



TR TIMES

Kansas City Triumphs Sports Car Club

Volume 43—Number 2 April 2021



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DIRECTOR'S DRIPPINGS Finally Spring

By Steve Peak, Director



In the movie "Groundhog Day", Bill Murray finds himself inexplicably living the same day over and over again. For the last year that seems very familiar.

Many of us planned and tried to get out on Sir John Black's Birthday and drive our Triumphs, but Mother Nature had other plans. So we settled for some outdoor, indoor, and partially covered pictures sent for our representation, thanks to Ed Curry for organizing this.

With the warmer weather coming we hope to be able to get out and see some familiar faces. We are going to meet for the April 1st Club Night Out, outside at Pegah's for good food and conversations. The Kansas City Automotive Museum is starting back up their Cars and Coffee on April 3rd 8-10am.

We have drives planned for April 17th to Lewis & Clark State Park and the Olpe Chicken Run on April 24th.

We hope May continues with more successful outings. From Club Night Out, on May 6th to British Car week kicking off with the Picnic at Black Hoof Park on May 23rd. A mid-week trip to Kactus Creek Croquet on May 26th.

Please reference page 20 or the Club website for all the calendar events that are upcoming. We hope we can start seeing more of everyone in the coming months and get away from "Groundhog Day".



Spring Is In The Air!

Cover Shot

**Faster than a speeding bullet...
It's SUPERMARK, the TR MAN!**

**Mark Gillissen and his TR6 on
Drive Your Triumph Day**

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 4/1 Club Night Out Back at Pegah's**
- 4/17 Lewis & Clark Drive**
- 4/24 Olpe Chicken Run Revival**

UPCOMING ROAD TRIPS

LEWIS & CLARK STATE PARK DRIVE Saturday, April 17

By Larry Taylor, Assistant Director



The first driving event of the year is here! Put those Covid Blues behind you and blow the dust off your TR. It's the great outdoors, so plenty of room for Social Distancing. Drive to and picnic at Lewis & Clark State Park (801 Lakecrest Blvd, Rushville, MO 64484, <https://mostateparks.com/park/lewis-and-clark-state-park>) on Saturday April 17th. We will meet at The Station, 15399 NW Brink Meyer Rd, Parkville, MO 64152 (I-435 and 45 Hwy) at 10:15 on Saturday, April 17th and will depart promptly at 10:30. From The Station, the park is about a 30 mile drive north on Hwy 45. If you are late and miss the start, go north on Hwy 45 for about 30 miles and turn left into the park entrance.

Bring your own picnic lunch, drinks and optional lawn chairs. We have rented a shelter house by the lake that has tables, water, electricity and a grill. We will furnish charcoal and cooking utensils if you want to grill hotdogs, brats, burgers or whatever. The MG club is also invited so lock your cars! After lunch you are on your own enjoy the lake, stay and visit with club members, enjoy live music and wine at the nearby Riverwood Winery, explore downtown Weston or head for home.

Consider this drive to be a "short drive and eat" and an opportunity to get your car running and checked out before Olpe and the Slim Run. I hope you can join us.

OLPE CHICKEN RUN Saturday, April 24

By Warren Wood, Secretary



The Olpe Chicken Run is back! After a pandemic induced cancelation last year, there appears to be great interest in reviving this run. It's a long way to go for some fried chicken but the sight of 60-some-odd Little British Cars in a caravan is something to behold.

Destination is the Olpe Chicken House (south of Emporia, KS) on Saturday, April 24, with a \$13 per person buffet meal at mid-day. We would caravan about 104 miles along some back roads to Olpe from the McDonalds in Gardner, KS, (with a pit stop midway) and eat lunch at the Chicken House, with the drive back home being on your own. Other area British car clubs have been invited to join us.

I last told you that the Olpe restaurant wanted to limit this event to 45 people but the manager now says they could increase that number to 60 if our group had enough interest, as things are opening up toward the demise of the pandemic.

Secondly, on the suggestion of a club member, I asked the manager if they could accommodate folks who preferred not to eat inside and instead wanted to get their lunch in a box for eating outside in the parking lot. She said they could work with us on that, too. We don't have the details worked out yet, but I'll keep you apprised as new information develops.

So, the latest info is that our maximum number of guests inside has increased, and we can allow for even more if there are those who prefer to eat a box lunch outside the restaurant. (I don't believe there are any picnic tables outside, but I am not sure about that.)

Road Trips, Cont.

SLIM RUN

Saturday, May 1

By Denny Hale, KC MG Club



This year's SLIM run will be a little different than previous years. With the need for distancing, and the reluctance to be crowded indoors, we're going to make it a day trip rather than an overnigher, to eliminate crowding around a dinner table and spending the night in a motel. It'll still be a nice, comfortable drive at a leisurely pace, and a chance to hang out with friends.

The May 1st event will start in Harrisonville MO, work its way across Missouri with no speeds greater than 65 mph, and end with a picnic lunch at Ha Ha Tonka State Park in Camdenton MO. KCMGCC has made a few stops there over the years, but we've never made it a destination to spend time at. It's always just been a timed stop on the way to someplace else.

To give you an idea of the day, from Harrisonville to the park is about 134 miles. Ruth & I will be narrating and keeping the group together with the CB as we drive. You can pack your own lunch, or stop at one of several places in Camdenton to get something, then meet us at the shelter house (only 7 miles) if you'd rather. We'll arrive at a shelter house along the Lake of the Ozarks around noon. After lunch, you'll have the afternoon to visit the park's sites, enjoy walking trails or just kick back at the shelter and have a beer; maybe pop a bonnet and point & talk. We'll have a park brochure for you with site descriptions and maps, but if you're thinking about going you should go to their website ahead of time and read about the park. It has a very interesting history.

