



STAG NEWS

Magazine of the Triumph Stag Club USA
Autumn 2022 | Issue 117

Bronte Stag Weekend 2022



British Car Day • Hardtop Hoists • Car Show Round-up



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On the Cover

Stags at British Car
Day, Bronte, ON
September 18, 2022

Photo: Terence McKillen

Like to have your photo on the front cover? Send high resolution JPG files to the Editor at Publisher@TSCUSA.org

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Submissions should preferably be non-formatted MS Word documents. Articles of 1,500-2,000 words are preferable but larger submissions can be accommodated. The Editor reserves the right to make changes to any submission for layout purposes. Photographs or diagrams should be sent separately as high-definition JPG files (>4000KB) with appropriate cut-line/caption descriptions. The author should provide a short biography. Send by e-mail to the Editor ahead of the deadline dates of March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1 for inclusion in a future issue.

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Our website URL is: tscusa.org

STAG ARTICLES WANTED!

Producing a magazine dedicated to a single classic car model issue after issue, as we do at Stag News, can be challenging. In order to keep providing interesting articles and stories, we need to hear from more of our membership. Thanks to those who have already stepped up to the plate and prepared a once off submission or have become regular contributors.

Please consider sending us an illustrated article about your Triumph Stags; the hunt for a suitable model, the restoration projects completed or underway, the modifications you have made, the difficulties faced, why you still love them, the outings and trips you take, the shows and events that you attend, the friends and associates with whom you share this passion.

We would like to hear from members in as many different States and Provinces (and internationally) as possible in order to keep the content regionally balanced.

Renew your membership ON-LINE at
www.tscusa.org/join.asp

NEW MEMBERS
Since Summer Issue #116

Graham Andrews, Henderson, NV

Jim Barton, Modesto, CA (Rejoined
from 05/2021)

David Beaufort, Salt Lake City, UT

Terry Connolly, Hudson, QC, Canada

Mark Fling, Santa Barbara, CA (Re-
joined from 06/2022)

Jim Hatch, Lenox, MA

Steve Hurley, Plant City, FL

Frank Incorvala, Cleveland, OH

Steven Levesque, Wrentham, MA

Phillippe Marcotte, Pierrefonds, QC,
Canada (Rejoined from 10/21)

Terry Oxley, Tumwater, WA

Dave Roe, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Jeff Rosen, Spokane, WA

Chris Taylor, Broadlands, VA

Can You Help?

with

Web/Social Media content

Stag News content & publishing
Membership Director/Treasurer

Contact Michael Coffey or Terence McKillen
for further details

DEADLINE

The deadline for the next issue of

STAG NEWS is:

Nov. 1, 2022

To submit material for publication
refer to details on inside front cover

Season's End

We are nearing the end of the driving season in the northern and higher elevation regions of North America, but those of us living further south can hopefully continue to enjoy driving our Stags over the late autumn and winter months. It is the latter group upon whom we will have to rely to provide thought-provoking technical or social comment on the use of their Stags, while the remainder of us sit by our firesides eagerly awaiting the delivery of the next issue of *Stag News*.

This season turned out to be somewhat more 'normal' for British car events. The participation by Stag owners did not reach pre-pandemic levels at many shows but it was nice to see the Triumph Stag as a featured anniversary model at the two premier Canadian British car shows held in Vancouver in May and Toronto in September. I am always surprised at comment from members of the public who think the Triumph Stag is a much more modern car than it actually is, and how few people actually remember seeing one on the roads back in the day.

In this issue, we have a report on British Car Day and the Bronte Stag Weekend, both run for the first time since 2019, which attracted a record attendance of over 1,000 British cars, but only 12 Stags. Participation by U.S. visitors was down significantly from previous levels, possibly because of trans-border COVID vaccination and Canadian health reporting requirements, or the price of gasoline, or perhaps we are all just getting older and less enthusiastic about undertaking longer drives. Also in this issue is an entertaining vignette from John Macartney with a very tenuous Triumph Stag connection, as well as brief reports from a few other British Car Shows together with a couple of technical articles.

Terence McKillen

Top - Electric hardtop hoist | Center - 'The Old Bill' had a few questions | Lower - rain beading on Scott McKee's highly polished Stag at Triumph



Founder's Corner

We'll the cooler days of autumn/fall have arrived and it is great weather for a drive in our favorite classic car, the Stag. This time of the year where we live in the Northeast USA is a lovely time for taking top down, warm jacket drives admiring the falling leaves and hoping that we won't get too much snow this winter. I hope that many of you will take your Stag out now that the cautionary health warnings have subsided to a more reasonable level.

With that in mind and with the driving season for Stags closing in a large area of our continent, it is a good time to consider tackling a few of those "promised" repairs/upgrades, etc. to your favorite Triumph Stag. I see many new members that have acquired a Stag which needs much love and care. If you are in need of advice or parts, do not hesitate to contact myself or any of our officers on listed on the inside cover of this quarterly StagNews.

This is a single marque club and we need all members support to continue our efforts. Any input that you feel is relevant should be forwarded to our listed officers on the inside front cover. As club Founder I am proud of what we have achieved since our inception and with your input we can only do better. Give us your input to make this club better for us all.



Michael Coffey - Founder

BRONTE STAG WEEKEND, ON

by Terence McKillen

TONY FOX, OUR CLUB'S CANADIAN Director, together with family and friends, has for many years hosted a three-day get-together for Triumph Stag owners on the days prior to as well as the day of the Toronto Triumph Club's British Car Day®. Now in its 37th year, British Car Day® was held at Bronte Creek Provincial Park in Oakville (just west of Toronto, Ontario) once again this year on Sunday, September 18, after a two-year hiatus due to COVID.

