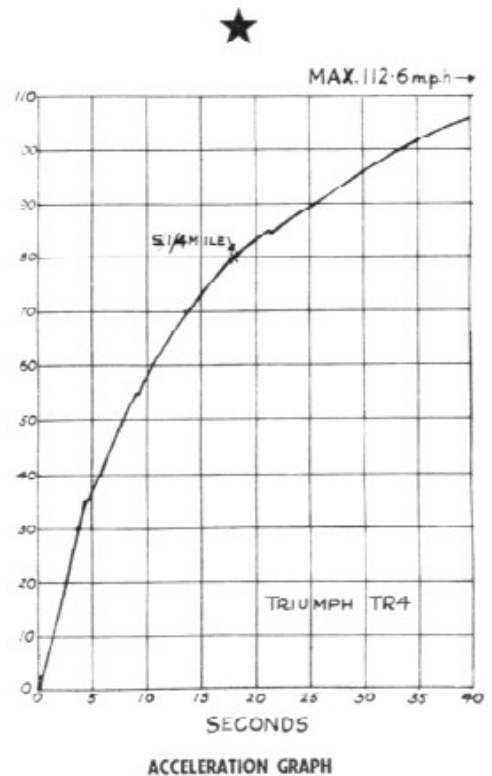
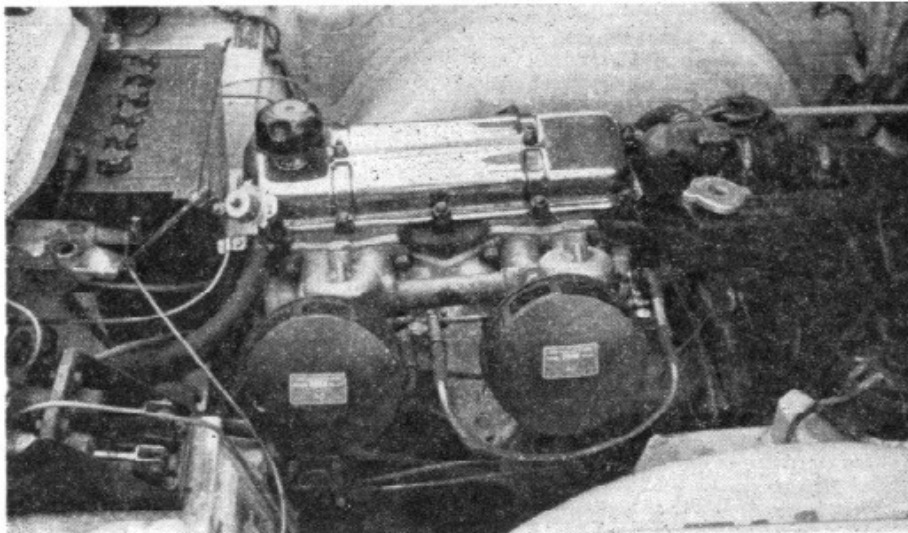


WEATHER-STAINED: The TR4 after about 1,000 miles of rally-following, in torrential rains, was completely weather-proof.



TWO-POINT-TWO: The four-cylinder 2,138 c.c. engine which develops 105 b.h.p. at 4,730 r.p.m.

THE TRIUMPH TR4

BY
GREGOR
GRANT

DURING the years the TR series of Triumph sports cars has attained great popularity all over the world. When the TR2 was introduced in 1953 it offered 100 m.p.h. motoring at the lowest cost envisaged in Great Britain for a car of its type. In competitions it rapidly became the most successful rally car of its time, starting off with a resounding victory in the 1954 Rally of Great Britain. The development work put in on the TR2 by Ken Richardson and his men was reflected in the large numbers of machines which were produced, and also exported.

Together with the late Peter Reece, I took a TR2 into the 1954 Lyon-Charbonnières Rally, long regarded as the especial preserve of professional Continental rally drivers. With no opportunity to do the lengthy recce, reckoned to be essential for success in this very tough event, the little white car not only finished without loss of penalty points, but was sixth in general classification, runner-up in the International Sports category, and best foreign entry. A few weeks later the same car, this time with the late Stan Asbury as co-

driver, completed the "Tulip" unpenalized, and was close runner-up to a Ferrari in the sports class.

