

THE RAGTOP

 HILL COUNTRY TRIUMPH CLUB

SEPTEMBER 9, 2010

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THE INSIDE LINE

by *ROBERT MacKENZIE, PRESIDENT*



Cars. Cars. Cars. We are always focused on cars. This car; that car. Why this car is better than that car, and so on.

When is the last time you thought about roads? Roads are an integral part of the driving experience and often overlooked.

Earlier this month, Pam and I had the opportunity to spend a few days in Northern California. As we are apt to do we took 'the road less traveled' as we made our way from San Jose to have dinner with an old friend of mine in Davis. Avoiding the interstates, the weekend wine-lovers and the scores of race-fans heading to see the Indy Car event at Infineon Raceway, we stuck to secondary roads, the scenic route as it were.

At one point, we found ourselves on a twisty two-lane road that first climbed up over a ridgeline before following a river for miles along a valley floor. Passing through vineyards, ranches and completely undeveloped land the road was a mix of tight turns and open sweepings bends that went on for miles, often interspersed with sections where if you put a wheel wrong you were in serious trouble.

It was the sort of road that the cars we love were made for. The kind of road I learned to drive on.

As we drove along it occurred to me that this was the kind of road that don't make any more.

Much like the cars we love; a thing of the past.

Sometimes, our cars can be like time machines; so get out and enjoy the ride.

Robert

The Rolling Sculpture Car Show will be held from 11:00am – 4:00pm on Sunday, October 24th. The organizers would like to see a good turnout of Triumphs and other LBCs. There's a discount for early-bird registration, and online registration is available for the first time this year. Details and registration forms are available at:

www.RollingSculptureCarShow.com



BACK ISSUES OF THE **RAGTOP** ARE AVAILABLE
ONLINE

<http://www.hillcountrytriumphclub.org/newsletters.php>

The Hill Country Triumph Club, the 50th Chapter of the Vintage Triumph Register (VTR), was founded in 1990 to bring together the owners of Triumph automobiles in the Central Texas area surrounding Austin. In 1991, the membership decided to include other British car fans as associates due to lack of other clubs in our area that represent some of the other marques. As owners and lovers of our unique types of cars, we have a special kinship, which draws us together. Membership is open to anyone who is a British car enthusiast, with or without a car.

Annual dues are just \$15.00 per family group or address per year. We have dinner meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and at least one other event each month. We encourage you to join and support us, even if you don't drive your car regularly. We also offer technical assistance if needed. One goal of the club is to help its members keep their cars on the road. Please call one of the club officers listed in the newsletter for more information about club benefits and spread the word about our club to others.

The Hill Country Club is a local chapter of the Vintage Triumph Register (VTR)/Triumph Sports Owners Association, which is open to all drivers of Triumph motorcars; a chapter of the Triumph Register of America, exclusively for TR2 through TR4A sports cars; and a chapter of the 6-PACK, dedicated to the enjoyment, preservation, and restoration of the Triumph TR250 and TR6 sports cars. Membership in these national organizations is encouraged. Visit their websites at www.vtr.org, www.triumphregister.com, and www.6-pack.org.

The RAGTOP is published monthly by the Hill Country Triumph Club. Material within may be freely reproduced providing Ragtop and the authors are credited. Any and all newsletter contributions are welcome. Deadline for submissions is the end of each month. Submissions may be emailed to don@dcphotos.com Car related classified ads are free to members and will run for three months unless otherwise instructed. Contact editor for other ads.

Membership Application



Name: _____

Address: _____

City / State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Car Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____ Color: _____

Car Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____ Color: _____

How on earth did you hear about the Hill Country Triumph Club? _____

Please mail application and check payable to HCTC to:
Nel McPhail, 1105 N. Canyonwood Dr., Dripping Springs, TX 78260

OFFICERS

President

Robert MacKenzie

president@hillcountrytriumphclub.org

Vice-President

Bob Baker

448.0093

rabaker1946@att.net

Webmaster

Dan Julien

451.3102

dan.julien@alumni.utexas.net

Treasurer

Earl McGlothlin

292.3387

conniemcg@austin.rr.com

Secretary

Bob Skewis

892.4068

skewistx@att.net

Membership

Nel Mcphail

656.1456

membership@hillcountrytriumphclub.org

Ragtop Editor

Don Couch

680-3540

editor@hillcountrytriumphclub.org

www.dcphotos.com

On the Cover

“Dog Daze of Summer”

Cover photo by **Barbara Kramer**

RUBY REPORT



Oh how time flies when you are busy! And this month has been a busy one. The “Sherlock HolmesBoyz” have been working nightly for weeks on end to ready their entry into the 24 Hours of Lemons race in Houston. As I write this we have the car 97% ready. We go racing tomorrow! I am confident we will “git ‘er done”!

I also have been busy as chairman of this years TEXAS ALL BRITISH CAR DAY. It is the 20th anniversary and I really hope to see the HCTC out in force.

Don't forget the ROLLING SCULPTURE SHOW next month. It's always a wonderful event with a great variety of some of the finest cars in town.

Again, we have a RAGTOP that's overflowing with info, articles and pics!

Thanks so much to all who contributed to this month's issue.

And now that the dog days of summer are (on the cover) seemingly over it's time to DRIVE the LBC's!

