

# NEW ZEALAND Classic Car

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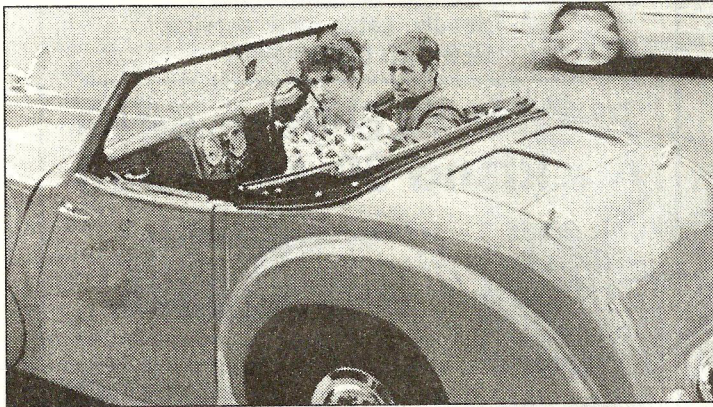


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# 1948 Triumph 2000

## a 'Bergerac' Roadster



Bergerac posing for the cameras in our Triumph Roadster



**T**horoughbred & Classic Car, of November 1985, has a photograph of the television character 'Bergerac' in a Triumph Roadster, and under it the caption reads that a Mr. E Brook Fowler of Wyre Piddle (is this a have-on?) near Pershore in Angleterre has told T & C.C. that he has just sold his white '49 Triumph Roadster to the BBC for use in the next series of Bergerac. Sure enough, on the next page there is a photograph of a white convertible Roadster loaded onto a trailer and hooked behind a Land Rover with a BBC logo on it.

Naturally I'd like to know if there is a connection between the Roadster that *this* article is about, and Mr. Brook's one. I guess it also tells us that there were at least two such 'Bergerac' cars, and maybe more – one for each series? It also explains, maybe, how it is that I know two men in New Zealand who each know that they have *the* Bergerac Triumph Roadster.

These Roadsters have to be the epitome of all that's 'English' from the thirties and forties and fifties. Long bonnet with huge mudguards, front and rear – wooden finished dash with Jaeger clocks, huge separate headlights, and, to top it all off, the inevitable overstated chrome front grille complete with badge, and flutes, big brightworked horns, and so on.

**T**he subject of this article is a faultlessly restored example of a 1948 Triumph 2000 Roadster, by Sports and Classic Car Garage, of Taupo, under the instruction of Richard and Patience Izard of Northland.

If you use a skillsaw, the chances are that the blade was made in one of Richard Izard's very hi-tec factories in NZ or overseas that he used to own. Having said that however it is more important to stress that Richard has impeccable credentials in the classic car scene. I first met



The West End, London showroom where Mr Izard purchased the restored car

him when he had finished having his exquisite fifties Sunbeam Alpine restored – usually seen at Auckland's Elleslie Concours, gracing the NZ Sunbeam Owners Club display.

I spent a time with the Izards a couple of years ago, learning a lot about his cars and his experiences with them, including his rallying with Graham Robson in Europe and knowing many of the greats in the racing circuits of the sixties. He'd sold Triumphs in some funny places in Europe, including in the Eastern Bloc, and owned and raced and rallied a heap of great cars, both as a lad in NZ, and overseas. He's a story in his own right, which we'll have to save for some other time.

Did you notice that I mentioned a connection with Triumph above? Well this is the explanation for his interest in this roadster. He's a Triumph man at heart, even though he

