

1969 TRIUMPH GROUP 44 GT6



OUR BARN FIND GT6



We recently purchased a Triumph GT6 that was originally campaigned by Group 44 and won the ARRC in 1969.

The barn find car visited Lanky Foushee's shop (Group 44 Team crew chief). He has verified the car is genuine and is going to do a walk around with us in the a.m. to point out all the history of the car. We will post video of this soon.

In the words of publisher, Tim Suddard, "Triumphs rule! Vintage racing is cool!"

A LOOK AT OUT GT6 FROM INSIDE GROUP 44



Lanky Foushee walked us around the car, pointing out that this car was indeed the original car he and Group 44 built in 1969. We peeled back the window seals to find the original white paint under the coat of blue.

Lanky was the crew chief for Group 44 and really knows his stuff.

THE TRIUMPH RUNS!



Triumph sweeps E Production and wins F Production in the Champions' Championships.

At Daytona, the 1969 SCCA race winners from each national Division met in the American Road Race of Champions to decide the super champions.

The Triumph GT-6+ took 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in E Production.

And a Spitfire Mk III won F Production.

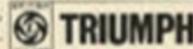
We didn't win C Production. But a '69 TR6

did place 3rd behind two Porsche 911's.

What it all means is this. If our cars can perform like they do on the track, think how they can perform for you on the road.

Look for your nearest dealer in the Yellow Pages. British Leyland Motors Inc., 600 Willow

Tree Road,
Leonia, N.J. 07605.



We just got word from Tim and Gary Hunter (our newest employee here at Classic Motorsports) that the Triumph runs and even the hydraulics are still good. Gary mentioned something about backfires and all we heard Tim say was "Fire is cool." More info soon.

We've also been doing some digging and we've found a few cool old images of our car in its former glory.

GT6: GET IT RUNNING?



As the GT6 is in such complete and honestly, real good shape, the decision has been made to get the car up and running before disassembly. This will give us a good idea of what shape everything is in and what will need additional attention.

Mechanically, there seems to be very little wrong. One front shock mount is broken, the shift lever bushing has failed and the clutch slave cylinder is frozen. Other than that, fluid changes and a fresh set of tires could conceivably get the GT6 race ready. Naturally, we wouldn't go out racing in a car that has sat so long, but we can at least run it around our test track at slow speeds a few times to see what the car feels like.

OUR GT6 GETS A SPONSOR

Oct 29, 2005 update to the Triumph Group 44 GT6 project car

A project like the GT6 can really benefit from the help of an outstanding source of parts and advice. We chose Spit Bits as our sponsors for this project. You can call them at (916) 645-3726 if you're looking for Spitfire and GT6 parts. Or visit the Spit Bits Website.

TEARING INTO OUR GT6



We found a good shifter to install.

Okay, cancel that part about how good the GT6 is mechanically.

J.K. Jackson and Gary started the work by rebuilding the clutch's master and slave cylinders to get the GT6 so that it could move under its own power. Like J.K., Gary is no stranger to Triumphs; he admits to five in his own garage.

Next up, J.K. set the timing, adjusted the carbs and then drove the car only three feet before uttering the command, "shut it down". It turns out the clutch in the GT6 was shattered.

Tim, Gary and J.K. then pulled the engine, gearbox and differential out of the GT6. They were stuffed in the back of J.K.'s truck to get completely torn down at J.K.'s shop, English Automotive in Tallahassee Florida.

What J.K. found is interesting. First, the stock GT6 clutch was almost nonexistent. Second, both the block and heads were TR6, not GT6, although the crank was GT6, thus giving the car a legal displacement. This car was never raced with the original engine, as the engine out of a crashed car was used from day one. This is common in race cars and not of great concern. But, we will source a GT6 block and head for our rebuild.

The engine was bored .040-in. over, but the pistons were the stock size. No wonder the compression was even, but very low! The number five main bearing had also spun. The rods look good and the crank is savable. The transmission seems decent, but will be rebuilt and the rear end is a 3:89-1 which is stock in a Spitfire. It is very plausible that this ratio was run, but probably not at a long track like Daytona.