Don



BOB'S YOUR UNCLE



Our new President Robert MacKenzie chaired his first full meeting, starting promptly at 7:15 pm at the Rudy's on 620. Congratulations went out to Barbara Kramer for her

efforts in securing the coveted cover photo in the last Ragtop. Wiley was lookin' good in his white TR6. Thanks to Don Couch for the educational write up two months ago on how to accomplish this task (we can tell that we have at least one reader of the newsletter)! As usual, Don says he is open to all suggestions and contributions to the Ragtop.

The Lemons Car Project is the weekend of September 11 and 12 . . . we received an update on the progress. Many hands are pitching in including Roger Bolick, Bill Waller, Bob Kramer, Richard Ceraldi, Don Couch, Robert Mackenzie and Greg Blake. Work has been done on the front and rear suspension, roll cage and frame repair. It seems with the short time available, it will be down to the wire . . . and that's the goal – to finish at the wire in running condition.

Texas All British Car Day follows short on the heels of the Lemons Race on the weekend of September 25 and 26, with the Gumball Rallye and Johnny Carino's catered dinner afterward on Saturday and the show on Sunday. All members with a running car should participate and the price is right at \$20.00 for early registration for

the Sunday show. The website has been updated this year and has an interactive registration form. Please visit it at www.txabcd.org for all the information. MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW for the Springhill Suites host hotel as there is a limited amount of rooms reserved for us (big UT football weekend against one of those Florida schools). We can always use your help with odd jobs for a couple of hours on Sunday – please talk to Jim Icenhower if you can give a little of your time.

A couple of new members came to Rudy's: Jay Swanson brought his modified yellow Spitfire with it's four cylinder Mazda rotary engine and Cheryl Tipple brought pictures of her 1967 TR4A that she is making a second run at rehabilitating now that she is a grad student at Concordia. Plenty of time for those students to get their finger nails dirty! We had TEN Triumphs in the parking lot – mostly SPITFIRES! Thanks to Jim Icenhower, James Botek, Dean Mericus, Don Couch, Bob Skewis, Bob Kramer, Dan Julien, Mike Jankowski, Richard Ceraldi, Joel and Philip McKenzie and Bill Waller for flying the flag . . . I'll see you on the road!

Bob

Join us for the 20th Anniversary of the Texas All British Car Day

Sept. 25-26, 2010
Round Rock, TX



The Largest All British Car Show in Central Texas

- Hospitality Suite at Springhill Suites Hotel
- Gumball Rallye on Saturday
- Dinner Saturday Night
- All British Car Show on Sunday at Old Settlers Park
- Benefits a Local Charity
- \$20 per car early registration
- Sunday Show is Free to public – Bring the Family!
- Save the Date!

Host Hotel

Springhill Suites
2960 Hoppe Trail
Round Rock, TX
512-733-6700

*Springhill Suites offers a special rate for
Texas All British Car Day. Register early.*

Information and Registration

TXABCD Website: <http://www.txabcd.org>
TXABCD 2010 Chair - Don Couch
info@txabcd.org or 512-554-2712



THE ROADSTER FACTORY SUMMER PARTY 2010

or “How I spent my summer vacation”
by Mike McPhail



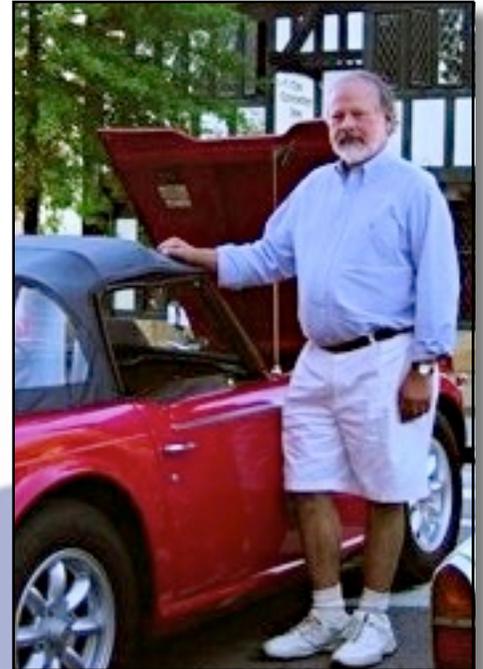
I left Drippin' on Tuesday morning July 27, for Tulsa, where I hooked up with my good right arm, Art Graves. He, as you may know, is the other half of the legendary “Hill Country Triumph Club Road Warrior Cross Country Rally Team”. By Wednesday evening we were enjoying a cold IPA at the Broad Ripple Brew Pub in Indianapolis. Thursday afternoon we reached our destination, the Roadster Factory in Armagh, PA.

That was 1530 miles from Austin in three days, and we were not even half done with the driving. The mid-summer weather is just about perfect in the Laurel Mountains of western Pennsylvania, with highs in the seventies and lows in the fifties. The area around Armagh is incredibly scenic, and the quaint little towns are connected by nicely paved tree lined by-ways with plenty of dips and twists. The party activities are spread around the area, giving us an opportunity to put our cars through their paces while enjoying the local scenery.

The next forty-eight hours proved to be a flurry of activity. Our first evening began at the Runyan Farm, home of TRF, where we collected our registration packages and schmoozed with the other party-goers before heading to Homer City for pizza. We were back by dark for the bonfire, which felt pretty good as the temperature dropped. Clad in Levis and HCTC hoodies, we marveled at the brightness of the stars in the night sky (while you were in Texas, sweating your ass off). It was 11PM before we knew it, and we had the road to ourselves as we cruised back to our motel in nearby Indiana, PA.