After enjoying sites at the park, folks can find their own way home, leaving whenever you want, and driving at your own pace. Cars can pair up and travel home in small groups if you're concerned about this being a 275 or 300 mile trip for your car so early in the driving season. Attend the KCMGCC Spring Tune-up tech session on April 10th if you'd like help or advice to get it ready. An Evite for SLIM2021 will come out with details in mid-April. We look forward to seeing everybody there; MGs and TRs.

JOIN THE VINTAGE TRIUMPH REGISTER

VTR is the national club of Triumph enthusiasts and sponsoring organization for our Kansas City Triumphs Sports Car Club.

VTR membership provides:

- The Vintage Triumph Magazine, a bi-monthly color publication
- National VTR Convention, this year in Edmond, OK, Sept 14 –18th
- Website with reference materials and member only sections
- Record trace certificates for TR2/TR3/TR3A/TR3B (\$35 Fee)
- Clothing, regalia and exclusive items

\$35 annual membership. Sign up at vtr.org



Find us on:
facebook®

<https://www.facebook.com/kansascitytriumphs/>

DRIVE YOUR TRIUMPH DAY

Lousy Midwest weather once again prevailed on Sir John Black's birthday. A combination of 14-degree temperature and roads white with salt and slush made a very poor day for a drive. Why do we try to celebrate his birthday when it's such a dismal time of the year? How about celebrating his wedding anniversary or the day he bought The Standard Motor Company? He must have had some special event occurring on a balmy spring or fall day.

Not to be deterred fourteen members sent photos of fifteen cars to the event organizer. Some made it out to the driveway, others stayed snug in their garage. Let's hope for a better day next year.



Bob Aguilar



Mark McCracken



SUPERMARK Gillissen



Larry Taylor



Keith Jordan

Drive Triumph Day Cont.



Steve Olson



Tom Spornitz



Paul McBride



Jeff Taylor—Two cars in one selfie!



Steve Vehlewald

Drive Triumph Day Cont.



Warren Wood

Craig Simon—*The Talk'n TR*

Bob Haefner



Steve Vehlewald

MEMBER UPDATES...

Projects, Problems, and Progress

Craig Simon tried to drive his Triumph February 10th. Didn't work out. Here's what happened.

Triumph - "Who the hell opened the garage door!!"

Me - "I did. It's Sir...."

Triumph - "Well close it! It's 10 freezing degrees outside!"

Me - "It's Sir John's Birthday. We are going to meet our Triumph group at a local Park".

Triumph - "I don't care if we are going to meet the Queen! Close the bloody garage door and put my damn cover back on!"

Me - "But it's a tradition".

Triumph - "So is the Monkey Buffet Festival in Thailand or chasing a 9lb wheel of cheese down a hill, but they weren't doing it in 10-degree weather! Close the damn garage door!"

Needless to say, I covered my Triumph back up and closed the garage door. I understand other club members had similar conversations.

Kenny Wymore has been real busy with his TR4.

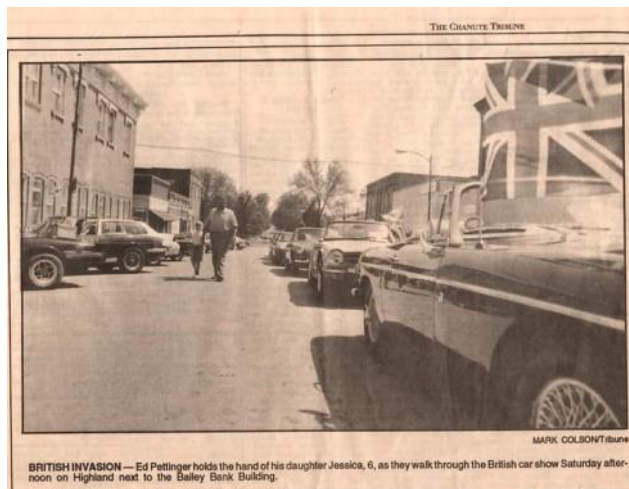
- Upgraded to high torque starter.
- Replaced points with Pertronix.
- Replaced coil with Flamethrower coil.
- Replaced trans tunnel with 2-piece plastic tunnel.
- Replaced dash lights with LEDs
- Oil change and added a magnetic drain plug.
- Transmission fluid change.
- Greased all Zerk fittings

Ed Curry attempted to tow a TR3 rolling frame. Enlisted help of son with a mighty Fiat 500, the only family vehicle with a hitch. Relying on a tow bar custom made for an MGB and the famous last words, "Trust me, I've done this before" what could possible go wrong? Disaster quickly ensued when the Fiat turned but the frame when straight. Will have to rethink project.

Bob Aguilar has an eye out for his next ride. He will skip the whole EV craze and go for the WV Air Jet vehicle



Steve Olson's TR8 is barely visible way back in this line of cars in Chanute. It was completely bone stock and still clocked 114 MPH before I had to jump on the brake pedal. Too bad we can't still hold that event. Even my Midget managed 91 once. Most older Brit cars ran in the 90s!