Despite some bad news, we found some more cool tricks and good news too. The Group 44 team had invented an ingenious way to keep the transverse leaf spring centered. This arrangement with two bolts closing in on a center bolt is best explained by the attached picture. A neat scatter shield had also been fabricated. The header is obviously original as are most of the other engine externals. The coolest piece is the beautifully machined oil cooler adapter made by the late, great Brian Fuerstenau of Group 44 fame.

Other interesting developments: We have been in contact multiple times with Group 44 founder Bob Tullius and now former Group 44 team member, Steve Knoll and his excellent www.laprecord.com website have gotten on board our project. Steve has been a wealth of information and has further documented with our car's originality.



A detail of the rear suspension. Note the purposely bent lower a-arm and the non-rotoflex u-joint configuration.



Detail of the device used to centre the rear transverse leaf spring.

IN GEAR



We just got invited to the Group 44 Reunion at the Amelia Island Concours in March, so we need to start working double-time to get the car finished.

Sometime in the early '70s, all four of our fenders (quarters in the rear) were butchered to allow wider tires for the last couple of years of the car's prior racing life. We decided that a parts car with a good nose was the best way to fix this problem. The Group 44 used a completely stock nose on the car. To keep this jewel as original as possible, we found a decent 1969 parts car for \$300 that was close in serial number to our GT6.

A photo from the Daytona archives told us that when the car won the ARRC in 1969, it had all its glass, bumpers and marker lights. The parts car will supply some of these items. When we pulled the doors apart from the race car, we were dismayed to find that the inner door panels had all been cut out in the '70s. We will have to fix this problem as well.

We studied the cage and along with pictures of the car in the winners circle at Daytona. It was obvious that the car only ran the roll bar during that one triumphant race. However, since we want to be able to once again race this car, we are probably going to leave the cage. Plus, it was supposedly built in 1971 by Reeves Calloway. We have gotten with SVRA tech guru Jack Woehrl and showed him some detailed photos of the cage, and he has given it his blessing.

Since time is of the essence and we need this car to be perfect, we are going to let the guys at The Body Werks handle all the paint and body work on this project. We hope to have the nose to them before we leave for Monterey this week and the rest of the body to them shortly thereafter.

We are actively seeking original photos of this car to document more of its history. We would really appreciate any help, especially in finding a good underhood or interior picture, as we want to make this car look exactly as it did (except for the cage and safety gear) when it won the national championship in 1969.

TRIUMPH TRICKS



Last night we tore into the rear suspension of our project GT6. While outwardly it looks like a standard GT6 back here, upon closer inspection there's a lot more trick stuff.

Our GT6+ has had its shock relocated to the inner fender well. Meanwhile, the frame itself and the upright for the original shock location have been massaged to clear the bigger-than-stock half shafts. The trailing arms are super-slick and equipped with Heim joints. The original rubber lower control arm bushings have been replaced with steel concentric bushings, and the shocks are Konis. The backing plates on the brakes have been drilled out and the stub axles seem to be modified as well.

We are not sure how much of this was done by Group 44, but initial conversations with Group 44 crew chief Lanky Foushee suggest that all these mods were made by the team.

GETTING BACK TO GROUP 44



Quite a few changes have been made to our GT6 since 1970.

Once we tore the doors apart on our Group 44 GT6, we realized that they had been gutted to reduce weight. Since the pictures from the 1969 Daytona winners circle clearly show that the car ran window and quarter window glass, we will restore the car to that specification.

Luckily, fellow FOT (Friends of Triumph) member Mark Loucks had two NOS doors that still had the Stanpart stickers on them. He sold them to us at a very reasonable price. He also had two NOS front fenders. That stroke of luck, combined with the fact that the nose on our parts car wasn't as nice as we had originally thought, helped us make a decision: We would use the original nose and weld on the new fenders to replace the ones that had been butchered and flared by subsequent owners.

With the doors and nose covered, we could move on to the rest of the body. The great folks at SpitBits had rear quarters right there in stock. From there, we needed to finish stripping the body and get it to the body shop. The next nightmare will be deciding what to do with the cage, since it is both safe and not original to the car.

Again, Daytona winners circle photos clearly show that the Group 44 car originally had just a four-point roll bar. The accurate way to restore the car is to go back to that four-point bar. Unfortunately, the safe way to race the car is with more than a four-point bar.

BODY WERKS



The inner fender wells needed to be repaired before we could weld on the new rear quarters we sourced from Spit Bits.