We were off like a shot Friday morning in order to be first in line for the heavily discounted inventory at the Roadster Factory parts counter. Our next stop was the Pittsburg Raceway Park in New Alexandria, where the cars had been lining up since 9am for a chance to conquer the quarter mile. There was virtually no waiting, and facing off against each other, we made three runs in short order. Art's new engine was in fine tune and easily

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turned 75 mph in under 18 seconds in the drag race that I let him win. This was a very respectable showing for a stock TR6, with only heavily modified cars doing better. Richard Good (of Good Parts) was able to cover the ¼ mile in only 13 seconds and reached 90 mph in his tri-carb TR6. This was certainly a testament to the effectiveness of the parts he sells! A fleet of TR7/8s were on hand, many of which were packing American V8 muscle under their bonnets. Many of these cars were topping 100 mph with ease. What fun!

Art was in first place for the \$100 prize in the Le Mans running start contest, but left the field of battle at my urging. It was lunchtime and I was desperate to get to Clem's BBQ for their locally famous hot link sandwich. Afterwards, we had to hurry to Armagh for the winery tour, which took us far into the neighboring Amish country. The colorful locals (well, mostly black and white,

actually) seemed as amused at our little British cars as we were with their horse and buggies. The tour was completed in just enough time for a refreshing dip in the motel's sparkling pool and a quick change into long pants; then back to TRF for the gala outdoor banquet, bonfire and fireworks display. Triple C Accessories had set up at the farm and we did some shopping after dinner as we enjoyed the live music, tire kicking and free beer before the "bed sheet movie". It was "BS" alright, starring everybody's hero, Steve McQueen as a daring Le Mans race car driver. Alas, the plot's snail pace threatened to render us comatose, so we gathered with the rest of the revelers by the fire until after the pyrotechnics, and then made the delightful drive to the Comfort Inn.

On Saturday morning we had to make the agonizing choice as whether to rally or autocross. The motoring is so fantastic in this part of the world that we could not bear to miss the opportunity to spend a few more



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hours exploring the countryside. We had the added bonus of discovering some new dining spots along the “Poker Rally and Mountain Road Tour” route. Stopping at participating local businesses for playing cards to complete our poker hand meant a slice of pizza here, and an ice cream cone there, etc. Now that’s the way to run a rally!

Yikes! The grand finale car show started at five, and we had yet to wash our buggies! After a car cleaning session at local Triumph aficionado Jim Antis’ house (too bad he wasn’t home, as all his friends were there) and a stop at Uncle Sudsie’s package store, we were back on schedule. There was a big turnout on Philadelphia Street, and all manner of Triumph automobiles, and a smattering of other marques, were lining the avenue. The Coventry Inn was open for complimentary wine and

cheese, and while the restaurant was not serving, the bar enjoyed a brisk business. Dinner was available at several other fine establishments nearby...my Reuben sandwich and pint of Guinness was delicious!

It was getting quite dark by the time Charles Runyan and John Schwauger presented the awards. The streets were reopened and Art and I were able to claim spots right in front of the Coventry Inn. We stayed a while, chatting with the Runyan family and some of TRF employees, who as in years past, remembered us as loyal customers and good friends.

So, is it worth driving 3000 miles for a 48 hour show? If it’s the Roadster Factory Summer Party, then, absolutely!

Mike

Behind the Badge

Triumph

An open book that spans the globe



BY MARK J. McCOURT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LICHANCE

Triumph is a name that holds equal esteem in the worlds of motorcycles and sports cars, and while the two are separate entities with their own branding, they were once one, built by the same manufacturer. When the Triumph car division was launched by its parent motorcycle company in 1923, it was given a badge that implied England's global power; the post-war rebirth of this automaker saw it adopt another emblem, while a logotype stood in after the mid-1960s until Triumph stopped building sports cars in 1981.

The original Triumph Company built a handful of sedans and sporting roadsters through the 1930s, with the powerful, Donald Healey-developed Dolomite roadster at the pinnacle. These Triumphs wore a circular cloisonné emblem that represented a globe of the earth, with distinct regions colored differently; the area representing Great Britain was in red, as were other areas then under British rule like India and South Africa, while the area representing the seas was pale blue. Overlying this globe was upper-case TRIUMPH lettering.

Triumph's motorcycle division and car division were divided in 1936, and a revised globe emblem was introduced. This globe showed all of the land area in single-tone red, still overlaid with lines indicating latitude and longitude. The logotype across the globe was also changed to a simple script, with the finish of the "h" rolling back to underline and emphasize the name.

When Standard Motor Company chairman Sir John Black purchased Triumph cars in 1944, he aimed to build a simple, fast sports car to rival MG, Jaguar and Morgan. While Standard-Triumph's first such attempts were short-lived, the famous globe reappeared on the popular TR2, TR3 and TR4 sports cars, albeit in a less prominent form in the center of the disc wheel hubcaps. The last time a circular globe was seen was on the hood of the 1965-1967 TR4A, where it rested above the separate chrome T-R-I-U-M-P-H letters. This final metal-tone globe showed a different perspective of the world, taken from above and tilted so that the eastern half of the United States was visible, along with all of

Europe, Africa and Asia.