Soon Triumph TR2s were to be seen in every type of event, and the type was followed by the improved TR3. After a splendid début at Le Mans by the privately entered Wadsworth/Dickson TR2 in 1954, twin-cam versions were entered by the factory and displayed fine reliability. So far, no two-o.h.c. machines have been offered for sale, but this year the Standard-Triumph concern, now controlled by Leylands, announced the TR4.

This is, substantially, an improved version of the TR3, as the basic frame is little altered, the suspension is almost identical apart from revised dampers, and the well-tried o.h.v. (push-rod) engine is retained. However, bodywork has been completely restyled by Michaelotti, with such refinements as wind-up windows, generous luggage boot, more interior room and completely weather-proof hood. The latter kept out the heaviest rainfall I have ever experienced on the Continent of Europe, but until one learns the drill, it is rather a chore

Latest 2.2-litre Car Has Excellent All-Synchromesh Gearbox and First-class Road Performance

to erect. I counted no fewer than 29 separate press-on fasteners, in addition to a couple of hooks and a reinforcing metal strip—all of which have to be secured before the top is in position.

Heating and ventilation equipment is an immense advance on anything offered before on a TR. In addition to a most efficient electric blower, it is possible to direct currents of hot or cold air to both windshield and occupants' feet, separately or combined. At each end of the fascia, swivelling vents are provided which control the amount of air admitted to the driving compartment.

Seating is well thought out, and a child can be accommodated on the rear bench. The instruments are well placed and easy to read, but I was often puzzled by the coded control knobs, until I became used to the diagrams which indicate their function.

In comparing the TR4 with its predecessors, one notes the adoption of rack-and-pinion steering with most efficient anti-shock rubber joints on the column. As regards directional control, the steering at speeds of up to 60 m.p.h. is

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Triumph TR4—continued

very light indeed, and it is advisable to avoid an unnecessary movement otherwise there is an instantaneous response. Above 60 m.p.h. the steering becomes almost ideal, liveliness replacing the somewhat "power-assisted" feeling at lower speeds.

The new synchromesh gearbox is as efficient as any to be found on Continental cars, and the provision of synchromesh for bottom ratio will be applauded by all buyers. Incidentally, low gear ratio has been raised from 3.38 to 3.14 to 1, putting up maximum at 5,600 r.p.m. to just over 35 m.p.h. It is now virtually impossible to engage reverse in error, for this ratio has a locking arrangement, necessitating pulling up the lever for engagement.

On the car tested no overdrive was fitted, the resultant rear axle ratio being 3.7 to 1; with overdrive, 4.1 to 1 is standardized. With the normal four ratios performance is all that could be desired, with brisk acceleration and a maximum speed in excess of 110 m.p.h. In the revealing standing quarter-mile tests, the TR4 achieved 17.4 secs., coming out of the measured distance at 80 m.p.h. in third gear. I found that the maximum in this gear, at 5,600 r.p.m., was exactly 85 m.p.h. Changing into top before the end of the "quarter" produced 18.5 secs. as the best time achieved. To reach 90 m.p.h. from rest took 25.2 secs., and to 100 m.p.h. 34 secs.

The engine is undoubtedly free-revving, for during maximum speed trials over 5,600 r.p.m. was registered, and the mean average worked out at 112.6 m.p.h. Curiously enough, the exhaust note was more pronounced in the medium speed ranges, and there was a definite "boom" at 60-65 m.p.h. on top. Power-roar from the twin SU carburetors is also predominant during acceleration, but mechanically the 2.2-litre unit is a good deal less harsh than its 2-litre forebears. The engine is invariably a first-time starter, from cold or hot, and with slow-running set at 700-800 r.p.m., there was no tendency to stall in traffic, which occurred when the throttle stops were adjusted to 500 r.p.m.

During the time the TR4 was in my

care it was used to cover an International rally; the wider track as compared to the TR3 has increased stability, but there was still a slight tendency to hop about on humpy curves, indicating that the suspension is still on the harsh side, despite the altered damper settings. However, there was no question of anything but first-class road-holding, and on winding Alpine passes the TR4 is a sheer delight to drive. The Girling brakes are immensely powerful, although pedal pressure is higher than one would expect. There was no sign of fade, nor of any peculiarities whatsoever. Swooping down to those sudden hairpins beloved of Continental road-builders, the synchromesh bottom gear combined with those admirable brakes produced a wonderful feeling of security.