The Body Werks continues to plug away at our GT6 bodywork. The rear quarters are now mounted and the hood is in DP 40 primer. The new fenders have been welded in place on the hood. The roof has been straightened, and we are now dealing with the huge hole that has been torn into the transmission tunnel somewhere along the way.



CUT AND WELD



Since our last update, The Body Werks has continued to work on the body of our Group 44 GT6. A huge chunk of our driveshaft tunnel had been removed, so Tom Prescott expertly cut out a chunk of tunnel from our parts car and welded it back into place.

Our driveline has been delivered to Kent Bain at Vintage Racing Services, who will carry out the rebuild. We took the chassis back to our shop, stripped it, and carefully inspected it. We noticed a couple of problem areas, so we quickly welded them up.

From there, the chassis will go to the powder coating shop. While it was originally painted rather than powder coated, you can't really tell the difference in the semi-gloss finish. Plus the powder coating will hold up much better than paint.

CUT, WELD, CONTINUE



We have our chassis and all our black parts back from the powder coaters. We went with a semi-gloss black that seemed to match the Triumph frame coating perfectly. East Coast Ornamental did a beautiful job; they didn't lose a single piece and performed the work quickly. Our total bill for sandblasting and powder coating was \$400. Folks, this is way cheaper, easier and more durable than painting.

Meanwhile, back at The Body Werks, Tom Prescott and his crew were going hard at it. Tom hammered and dollied out most of the dings and dents from the floor of the GT6, all while wondering if the damage occurred at Daytona, Marlboro or Road Atlanta. With this much history, it hurts to change anything. However, we felt we needed to hammer out some of the results of these off-course excursions. Gary Hunter from our office stopped by to help wire brush the bottom of the car.

A while back, we made the decision to remove the non-original cage. We were a bit hesitant due to rumors that Reeves Calloway built the cage, but it turns out we made the right decision. A friend of ours ran into Reeves Calloway, and he denied ever having built a cage for this car; apparently one of the previous owners had created this urban legend. Our photos clearly show that the car had a four-point bar when it was in the ARRC winner's circle at Daytona in 1969, so we went back to that style of roll bar. For additional safety, we welded in a diagonal cross brace and a harness bar.

We had tried modifying and fitting an Autopower roll bar we had from a past Triumph Spitfire project, but it was too wide to fit in the GT6. So, we took some measurements and called Autopower. They quickly and cheaply bent us up a main hoop and threw in the extra pieces so we could cut and weld them in correctly—you want your harness bar to be below your shoulders, but only by a few inches.

While sitting in the car, we measured the correct height for the bar, tacked everything together, then pulled out the entire assembly. We completely seam welded the roll bar together, then put it back into the car for welding in place.

We have been gathering parts for our project. While the body was at the body shop and the frame and suspension components were at the powder coaters, we went through all of the remaining components—along with our notes—and placed a rather large order with SpitBits. They had every single piece we needed in stock—except for the wooden dashboard, which is made to order. On top of that, they were very cordial and had the order at our door in less than a week. It's nice to deal with a business that has the inventory, prices, shipping and online ordering capabilities of a big company but the personal service of a small company. The owner, Nigel Cosh, usually picks up the phone himself.

For the stuff we couldn't get from SpitBits, we turned to local sources. Our radiator, for example, was custom-built by Group 44 from Corvette parts—and it's huge compared to a GT6 radiator. We sent it down to Robbins Radiator Works in Daytona Beach for a recore. This shop has been a fixture in our area's automotive scene since 1922, and it's surprising how many local Daytona Continental entrants we have spied through sourcing radiator work from this company.



PAINT, PAINT, PAINT AND THEN ASSEMBLE



While a lot of Group 44 cars were supposedly painted MG Glacier White, the original color of this car was 1969 Triumph New White. Now the car is once again wearing this paint.

Our GT6+ project car is now screaming along. Everything is back from the body shop and the paint came out perfect. Tom Prescott and crew did their usual masterful job.

To more closely emulate what a new Triumph would look like back in 1969, we went with PPG single stage instead of our usual base-coat/clear-coat show car paint job. While a lot of Group 44 cars were supposedly painted MG Glacier White, the original color of this car was 1969 Triumph New White. We found plenty of samples of this original color on the dashboard and behind some of the trim pieces, and now the car is once again wearing this paint.