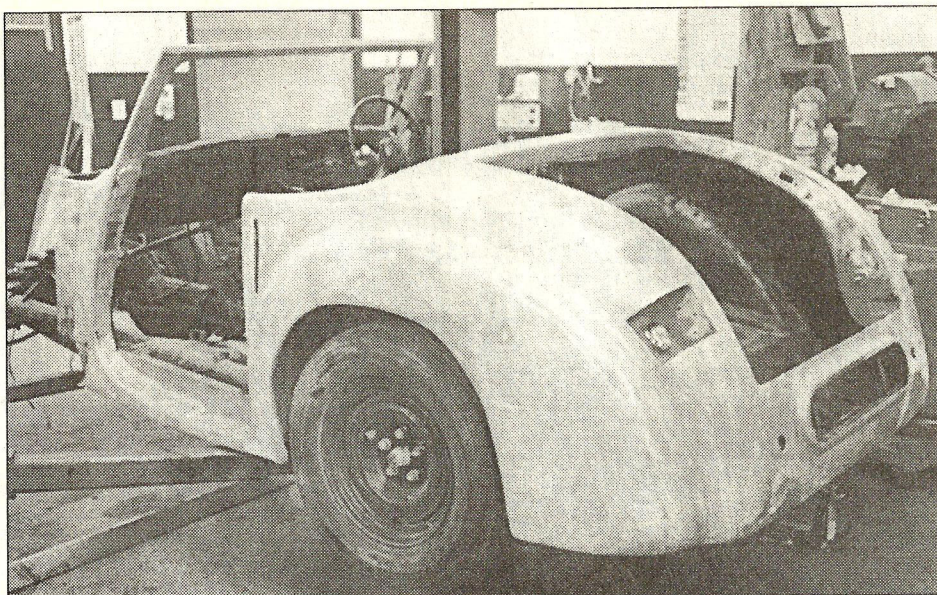
confesses his favourite personal car is an MG TD 1500 and while he loves classic cars of all kinds, he did spend years working for, and selling, Triumph in Europe.

He also has a TR3A being restored in this same workshop, and that too is another story.

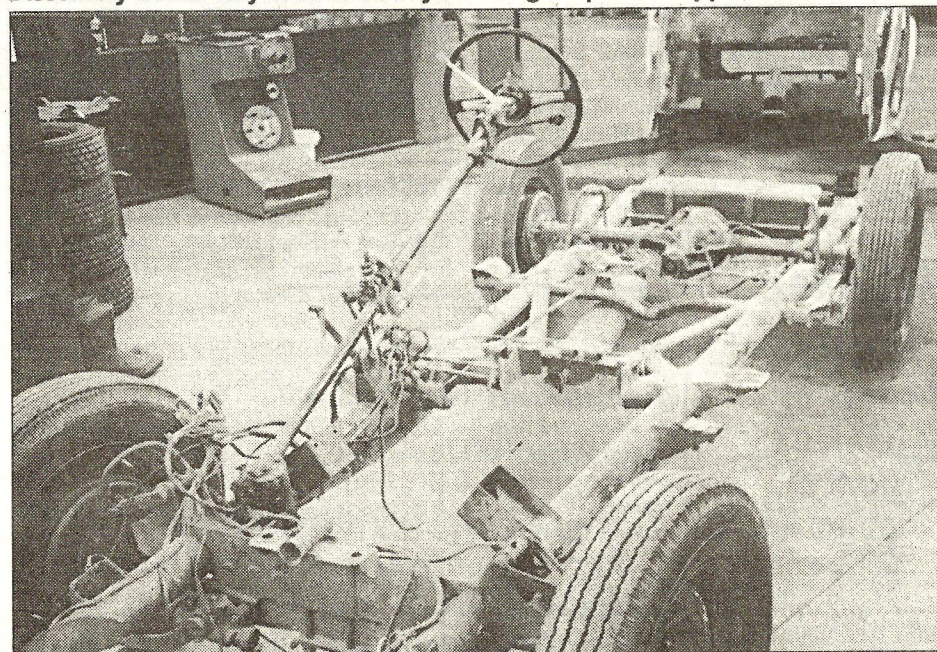
**H**e bought this Roadster in England, allegedly as a 'fully restored' car. It was offered as a Bergerac car – with photographs to prove it. He brought it back to NZ, and then decided to paint it. He took it to his restorers, the Sports and Classic Car Garage, who found the restoration was only paint deep.

It would be easy to condemn English restorers on the basis of what was found. But in fairness, we don't know if any more than preparing the car for the TV series was ever actually intended, and for this purpose the car looked fine,





**Disassembly under way with the body showing its paint stripped**



**Many body parts were recreated after the body was removed from the chassis**

judging by the photographs. But when Peter and Kevin Wall started stripping it down for a re-paint they found so many problems they had to call Richard down from his baronial estate to have a look. I have seen some of the samples of the bodgy work uncovered ... pretty horrible, this car had *not* been restored. I can't really describe it, you had to be there, but there was plenty of bog, inches thick! Much of the timber framing was well beyond saving, patched up with bits and pieces.

