of my best friends in the club, looked at the TR7 Spider and ending up buying the car for just \$600. Discher, owns a 1971 Stag, a 1976 TR6 and a 1968 Triumph 2000 sedan. He recently drove my TR8 -- his first time in a 'wedge' -- and came away impressed with Triumph's last sports car. So much so that he decided to take a chance on the TR7 Spider.

If there is such a thing as non-buyer's remorse, it set in on me. After looking over Blake's TR7 Spider, I realized there was really nothing tremendously or expensively wrong with it that couldn't be fixed in a few weekends. With little more than a basic tune-up and carburetor rebuild, the engine ran great. Then came: new shocks, struts and springs; rear wheel cylinders; a good used brake booster; a new clutch slave

cylinder; new a set of tires; some exhaust system work; and a new convertible top.

That's all it took for Blake's Spider to be roadworthy. I helped Blake a little on some of the smaller jobs. Like most guys who own a TR8, I wanted nothing to do with any TR7 -- until Blake's Spider bit me. The more I looked at his car, the more I liked it.

The TR7 Spider came in just one color: black. The glossy black paint, which some say is the highest quality paint job ever applied to a TR7 or TR8, is set off by the special red reflective decals and full-length pinstriping. The word 'Spider' appears on the rear quarters and trunk. The Triumph laurel wreath on the nose and the 'TR7' on the trunk are also done in red reflective material.

On the inside, the TR7 Spider came with a special shagadelic interior that Austin Powers would surely find groovy. The carpet is pewter colored semi-shag and the seats are upholstered in gray cloth that features black racing stripes. There's a TR8 steering wheel and TR8 alloy wheels for good measure. All TR7 Spiders came standard with air conditioning and an AM/FM cassette radio. Bosch Pilot front fog lights and a stainless steel luggage rack were optional. Price new: \$10,585.

The TR7 Spider was built in the Land Rover Solihull plant. These were the first TRs built at Solihull before all TR production was transferred there from Tri-

umph's home in Canley, Coventry in the summer of 1980. It is at the Solihull factory where the TR7 and TR8's quality improved dramatically. No one is quite sure how many Spiders were made. Some say the number is 1,208. In his book *Triumph in America*, Mike Cook, former British Leyland public relations executive, and well-known Triumph historian, says around 2,000 Spiders were made. In either case, the Spider is even rarer than the TR8.

So, I decided to go looking for a Spider of my own. Right away, I found several Spiders spread around the country for sale on the Internet. They weren't cheap, not even the ragged out ones. Luckily, the one that really caught my eye was located just 3 miles from my house. The ad stated that the car had low original miles. It looked pretty good in an online photo. When I called and asked about the car, the man said it had only 13,000 original miles. The asking price: \$3,000. I knew I wasn't going to spend three grand on a TR7, but I made an appointment to look at the car just to see if it really did have so few miles, and, if so, how flexible the price might be.

The owner, a burly man in his mid 50s, said he was the original owner. A close look at the car revealed that it suffered greatly under his stewardship. In 1982, someone tried to steal it, he said. The would-be thief pried off the ignition lock. Rather than fix it properly, he installed a push-button starter. Because he felt uneasy leaving the car unattended with a steering wheel that could not be locked, he only drove the car around his neighborhood.

He also said that he hadn't driven the Spider in a long time because he could no longer fit behind the wheel. That accounted for the low miles. A look at the original upholstery and carpet revealed no wear, but a lot of dirt and a few removable stains. His story seemed credible. I could tell from the freshness of the body hardware that the car did indeed have 13,545 original miles. All the belts and hoses were factory original, as were the tires and convertible top.

There was a nasty mess under the hood. A carburetor or electrical fire melted 90 percent of the engine wiring harness and ruined the throttle cable. Somehow the engine started and idled as smooth and quiet as a Toyota engine. The clutch worked OK. But the turn signals, horn, headlights and brake lights did not. The emergency

*Continued on next page*

# Even With 13,545 Original Miles, Owner Still Asks Too Much

From previous page

brake was disconnected, and the rear brakes were not working. The body had a sizable dent in between the taillights. Because the car had been rustproofed when new and stored inside all its life, there was no rust, just a few bad scuffs.