A different cloisonné badge had come to prominent placement on early TR sports cars, and this was an adaptation of Standard's "open book" corporate badge. In a keystone atop the book's spine was the car's designation: "TR 2," "TR 3" or "TR 4." Those book pages (and the scroll beneath) were different colors, depending on the application. In TR2 and TR3s, the model designation, the right hand page and the scroll were red (with chrome TRIUMPH lettering in the scroll), with the left page in black; on TR3As and TR4s, the model designation, left hand page and scroll were dark blue, while the right page was white, and the TRIUMPH name was spelled out in separate chrome letters on the hood.

The TR5, TR250 and TR6s that came between 1968 and 1976 used plain, sans serif TRIUMPH badges, but late TR7s and most TRBs wore a new plastic circular emblem (or large decal, depending on assembly plant) that combined the upper-case name in a sporty slanted font, ringed by two laurel wreaths. 🌐

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Third Annual!

the Rolling Sculpture Car Show

October 24, 2010 11pm-4pm

A celebration of automotive style in all of it's forms. Several hundred collector cars, modern classics, hot rods, art cars, and other motorized eye candy will be parked along the main street of the Hill Country Galleria on Route 71 in Bee Cave (<http://www.hillcountrygalleria.com/go/gmap.cfm>).

Bring your own rolling sculpture and enjoy live music, restaurants and shops.

Show car parking begins at 10:00 am the day of the show

Show will be held rain or shine – covered parking will be available in the event of rain.
 Show decals for the first 200 entrants / Awards will be presented by the show sponsors



Proceeds to Benefit



Made possible by these generous sponsors:



Online registration: www.rollingsculpturecarshow.com

Questions: rollingsculpturecarshow@austin.rr.com

Mail-in Registration Form

Include this registration form with check or money order (no cash) payable to Friends of the Bee Cave Library.
 \$15 for pre-registration (before 9/24/10) or \$25 for regular registration (after 9/24/10)

NAME: _____	AMOUNT ENCLOSED
ADDRESS: _____	_____ Pre-Registration/Registration
CITY: _____	_____ Additional Donation to BCPL
STATE/ZIP: _____	_____ Total Enclosed
PHONE: _____	
EMAIL: _____	
YEAR/MAKE: _____	
MODEL: _____	

Mail to:
 Friends of the Bee Cave Library, 19714
 Fig Bluff Lane, Spicewood, TX
 Attn: Rolling Sculpture

Deadline for mail-in registration postmarked by 10/15/2010

~~Tool~~ Project of the Month

by Mike McPhail

While we are on the subject of Lucas electrics, let's take a look at some of the components. A vital, but often neglected item is the distributor. This hard working gadget often performs faultlessly for decades, but may very well be in need of servicing.

The distributor is a fairly simple mechanical device that has changed little over the years. It has several functions:

Switching current on and off to the coil to generate a timed spark

Directing the spark to the proper spark plug

Advancing the timing as the engine revs

A cam on the distributor shaft, which is driven by the cam shaft, opens and closes the points when the engine is turning. When the cam lifts the contact points and breaks the ground circuit to the coil, a spark is generated. The spark wire from the coil is connected through the distributor cap to the rotor, sitting on top of the distributor shaft. The spark jumps from the rotor to the spark plug wire terminal of the cap and on to the spark plug. As the engine speed increases, a pair of weights under the plate works against springs holding the top section of the shaft. This centrifugal action causes the rotor to rotate, which advances the timing. A timing light will verify this phenomenon: just rev the engine and observe the motion of the timing mark. It should move over thirty degrees at 3000 rpm. It is not unusual to find the two piece distributor shaft to be frozen. Long ago, rotors were stamped with "remove to oil", but

this maintenance reminder has been largely forgotten. Check for free movement by giving the rotor a little twist. It should readily return to its original position when you let go. If it does not you should delve deeper (not for the faint of heart).

Take note of the direction the rotor is pointing and the location of the #1 plug wire on the cap before you pull the distributor. Don't try to do the following with the distributor in the car. Remove the rotor, the vacuum advance rod and the two small screws securing the base plate. Take careful notice of the alignment of the rotor in relation to the locating bar on the bottom end of the shaft; the pieces can be reassembled 180 degrees out, which will really screw you up. Remove the base plate with points still attached. You can now see the mechanical advance. There is typically a large and a small spring, one on each of the weights. The large spring will have a loose fit and will not pull the weights completely to their non-extended position. The small spring should bring the weights to rest when twisting the top of the shaft.

If the springs need replacing, order new ones, as you will be hard pressed to obtain satisfactory results otherwise! With new springs in hand and old springs removed, take out the screw on top of the shaft and withdraw the top section. Take careful note as to how the weights are positioned. Look for damage and corrosion, then after cleaning and oiling re-assemble the mechanism.

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Since you have nearly disassembled the whole damn thing, you might as well give everything a good cleaning and oiling. Check for excessive play in the shaft and free movement of the two piece base plate. The flimsy ground wire must be intact. The vacuum unit must operate easily with 15 inches of vacuum (about what it takes to get a chocolate malt through a straw) and not leak down.

The vacuum advance, by the way, provides additional advance when the car is under way, while backing off under hard acceleration to avoid pinging. At idle the throttle butterfly blocks the orifice so that the action only occurs while the gas pedal is depressed. Test this by sucking on the vacuum unit at idle: the idle will increase several hundred rpm if all is well. Triumph TR6s have an interesting variation on this theme. Their vacuum unit is mounted on the right side of the distributor and retards the timing at idle. Upon depressing the gas pedal, the vacuum is released and the timing is advanced. This is completely opposite of the typical vacuum advance arrangement, but with similar results.