According to Group 44 Crew Chief Lanky Foushee, all the Group 44 cars were painted satin black inside, so we recreated that look. We have also sourced the original trim pieces and other parts to put this car back together.

The frame is up on jack stands, and we have every critical part crack-checked, painted or powder coated and ready for reassembly. We hope to display this car as a roller at PRI. With only a week to go before the show, we will be burning the midnight oil on this one.



THRASHER



Well, the thrash is over, at least for now. We got our Group 44 GT6+ mostly assembled in time for the PRI show, where this now very attractive little car made quite a splash. Special thanks to Jere Dotten, Gary Hunter, Paul Suddard and Tom Prescott for pulling off this miracle.

As you can see from our last update, what was a bare frame and shell at Thanksgiving is nearly together just two weeks later.

Actually, the process of assembly was quite straightforward. We will need to go back into the rear hubs and get the shims correct. We still have a few trim items to put on, as well as a couple of the original decals that we scanned and will get [Hawkeye Signs] (<http://www.hawkeyedaytona.com>) to make up for us. Speaking of signage, Tim at Hawkeye nailed the decal package. We also owe a special thanks to fellow Group 44 car owner and Amelia Island founder Bill Warner, who supplied us with some of the original decals.

ATL did a fantastic job of rebuilding the original fuel cell using the original can and even the original cap. Naturally, in the interest of safety, the bladder is all new. Our friends at Koni pulled off an amazing rush job of rebuilding the original shocks, which had date codes from 1970. We also owe a special debt of gratitude to Vintage Racing Services, who rebuilt and welded the differential. VRS co-owner Kent Bain checked his gear charts and suggested we try a 4.11:1 final drive ratio, as Road Atlanta is our intended first track.

While we would have loved to install a lightweight, efficient Griffin radiator like we did in our TR3, to preserve the originality of this car we took the original Corvette-based radiator to Robbins Radiator Works and had them re-core it.

Another rush job to make the show was carried out by Wheels America. Bob Stretch and his team did a fantastic job refurbishing our original American Libre magnesium wheels. They even had to re-weld one wheel that had been badly bent somewhere along the way. Last but not least, we need to thank Carbotech, who were able to take the original brake shoes and rebuild them with trick competition material. They also sent their front race pads to fit the original GT6 calipers.

Next, we will move into the wiring, interior and the plumbing of both fuel and brake lines. Look for this car to appear at our display at the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona, Amelia Island Concours, and of course, the Classic Motorsports Mitty, to be held May 1-3, 2009.





BLUR OF ACTIVITY

Our biggest challenge has been returning the car to its original configuration. Regular conversations and some priceless detail photos from Mike Downs, who largely built the car and drove it to the national championship in 1969, have been a huge help.

We haven't written much since the PRI show in mid-December, but that doesn't mean we've stopped work on our GT6. In fact, we have nearly finished the car. From mounting the front bumper to installing the rest of the trim, there has been a blur of activity in the Classic Motorsports workshop. We've even finished the graphics with the help of Hawkeye Signs, who reproduced some no-longer-available Group 44 stickers.