Economy was most marked during the period the TR4 was in my hands, and even 90-100 m.p.h. cruising on motor roads, together with plenty of mountain work, produced almost 30 m.p.g. One never ceases to marvel at the efficiency of the lusty four-cylinder engine, long noted for its economy of operation. Admittedly the engine was not at its happiest on the grades of petrol provided abroad, and tended to run on after switching off at the conclusion of a fast run. Yet it was impossible to make it pink, therefore the 9-to-1 compression ratio cannot be considered to be too high for Continental use. During over 800 miles less than half a pint of oil was required.

I did have an unfortunate experience with the lights, for the car was delivered with British bulbs, dipping to the wrong

side. Several camion drivers soon convinced me that they have certain retaliative measures. By a lucky chance, my own Continental kit included a set of the regulation bulbs!

Taking it by and large, the TR4 offers a great deal for a comparatively modest outlay. It is a most enjoyable method of transport, with the kind of performance that puts it straightaway in the sporting car category. Nevertheless, it provides comfort far in excess of that offered on earlier TR models, without losing the characteristics that have so endeared the marque to thousands of purchasers.

During the time the car was in our possession it gave not the slightest trouble. The general finish was excellent, and after motoring in really dreadful weather the car was soon restored to showroom finish.

I presume many potential purchasers would prefer the overdrive version for sustained high speed cruising, but I can assure them that the lusty big 2.2-litre engine can be run at 5,000 r.p.m. all day, without the slightest sign of distress; a comfortable 90-95 m.p.h. gait can be maintained indefinitely, with the clock showing around 4,700 r.p.m.

Without a doubt the infusion of Leyland know-how into the quantity production of quality vehicles has been of great benefit to Standard-Triumph. This TR4 is already acknowledged as a winner, and the knowledge that it is still somewhat difficult to obtain in the U.K. is proof enough that hundreds are being shipped abroad—and production is increasing every month.

SPECIFICATION AND PERFORMANCE DATA

Engine: Four cylinders, o.h.v. (push-rod), 86 mm. x 92 mm., 2,138 c.c., 105 b.h.p. at 4,750 r.p.m. Compression ratio, 9 to 1. Twin SU carburetors. Lucas coil ignition.

Transmission: Borg and Beck single-plate dry clutch. All-synchromesh gearbox, ratios 11.6, 7.44, 4.90 and 3.70 to 1. Open propeller shaft. Hypoid rear axle.

Suspension: Front, independent by helical springs and wishbones. Semi-elliptic at rear; Armstrong telescopic hydraulic dampers.

General: Rack-and-pinion steering, 5.90 x 15 tyres. Girling disc brakes (front), drums (rear). Bolt-on disc wheels (wire wheels extra). Heater, de-misting and ventilating units with booster. Windscreen washers.

Dimensions, etc.: Wheelbase, 7 ft. 4 ins. Track

(front) 4 ft. 1 in., (rear) 4 ft. Ground clearance, 6 ins. Overall length, 13 ft.; width, 4 ft. 9 1/2 ins.; height, 4 ft. 2 ins. Turning circle, 33 ft. Weight (as tested), 20 1/2 cwt.

Performance: Speeds in gears: 1st, 35 m.p.h.; 2nd, 55; 3rd, 85. Maximum speed (mean), 112.6 m.p.h. Acceleration: 0-30, 3.5 secs.; 0-40, 5.5; 0-50, 7.8; 0-60, 10.2; 0-70, 13.8; 0-80, 17.6; 0-90, 25.2; 0-100, 34.0. Standing quarter-mile, 17.4 secs.

Fuel Consumption: (Average, fast driving) 27-30 m.p.g.

Makers: Standard-Triumph, Coventry.

Price £750 (plus £282 5s. 3d. P.T. = £1,032 5s. 3d.)

Available extras: Hard top; "Surrey" hard top; centre-lock wire wheels; Laycock-de Normanville overdrive; radio; fog lamps.