Richard Izard had a look, and decided there was only one way out – forward, go the whole hog and have the car done properly. Me, I tend to thrash around moaning in financial agony when faced with buying a couple of tyres, let alone realising I had a problem involving my life's savings.

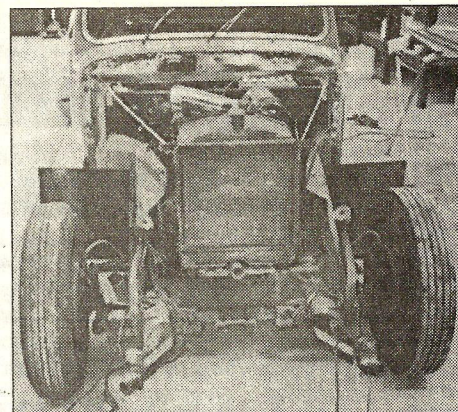
But Richard was OK, he'd saved up a few

dollars from the grocery money over the years – you know, eating mince and snarlers instead of steak and roasts and so on, and the budget would just about stretch to top professionals.

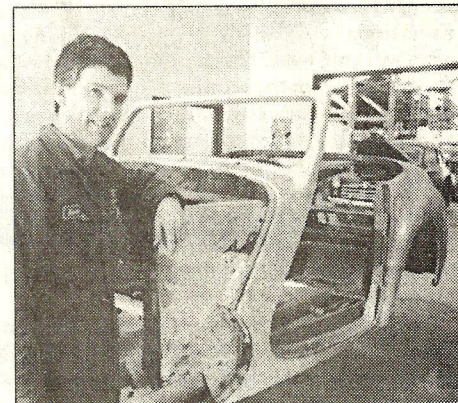
That was eighteen months ago.

On the day we drove down to see the newly arisen Phoenix at the Taupo workshop, we were going to meet Richard Izard and get his reactions. He reckoned that, having gone to all this trouble, not to mention expense, he was damned if he was going to be the second bum in the driver's seat of his own Roadster.

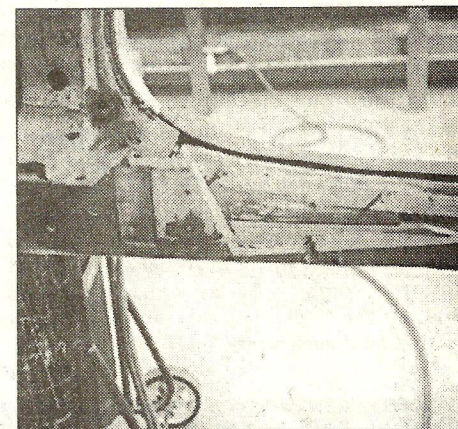
Me and Sue Marsden, the photographer, were taken down in the editorial Beamer while Richard Izard flew down. It was a Sunday morning, following the annual Birkenhead Ball, and I was a touch mono-syllabic. Gregory was in good humour having been kept awake



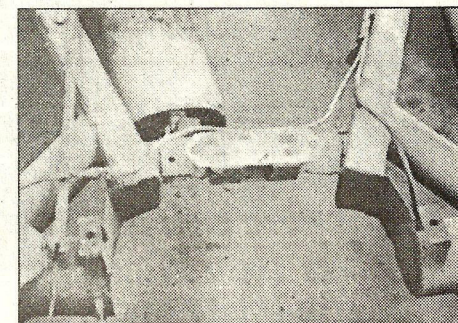
**There was some chassis rust and a fair degree of rotten woodwork**



**Kevin Wall, the man in charge of this 18 month restoration project**



**Fijian Kauri replaced the original rotted English ash**



**Some of the repairs were 'quite atrocious' – the crudely-cut chassis**



most of the night by the newly acquired no.2 son, he was glad to get away! Sue seemed in fine fettle, grabbing the rear seat despite my moans of geriatric pain, and collapsing as we took off at 0700hrs, approximately.