Once you get the unit back together, check for a bent shaft by measuring the point gap on each lobe. A variation in the measurement will certainly indicate wobble and result in poor running. If you have identified problems with your distributor, you may want call in professional help! Robert Sarama offers complete distributor service and comes highly recommended. Contact him at lucasdistributors@yahoo.com . Pertronix also makes replacement distributors for our cars (not entirely suitable for TR6); go to

www.dealparts.com and look for D176600 (4cyl) or D177600 (6cyl). These wonderful gadgets are plug-and-play and sell for well under \$200.



Let's talk about rotors. Until very recently, the usual sources were selling replacement rotors with the brass conductor riveted to the plastic body. Eventually the rivet either comes loose or cracks the body. Either way, you're walkin' home, buddy! Now (for about \$10) you can get a rotor exactly like the old original molded style.

Points and condensers are cheap and easy to replace. If you have a known working condenser, you may not want to replace it, as the new ones seem to have a high failure rate. Keep spare ignition parts in the car, and/or convert to the Pertronix Ignitor electronic ignition module.

Caps have fallen victim to cost-over-quality issues, also. The cheap caps with aluminum terminals corrode quickly, causing problems, especially on a damp morning. A nice Bosch cap with copper terminals will probably be the last one you ever have to buy. Old wires can cause plenty of trouble, too. Wires should be as flexible as new, and should be checked with an Ohm meter. With

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the wires on the cap, test each wire for resistance. Modern (non-metal conductor) wires will have a reading around 5k, depending on their length. Early cars with solid wire conductors (like “bumble-bee wire”) will show only the resistance that may be in their screw on spark plug ends. These ends are notorious for burning out the resistor inside. If you do not get a reading replace the end. The spark may jump gaps in defective components, but will surely affect performance. Early cap and wire sets are getting rather expensive and can often be replaced with the newer style. Early Sprite and TR3-4 side terminal style caps can be replaced with the early ‘70s MGB cap (Moss 163-815). Later Austin-Healey 3000 (BJ8) caps can be replaced with that from a TR6 (Moss560-145). Spark plug wires from the same cars will be needed to replace the solid wires, unless you wish to add quick-connect ends for the wire to cap connection.



Very early cars have a screw in connection to the coil. New wires will require a new coil in this case. Be sure to get a non-external-resistor coil. Manufacturers began using external resistors in the ‘70’s, notably on the late TR6. The resistor is built into the wiring

harness and can be identified by the additional heavy wire to the coil. Coils are not well marked as to their application, and should be checked with an Ohm-meter. A reading of 3 Ohms indicates a non-resistor application; 1 ½ Ohms requires the need for an external resistor. Most meters are not very accurate in this range and you can expect slightly higher readings.

Why the external resistor?

When the engine is cranking the available voltage drops like a rock. Some clever fellow reasoned that if a six volt coil was installed it could be powered from a contact on the starter solenoid when cranking for full spark. While running, the power from the ignition switch could pass through a resistor to drop the voltage from 12 to 6.

Seems like a lot of trouble to me!

Mike

RACING to the PARTY

by Greg Blake

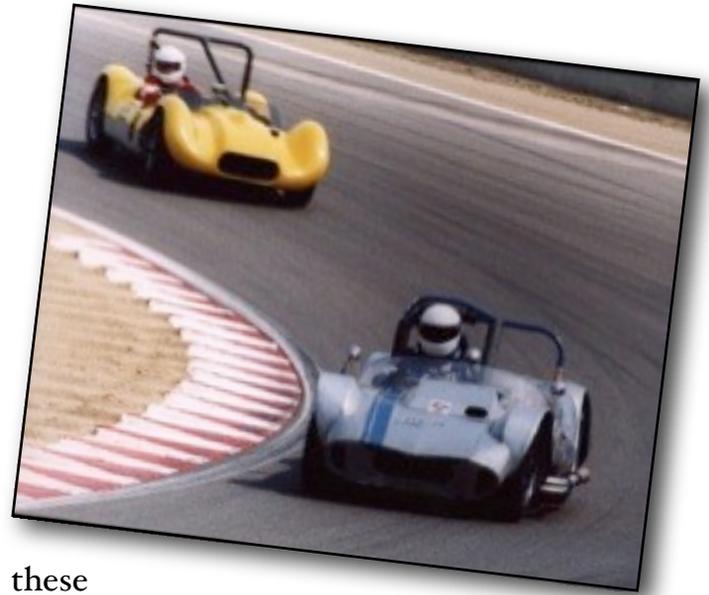
A great big thanks to all those that shared their love of “race cars” at Will’s 5th birthday party! We had 15 kids ranging in age from 10 months to 9 years at our house on August 28th for the big event. All kids, even some of the parents, got to go for a ride. We would especially like to thank Don Couch, Bob and Barbra Kramer, Bob Blake, and Roger Bolick and Tina who all brought (or tried to) Triumphs to the party. Without your cars, the little 3 would have been overwhelmed. All told we provided 30-40 rides around the block. Even Elvis got to sneak in a ride. At bed time that evening, we asked Will his favorite part of his birthday party his reply was the “race cars”. Thanks again, Greg, Alison, Will and Presley Blake