When bargaining time rolled around, I said the car was too much work, a much bigger project than I really wanted. I mentioned that the ad said nothing about all the mechanical problems and missing parts. That was just a tactic to try to lower the price. I really wanted the car. I had a garage full of spare parts, and I saw nothing wrong that I couldn't fix quickly with a minimum of cost and effort.

I said I would be interested if the deal was irresistible. Soon \$3,000 became \$2,000. Then it became \$1,800. Still, I balked. I mentioned 'cash' a few times. A few moments later, the price dropped to \$1,500. I then shook his hand and promised him cash the next day.

But there's a lesson here. No matter how well you think you know British cars -- and I have owned around 20 -- they always



The engine bay of a typical TR7. The air cleaners are incorrect in this example and the valve cover should be medium blue.

have a way of surprising you. My new TR7, despite a fairly close examination, turned out to be in deplorable condition -- which is probably why the price went from \$3,000 to \$1,500 in less than two minutes. There are some people in this world who should not own British sports cars, and the man

from whom I bought the TR7 Spider is one of them.

The first thing I did upon getting the car home was give it a thorough cleaning to get rid of all the papers and junk that had been left in the car over the years. I found a few brake springs and small parts in the trunk. Then I gave the car its first tune-up since Ronald Reagan was in the White House.

Out came the car's original Unipart spark plugs, which, shockingly, were only finger tight in their holes. I wrestled with the oil filter housing for a half-hour before it finally came off. My guess is that also hadn't been removed in decades. After the oil change, I flushed the cooling system and

*Continued on next page*



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ENGLISH CAR REPAIR

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## Learning to Like Wedgies - Try It!

*From previous page*

put in a new thermostat. I installed the new throttle cable and drove the car around the block a few times. Except for weak brakes and a clutch hydraulic system that needed bleeding, the car seemed to run and drive fine -- and, I noticed, unusually quick for a TR7. The engine sounded great. I've come to really like the high-pitched whine it makes when revved hard.

After 45 minutes or so behind the wheel, I felt I could trust the TR7 enough for the 12-mile trip to Blake's house so we could compare Spiders -- and perhaps pat ourselves on the back for two great deals.

I never made it.

The first stop, to the gas station for a high protein tank of super unleaded, nearly cost me my life. The tank was about half full when I heard a sloshing noise, like water hitting the pavement. I looked under the car and saw gasoline pouring from the tank and dousing the muffler, which was smoking and dangerously close to combustion. I felt near death or at least a major catastrophe. I quickly put the nozzle back in the pump and pushed the car over to the corner of the gas station.

I let the tank drain. Then I jacked the front of the car up to force more fuel from the tank. After I got out all the fuel I could, I started the car and headed home, staying in the right lane and driving with the emergency flashers on. I felt a little like Slim Pickens at the end of Doctor Strange-love. Remember that scene where he straddles a loaded nuclear missile, waving his cowboy hat and hootin' and hollerin' as it falls from a B-52? I wasn't making those kinds of noises. Mine were more akin to prayers.

I hoped the fuel leak was just a bad seal around the sending unit or a dry-rotted hose. But it was much worse than that. The top of the tank was rusted through in several places. Then I realized the previous owner obviously knew about the leak because the tank was nearly empty when I bought the car. The leaky tank was just the start of the bad news.

When I got the car home, I noticed green fluid on the ground at the front of the car. The radiator had developed a couple of small leaks. More surprises were in store: When I unbolted the clutch master cylinder for the rebuild, I found that one of



A pair of 1980 TR7 Spiders, probably built just days apart, sitting in snow for perhaps for the first time! Blake Discher's on the left, and Richard Truett's on the right.

the mounting ears had snapped and that it had been rigged in place with a big washer. When I pulled off the left rear brake drum, I found nothing inside except the brake shoes. All the hardware for the emergency brake was gone. So were most of the springs. The wheel cylinders on both sides were rusted frozen.