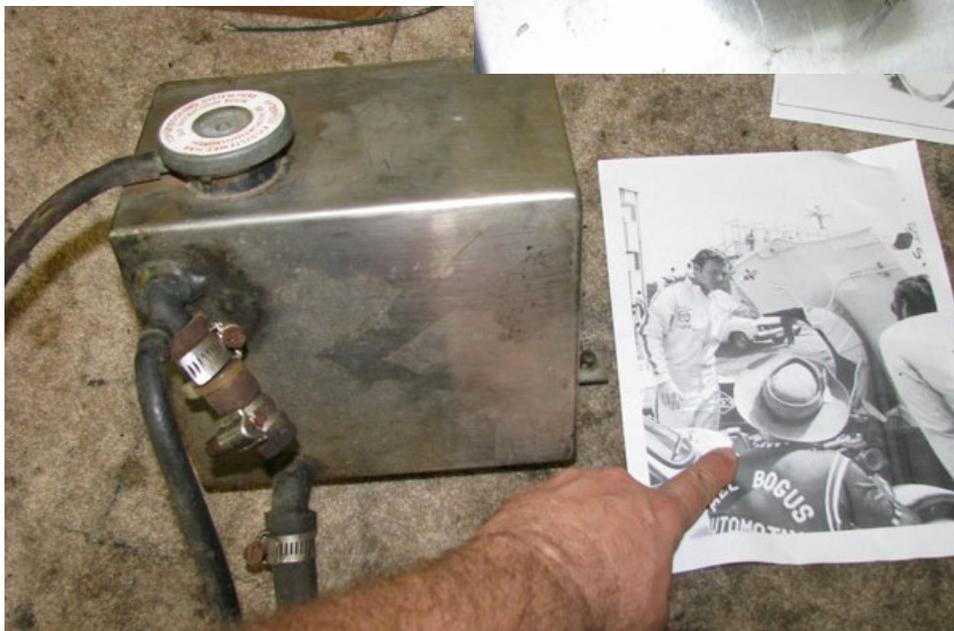
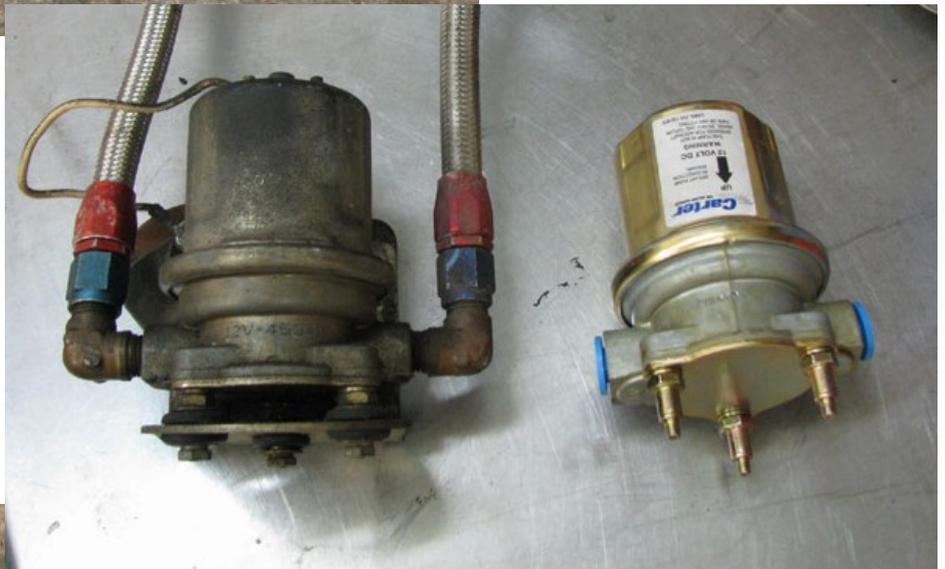
Our project has also progressed mechanically. With the help of Jere Dotten and Gary Hunter, the brake calipers have been rebuilt and the steering rack has been rebuilt and shimmed properly. Thanks to technical assistance and new braided steel hose from BAT, the fuel system is fully plumbed as well.

Believe it or not, we found an AC electric fuel pump at our local speed shop, Action Performance, that is identical to the one originally used back in 1969. This must have been a good design, as they are still selling it.

We also installed a safety kill switch from Racer Parts Wholesale and a rollover valve in the fuel cell vent line.

We are very pleased with this progress. We have already entered the car in the Amelia Island Concours, which will be held in mid-March. Next on our list is finishing the doors and the interior.

Our biggest challenge has been returning the car to its original configuration. Regular conversations and some priceless detail photos from Mike Downs, who largely built the car and drove it to the national championship in 1969, have been a huge help. We picked up yet another GT6+ parts car for \$100 and sourced a wiring harness, the headliner, and host of the other trim items.



DETAILS

We entrusted Vintage Racing Services of Stratford, Conn., with the important task of restoring the engine for our Group 44 GT6+.

Detail work continues on our Group 44 Inc. Triumph GT6+ as we scramble to get it ready for Amelia Island.

The experts at Nisonger cleaned, lubricated and rebuilt the original Smiths chronometric tachometer. We will finish the dash and instruments this weekend.

To improve cooling—yet keep the car's original appearance—we had Griffin build a perfect duplicate of an original GT6+ radiator. The difference? This unit weighs half as much as the stock piece at 8.75 lbs. Plus, it will better cool the car due to superior cooling tubes and fins—and more of them.