Greg

Bill Ames Award

Bill Ames started road racing a TR3 in the 1950's. Like every racer, he wanted to go faster and like most he had budgetary constraints. He decided the best way to go faster was to build a special based on a TR3 engine and chassis. He took the body off his TR3, moved the engine down and back, and then constructed a new body of aluminum. It's name was Peyote and it definitely had a homemade appearance (see photo). Actually, this is Ames's improved second special, Peyote II. This car may have been ugly, but did it ever achieve the goal of going faster. About 1962, Bill teamed up with Dewey Brohaugh to build another special. This one was to have the same basic shape as Peyote, but was done in fiberglass. This collaboration resulted in a body which was pretty (see photo) and bore some resemblance to a Maserati Tipo 61 and also to a Lister Nobby. It was called the Ambro. Bill and Dewey had tried to sell



these bodies to other racers, but this was not very successful. Very few were built and sold. In the 1990's Bill found one of the original bodies and built an Ambro to go vintage racing (see photo). He vintage raced the car and later it was raced by his son.

Bill embodied the spirit of vintage racing.

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He was a serious racer, he was innovative, he freely helped others and he built some wonderful Triumph power specials on a shoe string budget. About 10 years ago Joe Alexander (Friends of Triumph – FOT) decided to honor Bill with the Bill Ames Racing for Life memorial award. Each year this plaque is awarded to a vintage Triumph racer that embodies the same spirit that Bill had for racing. This year at the Kastner Cup vintage races in Topeka, the award was passed from Larry Young to Bob Kramer. For years, Bob has been the heart and soul of the Triumph racers that belong to Corinthian

Vintage Auto Racing (CVAR). He has helped numerous Triumphs get onto the track and stay on the track. He is a great driver and excellent parts scrounger. He has been a strong supporter of the Friends of Triumph (FoT) and has attended all but a few of the FoT annual focus events. He truly represents the vintage spirit of Bill Ames.

Larry



Friends of Triumph by Bob Kramer

It is estimated that in the USA there are somewhere around 200 Triumph race cars competing in various forms of racing. Most of these cars race in vintage racing, where various clubs set their rules using the old SCCA rules as a guideline. It is common to use the 1967 rulebook as a cut-off point but many clubs also run the 1972 SCCA rules, such as my club, CVAR. There are still some Triumphs racing in the SCCA under current rules and some do quite well against the modern iron, much to the chagrin of the SCCA leadership. Just this past year Sam Halkias won the National E Production Championship in his TR6, aptly labeled the "Shape of Things Still Around." Even more Triumphs compete in autocrosses and rallyes around the country.

Every year the road racers try to select a suitable race track and get as many Triumphs in one place as possible. They now call it the Kastner Cup, named after Kas Kastner, the former Standard Triumph USA Competition Manager. He's the guy that provided support, parts and development to Triumph racers back in the day. Group 44 earned fame for their successes, but it all started with factory support and Competition Dept. parts. This year the Kastner Cup was held at Heartland Park in Topeka Kansas. With the reasonable tow we put the date on the calendar long ago and started down the path to get Andrew his competition license and have two cars ready to compete at this event.

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I have documented the purchase of the car for Andrew in previous articles. In short, I lucked upon a car with significant race history at a good price and sold off the lesser TR4 that I had purchased earlier. His car, number 67, is a 1962 TR4 that competed in both the 24 Hour Daytona Continental and Sebring 12 Hour races in 1967 and came in 8th place at the SCCA National Championship that same year. My car, number 29 was also at that 1967 SCCA National Championship race, albeit as an alternate, which meant that it only got to run the practices, but not the race. #67 had not been raced since the early nineties so we had our difficulties in resurrecting it, first with the clutch then the transmission and flywheel. When the transmission case broke and ripped the flywheel off the crankshaft it meant that the engine had to be torn down to put in oversize bolts for a new flywheel. We had difficulties with machine shops and one delay after another. Somehow, in between the work days on the TR6 Lemon's car I managed to get it ready.

The high torque starter that was on the car during the transmission case fiasco started the car just one time. When I went to start the car after I had it all back together it started up just fine but ran a bit rough. I didn't let it run long and after adjusting the valves and cleaning the plugs it wouldn't restart. The pinion gear was stuck on the ring gear, no doubt a result of the tranny breakage and flywheel disaster. It would engage but the shaft must have had a minor tweak. So I pulled a Lucas starter off the shelf, bench tested it and installed it. It started the car with a little effort so I took it for a test drive. Shortly into the drive I noticed a rattle from under the valve cover



and I brought the car back to the garage and found that I had neglected to tighten up one of the valve adjusters. An easy fix but now the car wouldn't start again. I was frustrated by many attempts at starting the car and put it to rest for the day.

The next day Jim Icenhower popped over to have me look at a Spitfire axle and he helped

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me figure out the problem. Even though it had just happened with the high-torque starter it hadn't occurred to me that the pinion gear could be stuck on the replacement starter. I figured that it was just your typical tired, old Lucas piece of junk that couldn't crank fast enough. I showed Jim my problem and while turning the engine over from the crank bolt I managed to load up the starter spring enough that it kicked back on me. Jim recognized that as a stuck pinion. I went to the shelf, found a couple of other starters to test and picked the best. When we pulled the starter out of the car we noticed that the pinion gears were quite different. I don't know what car it fits, but the pinion gear that was stuck was quite a bit different than all the rest I have. All the pinion gears are about two inches long but most have 2/3rd's of the gear area ground off, I suppose to help it release. The one that was giving me problems was geared the full length. No wonder it wouldn't let go.