These problems made me angry and disappointed. I was hoping for a quick and easy project that I could knock out in a couple of weekends. My plan was this: After fixing the electrical and mechanical problems and a giving the car a thorough cleaning, the Spider would stay if I liked it as much as I thought I did. I would send it off to the body shop and have it restored in time for show season next spring. If not, I would have a roadworthy TR7 Spider with incredibly low miles. I could sell the car at a good profit to someone who could give it a paint job and have a show car. Now none of this could be done before winter set in. The car was going to need more extensive and expensive repairs than I bargained for.

When I thought about it about to do with the car, I realized that with a little patience and a lot of elbow grease, I could add a very rare and interesting TR to my collection. There are not many Spiders left. Based on the cars I've seen for sale, most of the surviving Spiders no longer have their original upholstery or their unique decals. Though the TR7 isn't the most desirable TR in the series, the Spider has become quite collectible. Now I had the chance to own what must be one of the lowest mileage, most original examples left.

I made a list of everything needed to make the car healthy. First, I hit eBay. Then I called the usual suspects in the used TR parts business. Next, I perused the catalogs of The Roadster Factory, Rimmer Broth-

ers, Moss Motors and Victoria British. I ordered as many new parts as possible and bought the rest used.

In two weekends, I did a complete brake job, rebuilt the clutch hydraulics, installed a good used fuel tank, a good used engine wiring harness and a used ignition lock. I had the radiator recored. The electrical problems took two days to track down and correct. Whenever something goes wrong in a classic British sports car, the first thing people do is blame Lucas. Even I do that, though I know better. The TR7 Spider's electrical problems were not due to manufacturing or quality defects, but owner misuse, abuse and neglect. For instance, there were two peeled wires under the dash that had been used to power something. The wires were touching each other causing a fuse to blow, which knocked out half a dozen electrical components.

Strangely, both high and low beam headlights on both sides were burned out. When the lights didn't come on, I blamed Lucas and figured there must be a bad switch, ground or relay. I spent hours checking connections, fuses, wires and relays.

*Continued on page 10*



Richard Truett's 1982 TR8 which boasts a 3.9 litre Range Rover V8 engine.



## DTSC Pinewood Derby

Sunday, February 9, 2003 at 1:00pm  
Royal Canadian Legion  
Eleven Mile Road, Royal Oak



The contest consists of designing and building a small wooden racecar from a kit that meets certain prescribed criteria and specifications. The derby is run in heats to determine fastest cars with the cars starting by gravity from a standstill on a track and run down an inclined ramp to a finish line, unaided.

### *Rules, Specifications and Fine Print*

**Design.** The intent of the Organisers and the Club is for cars to be purpose built for this event and that the shape, color, accessories, decals, etc. should be that of a British marque or model as opposed to the usual "hot rod", "dragster" or American type car seen at traditional Pinewood Derby's.

**Classes.** Competition will be based on the following four (4) categories: 1) Members, 2) Associates (aimed at adult, females), 3) Family Members (aimed at boys and girls 16 years old or less) and 4) Classics \*\*(vintage Pinewood Derby cars from your first childhood). Additionally, awards will also be presented to best and/or most authentic British car. \*\* Note: Each registrant will be allowed one entry in the Classic class in addition to their required British entry in one of the other three classes noted above.

**Registration/Inspection.** Pre-registration is requested in order to help us to better plan this, our first such event, however, is not mandatory. Registration on the day of the event is allowed. Each car must pass weigh-in and inspection by the Official Inspection Committee before it will be allowed to compete. If at registration a car does not pass inspection, the owner will be informed of the reason (s) for failure and will be given 10 minutes in which to make the necessary adjustments. No adjustments or modifications will be allowed on any car after it passes inspection unless the car is damaged in handling or in a race. The Committee has the right to disqualify those cars that do not or cannot meet the specifications.