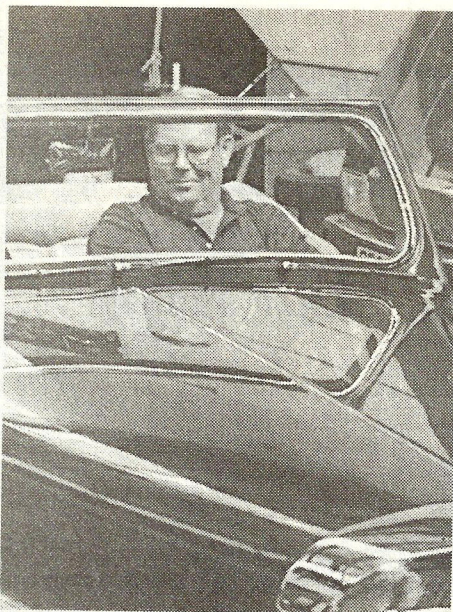
The workshop of the Taupo Wall brothers is new and purpose built. It's heaven if you're a car restorer, professional or amateur. In fact much of the plant is available to enthusiasts in Taupo. Wouldn't you like access to a professional bead blaster? It eats rust and paint and muck. There are assorted steel and alloy bending, cutting and curving devices, that can make anything for any car, provided you know how to use them.

Currently also under restoration there is a Model T, a couple of TR3As (including Richard's) assorted Jags, and a huge Bentley. Everything is extremely well laid out in light, airy, working bays. An interesting feature was the general warmth, because the concrete floor is warmed by the earth underneath – volcanic and all that. I'm not too sure about working on permanently heated ground, although in Taupo I've always felt semi-frozen.

A very pleasant working environment. Ergonomically excellent, said Gregory H, thus impressing me with his wide (smart alec!) knowledge.

When we walked into the workshop the first sight of this Triumph Roadster 2000 thrilled me immensely. The car sat there, incredibly immaculate in every fine detail. It would never again be as good as this day in its new life. I was surprised at how big it is, although I shouldn't be because cars in those eras were always a lot bigger than today's crops.

Not surprising mind you, because this car was a direct assault on Lyons and Jaguar by the boss of Standard – Sir (Captain) John Black – who had owned an SS 100 before WW2 – and when you have a good peer at the car it certainly is an amalgam of several ideas and concepts, and really is an end of an era car of this style – certainly the last with a front bench seat (for three), plus two fold out seats for tiny bottomed dwarfs in the boot – 'dickey seats'

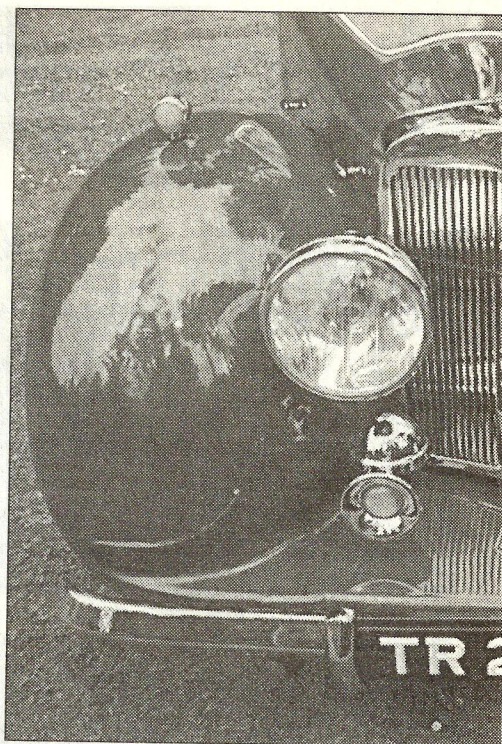


**Owner Richard Izard, overwhelmed**

so it's a three plus two! There are other innovations too. The use of a tubular frame is uncommon for the style and time and inside the overall frame there is an additional small box section frame is also welded in place in order to strengthen by resisting bending strains it was said. An interesting variation when you allow for the fact that the coachwork is built over an ash frame. The other innovation is the first use of hydrastatic brakes, hailed as a great advance because it decreased the travel in the pedal and eliminated adjustment.