The Bronte Stag Week-end has always provided an opportunity for Stag owners to attend British Car Day®, the largest single-day gathering of British cars in North America, but also to participate in a number of enjoyable drives through the southern Ontario countryside together with other Stag owners on the two days prior to BCD.

Due to the somewhat late confirmation that British Car Day® would be proceeding, following changes in the Ontario government's COVID protocols announced at the end of April, Tony decided that it would be better if the Stag weekend be more informal than usual, leaving out-of-town participants to arrange their own accommodation and meals. It turned out that we only had two Stags participate in the Friday drive, but twelve were at the Bronte show, which included just one member from the USA. Unfortunately, several of the usual local participants were laid up with

medical or mechanical issues so couldn't boost the numbers up to the anticipated mid-twenties. Perhaps 2023 will prove to be a better year for getting back together.

Stag Weekend

As a result of the lower-than-normal participation from U.S. based members, it was decided to restrict the Stag-only activities to a country drive and lunch on the Friday, a picnic lunch and drive on the Saturday, and an informal dinner on the Saturday evening.

On Friday, the plan was for Stag owners to meet up with Tony Fox in Burlington for a leisurely morning's drive over and along the Niagara Escarpment's by-roads, eventually reaching Rockwood and the McKillen's farm for lunch and mini car show, before retreating southwards to the Oakville area. However, that is not what transpired and it was just Tony's and your editor's Stags that participated.

Saturday's drive convened in Oakville, at the British Car Day site within Bronte Creek Provincial Park where Stag owners were guests of the Toronto Triumph Club for an al fresco picnic lunch. The Stags were joined by 10 other Triumphs for a drive northwards to ascend the Niagara Escarpment on the narrow switch-backs of Appleby Line, formerly known in the 1950s and 1960s by those in the Ontario amateur motoring world as the Rattlesnake Point Hillclimb route. Further north, the Escarp-



ment was ascended yet again on Milton 6th Line and then by taking 15 Sideroad and Nassagaweya 5th Line northwards through the rolling hills of the Guelph area, once again to arrive at the McKillen farm for light refreshments and conversation before heading southwards to the Burlington/Oakville area.



Some of the cars on Saturday's drive to Rockwood





British Car Day

The Triumph Stag was first introduced to the Automotive Press in June 1970 at Knokke-le-Zoute in Belgium and later revealed to U.S. audiences at the New York International Auto Show in April 1971. Due to the pandemic, celebrations of the Stag's Golden Anniversary were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 but the Stag joined ten other British models specially featured at the Bronte show which included the 100th anniversary of the humble Austin Seven, of which five restored and running models were present dating from 1927, 1928 and 1937, MG TD (70 years), Morgan Plus 4 (70 years), MG Midget (60 years), and MG B (60 years), the inimitable Jaguar E-Type (60 years), Triumph TR4, Spitfire and Lotus Elan (60 years), and the DeLorean DMC-12 (40 years). Also on display was a motorized quadricycle, built in 1898 by the Beeston company and an example of the first all-electric MINI - a 2022 Cooper SE, thus bridging 124 years of British car making.

Sunday, September 18 dawned overcast with sunny spells and a temperature of about 15 degrees C which later in the day climbed to 28 degrees under partially cloudy skies but late afternoon showers dampened the prize distribution and the



drive home.

Participants started arriving at the park at 8:00 a.m., and by 10 o'clock the field was almost fully occupied, although stragglers were still arriving up to one o'clock. Approximately 1,000 British cars

(1,062 to be exact) squeezed in, together with 50 vendors stalls and food purveyors. Gates were open to the general public at 9 o'clock and throughout the day it is estimated that some 8,000 spectators visited the park to view the cars on display.

An unusual appearance at this year's show was a wonderful collection of sixty Rootes Group cars (mainly Tigers and Alpines but some Singers and Rapiers) that were provided with a special display area to feature participants in the *United 39* event organized by the Tigers East-Alpines East Sunbeam Club which held its annual North American get-together in Oakville this year over 15-18 September. The Best of Show car, selected by a panel of judges was a spectacular 1955 Sunbeam Alpine. In the Stag category, first prize went to Tony Fox (Pimento red), second prize to Darren Fox (Magenta), and third prize to Graham Hunt (Carmine red). 🐯



The motorized Beeston quadricycle built in 1898



One of five Austin 7s at the show

BRITISH INVASION - STOWE, VT

by Chris Weekes & Alex McLeod

STOWE HOSTS A THREE-DAY BRITISH Car event, usually attracting between 600-800 classic British automobiles and motorcycles (reportedly the largest in the USA). This year the numbers were at the lower end of the range. This picturesque village is located between Mansfield and Hunger Mountains in the south-central area of the state.

This year was the 31st anniversary of this event, which was previously held on the same weekend as the Toronto Triumph Club's British Car Day in Bronte Park. In the year before the pandemic arrived, the organizers of the Invasion were faced with an accommodation conflict stemming from a major local school homecoming and made the decision to permanently move their dates to the second weekend of September, which now allows many participants

to attend both LBC events.

The history of the British Invasion began in a hotel called Ye Olde England Inn in Stowe. The owner, Chris Francis and his buddy Michael Gaetano from New York, who is a Rolls Royce/Bentley guy, were having a few drinks when Chris lamented, as hoteliers do, that while the area delivered skiers in winter, families in summer and leaf peepers in autumn, there was a gap in occupancy between labour day and the start of the fall colors. Michael suggested putting on a car show and the rest is history. British Invasion fills almost every room and restaurant seat in town throughout the weekend. While Ye Olde England Inn is sadly now gone, the British Invasion just keeps going.