TR TIMES

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Starter Replacement: During the Plague

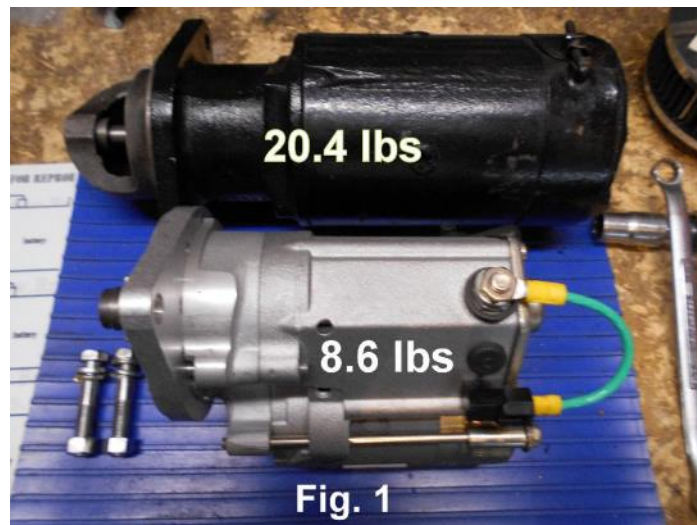
By Paul McBride

The original starter on my '57 TR3 had begun to sound a bit tired...maybe even sick...perish the thought. A check of the voluminous records I have kept since 1970 show that there may be good reason since it's been in service 177K miles (112K on my watch). I had renewed the rubber sleeve coupling between the drive and the pinion twice and replaced the brush sets twice during these 50+ years. And then there was the event that could be described as a near catastrophe:

Returning from the 1984 St. Louis All British Car Show a gaggle of Kansas City MG's, Triumphs, and the late Ray Huffman's fab 1935 Bentley pulled into a service station to refuel. I filled up, climbed in and hit the starter button. Nothing. Raised the bonnet to the acrid smell of an electrical fire coming from the starter.... grabbed a crescent wrench and noticing the solenoid on the firewall was doing the same I gave it a good whack. Everything calmed down and my fellow travelers gave me a push.... joy. Later at home with the starter removed, I discovered the rear bush missing and the burnt armature wedged against the field coils. Rick Torres, the owner of a foreign car service, supplied a used armature that checked out and with a new bushing staked in place the old starter was good to go. Today I would buy a new starter.... which is the subject of this article.

I have a pragmatic view of ORIGINALITY on our increasingly ancient Triumphs. Modifications that improve the drivability and longevity, e.g., Petronic ignition, spin on oil filters, real air cleaners, LED lights, Hi-torque starters are rationalized by me to be OK. For those who want their Triumph to be as close to the way it came out of the factory door.... that's great too. I do hope all Triumphs are driven, as decomposition happens all too quickly if they are not. The Gear Reduction High Torque Starters had piqued my interest.

Here is a step-by-step description with photos of my installation in the TR3 during the snow & ice laden "Drive Your Triumph Day". The new starter is much smaller and lighter, weighing 12 lbs less than the original Lucas. (Fig. 1)



Removal of the old starter required making room to extricate from under the bonnet as the exhaust header pipe is a hindrance to lowering it to the floor. I removed the air cleaners, the large cable from the solenoid to the starter, the choke linkage and the linkage between the carbs. There are 2 bolts securing the starter to the engine. The lower one is accessed under the car and the upper from under the bonnet. A strong grip and some maneuvering will bring the starter up through the engine bay. (Fig. 2)



Starter Replacement Cont.

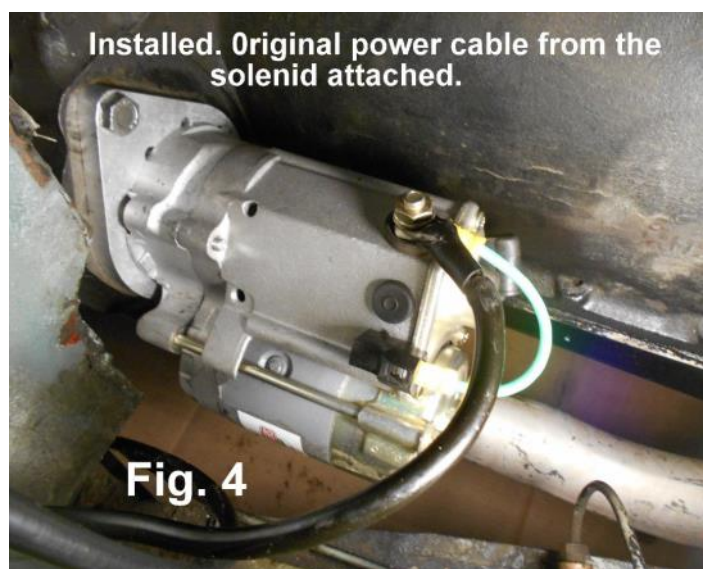
I purchased the starter from Classic Car Performance (British Starters). It was in stock, less than \$200 and shipping was included. It's the same one offered by many British car vendors and is manufactured by Gustafson. This particular starter is a replacement for TR2, TR3, TR3A's up to commission #TS 50,000 (April 1959). The later 3A's & 3B's require a different starter as they have a Bendix drive and the flywheel gear is different. The Classic Performance" website explains this clearly and they have starters for a wide range of British Cars. The mounting plate has multiple holes that allow rotating the body but that was not necessary in my application. The starter has a built-in solenoid but a by-pass wire is available and allows us to continue using the original solenoid (on the firewall) and a one cable attachment. This is preferable as one can activate the starter while under the bonnet...and is clearly explained and diagramed in the instructions. (Fig. 1A)



With the area and attaching bolts cleaned, it was time to install the starter. (Fig. 3)



I attached the lower bolt under the car and the upper bolt leaning over the engine bay. As many years have accumulated on me, as well as the car, some contortions have become more difficult. There was not enough space to place the lock washer and then the nut on the upper bolt. Together a thumb and finger will not fit. After failing this task with a flexible magnet and a grappling hook, I sprayed some fast drying carpet adhesive on the tip of my nitrile gloved index finger, and....KaZAAM!.... mission accomplished. There might have been an easier way, (reversing the bolt?) but memory escaped me. So, there it was lookin' great... and more important workin' great! (Fig. 4)



If you think you are smarter than the previous generation... 50 years ago the owner's manual of a car showed you how to adjust the valves. Today it warns you not to drink the contents of the battery.