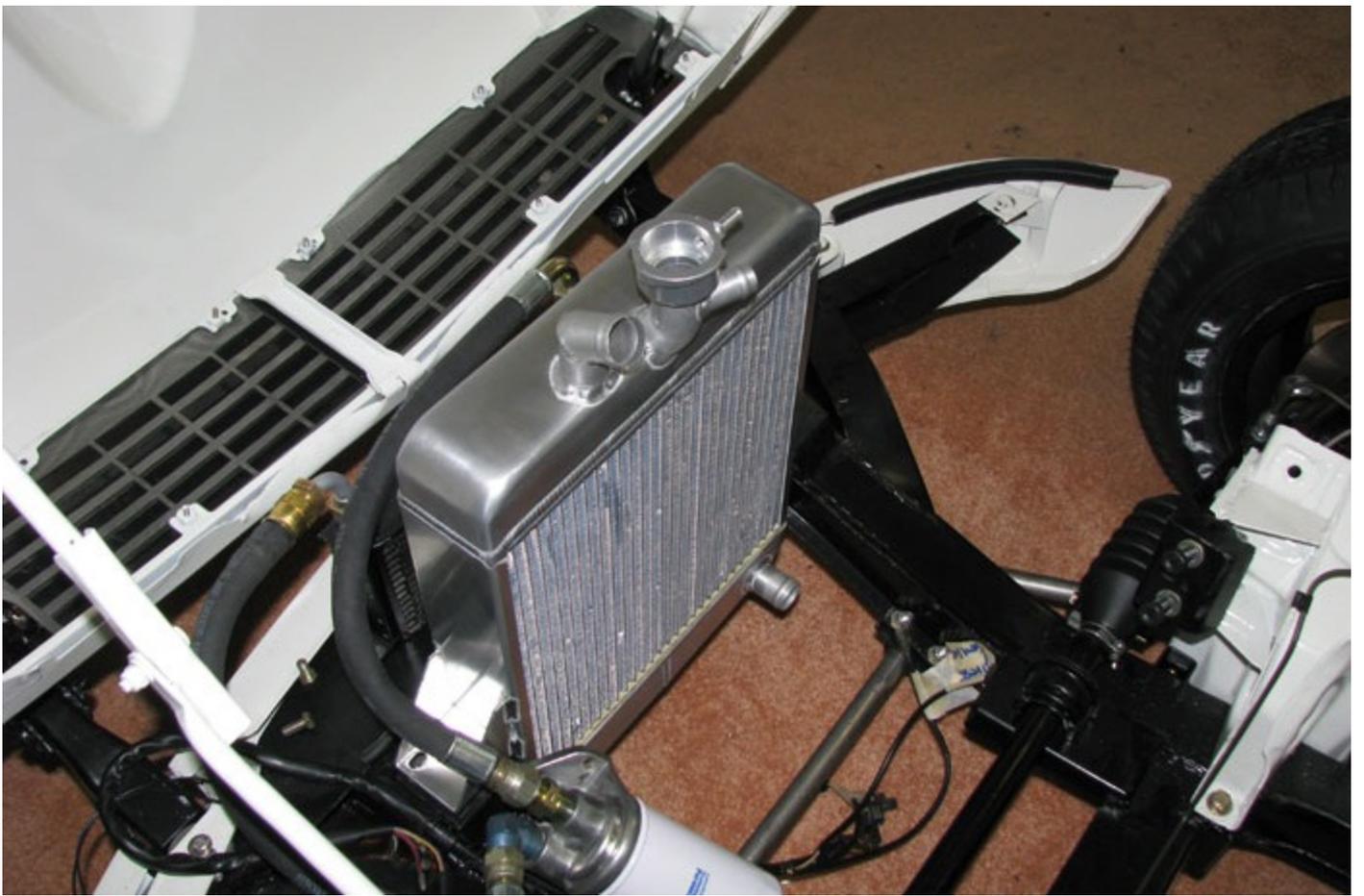
The original Group 44 Inc. pressurized surge tank came with our car. We have cleaned up this stainless steel tank and mounted it in the original position. The rest of our wiring and brake plumbing is also nearly complete. The engine and transmission arrive Wednesday, and we hope to have everything ready to drop the assembly right in.