The fun begins on the Friday night with a three hour downtown street party

hosted by the Stowe Village Vibrancy Association. This year Jerry Leone's Chop Shop Band played a fabulous set throughout the evening of sounds largely from the 60s and 70s. The street was blocked off as a pedestrian area with participant's cars lining both sides of the Village main drag. There are fabulous restaurants throughout the Stowe area, but be warned reservations (well in advance) are a must for both dinner and accommodations on both Friday and Saturday nights.

Saturday morning sees us out on the Show Field by 10:00 a.m. It's easy to get drawn away from the cars with all the good stuff on sale at the vendor locations. I always say that I never know what I absolutely need until I see it.

The cars are grouped by make and model classes, along with a "Car Corral"



The Standard 10 won the Stag+Other Triumph category



Chris' Stag was up against heavy competition event though only four Stags participated at Stowe this year



for cars offered for sale. A very impressive Concours D'Elegance event is also held near the large marquee tent area. Suitable music is of course broadcast throughout the day. A "Queen's Court" fashion judging event is held in the afternoon (ladies hats seem to be the big thing). At 2:30 p.m. awards for both participants choice and concours begin, with a drive-by of the top winners. The show closes for the day at 5:00 p.m. with an optional evening reception and dinner held at the Stoweflake Inn.

Sunday morning begins with a run through the famous "Smuggler's Notch." This very twisty and vertical drive over Mount Mansfield brought a great deal of welcome aid from Canada to our American Cousins during prohibition. The notch is so tight that large trucks are banned and a standing fine of \$2,400 is served up to any-

one who literally gets stuck in the Notch.

Returning to the show field, cars once again arrive at and are grouped for a participant's "Competition of Colors where everyone gets to pick their favorite car by color. Concurrently a "Tail-gate Picnic Competition" is held with prizes awarded for best presentation, most British, most humorous and the list goes on. See the British Invasion website at www.britishtoinvasion.com to view pictures of the "tailgate" winners from past years.

This is a weekend that just goes by in a heartbeat, with so much to do and see in one of the most scenic venues we have ever experienced in our U.S. travels.

There are some amazing shops along Highway 100 that we must always visit in the area before we head home including the Cold Hollow Cider factory where they

make incredible hot apple cider donuts that they sell by the bag (these don't last long in our car), and the Cabot Cheese and Chocolate outlets. The best by-far is the Ben and Jerry's Ice cream factory where the kid in you will want to sample one or two flavours and of course see the "Flavour Graveyard," where headstones remember our favorite flavors that are sadly no longer with us.

Unfortunately, of the approximate 600 cars at the Invasion, there were only four Stags - a sad showing. Because there were so few, we wound up in a class of Stag and Other (Triumphs) of which the 'Other' got all the votes, with the result that the Standard 10 took first in class! 🐾

TRIUMPHEST 2022

by Scott McKee

Scott McKee reports that the last time he attended a Triumphest event, last year in Flagstaff, AZ it snowed. This year, in sunny Southern California, it RAINED. Scott is a bit concerned about what may happen at next year's Triumphest!

Triumphest is an annual blowout event sponsored each year by one of five Triumph clubs from Arizona to Washington state. Held since 1986, this year's event was hosted by the Triumph Sports Car Club of San Diego at the Dana Resort.

Scott reports that it was very humid all weekend, feeling much more like Hawaii and being in San Diego, it looked like Hawaii too. However, a great weekend was had with fellow Triumph owners, including just one additional Stag belonging to Mel Hildebrandt.



Pools of water everywhere

My first Triumphest was back in the late 1980s. This is a west coast event the rotates amongst the south-west Triumph Clubs. I drove the TR3A I had recently purchased shortly after my divorce. As the years rolled on, the schedule of events has been fundamentally the same.

Triumphs are meant to be driven and enjoyed so you won't see a concourse competition here. What you will find is a Funcourse that encourages all drivers to show their car no matter what it looks like, but it must be registered and drivable.

One year my TR4, that I used as my daily driver to work (a 90 mile round trip) for years in Southern California, was awarded "2nd Worst Car." I received a few Bronze awards as well and my TR3A received some Silver awards.

Back then, the Funcourse would have an equal amount of Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. These last few years, Triumphests may yield 1 Bronze, 5-10 Silvers while the rest are Gold. That's with over 100 cars sitting in the parking lot! What changed? My guess is the age of the drivers, being older, have more time to work on the cars AND the money to make their cars pop!

For me, I had the ability to step into a 1971 Stag that was recently restored. Of

course, I sold off three TR4 projects (and spare parts), a TR8 with a fried engine and "The Green Mile" (a scary Spitfire 6) to get it. Kate, my then new wife, was as excited about the Stag as I was. That was nine years ago and we're still going to Triumphests.

Triumphest 2022 was hosted by the Triumph Sports Car Club in San Diego. As the club has a modest membership, it meant that there wouldn't be an Auto-cross, a driving rally, nor a walking rally. What the club did to was put together a great venue smack in the middle of Mission Bay in San Diego. It was roomy yet intimate. A nice surprise was the daily morning brunch provided by our Host – what a great perk; Kate's still talking about that tasty breakfast.

Another interesting feature was everything being in one huge room. All the folding walls were tucked away. Registration, the raffle prizes, Vendor booths and a bunch of tables scattered around to sit and chat was in that room. You could see anyone and everyone come and go; a nice feature if you're looking out for that one friend from another club. Simply a friendly and inviting location to spend your day.

Considering it was raining ALL DAY on the Friday, that room was busy. Yup, nature

was washing all our cars for us that day. Interestingly, with all that Friday rain, I saw only one person with an umbrella.