**Kits/Material.** For most, it is highly recommended that the Official Grand Prix Pinewood Derby Kit be purchased which includes the correct axles and wheels as well as the basic wooden body to facilitate building your model and meeting the above race specifications. They are available at many local hobby and sporting goods stores that handle Scouting materials for less than \$4.00.

**Costs.** For those who wish to purchase their own Kit or material, a \$5.00/car entry fee will be assessed to cover the costs of trophies and awards for the Derby. If you would like the Organisers to provide you with the basic Kit noted above as well, the cost per car will be \$10.00. No entry fees will be charged for the additional cars entered in the Classic class.

**Food/Beverages.** The Club will provide a light afternoon meal, however, participants are allowed by the Legion to bring in their own munchies and other snacks. All beverages must be purchased from the Legion.

**Width.** The overall width of the car shall not exceed 2 3/4 inches.

**Length.** The overall length of the car shall not exceed 7 inches.

**Weight.** The weight of the car shall not exceed 5 ounces. No loose materials of any kind (such as lead shot) are permitted in the car. The car may be hollowed out and built up to the maximum weight (Kit weighs substantially less than 5 ozs.) provided the additional material is securely built into the body, not taped on for example.

**Wheels.** Only the Official BSA/Cub Scout Grand Prix Pinewood Derby wheels and axles are permitted. Wheels may be sanded slightly to remove any imperfections, but the treads must be left flat. Burrs and other minor imperfections in the axles may likewise be removed with a fine emery cloth, etc. Wheel bearings, washers and bushings, etc. are prohibited.

**Clearance.** A minimum of 3/8" clearance to underside of body must be maintained in order to clear track lane strip.

**Springing.** The car shall not ride on any type of springs or suspension. The car must be freewheeling with no starting device.

**Details.** Details and accessories such as steering wheel, driver, motor, windscreen, etc. are permissible as long as they do not exceed the maximum width, length and weight specifications.

Additional information regarding logistics, conduct of the race, heats, etc. will be provided on "race day". Any questions/concerns with these specifications or other event issues should be referred to the Organisers, Brian Sims at (248-814-8441, [simscl@ameritech.net](mailto:simscl@ameritech.net)) or Terry Walters at (734-464-8149, [twalters@twmi.rr.com](mailto:twalters@twmi.rr.com)).

(Vintage Pinewood Derby cars shown courtesy of member Ken Pardonnet)

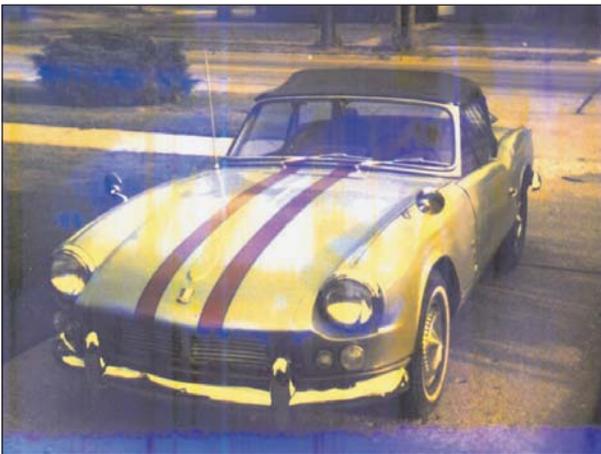
## My First Triumph: Sharon Simon Gets A Triumph of Her Own



Sharon sits in her 1965 Triumph Spitfire. Blame husband Mike for getting her hooked!

In the summer of 1965 (sounds like a movie theme) I met Mike Simon. At the time, he was driving a red 1963 Triumph TR4. We started dating, and before I knew it he was teaching me how to drive a stick shift. Well, at the time, I was driving a plain old 1956 Ford and soon I wanted to get one of those little British cars too.

So we started searching and although



I don't remember how or why but I ended up buying a black with red interior 1965 Spitfire. Yes, it was fun to drive. One time a friend of mine and I drove up to Mackinaw City for a weekend. It was in January and there was snow piled up three cars higher than my little car! Stop signs were buried so you had to stop at every intersection and creep out to see if another car was coming. We had a great time.