I installed the next best looking starter I had and the car started. The old Lucas piece struggled a bit to turn the engine over but it got the job done well enough that I could finish the tuning and get the car ready for Topeka. All this happened because I didn't have a spare high torque racing starter. I do own one, but it was in New Mexico. I had loaned it out to a fellow TR4 racer a while back and he planned on returning it to me at Topeka. My plan was to see if the Lucas POS

would work well enough and have the spare just in case.

Off to Topeka I go, but how do I get two cars there? I am now the proud owner of a 28 foot long enclosed trailer, big enough to haul two TR4's and heavy enough to bring the truck mpg into the single digits. The most notable thing about the haul to Topeka was that instead of my usual passing everybody, I was being passed by everyone. The truck could handle it but acceleration was a chore and



braking was just that much longer. All in all I'd have to say that it went better than I expected even though I couldn't keep up with MapQuest estimated travel times.

When I arrived at Topeka Heartland Park, I met Sam Halkias in line to get our racing credentials. We towed in and lined up next to the rest of the FoT (Friends of Triumph) and that put Sam and my trailer side by side. These days it seems everyone has moved into enclosed trailers and that works to segregate the racers from each other somewhat but I

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couldn't have had a better neighbor. Sam had brought his SCCA car and another older TR6 SCCA car that he called his vintage car. Its vintage may have been 1990's and it was very fast too.

The race weekend went very well. As could have been predicted the starter gave us trouble and the guy who had my starter got delayed until Saturday. Throughout Friday we worked on learning our way around the track and while I completed all the laps in all sessions, Andrew got stuck out on track by that darn starter. Actually it was the kill switch that died. I had noticed one time that the switch didn't turn on the power the first time I cranked it. Another crank and it worked. So I made a note to replace it soon. On a warm up lap #67 suddenly lost power and Andrew guided the car to a safe location, where he persuaded a corner worker to blip

the switch for him. This got him power back but that POS starter wouldn't start the hot engine so he watched the session as a spectator. We replaced the kill switch with a Harbor Freight special.

Once we got the starter Saturday morning we replaced it in a matter of minutes and made every session from there on out. Andrew was working on his lap times and competing with a TR4 and GT6 from Colorado, while I was messing with TR4's and Datsun's closer to the front. I had my best lap time early Sunday with a 2:02.2 and Andrew managed a 2:05.5. This left me gridded 8th for the Kastner race and Andrew 12th. We were happy and we both had enjoyable races. For my part I was moved to the 7th spot when a driver change put one of the TR4's ahead of me to the back of the pack. At the lead was Sam in his superfast TR6, followed by visiting Brit Keith Files in

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his TR4, closely paced by the TR4's and 4A's of Tony Drews, Jim Gray, Greg Hilyer and Sean Alexander. I felt good about my chances because I had been able to dice with both Sean and Jim in earlier sessions, but I was also concerned about Jeff Snook and his fast TR3 gridded right behind me. I expected to be a little quicker than earlier in the day because I had just corrected a minor engine miss by changing plugs and retiming the engine.

As the race started I was able to hold off Snook from behind. He had practiced in a different group so I didn't know how he would race me. I trailed Sean nose to tail, he followed Tony and Tony followed Jim, while Keith tried to keep Sam in sight. As the laps started to tick down I pulled away from Snook but gradually the engine miss reappeared. I lost a little ground to Sean, Tony and Jim and put all my effort into maintaining space with the TR3. I didn't want him to know I was in trouble. Then things started happening. Sean's engine blew up as he started up the front straight, very much like the one I experienced

at Mosport. Because I had lost ground to him I was able to avoid the debris field. Ironically, his car, with his dad Joe driving it was right behind me at Mosport when I blew up.

A few laps later Greg "Lunker" Hilyer's car created some dust and/or smoke and he exited the track after turn six. I was now running 5th in the Kastner Cup and biding my time to the checker. I watched carefully to see if Snook was gaining on me and waited for the checker. On the next to last lap I saw Lunker's purple TR4 back on track in the distance as I rounded a hairpin turn. I assumed he had fixed the problem trackside and was back racing, but it was not so. A corner worker had told him the race was over and he was limping back to the pits. Heartland Park has the worst entrance onto the front straight that I have seen. We come off a wonderful left right sweeper combination into a triple 90 degree turn, left, right, left that is under a bridge, downhill, tight, and just crappy. Add to that that the track exit to enter the pits is right after the first left turn and for our cars that lane is also where we want to race. That is where I caught Lunker, me going as fast as I could and him waving his thanks to the corner workers as he rolled in. I had to tuck in behind him while Snook closed in from behind. The tight turns is where my engine miss was at it's worst and the bad start down the front straight made Snook's pass going into turn one a given. I couldn't catch him after that. In reality I was happy with a 6th place finish, but it could have been so much more. Andrew was having just as much fun leading a pack of four Triumphs in the 2:10 a lap range, finishing in front of that group.