We woke up Saturday and peeked outside... was... it... raining...? NO! Checked the Weather App and found there would be no more rain. What a perfect day



to show our cars. The only 'gotcha' was having to wake up early enough to get your car ready; not a task to do the day before in the rain. The parking lots were bustling with rag wipers, coffee drinkers and "supervisors." What a spectacular show of cars, too many to mention. Yet there were only the two Stags; my Yellow 1971 and Mel Hildebrandt's Saffron Yellow 1970.

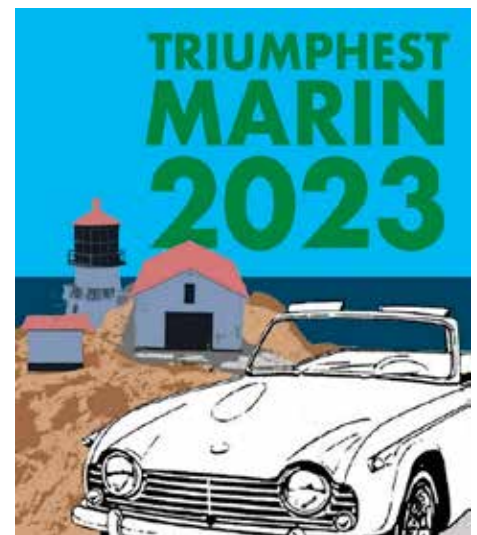
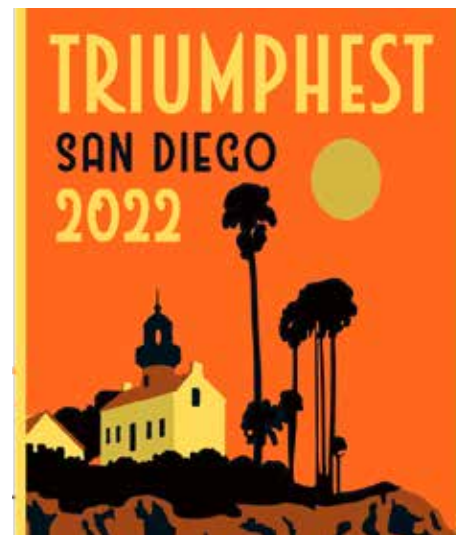
The event closed with the evening award ceremonies. Another first (for me) was the dinner being a self-serving buffet instead of table service. Pick your food as you walk through the line, perfect. No kidding, that's the first time everyone got served quickly with food that was hot. Go back for seconds if you want. During the Awards portion of the evening, my Stag received a Gold award while Kate and I won a few of the raffle prizes. We had a great time.

A few observations I made during our stay. The pool was nice, warm and not crowded. The two technical sessions were top notch. It was humid, oh so humid; not having a breeze didn't help. So humid, in fact, that my vitamin pills turned into mush. Everyone was smiling and talking. The Stag ran flawlessly.

Next year is Triumphest 2023, held in Marin County by the Triumph Travelers Sports Car Club in Palo Alto. 🐾



Above: Mel's Stag | Top: Scott's Stag



CAR SHOWS

by Terence McKillen

DUE TO THE COVID PANDEMIC many British car shows that previously ran annually for many years, had to take a two year sabbatical but most seem to have fairly successfully rebounded this spring and summer. Some of the major shows reported total participation numbers at or greater than the typical pre-COVID numbers while others reported general participation levels down by 25-40% in both the U.S. and Canada. However, for some reason participation by Triumph Stag owners was below normal.

It appears that fewer U.S. classic owners made the effort to cross the border to attend Canadian shows while the opposite seems to have occurred with near-border U.S. shows.

The drop in U.S. visitors to Canada can possibly be explained by the trans-border COVID vaccination and health reporting requirements, all of which will likely be removed at the end of September 2022. The price of gasoline may have had some impact on owner's decision making, or perhaps we are all just getting older and less enthusiastic about undertaking longer drives.

Why do people enjoy participating in or visiting classic car shows in any case? There are probably as many reasons as there are British marques and models on

display at a typical show field, but the most common reasons are likely nostalgia for a particular time period which is represented through the car models on display, the memory of a particular place or event that the visitor associates with a particular car, and for most of us autophiles, the love of fine machinery and the opportunity to view a large gathering of cars of the same type or era in one place; essentially an outdoor museum.

Many people report that reacquainting with friends is the top reason for attending a car show. Michael Link recently opined that car enthusiasts, generally speaking, love to talk to others about their cars which makes for the ability to meet some interesting people, view the cars and hear their stories while enjoying a day at the park looking at the expanse of wonderful machinery, savoring the 1960s and 70s era musical entertainment, enjoying the specialised food retailers and the auto- or lifestyle-related vendors' wares.

It has always been my belief that most people who love classic cars, whether they be expensive concours queens or just a decently preserved car of any make or model, belong to a universal fraternity where all are recognized as a 'car person' for their accomplishments in restoring or just maintaining a 40, 50, 60 year-old or older motor car in working condition. Even though car enthusiasts may, as Mel Hildebrandt

recently commented, belong to different tribes, we all love our rides.