WEDGE WORDS

By Steve Olson

Most know that Rover got the V8 engine that it used in nearly everything it built for decades, including the TR8, from General Motors. GM first used that aluminum V8 in the compact size Buick Special, Oldsmobile F85 and Pontiac Tempest. They called it the 215 cubic inch and it came with either a 2 bbl or in a slightly hotter version with a 4 bbl. All three makes used the same block but the heads were different. The Olds version may have been slightly higher performance. Very few Pontiac versions were sold and I don't know what heads they used. Customers and soon hot rodders and boat racers came to love the light weight and small exterior size. GM sold gobs of these cars in model years 61, 62, and 63. But then they gave up on the 215 and went back to cast iron. Ever wonder why?

Without actually doing any deep research it seems that GM had problems casting the block. They embedded the steel cylinder liners in the casting and a high percentage (I have heard as much as 50%) had to be scrapped because the liners had shifted out of line in the casting process or there were bubbles trapped in the aluminum. That made the bean counters grumpy. Then once the public started driving the cars there were too many warranty claims. Seems the coolant in use at the time was not kind to aluminum and American drivers weren't good about annual coolant flushes and replacement. By the time GM gave up on the engine the coolant makers had found solutions to that problem but a bit too late. As always GM kept making the cars bigger and heavier with each update and us customers kept asking for more power. The 215-bore spacing left almost no room for displacement to grow so bigger engines meant all new tooling. The bean counters won the arm-wrestling contest with the engineers and the sales department and so 1964 models switched back to cast iron blocks with aluminum heads and intake manifolds which was said to add only around 40 pounds.

When a Rover exec was visiting GM a year or so later, he supposedly spotted a 215 sitting in a corner and asked what that was. When told it was no longer

in use, he asked about buying the rights and the tooling. GM was happy not to have to haul all that off to the scrap yard and a deal was reached.

Rover solved the high rejection rate on casting the block by switching to steel liners pressed into place after the block was made. These are not wet liners like on the TR2-6 but are just thin steel liners inside aluminum bores. Rover also decided oil flow needed improvement and worked on that. In metric terms the engine was now 3.5 Liters which is exactly the same bore and stroke as the 215.

GM rated the engine as high, I think, as 175 horse power. Why did Rover only get 133 in the TR8? The big loss was NOT that they used twin SU and later Zenith carbs. Advertised horse power was now measured differently. In the early 60s horses were measured on an engine dyno without things like fans or alternators or air cleaners or restrictive exhaust.

By the time Rover got around to rating the TR8, horses were measured at the rear tires with all ancillaries in place. So you would expect numbers to be 15-20% less. Plus, by then emission laws mandated lower compression and various other smog reducing, power robbing devices like catalytic converters and air pumps. And power ratings were now often being understated to make it easier for the owner to get insurance. When a magazine tested the 1980 TR8 against the same year Corvette the TR was actually slightly faster. Granted 1980 was not Corvette's finest example.

Most are pleased that Triumph chose, or was forced to choose, the Rover V8 rather than its own V8 like the one used in the Stag which suffered from warranty issues of its own. Did you know the TR7 engine is just a Stag V8 with 4 cylinders missing? Did you know SAAB used that TR7 engine and that early on had Triumph build it for them? Did you know Rover SUVs used the same aluminum 215 V8 or upgraded versions of it till Ford became their owner and eventually forced them to switch to Ford motors? Did you care? Don't answer the last question. And check out an ad that Buick once used to show how light the little 215 was. I kinda miss the sexist ads of the 60s when shoes were really tall and shorts were really short.



GT6 SEAT RECOVERING

By Roger Elliott

My GT6 seats and transmission cover pieces were not in very good shape, so I decided to recover them as part of the GT6 restoration. The seats are rather unusual; the back is four separate pieces of vinyl and several pieces of foam and the inside bolster is actually fixed to the transmission tunnel instead of the seat. After struggling with the seats for quite some time, I decided to have professionals deal with the seats. I recovered the rest of the pieces myself.

I, also, recovered the radio tower as it was ripped up.



The Birth of the Modern Sports Car:

Datsun 240Z, Porsche 924, Triumph TR7 and Mazda RX-7

By David S. Wallens

Feb 24, 2021 | Classic Motor Sports. See full article for other cars

Triumph TR7: 1975-'81

You could argue that Triumph helped put the sports car in the hands of the average postwar enthusiast ever since they released their TR2 for the 1953 model year. Follow-up models carried on that tradition.



They also carried on a lot of that original architecture: Strip down a TR6 model, sold between 1969 and 1976, and you'll find a lot of 1950s DNA.

The TR7, released for 1975, was all new. The tag lines found in so many ads summed it up nicely: the shape of things to come.