I'm reliably told that the tubular chassis and the extensive use of alloy is all connected with aircraft industry wartime experience, plus the shortage of steel. This was claimed as a great technological advance, of course.

But all this was let down however, if it was an assault on Jaguar, by the old problem of underpowering. The Standard six cylinder motor production was committed to none other than William Lyon for his post-war Jags. Instead they had to use a basically pre-war design Standard four cylinder 1,800cc engine

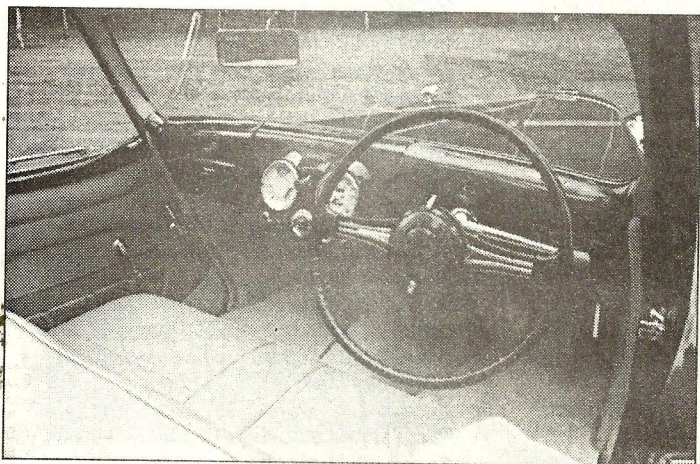


**This Roadster has to be the epitome of**

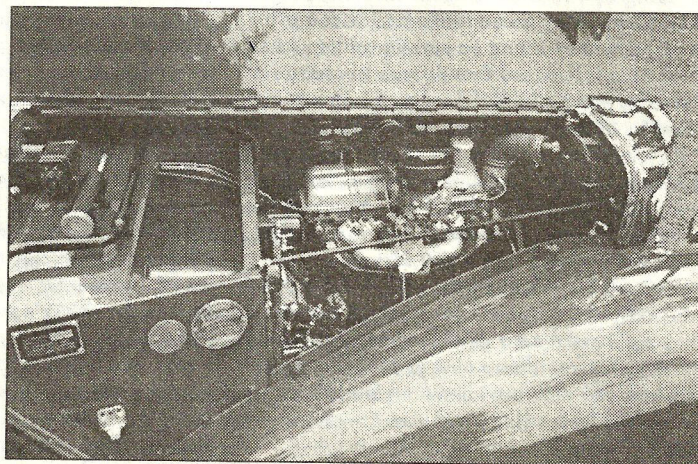
(the same unit as the recently tested Jaguar 1 ½ litre saloon), and, later in this car, the 2 litre Vanguard unit. Nevertheless, this motor is still deserving of lots of respect. A wet sleeve, very sturdy motor used in many situations. Any older country boy will remember the Fergie Tractor – it was the same motor. Parts are *still* readily available. There's nothing wrong with Standard motors.

I wonder how it would have gone with the bigger six cylinder motor?

The panels are all alloy pressings (except for the steel front guards), and all this gives an overall weight of 22 cwt – a bit over 200lbs more than a ton – like that arch-conservative Gabriel, who pontificates elsewhere in this mag, (you know, the one who hates American cars!) I don't accept metric weights as meaningful when describing cars, so you'll have