Why do many classic car owners opt out of participating in these events. Perhaps the distance from home to the event may be a deterrent. On average, participants travel 52 km (33 miles) to British Car Day at Bronte, ON with just 28% travelling over 100 km (60 miles). The weather forecast for the day may not suit everybody. Some people may not like having to stay parked on the field for the entire event. Some may choose not to exhibit their car because they believe it won't fare well in judging compared to its contemporaries, possibly because of its exterior condition or perhaps it isn't the best color to be a winner. Statistics from BCD indicate that red colors tend to win most often (42.4%), followed by blue (18.2%) and green (15.2%). If one were to delve deeper into the statistics, I would guess that it is the brighter of the color hues that are more likely to win – think Carmine or Pimento rather than Damson in the red section of the color wheel or French or Wedgewood rather than Sapphire in the blue section but I think British Racing Green would win out against Java. The whole 1960s and 70s theme may not appeal to those with no personal experience of that particular time in history. Younger people may just like the cars and have absolutely no connection with the related time period but owners of current Minis, generally of the Gen-X or Millennial cohort, certainly seem to join in the fun with both feet.

Or it could just be that they don't like anything at all about car shows and would rather simply be out driving their Triumph.

Regardless of the reason, people who otherwise seem to enjoy everything that goes with British classic car ownership certainly are missing out on a great experience if they don't occasionally attend a major car show like British Car Day® at Bronte, ON, the British Invasion at Stowe, VT, the All British Field Meet in Vancouver, BC or the west coast's Triumphfest.

If winning is important to you, be sure to bring your red Stag but if not, bring any other color or just bare metal and Bondo and enjoy the day out with like-minded people, perhaps even establishing some new friendships. How about making an effort to bring your Triumph Stag to a major car show near you next year, sharing it with the many spectators who may never have seen one before. 🚗



STAG REAR SUSPENSION

by Tony Fox

AN AREA OF FAILURE ON THE Stag rear suspension has been known to us for some time. In addition to the two known instances, my own and that of Dave Bergquist in CA, we have now heard of a third in Australia.

The subframe that supports the rear trailing arm (this extends from the pinion nose to the outer rubber body mount) cracks at the outer end; right at the joint where the support for the body mount is welded to the box member (see diagram below). The failure is a fatigue type which means it may have been caused by defective welding when the subframe was first manufactured and progressed over the years. Final separation can occur during even mild driving as it did on mine. Fortunately, in that regard I was doing approximately 30 mph at the time.

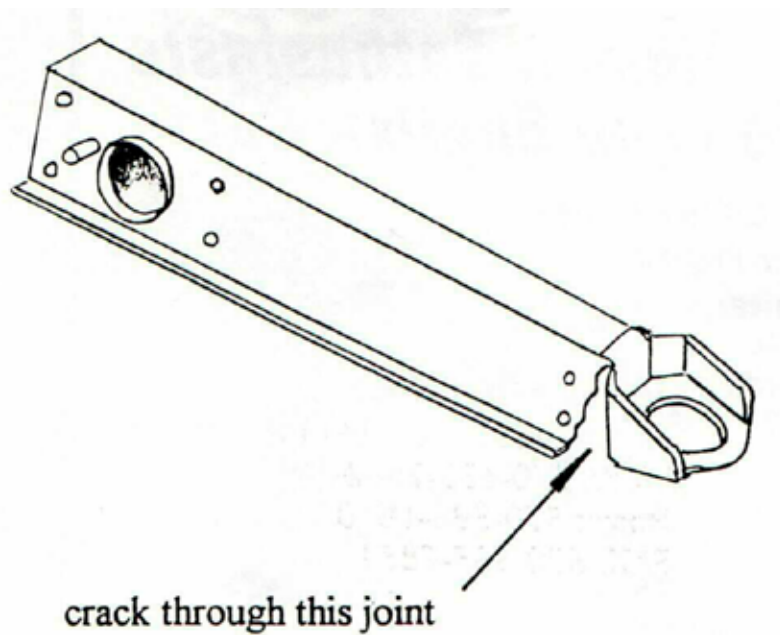
Failure causes total loss of support for the trailing arm at the outer end of the subframe which then wants to move rearwards pulling the parking brake cable tight. Failure at speed could be quite dramatic; it doesn't bear thinking about.

It is easy to examine this area by cleaning all of the grease off the area shown in my sketch below and looking for a hairline crack using an inspection lamp. You can get good enough access to do this other than the top surface, however if the three sides are OK, I believe it is satisfactory. Mine was successfully MIG welded as a temporary measure until the new one could be installed.

Currently it appears that only the right hand unit is available as new stock (#215160) at \$148 from Rimmers, although used left hand ones (#215159U) are available at around \$100.

After inquiring with Stag experts in the UK about this type of failure, I was told that it was unheard of, including by Tony Hart who raced Stags for a number of years. So, I put my failure incident down to an aberration, perhaps a manufacturing error.

At least that was until I heard of Dave's failure and now this third one. In addition, a posting on the SOC Forum a year or two



ago indicated that a German Stag owner experienced the same failure.

In view of these failure reports, I would recommend, as a matter of due caution, that everyone should visually check their cars to avoid any potentially catastrophic failures should this happen at speed. 🚗



A STAG HARDTOP HOIST

Compiled by Terence McKillen

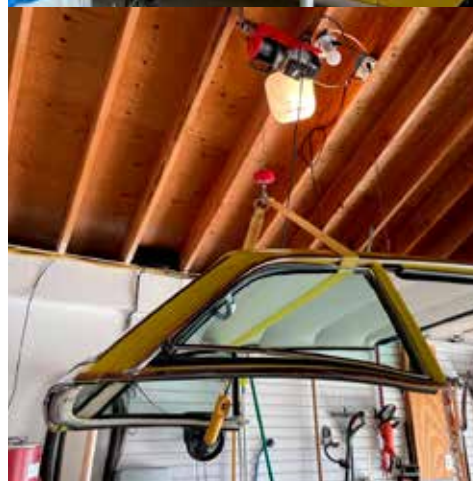
SOME TIME EARLIER THIS YEAR, Scott Reeves asked members for advice on the Club Forum regarding a suitable hoist for lifting off the Stag hardtop for storage when not required for daily use. Scott commented that there appeared to many affordable models of hoists to select from but none with a frame/hook system that would properly fit his Stag hardtop with certainty. He went on to comment that the ones designed to fit a Mercedes SL seem possibly suitable but asked for any success stories that work well. Later in the Forum threads Keith Stewart noted that stories and pictures of the various implementations would be a real asset to many in the Club and volunteered to write up something, provided all the Forum posters were willing to send in good digital photos of their solutions along with paragraph or point form descriptions of what they did, along with any caveats? I missed Keith's offer to collate results and instead duplicated the offer to produce a technical article later in the year to summarize various Member's offerings, not always accompanied by good quality images! Here are the findings.