That shape, specifically, was a wedge. Sleek. Wind-cheating. The TR7 looked nothing like the rest of the Triumph lineup. Only Lotus offered such machines, but their customer base came from a different tax bracket.

Behind the Wheel:

The TR7 was much closer to the 240Z, boasting a modern dash, good seats and a thick steering wheel. It just didn't offer the same thrust, but remember the times: The Z came out before performance hit the skids, with the Triumph just afterward.

Historical Perspective:

Despite its landmark status, the TR7 had a rough debut. Labor issues were blamed for a host of problems, including a long line of major mechanical troubles. Plus, initially the lineup didn't include a convertible.

While the TR7 sold well and eventually exorcized its demons—and added a drop-top model to the lineup—its place in history is not ideal. Yes, the TR7 has its fans, but when most people conjure up an image of a Triumph, it has wire wheels—either two or four.

Racing Pedigree:

The Triumph TR7's track career started on a strong note. On the car's first time out, Group 44 Inc. team boss Bob Tullius gave the TR7 an SCCA D Production title. He backed that up with four more consecutive titles. And then his team abandoned the TR7, favoring their Jaguar XJS Trans-Am program for the rest of 1976. Group 44 Inc. didn't totally forget the wedgy Triumphs, however, as they ran the V8-powered TR8 during the 1979 Trans-Am season; the effort was so dominating that Group 44 Inc. moved to IMSA competition for 1980 in response to the SCCA's competition adjustments.

Shopping Today:

The TR7 is a bit of an enigma. Some argue that once sorted, it's the best-driving Triumph this side of the TR8—basically a TR7 fitted with the infamous Buick/Rover V8. The TR7 and TR8 also represent Triumph's last sports cars, as the brand imploded in 1981. TR7 values, though, have remained low—very low.

Triumph built less than 2500 copies of the TR8, a true milestone car, for the 1978-'81 model years.

Advertorial

JAM SLIDE LOCK

As a long-time British car owner, I've grown to appreciate not only the cars themselves, but the many kindred spirits who love them as much as I do. We're part of a culture that chooses to be in the trenches with like-minded British car lovers. Often times, yes, with wrenches or repair manuals in hand, but nonetheless, discussing or fixing our favorite sports cars.

I choose to do the wrenching, repairs and upgrades myself, but there are many knowledgeable people who offered sage advice along the way. Through that I have gained confidence in helping others who are facing the same repairs I once needed help with.

Through my junior and senior years of high school I spent half days in school and the other half in a two-year Vo-Tech course in Auto Mechanics. I never aspired to be a mechanic, but I wanted to be able to repair my own cars.

My interest in American Muscle cars was brief as a teen but once I was turned on to British cars, though, there was no looking back. My first was a '78 Spitfire 1500 in 1984. Soon I acquired a '73 MGB GT, a '75 Midget, and 3 more Spitfires. I'll bet a number of readers will recognize this pattern, right? I've always wanted a vintage Mini, a 'big' Healey, a Sunbeam Tiger, etc. At only 56, there's plenty of time for those. More time than garage space.

Working my way through college, I restored classic and antique cars at Precision Restoration. It was long before the internet, so replacement parts were either found in Hemmings Motor News, or if replacements were nowhere to be found we hand-fabricated them.

Necessity is the mother of invention. One day at a car show all of these combined experiences gelled. Witnessing my bonnet collapse was the catalyst. With the slightest force on the prop rod lock, gravity accelerates a bonnet's descent at an incredible rate. Maybe it was an epiphany, but there was an instant recognition of a need for a safety device that would prevent Spitfire and GT6 prop rods from buckling no matter what force was applied.

As a member of the triumphexperience forum site, I posed the question in the Spitfire And GT6 chat room: "Has anyone experienced their bonnet suddenly falling?" Not knowing if mine had been a rare, random instance, I was a bit surprised to have so many replies. Turns out, it's a documented problem.

Quite a few replies mentioned that the cause had been operator error, having bumped the prop rod, along with others saying it had been a wind gust that lifted their bonnet just enough to offset the 'lock' in the prop rod.

I must have stared at the prop rod for an hour, sitting there on the tire. I pictured the devices that others described as their remedies and knew they all had a certain hokey appearance that would not have a professional appearance when used at car shows. I wanted Spitfire & GT6 owners to love the simplicity and professional look of a device that would complement their prop rod at car shows, not look like an afterthought. And every time they lift their bonnet at home, it would provide both security and peace of mind to know they could bump the prop rod and it would not fail.

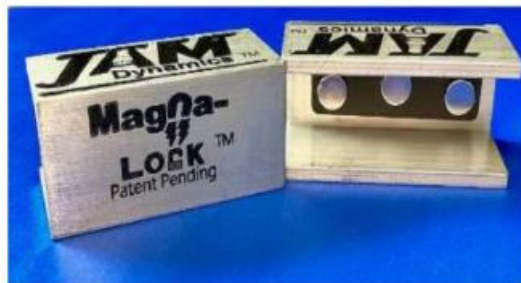
In my shop the fixtures were built to hydraulically press galvanized steel blanks into the exact shape and size required to fit both the upper and lower prop rod sections, positively locking them together with a simple slide of the lock. And thus, the Slide-Lock was born. To install it, you simply remove the bolt from the hinge of the prop-rod and slide the Slide-Lock™ up onto the upper rod. It resides there and is always ready to slide down into the lock position. For added strength, weatherproofing and aesthetics, I added a colorful outer jacket with a logo.