When it snowed enough to where it caused most cars to get stuck, my Spitfire never did. That was one great thing about

that car. Of course, I would not attempt this now. If help was needed to get me moving forward I would put the car in gear, get out and push forward, jump back in and go! Unfortunately, I'm not nearly as limber now as I was then.

Cruising to Ted's on Woodward Avenue was also a feat in itself. Most times there was a line up to get into the parking lot and lucky me would get stuck on that darn hill. If you're from around this area you remember hand-brake, clutch, and gas. To me this was the closest thing to owning an expensive sports car of which I could not afford. Even if I did though, the fun and the memories could not have been better.

Alas, the fun it ended though one night. At the time, I was living with my sister and her family.

Very early in the morning, about 4 or 5am, a knock on the door awoke my brother-in-law. The neighbor across the street asked if I was in the house. As he was leaving for work, he saw my car upside down in the street. He thought perhaps I'd come around the corner too fast and had flipped over!

What happened? Vandals had done a nasty deed. They'd tried to tip over another neighbor's VW Bug, but could not, so instead they took an umbrella found in the VW and put scratches all over my Spit-

fire's paintwork and then flipped it! My car had been freshly repainted and you could see fingerprints left by the vandals. I hadn't been in my job too long and had to get to work, so Mike agreed to stay at the house to wait for the Roseville police to take some prints. They didn't bother. Insurance paid the claim and Mike repainted it. This time Cadillac Silver with candy apple stripes down the front and rear. We thought it best to sell it while it looked fresh.

Now, if you read Mike's My First Triumph article, you know how the story continued!

### Low-Mileage TR7 Spider

*From page 8*

Only on a whim did I check the headlights themselves and find that they were getting the required voltage. Later, I replaced the springs, shocks and struts, bringing the total parts bill to around \$1000. Now I am feeling pretty good about having a mechanically excellent TR7 Spider with 13,600 miles for just \$2,500.

Few people in the Detroit Triumph Sports Car Club own either a TR7 or a TR8. Both cars still are not really accepted among the TR faithful. Both Blake and I feel that if more people would just drive a TR7 or TR8, they would warm up to the car. Blake's attitude toward the TR7 shifted dramatically after he got to know his car. There's no doubt in his mind that the TR7 is true Triumph TR.

He noted that it handles well and offers decent performance. That it's comfortable, has a large interior and big trunk. It's also weather tight. More importantly, the styling has held up so well that few people can believe the car is 22 years old. There are plenty of spare parts available, and they are extremely affordable. Rust is perhaps the only thing that would make a TR7 too expensive a proposition to restore. All the panels and fenders are welded onto the car's unibody, making repairs difficult and expensive.

Looking at the serial numbers and paperwork, Blake and I discovered that our cars were built just days apart and sold by the same dealership, Hodges Imports on Woodward Avenue in Detroit. My car is serial number 400390; Blake's is 400612. They were probably at Hodges at the same time 22 years ago. Now, both Spiders have been rescued from uncertain futures.

## December Board Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Tamara Barber, Pat Barber, Dan Campana, Dave Carlson, Laurie Carlson, Blake Discher, Ken Pardonnet, Mike Simon, Sharon Simon, Dave Snyder, Sue Snyder, Rich Truett, John Uloth, and Jim Watch.

The meeting was called to order. Dave Snyder welcomed the board.

### Committee Reports:

**Membership:** No membership update.

**Most Driven:** John Uloth reports that everyone has been contacted regarding the submittal of their mileage totals.

**Participation Points:** The final list is due as at the December meeting.

**Treasury:** Information privleged for members only. Direct inquiries to Dave Carlson.

**Web site:** Pat reported that the web site has had approximately 20,000 hits since its inception.

### Recent Activities:

- Nov. 20: First Winter British Knights at the west side location. Twenty-three people attended the event.
- Nov. 24: Kart 2 Kart racing was again a popular event. We had a great showing and lots of fun.