When it comes to long-term storage, there are several solutions offered. Typically, the top either remains suspended high-up in the garage, or it is lowered to the ground for storage, usually on a purpose made hardtop rack. UK Custom Covers - ukcustomcovers.com - makes a very nice quality custom-fit cover for the Stag hardtop. When reviewing the hoist manufacturer's websites I noticed that some indicated that the hoist is only for actual removing/replacement of the hardtop and is not recommended for long-term storage; perhaps they are just avoiding potential litigation - *caveat emptor*.

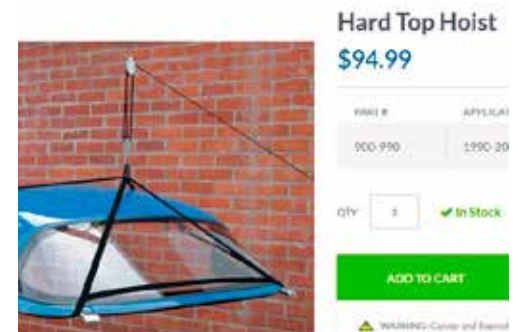
Mel Hildebrandt - The hoist that the previous owner of my Stag included with the car appears to be from Harbor Freight (Pittsburgh Automotive electric hoist with remote control). It has a lifting capacity of 440 pounds and costs about \$120. Harbor Freight also offer woven lifting straps with 2,000 lb. capacity for \$9.99 each. Mel leaves his hardtop permanently attached to the lift device.



The Harbor Freight electric hoist used by Mel costs about \$120



Michael Link - for hardtop install and removal, one of my friends Dan, uses a Mazda Miata hardtop hoist. I've also heard of people using a Mercedes-Benz hardtop hoist, with modified clip-holders where it grabs the rain gutter rails. For me, I have always asked someone to help with the task. There appear to be a number of different hoists available for the Mazda, and about seven or so for the M-B top with all kinds of price ranges. My thought is the M-B hoist is likely more for a top of the size and weight of the Stag's than are the Mazda ones. That may not be the fact, but it seems logical. Dan said he's used the Mazda top hoist and it works fine.



Moss Motors sells a simple manual hoist for the Mazda Miata

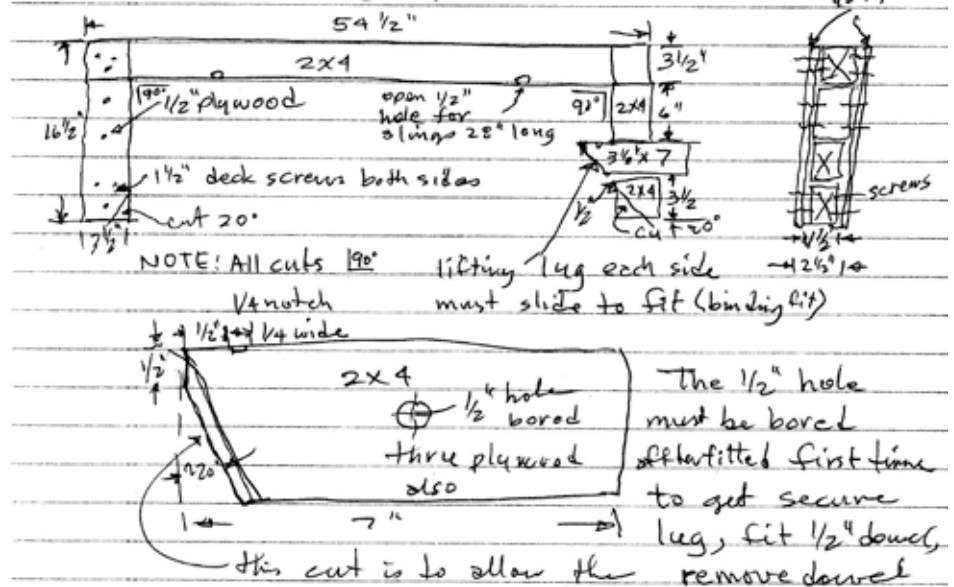


Another Mazda-type hoist

Malcolm Ford - Mine uses a 12v winch (from eBay) and an older-style Thule car gutter mount roof rack bar (below) that fits just behind the door for centre of balance.



Howard Holdsclaw - I solved the problem for myself, 86 years old, too old to lift the top. I constructed a lift and storage device. I constructed them in wood intending to refabricate in metal at a later date. I have sent pictures and a sketch of my project. In meantime, the center of gravity is 3¾ inches back of the vertical frame that fits against the B-post. I will include a positive position locator for the "Lug" to prevent it from moving along the gutter during operation. I will also attach a rest for the rear top pin to be seated without putting too much pressure on the rear chrome attachment point (clips). I will also use a different roller system for the storage unit. A critical engineering point is the 1½ inch bearing on the end of "lug" That



Sketch of Howard's hoist frame



Howard's lifting devise attached to the hoist



Another take on the subject

bearing surface causes the hoisting beam to rotate slightly if the top is weighted by hand to the front or rear of the top when lifted. This rotation in effect moves the central of gravity of the top to keep it in balance thus eliminating the for a three of four point lifting device.