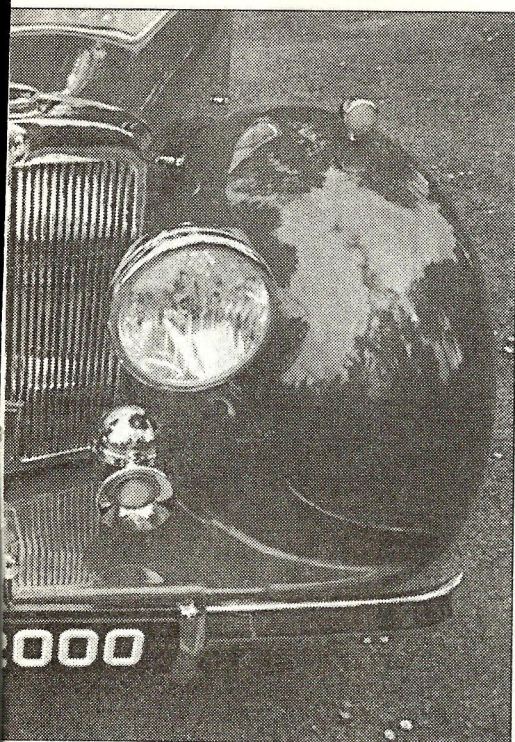


**This re-veneered dashboard could never be bettered!**



**The pristine engine compartment also houses a toolkit**





all that's 'English' from the '30s & '40s

to do your own metric conversions if you're under thirty years of age. The view from different angles is really very interesting. It is only from the rear that it could be difficult to identify. From the side it is a very distinctive car, and well balanced in my opinion. Large and curving guards front and rear, cover the big sixteen inch crossplies. The boot is large and balances the long traditional bonnet – not surprisingly, since it has to accommodate two passengers. The front-on view is classic thirties.

I walked around and around it, just as Richard Izard did later on in the morning, and could not find anything that didn't impress me with the sheer professionalism of the restoration. I hope I wasn't consciously looking for faults, but in any case everything was meticulous.

A complete set of original tools sat in the engine bay. These came from a very lucky cache of bits and pieces the restorers stumbled across in Taupo – just as they discovered an owner's manual in excellent order at an auto-jumble.

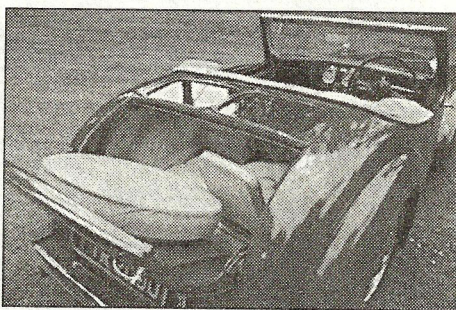
Later, the car went onto the hoist and I could have a good look underneath. It was the same story, just perfection, with two-pot glossy black or thoroughly cleaned alloy and anodised nuts and bolts and screws.

This is a car for the Ellerslie Concours, a must, and I'm sure that we will see it there in February 1994.

Peter and Kevin keep thorough photographic records of all restorations. The photos tell the story of just how far gone under the paint this TR Roadster was. As related above, much of the wooden framing was unuseable – in fact both doors and the boot lid were almost



The rear glass screen folds flat



The two small dickey seats revealed



When motoring, the screen is raised

completely re-fabricated, as was the whole bonnet. If you look at the photographs you will see no indications of this, all the gaps are perfect to the eye, and this isn't easy because these sorts of bodies don't allow for the adjustments that mass produced unitary bodies do. You have to make it just right the first time. No mistakes.

Much of the aluminium panelling was re-made, because there was just so much corrosion and so many dents, not to mention butchery. The massive front guards are steel and they had to be really worked, hammering and filing to get the perfect curves back again. The same applied to most of the alloy panels once taken off the wood frame – those that weren't simply replaced with new ones made there like the doors etc.

Photographs also show the chassis and details of the rust picked up here and there. A chassis leg full of large rust holes was typical of just how badly gone the car was when it got here. All of this was replaced with sound metal or even whole new sections faithfully reproduced.

The veneered dashboard is a beautiful example of cabinet making and this drew my admiration, and later on Richard's as well. On the tops of the two doors there is solid mahogany with neat little shark fins to act as door slammers. All of these were restored to a state of perfection, of course.

The soft top shows the experience the English have in this area. I actually timed the erection of this top later in the day, unbeknown to the erector, and it took thirty seconds to get rain protection and a further thirty seconds to clamp it into place. Very good. The English were experienced at this sort of thing.

The boot is something that really fascinated me. It's a fully carpeted compartment with two tiny seats that can be folded forward and quite out of the way – so as to load suitcases no doubt – or simply folded flat in position, or opened up as two little – and I mean *tiny* – uncomfortable dickey seats. The boot lid is in two sections. The top, smaller part is hinged at the top and has two glass windows set in it so that you can swing it up and it becomes a windscreen protecting the dickey seat passengers. The major two thirds of the boot lid opens back on lower hinges giving access to the seats.