**Upcoming Activities:** Information elsewhere in this issue.

### Old Business:

- The next member meeting will include the election of officers. There will be a place on the ballot for write-in candidates.
- The board voted by secret ballot for the recipient of the Hard Luck Award. The winner will be given the prize at the Year End Party.
- The club officers will select the Tony Award recipient tonight. Mike Simon is to contact the Reinowski family regarding the presentation. We will see if Dave Murphy is willing to introduce the award and the honored recipient.
- The next member meeting is also a collection date for any children's toys you wish to contribute for Christmas distribution.
- Fifteen 2003 DTSC Calendars are still available. All expenses have been met with the current sales.
- The Membership Surveys are coming in at a good rate. Pat Barber has received and tallied about 35 to date.
- The 2003 events calendar is filling up. Blake gave more information on his proposed 24 hour rally around Michigan and the Carlson's provided details on the Watkins Glen trip.
- The proposed 2003 Board Members will be: Chairman, Mike Simon; Dan Campana, Blake Discher, Fraser Mackenzie, Ken Pardonnet, Mark Rollinson, Brian Sims, Sue Snyder, Larry Tomaszycski, Rich Truett, John Uloth, and Jim Watch.

### New Business:

- We will be giving Diane, the Legion's barkeeper, a club gift again this year.
- We need to take care of the donation we make to the Legion for use of their space.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tamara Barber, Secretary

## For Sale and Items Wanted

**For Sale:** Starting that winter TR6 restoration? I have new, still in the box fenders made in England (front-early) & rear-all) & the associated fasteners you need. Why do all that welding and patching when you can have brand new, bolt-on sheetmetal!? I've done it both ways and I'll never go back to the patching when panels are available! \$1,000 (firm) for the lot. Call Terry Walters, 734-464-8149 or email [twalters@twmi.rr.com](mailto:twalters@twmi.rr.com) (11/02)

**1980 TR8 convertible:** Carbured, Panasperts, uprated brakes and suspension, GM alternator, 44,000 miles, garaged winters, runs great. Many extra parts. Call Paul Amaranth, 248-650-2428 or email [paul@auroragr.com](mailto:paul@auroragr.com). (11/02)

**For Sale:** Spitfire 1500 engine ,ASP trans, rear end from 74 Spit (said 45,000 miles on speedo, ran well before pulled.) Misc. other Spit parts. '71GT6 complete roof section with mint hatch, good glass, rear side vents and headliner. 1500 Spit. Open to offers. Call Wayne at 519-253-8870. (11/02)

**Triumph TR 2-8, Spitfire, GT6, Stag, Herald, Vitesse & TR10 PARTS.** Call Ed at 248-828-8243 or email needs to [trispere@aol.com](mailto:trispere@aol.com)

*For Sale and Items Wanted ads are published in the DTSC Review as a free service for our members and others with items of interest to our members. Ads are printed for three consecutive issues or the editor's whim, taste and fancy unless a longer duration is requested. Send info to [review@detroittriumph.org](mailto:review@detroittriumph.org).*

## This Month's Featured Regalia Items



Embroidered Ball Cap \$10



Cloisonne Lapel Pin \$2

*For mail orders or information contact the DTSC Regalia Chairman Sue Snyder at 586-979-4875 or email [snydley@comcast.net](mailto:snydley@comcast.net)*

## DTSC Membership Renewal

It's that time again, your 2003 DTSC dues are due on January 1, 2003. Please use this form to renew your membership and update your information for the DTSC Directory. DTSC dues are still a great value at only US\$30. If you do not wish to cut this form from the Review, it is available online on the club's website at: <http://www.detroittriumph.org>. **Members in good standing as of February 15, 2003 will be included in the 2003 Membership Directory to be mailed with the March issue of the DTSC Review.**

DTSC Member \_\_\_\_\_ Driving Companion \_\_\_\_\_

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I am interested in the following:  Tech info  Mech help  Tours  Rallies  Shows  Social

I'd like to help the club in it's activities and events.

British vehicles owned (please include year, marque, model and color)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and mail to: Dave Jonker, DTSC Membership Chair, 22609 Carolina, St. Clair Shores, MI 48080

### Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club

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