I gave away free samples to Spitfire and GT6 owners on the forum, requesting feedback on how they would like to see the product improved. Thank goodness for honest replies. I learned that one of my Slide-Locks had left a minor scratch on one person's prop rod paint. Someone else suggested offering them in other color choices. Slide Locks are now coated with a scratch-proof coating to protect your prop rod paint, and are available in red, yellow, white, black, and blue.

As simple as it is to install, I knew some Spitfire owners would prefer a device that required zero installation. So I developed the next level prop lock made from heavy gage brushed aluminum. You simply place the Magna-Lock™, onto either side of the prop rod hinge. Done! A trio of strong neodymium magnets holds it in place. When you want to lower your bonnet, pull the Magna-Lock™ off and place it in one of your parcel trays. It stays there until you need it next.

My burgundy '79 Spitfire has been the test-bed for the measurements, fittings, and R&D for all products we're developing. Some are still in the early stages while other products are being refined for final development. All are Spitfire and GT6 related. Upgrades that retain the authentic Triumph look.

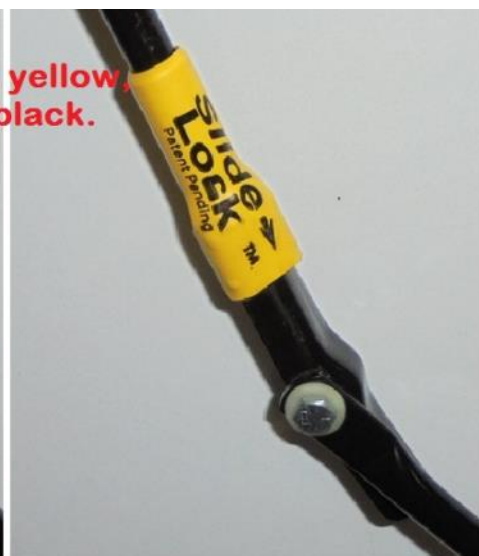


I am looking forward to visiting with each and every one of you in the Kansas City Triumph Club at cruise-nights, destination drives, swap-meets, and car shows in 2021. Thank you.

John McGuire
Founder of JAM Dynamics



Available in red, yellow, blue, white and black.



"KEEP YOUR BONNET OFF YOUR HEAD" with Slide-Lock and Magna-Lock.

\$16.50 is cheap insurance

Just \$12.00 each for KC Triumph Club members

Spitfire & GT6 up-grade products.
jamdynamics.com



Club Board Meeting Notes

By Warren Wood, Secretary

The Club's Board of Officers meets monthly to take care of the "business" of running the Club and to plan future events and activities. Here is a brief summary of the main topics considered by the Board at its last two monthly meetings. The Board always reviews and approves the monthly Treasurer's reports and plans for upcoming events, but unless there was something unusual, those reports won't be discussed in these summaries. Questions or comments? Please contact a Board member.

Board Meeting of February 16, 2021:

The Board again held its regular meeting by Zoom video conference call, the third such meeting conducted in this manner. The pandemic continues to limit the Club's activities, so the Board's planning and discussion of activities is likewise limited. January and February Club Night Out meetings also have been held by Zoom calls as we await warmer weather and a return to Pegah's.

Board Meeting of March 16, 2021:

This fourth Zoom conference Board meeting may be the last by Zoom as the Board is looking forward to getting back to in-person meetings at Pegah's in April. Driving activities may resume in April with the Board's planning of an April 17 drive to Lewis & Clark State Park and the ever popular Olpe Chicken Run on April 24. Other area British car clubs have been invited to join us at Olpe.

JOIN KANSAS CITY TRIUMPHS

The Kansas City Triumphs Sports Car Club is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of Triumph sports cars. We are a social club of approximately 100 enthusiasts from all over the Midwest. The club hosts monthly gatherings, driving events, group email and technical sessions giving you many opportunities to enjoy your Triumph and other little British sports cars. We publish a bimonthly newsletter sent to all members. Don't worry if you don't currently have a Triumph or if your car is less than perfect. We welcome all Triumph enthusiasts and other British sports car owners.

To join or renew, complete the application and mail with a \$20 check (\$25 for paper copy of newsletter) to:

Keith Jordan, Treasurer
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The Triumph TR250K: The American Concept That Might Have Saved the British Auto Industry

By Peter Brock Classic Motor Sports, March 2013

Back in the golden era of SCCA “amateur” racing, before the rise and demise of the club’s money-laden Can-Am and Trans-Am series, there was little professional road racing in America. In spite of the fact that club events were supposed to be about sport and not money, there was in fact some real factory-backed competition among those few manufacturers who profited from the realization that success on the race track was an important marketing tool for the sale of their cars.

Production-class race cars were just that, with the emphasis on “production,” so the fans could believe that what they were watching on the track was very close to what was sold on the showroom floor. Little visual modification was permitted to the production bodies, but almost anything was legal under the hood, provided it was modified using the car’s actual production components with no metal added.

The big money in those days was in C-Production, that crucible of performance where the faster sports cars from the industry’s biggest names fought it out

to the limit of the rules. Leyland-Triumph, Porsche, Datsun and even Toyota were the main participants. Perhaps the most visionary leader of that early tumultuous period was Triumph’s [R.W. “Kas” Kastner](#). His carefully developed Triumphs had dominated the SCCA’s Production classes for years, but by the late ’60s he could see that manufacturers in Japan and Germany were improving their offerings at a faster rate than his slower-moving, conservative English masters. He decided he wasn’t going to get left behind.