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After the race Keith Files was awarded the Kastner Cup for his second place finish. The TR4 he drove is one of the factory cars Kastner prepared for the 1964 Sebring race. Kas watches all the races and picks his winner not just on race performance, but on the weekends effort overall, passes that he sees, obstacles overcome and anything else he sees as important. Sam was eligible but he brought an AK47 to a knife fight. He came to support the Triumph faithful and put on a show for us, and that he did. His paddock was packed with visitors all weekend. The winner, Keith, keeps a TR4 here in the states while he campaigns a TR6 in the UK. He earned the Cup by running hard all weekend, and then stepping it up in the Cup race, staying ahead of the hard charging Tony Drews, winning the D Production (TR4) Class by some 24 seconds. For reference I was almost 36 seconds behind Keith, not that bad after 11 laps.

The second award that is given out at the Cup weekend is the Bill Ames Memorial Plaque. One of the cars racing was Joe Alexander's Ambro, a kit car based special named after its developers Bill Ames and Dewey Brohaugh, and still sold under the Dio kit car brand name. Joe was one of the founders of the Friends of Triumph, and he is its heart and soul. He credits Bill Ames with being there to help him in his early TR4 racing days. Joe's Ambro was built in memory of his friendship with Bill Ames. In Joe's words "Knowing Bill Ames was to know the Joy of Racing a Triumph". The plaque that honors Bill Ames memory is occasionally passed on to Triumph

racers, but to my knowledge it has not been given out all that often. Bill Dentinger from Wisconsin was the first person to receive it back in 1998 and Larry Young from Tulsa was the last recipient back in 2008. This year Larry passed on the award to your author, and



I was more than honored to accept. Looking around at the assembled crowd while I accepted the award I pointed out that I was surrounded by a lot of people just like me, willing to help each other out at the drop of a hat. That is what the Friends of Triumph is all about.

Plans have been made for next year's Kastner Cup to be held at Laguna Seca Raceway near Monterey CA, and in 2012, the 60th anniversary of the Triumph sports car it looks like we will be headed to Road Atlanta for a big time party. Both of these events are spectator magnets and it is not too soon to think about making that trip in your Triumph.

Bob

**Starting in January '64,
Triumph TR-4 and
Triumph Spitfire
grabbed off 83 victories
and two SCCA titles:
National DP Champion,
GP Class Champion.**



Special Sebring Spitfire GT Coupe

**Starting at Sebring '65,
here is the Triumph team:
Bob Tullius, Charlie Gates, Ed Barker, Duane Feuerhelm,
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SCCA-approved competition equipment available for TR-4 and Spitfire. Look for dealer in Yellow Pages. Standard-Triumph Motor Co., Inc., 575 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022, Canada: Standard-Triumph (Canada) Ltd., 1463 Eglinton Avenue W., Toronto 10, Ont.

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: 74' TR6 for sale? basically a stock looking TR6-very clean

5,500 miles Mimosa w/ Chestnut interior (paint job approx. 3 years old) rust free
Strong engine (Ron Harrison just replaced the clutch & a few other items listed below)

- new red (Hella style) horns •fairly new top (~2 yrs old)
 - brake master cylinder (2 yrs old) •windshield (2 yrs old)
 - new clutch slave cyliner •approx. 30K miles of tread left of Michelin Redlines
- asking \$13,200 (\$12,500 w/out the new leather Miata seats)

Questions, call Jim Wells @ 254-780-1464
email: jimanddiana@clearwire.net

FOR SALE: 74 TR6 seats, decent condition black vinyl. \$250

TR6 wheels with worn redlines, good hubcaps and trim rings. Small dents in a couple of the wheels. \$250

Will sell both for \$450 OBO.

Andy Reed 303.478.5658

1971 GT6 FOR SALE:

90% restored, needs to find a loving home, \$4000, 512-786-9570

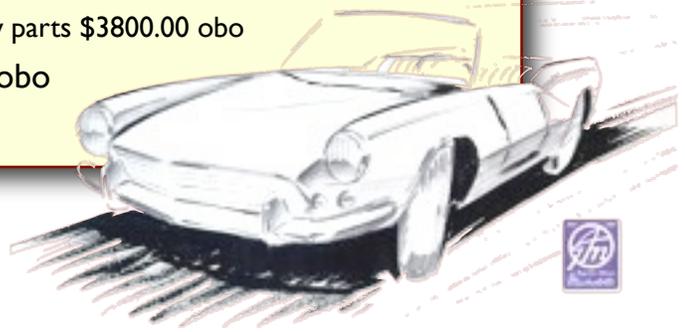
Allen Monroe

WANTED:

Looking for a hardtop for a Spitfire 1500 – any condition - cheap is good – free is better.
Robert MacKenzie (president@hillcountrytriumphclub.org)

FOR SALE:

- 1963 TR-4 Restoration in progress, Rebuilt Engine, lots of new parts \$3800.00 obo
 - 1969 GT6 needs restoration, paint, interior \$1000.00 obo
- Contact Don Couch for more info (512)-680-3540



THE RAGTOP - SEPTEMBER 2010



Calendar

SEPT 14th - HCTC meeting - POK-E-JO'S BBQ

SEPT 25th -26th TXABCD - Round Rock, TX

OCT 24th - Rolling Sculpture Show - Hill Country Galleria



1105 N. Canyonwood Dr.
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
address change requested



The next HCTC meeting will be held Tuesday, September 14, 7 PM, Pok-e-jo's BBQ in the Brodie Oaks shopping center, Northwest corner of South Lamar and Ben White/Capitol of Texas Highway/Loop 360, Phone 512-440-0447. **NOTE THAT WE DO NOT HAVE THE BACK ROOM. WE ARE ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE RESTAURANT.**