David Bergquist - This is what I have done for 20 years. I use a simple block and tackle, attached to the hardtop with the attachment clamps from a rooftop luggage rack. I attach to the hardtop's front center, rear center, and each side near the B-post. I do not like the idea of leaving the hardtop hanging from its raising/lowering hoist, so I place a hollow core door-blank underneath the hardtop to support its weight while stored. Once the hardtop is raised to its storage position, I lift the door-blank into position beneath it, where I have short chains which attach to both the ceiling framing at one end and eye bolts with large washers in the door-blank on the other to bear the weight of the hardtop. Once in position, I slack off the hoist's tension a bit so the hardtop rests on the door-blank positioned below it but do leave a slight tension on the hoist for safety so the hardtop cannot slide off of its door-blank support. Winch cost \$110 at Orchard Supply.

Sujit Roy - Many folks have said ones from a Merc work well. I bought one off Amazon for around \$100. Its basically a straight rectangular bar with two clamps on each end. It didn't work out of the box. The clamps were too short. To get it to work, I cut the bar down the middle and joined a piece in the middle so the bar is in the shape of a something like this. /-\ It came with a block and tackle, but I need assistance when removing and installing the top. I plan one day to connect an

electric winch.

John Howard - What a timely thread for me! I just spent the day, and most of yesterday, setting the electric hoist in the rafters. The slings that came with it were useless. I had thought that one under the front area and one through the side windows would do it. Bad plan: too much strain on the windows. A guttered roof rack would certainly be easy, but can I really trust the integrity of the gutters, which were never meant to be lift points? I'm now thinking of a 2x4 under the said-to-be balance point just behind the B-post, with a line to each end of the 2x4, and a line to the front corners to keep it balanced. The 2x4 means that lifting the roof off the car would take a bit longer.



Yet another attempt (on a TR6) although the bicycle-type hooks look a little weak

THERE ARE VARIOUS WAYS YOU CAN DO IT!

by John Macartney ©

FROM TIME TO TIME, PEOPLE ASK me one of two questions and it's sometimes difficult to provide an answer they will find acceptable. The first question is usually along the lines of, *"Did you ever think when you were selling cars (Triumphs, of course) that they were classics in their own time?"* The answer to that is an emphatic NO! No, the cars weren't classics – to us, anyway. They were current models of the time, built to meet a known or perceived market need and I doubt that anyone in the company ever realized that many examples would survive as long as they have – and often receiving fairly indifferent and infrequent servicing at an early stage in their existence.

The other question is difficult to answer without either causing offence or mocking the marque – and it's this. *"Didn't you appreciate the truly amazing standards of engineering excellence?"* Cough, splutter, breathe deeply and count to ten. *"Amazing standards of engineering excellence?"* Well, let's put it this way. If you repeated that sentence but restricted it to the first two words, I guess quite a lot of people might have inclined to agree that there was plenty of room for improvement – and on some quite mundane aspects too, but that's another story.

That said, I'll tell you one thing Standard-Triumph engineers never considered – and it's this. I can't use the damned things (as I was so accustomed in my youth) following the arrival of middle age – or even later. I refer of course to the gentle onset of what is termed in polite circles as "gentlemen (and ladies, of course) of a certain age" and all this implies. I have long passed the onset 'of a certain age' and only yesterday, as I was being fitted up with my hearing aid, the lissom blonde who seemed so helpful and caring, needed to check my date of birth and address. Try as I might to avoid it, I had a senior moment. Not only had I completely forgotten my address, but I gave her my late mother's date of birth! She looked a little surprised and asked if I was sure? "Sure, about

what?" I replied. "Your date of birth?" she answered with a winning smile. "I'm sorry," I said, "can you speak up a bit?"

I won't bore you with the tedious detail but that little exchange has now made me eligible for a second hearing aid and this time in the 'good' ear as well – so I'm delighted to know I'll soon be hearing in stereo – and if nothing else, should definitely be able to hear my three-year-old grandson's squeals, for a while. ... Anyway, while this has nothing directly to do with Triumphs, it heralds (no pun) the onset of a later age, which has now started to beset me.

Only last weekend, I spent a most entertaining afternoon with a man who seems to be making a very good living selling fully restored Sprites and Midgets – for which cars my younger son is showing a clear intention of forthcoming ownership. In fact, he now owns one and I can only say I'm more than envious. Of the six sparkling vehicles in the showroom, all were 'tried on' by me during the course of our visit – and the views through the screens brought back many happy memories. It was only when I tried to get out of them, especially the two with their tops erected, that I experienced considerable difficulty and my grunts of exertion to avoid damaging the new paint and upholstery were clearly heard by more people than me alone. In muted tones, I cursed Donald Healey and BMC for designing such a stupid little shoehorn of a car – and then I remembered a technique I'd adopted a few years previously, of which I'll say more in a moment.

But was this dilemma only limited to Sprites and Midgets? Sadly, no. It was only a few weeks earlier, that I'd made a less than gainly exit from a Spitfire with an erected top and an even more indecorous departure from a GT6. Those experiences also made me curse the late Harry Webster, the late Giovanni Michelotti and the whole of the Standard-Triumph engineering team. Why the hell didn't they design a sports car that an old f***t could sit in,

enjoy – and emerge from with whoops of delight?