It's damned uncomfortable for adults for a heap of reasons, not the least being that the spare wheel is lodged right behind them. Both parts of the boot lid are supported by solidly designed hinges and supports, allowing several positions, one for driving with dickey-seat passengers and another allowing orthodox luggage stowing.

The boot interior has no bulkhead between the dickey seat area and the front seat passengers, so communication is very easy, but I've no doubt the rear must be for children or teen-agers.

No fully grown human could travel from Auckland to Taupo in it, for instance.

On the rear bumper, at each side, there are solid rubber steps for passengers to use for stepping in to the compartment. (These steps were supplied by the UK Roadster Club, which has two or three hundred members. The club re-manufactures some rubbers and other parts.) I tried it, of course, and triggered off Kevin – the touching of any part of the car was always the signal for him to scurry forward compulsively and wipe away the smudge – something that amused all of us, including Kevin.

But you can appreciate this because anybody who has carried out a restoration knows that feeling that immediately follows the completion of the last part of the assembly, and they had completed this job at 3:30am that morning. As the day wore on they started to fade and



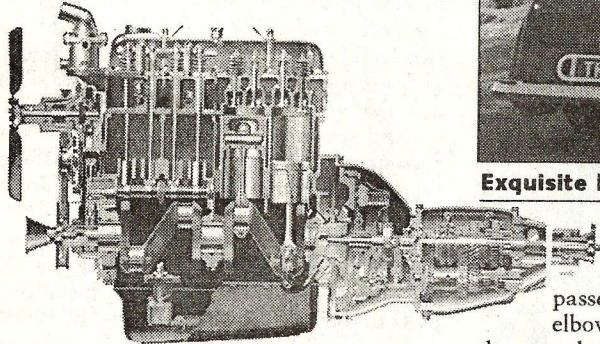
when we came back to the workshop after the photographs (which took for ever!!) we found Peter asleep on the back seat of one of the cars under restoration in the workshop.

I mentioned the UK Roadster Club to Peter. He had joined the it on behalf of Richard, and they received a huge amount of help by way of information and new and used parts. They also located parts such as boot lid handles, brand new, in NZ, because the old ones were too far gone with muck metal corrosion.

The motor was completely sound, and other than a strip down for checking, little needed doing. It is the Standard Vanguard, four cylinder, wet sleeve, OHV motor. Parts are easily obtained if you know where to look.

In fact the engine had been run up and used for the first time in the early hours of that very morning. As we drove the car that day I was really impressed with just how quiet and steady the motor was. After Richard's initial drive with me the pipe was already reassuringly grey.

The three speed gearbox is supported by the commonly found Laycock overdrive used on many English cars during the forties, fifties and



**Cutaway of the Standard engine**

sixties. In Hamilton, Classic Restorations handles all Laycock parts and repairs. I got a replacement unit from them recently for my Rapier Ragtop, and it's perfect.

In this Roadster's motor the simple finish, using original colours, understates the highly professional finish the Walls put into all their work. The rocker cover is finished in a silver hammerglaze typical of the period, and this is continued in other fittings. Otherwise everything is an immaculate black. A single Solex carb supplies the mixture.

The column change is a short silver lever, quite thick, mounted on top of the column,