Because of the sheer size of the United States, the SCCA had wisely

divided the country into regions, making it more practical for privateers who didn’t have the budgets to travel long distances to earn points for their regional class championships. The goal for all these top amateurs was, of course, to win one of the SCCA’s national championships.



Triumph TR250K Cont.

This is where manufacturer support became crucial. To increase their chances of qualifying for, and then winning the SCCA's coveted National Championship Runoffs held at the end of every season, each of these manufacturers quietly backed a couple of favored multicar programs.

Triumph sponsored two teams, using tuning guru Kastner on the West Coast while Bob Tullius's [Group 44 Inc.](#) reigned supreme on the East Coast. Datsun's forces were similarly aligned with Brock Racing Enterprises in California and Bob Sharp Racing in Connecticut.

With the top three regional points-winning cars in each class from each region qualified for the Nationals, the C-Production grid at the season finale was about as close to real professional racing as anything in the day. Since each of these powerful teams could be expected to qualify both of their cars in each of their respective regions.



With four Triumphs, four Datsuns, six Porsches—each with one of the best “amateur” drivers in the country at the wheel—the C-Production shootout at Road Atlanta was some of the best racing ever seen in America. These manufacturers were spending more money at that time in C-Production than nearly any other type of racing in America; it was indeed the SCCA's golden era.

Triumph's Kastner realized that if his super-conservative management in England didn't soon come up with something new and better to fight off his increasingly quicker German and Japanese competition, he'd soon be shut out of the running. Worse yet, Triumph sales would probably fall off so badly that the English firm could go broke.

Kastner's carefully developed modifications to Triumph's aging TR-series chassis had an excellent record in competition. The Triumphs were still very competitive on most of America's shorter circuits, but at places like Road Atlanta, Riverside and Road

America, low frontal area and good aero were becoming increasingly important. The ever-improving Japanese and German imports were getting faster, while the TRs were hitting the aerodynamic wall of resistance.

The Anti-Triumph

On his numerous trips to New York and England, Kastner had met with Leyland-Triumph's manage-



ment, trying to educate them as to what would be needed in the coming years to maintain superiority. The American office, being close to the front lines, understood completely and backed Kastner's ideas, but the company's long-range financial decisions were made in the U.K. The home office was reluctant to listen.

Over time, Kastner realized that the only way to resolve his immediate problem in America was to take matters into his own hands and build a racing concept that would demonstrate what could be done to modernize the aging TRs for relatively little investment.

The British office patiently explained to Kastner that they were looking several years ahead to a “totally all-new” Triumph to solve his problem, but he countered by saying that Triumph needed a potential sales winner now—a new production model with modern styling that would appeal to the American market, Leyland-Triumph's biggest. This new car would also, most importantly, put Triumph back on top in SCCA racing.

Kastner was convinced that a new, aero-efficient shape mounted on a slightly upgraded TR chassis was both the answer to Triumph's sagging sales figures in the U.S. and his problems on the race track. What made his new body-only solution so logical was that it would go into production much more quickly. The Leyland plan required designing, engineering and building a whole new car with essentially unproven components.

Triumph TR250K Cont.

The “K-Car” Solution

Kastner and I came up with a plan to build a prototype that would be both a show car and a fast production race car. My initial concept was a radically shaped coupe that would take advantage of the aero sleekness of an enclosed form.

It was similar in concept to the Daytona Coupe that I had recently designed for Carroll Shelby’s aero-resistant Cobra roadster. The TR250’s independent-rear-suspension would be mated to Triumph’s new 2.5-liter six-cylinder to form the foundation of the new car.

With some of my sketches for the new “K-car” in hand—the name obviously a take on Kastner’s name—plus a quickly typed formal proposal outlining the bold plan to race this concept-production car at Sebring in 1968 against the all-dominant 911 Porsches, Kastner headed for England to sell his idea to Leyland-Triumph’s top management.



Disappointingly, the U.K. office was reluctant to get behind the project. On his return through New York, Kastner again stopped by Triumph’s U.S. office and fortuitously was able to squeeze a promise of some meager funds from management. They backed his plan, believing it to be Triumph’s only hope of survival. Had they not supported the idea, the car never would have been built.

The Race

Kastner chose America’s top two Triumph racers of the period, Jim Dittmore and Bob Tullius, to drive at Sebring. Their speed in the new car during practice and the race was impressive. There had been zero time for testing and development, but it didn’t matter; the car was instantly and comfortably on pace with the Porsches. The whole effort had been done on a shoestring, but that’s all Kastner had to work with.

During the race, Dittmore easily outdistanced the Porsches that led for the first 3 hours. That comfortable lead vanished in an instant when one of the remachined mag wheels failed, taking the brake caliper with it. With no spares available, there was no choice but to withdraw.

The End

The failure had nothing to do with the design of the car or its preparation. Had the wheel not failed, the Triumph easily could have won. However, despite the good response from the American automotive media, our Triumph prototype still failed to generate any noticeable response from the home office in England.

That indifference was possibly on purpose, as officially recognizing the TR250K’s design could have created a liability for Standard-Triumph. Their “all-new” TR7, when it finally appeared in the fall of 1974, was most definitely influenced by Kastner’s K-car..

British Leyland’s main mistake was going to the all-new chassis for the TR7; the track-to-wheelbase proportions simply didn’t match the elegance or the performance of the original. The bungled design and its late appearance might well have been one of the reasons for British Leyland’s 1975 announcement that they were bankrupt, a sad point for the giant that had once produced 40 percent of England’s cars. The skid would continue with the Triumph nameplate basically disappearing a few short years later.