The fact is, they didn't. No-one did – and for the simple fact that sports cars were designed for the youth of the sixties and seventies, not for people in their sixties and seventies. Three decades (and more) ago, I was as youthful in mind and spirit as I am today, but then I was also supple in joint, energetic in muscle and could contort myself without demur.

Not now! And this is not a recent phenomenon. It's been around for longer than I'm prepared to admit.

Paul and I had been allowed by the Curator of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust (BMIHT) at Gaydon, England – to borrow this delightful 1959 TR3A from the BMIHT collection for a long-distance Charity Road Event and we certainly enjoyed ourselves for the 24-hours it was in our care. The event in question was an 800-mile day and night trip, so those of you who have driven in the UK will know this journey would have been arduous on our narrow, twisting and grossly overpopulated roads. It was. At about midnight, after some fourteen shared driving hours in the car, Paul decided it was time for me to take the wheel for the homeward stretch. With Mr. Lucas doing his best with 45/40watts of tungsten main beam, two arthritic windshield wipers and a heater that tried hard (but largely failed) to keep us warm(ish), the TR manfully snarled through the night, gently illuminating the cockpit with an ethereal glow from its – more than a little dim – instrument lights. Inconvenient? Most certainly, but this was sidescreen TR motoring at its best.

Earlier in the day when the top had been down, we both re-experienced that cutting blast of cold air that agonisingly hits you in the back of the neck and my coccyx (tailbone) was telling me that all was not well in that department. Never mind, it was a TR – and the seat cushions really were that bad, even when the cars were new!

At about four o'clock in the morning,



Pictured alongside is a former friend, Paul Richardson, elder son of the late Ken “Mr. Sidescreen TR” Richardson. Image: John Macartney

Paul awoke and announced he had an urgent need. Come to that, I did too – but the roads up to that point had not offered the convenient but brief facilities that would have sufficed. With my navigator now starting to loudly trace my ancestry as a result of his increasing discomfort, we pulled into the town of Woodstock, near Oxford. Woodstock is a nice town. It has a wide main street that at night is superbly illuminated with lighting that satisfies even the most stringent town planner. I pulled off the road and conveniently, right next door to the municipal facility we both planned to use.

Lights off, engine off. Doors open. Neither of us could move! We were locked in an upright position and seized joints in arm, thigh and back refused to budge. After some puffing and grunting, I found a way to emerge. Remember, this is a right-hand drive car – but the principle applies to left and right-handed versions.

- Open the door to its fullest extent.
- Place the hand nearest to the road, palm downwards on the road and roll out, putting progressively more weight on the arm, and then bring the other arm out as you are able to take its share of your weight.
- At this point, you will find yourself on all fours facing the back of the car.
- I instructed Paul in this technique, and pretty soon, both of us were in the same position on all fours looking back down the street we had just

driven up. Needless to say, we started to giggle, and this rapidly turned into hysterical laughter with both of us lying prostrate on the blacktop on both sides of the car, laughing fit to burst.

At that point, another car appeared in the distance, approaching us. The car quickly drew to a halt beside us and looking up through my tears of laughter, I noticed it was painted in bright squares of day-glow yellow and blue – with a sign along the side announcing it was of the law enforcement variety with two friendly gentlemen wearing ‘high vis’ yellow jackets. It then turned out that for reasons I cannot possibly imagine, they wished to have a discussion with us. Quite an extended discussion as it turned out! But still we failed to stop laughing and it took a while for the two occupants of the car to satisfy themselves we were truly both stone-cold sober. Then, taking a degree of pity on us, they both most kindly helped us to our feet and actually supported us – still giggling, into the Men’s Room where we were left alone to do what had to be done.

And that “exiting manoeuvre” is what I repeated in (what I thought was a dark corner) of the Sprite/Midget showroom. As I replicated my earlier departure from the TR and was kneeling there, gathering my breath prior to standing up, a kindly voice enquired, “Are you quite alright, Sir?” It was the proprietor of the establishment, and I looked

up at him with a smile. “Thank you. Yes, I’m quite alright.” Funny you should ask that question – that’s just what the ‘Old Bill’ (Brit-speak for the police) once asked me beside a TR3A about six years ago and not ten miles from where I am now.” He looked a little non-plussed but re-assured I wasn’t having a heart attack in his showroom, made off for another visitor to see if he could extract money from him.

But in the midst of all this confusion and enforced ageism, I’ve realised that my old mate, Giovanni (or was it his dad?) had an idea, probably even before Harry Webster needed to draw on such sources of inspiration. Standard-Triumph did offer a car for Old F****s like me, who still hanker for the blood-rush-of-youth-wind-in-the-hair motoring, while accommodating something to the front of their persons that is redolent of a heavily pregnant woman. And what is that car?

It’s a Triumph Stag, of course! With its ultra-wide doors, tilt, and telescope steering column, 145 bhp V8 with overdrive and other frills, I wish I could be in the market to acquire one. 🐉

John Macartney spent his career in the British motor industry. He apprenticed with Jaguar Cars in 1962 and in 1966, following in his father’s footsteps, he moved to Standard-Triumph where he held various positions including in the sales department of the company’s prestigious showroom in Mayfair, London. He went on to become Personal Assistant to British Leyland’s Chief Executive, Lord Stokes where he was personally responsible for Consumer Affairs. In 2009, John drove a Triumph Stag across the USA and Canada covering 15,400 miles raising awareness of and support for PTSD. His book “Turn Left at the Pacific” is well worth a read - Ed.



The Old Bill had an extended discussion with the TR3’s occupants. Image: Macartney from internet open source



Like the big Triumph saloons, the Triumph Stag allows for a graceful exit at any age. Image: Terence McKillen

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