## Clubs

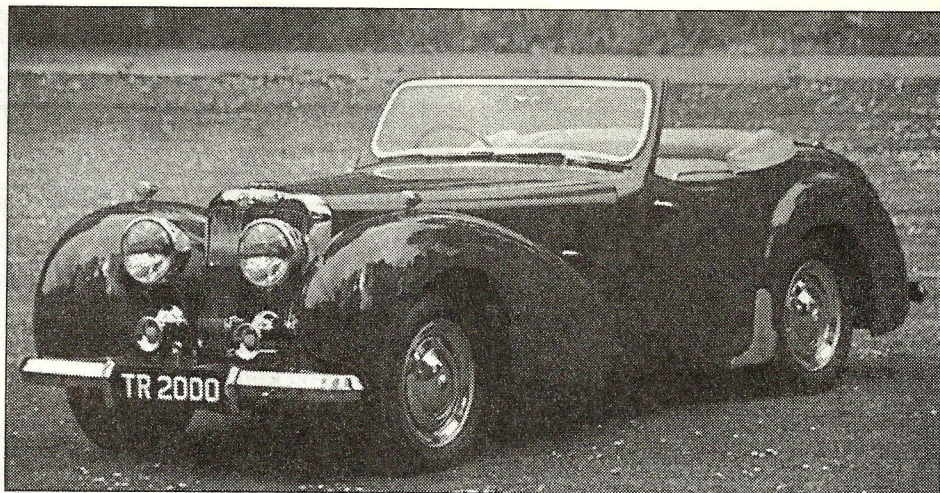
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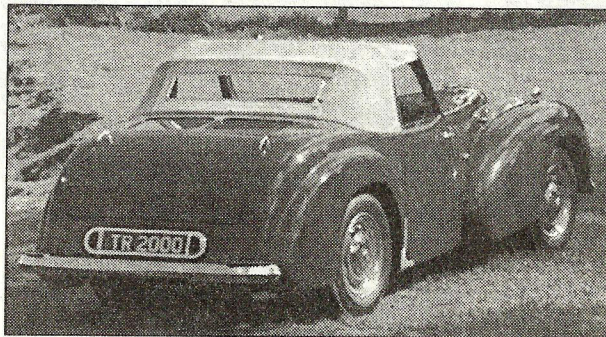
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**These Triumph Roadsters were the last cars manufactured with dickey seats**



**Exquisite hood with perspex rear window**

sticking out to the right of the driver. Probably because this is a three seater and the middle passenger wouldn't want the driver's elbow jammed in the eye. Incidentally there are three windscreen wipers, (one for the middle passenger) each with its own knob.

Richard's arrival was eagerly awaited, a fact that must have been very obvious to him. When you step in the door to the combined gazes of Gregory H, Sue our photographer, and your correspondent (wiping away the odd emotional tear), plus of course the anxiously focussed attention of Kevin and Peter, and you spot a cloth covered car inviting a formal unveiling, any sensitive person knows that their reaction is important to everybody.

He didn't let us down. He duly walked around and around the beautifully presented car uttering short sharp expletives like, "Gee whizz," and, "My goodness me," and in every way he showed his very real pleasure in what had been created. Even though it must have been difficult to express spontaneously one's feelings about a car that has just been rebirthed as a new car, nevertheless it was obvious that Richard was totally satisfied with his investment. He hadn't seen it in this state before so the pleasure was all the more acute.

I was anxious to travel in the Roadster with Richard, because it was a great chance to experience somebody's pleasure at this stage of a long term and highly detailed restoration.

After Kevin had taken him for a brief run

Richard sat in the driver's seat and off we went. No scuttle shake was the first thing I noticed, followed by the absence of suspension judder, the whole car felt taut and tight and *new, of course*. The two litre motor purled along really quietly and smoothly. It was a totally useable car. No match for a contemporary Jaguar in performance, but perhaps it would have been had 'Captain' Black not flogged off all his big

motors. It was sunny and quite warm, and Richard drove firmly. We felt the speedo was maybe indicating low, at fifty five, but the needle was totally steady (new cable from the UK Club) and this was true of the other instruments – no rev counter though. A bit of a wander in the steering, but Kevin pointed out the alignment had not yet been done, and that would soon be taken care of. The front suspension is massively solid with a beam and a huge transverse spring, with Armstrong shocks mounted at each wheel, and they work very well, you could feel the security of a solidly designed car from an era when they built cars like small trucks.

A brake squeal was also audible, and some other minor fault so minor I can't even remember it. Not bad for only a third drive!

A faultless restoration typical of so many carried out by professional restorers in New Zealand. The rest of the afternoon was spent photographing it at the Huka Lodge, and it didn't look out of place there either in the beautiful old fashioned flower gardens.

Whilst Greg and Sue fiddled around snapping it, I continued to admire a rare car, one of only three in the country, it's thought.

Finally don't forget that while people are moaning about the cars going overseas, there are people like Richard Izard also importing them, and people like the Wall brothers carrying out superlative restorations.

**Penn McKay**