From left to right: Peter Brock, Jim Coan, Kas Kastner, Jim Dittmore, Bob Avery, Ed Freudenberg. Photograph Courtesy BRE Archives

KANSAS CITY TRIUMPHS 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

By Kim & Craig Simon , Activities Co-Coordiators

JANUARY		JULY	
1/16/2021	ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING - ZOOM	7/1/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM
1/19/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM - ZOOM	TBD	KIM AGUILAR WINE & JAZZ AT HOLYFIELD
FEBRUARY		7/10/2021	DRIVE-IN MOVIE NIGHT (MG)
2/4/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM - ZOOM	7/10/2021	GREAT AMERICAN CAR SHOW
2/10/2021	DRIVE YOUR TRIUMPH DAY, 11:00	7/20/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM
2/16/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM - ZOOM	AUGUST	
MARCH		8/5/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM
3/4/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM - ZOOM	8/14/2021	KC RIVER MARKET CAR SHOW (MG)
3/16/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM - ZOOM	8/17/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM
POSTPONED	DRIVE - FORT OSAGE TO MO CITY	8/27/2021	WINE & JAZZ AT STONE PILAR
APRIL		SEPTEMBER	
4/1/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM - PEGAHS PKG LOT	9/2/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM
4/17/2021	DRIVE - LEWIS & CLARK STATE PARK	9/4-6	HEARTLAND ALL BRITISH CAR SHOW & DINNER
4/20/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM - PEGAHS LOT	9/11/2021	MG BARN PARTY
4/24/2021	OLPE CHICKEN RUN (MG & LC INVITED)	9/14-18	VTR NATIONAL CONVENTION - EDMOND, OK
MAY		9/17-18	ST LOUIS ALL BRITISH CAR SHOW
5/1/2021	MG SLIM RUN - ONE DAY (MG)	9/21/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM
5/6/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM - PEGAHS	9/30-10/3	SIX PACK TRIALS - RICHMOND, VA
5/9/2021	KC AUTO MUSEUM SCAVENGER HUNT	OCTOBER	
TENTATIVE	SPRING TUNE-UP DAY	10/7/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM
5/18/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM - PEGAHS	10/2/2021	WEST BOTTOMS ANTIQUE RUN (MG & LC INVITED)
5/23/2021	BRITISH CAR WEEK PICNIC (MG & LC INVITED)	10/8-10	LAKE GARNETT TRACK CAR SHOW
5/26/2021	KACTUS CREEK CROQUET	10/9/2021	BRITS IN THE OZARKS
JUNE		10/10/2021	LAKE GARNETT TRACK DAY PICNIC (MG)
6/3/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM - PEGAHS	10/19/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM
6/5/2021	ARROW ROCK PARK DRIVE (MG & LC INVITED)	10/23-24	MG FAT RUN (MG)
CANCELLED	TRA NATIONAL CONVENTION - LEXINGTON, KY	10/30/2021	FALL FOLIAGE RUN (MG & LC INVITED)
6/15/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM - PEGAHS	TBD	LAWRENCE CAR SHOW - LAWRENCE, KS
6/26/2021	DRIVE TO BE PLANED	NOVEMBER	
TBD	GARDEN TOUR & DINNER (MG & LC INVITED)	11/4/2021	CLUB NIGHT OUT, 6:00 PM
TBD	COR CAR SHOW - CHURCH OF THE RESURECTION	11/13/2021	CHILI SUPPER
		11/16/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM
		DECEMBER	
		12/2/2021	ANNUAL MEETING & HOLIDAY PARTY
		12/21/2021	OFFICERS MEETING, 6:00 PM

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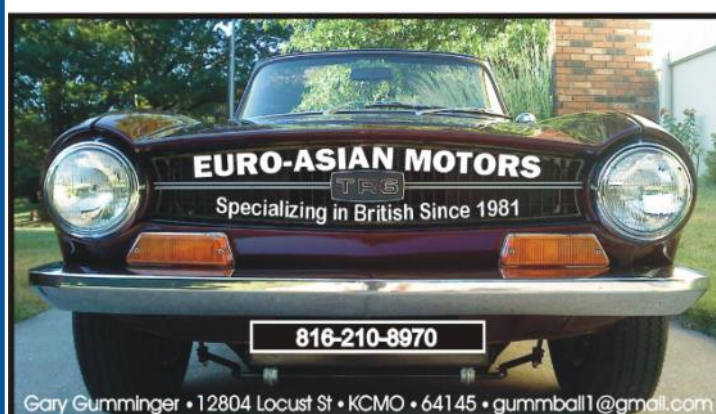
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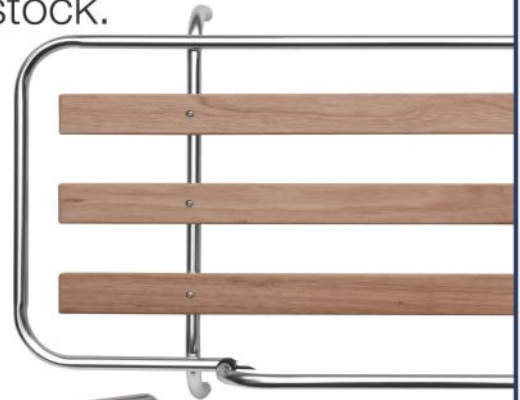
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