We entrusted Vintage Racing Services of Stratford, Conn., with the important task of restoring the engine for our Group Inc. 44 GT6+. VRS's main engine man, Harvey Thompson, shown in the slideshow making final adjustments before initial startup on our engine, was there when our car was new. He took a GT6+ to the SCCA Runoffs in 1974 with a Group 44 engine in it. Not only was he able to build the engine exactly the way it would have been built in 1969, but he was able to get us the identical 162 horsepower this engine configuration had when it won the ARRC in 1969.

We will feature a very interesting look at modern versus vintage engines in an upcoming issue of Classic Motorsports, as well as full details concerning how this engine was assembled. In the meantime, the slideshow contains a shot of Peter Vargosko of Valley Auto machine, Inc., balancing the crank to within one tenth of a gram. On these inline-six engines, balancing is the key to longevity.

We even shot a little video of our engine running for the first time.







ALMOST READY FOR AMELIA

Tim is currently out West seeing customers and participating in the Vintage Motorsports Council meeting, but before taking off he sent us a new photo of the GT6. Check it out, it's nearly complete.



AMAZING AMELIA

At 7:15 Sunday morning, we lit that baby up, shot out of the garage where we were storing it for the weekend, and roared down A1A with open pipes and no license plate.

The last three weeks have been a blur. A day after we received our engine and transmission, we had them both in the car. Everything went fairly smoothly and Jere Dotten, Gary Hunter and I spent a couple of days buttoning things up and working on systems.

Weekend before last, Rennie Bryant came to the rescue and finished up the wiring that Jere and I had started. We then systematically went through the clutch, braking, cooling, electrical, and fuel systems before we ever tried to start the GT6+. We sprang a couple of minor leaks, but overall we had things ready for that initial startup.

Finally, just a week and a day before Amelia Island, we were ready to fire up the Group 44 GT6+ up and see what we had. We made a video of this magical moment for those of you who wish to experience the sound that this race engine makes.

The next day, after installing the driveshaft and working through a few more issues, we were able to drive the Group 44 GT6+.

From there, we had just one week to sort, finish and detail the GT6+ for its Amelia Island debut. We installed the rest of the original seat belts along with some odds and ends we had lying around. We also had a tach cable flown in from England for the original Smiths chronometric tach. Thank you, thank you, Peter at Nisonger for helping us source this hard-to-get piece.

We weren't happy with the car's nose stripe, and with one day's notice our friends at the Bodywerks repainted it. Then, friend and detailer extraordinaire Tim McNair came in a couple days early for his Amelia Island detailing assignment on the Meguiar's trophy-winning Delahaye. He helped us prep the GT6+ to within an inch of its life. Wow, we learned a lot about what it takes to detail a car for a show like Amelia Island.

At 7:15 Sunday morning, we lit that baby up, shot out of the garage where we were storing it for the weekend, and roared down A1A with open pipes and no license plate. Tim McNair again went over the car, despite my taunting him that if you wax it more than twice you are playing with it. We went on to win a prestigious Amelia award for our efforts.

From here, we will sort the car and get it ready to race. We also plan on bringing it to the Winter Park British car show April 4. Of course, we will have the car at The Mitty to join in on all the Group 44 Inc. festivities.

Speaking of Group 44 Inc., Lanky Foushee, Bob Tullius, Hurley Haywood and the rest of the Group 44 Inc. team all complimented us on the work we had done. In fact, Tullius and Haywood were among the judges that bestowed the award on us.











SORTING AND TESTING

While we wore our game faces at Amelia, our totally unsorted and untested GT6+ had all kinds of teething problems and issues.

As we mentioned last time, we completed the GT6+ in time for Amelia—and we even won a nice award. Now it was time get the car track-ready. While we wore our game faces at Amelia, our totally unsorted and untested GT6+ had all kinds of teething problems and issues.

First, the brakes were locking up every time we tried to move the car across the field. We also had issues with our surge tank that were causing our fresh engine to run very hot—a dangerous problem that was quickly fixed by moving the hose outlets on the tank, allowing us to plumb it correctly.

From there we dealt with a list of minor fixes that included a defective lug nut that had been machined with insufficient thread, an original brake light switch that had disintegrated, and front shocks that needed some different hardware.

We also had to replace the original, '70s-era seat belts and harnesses with something a little safer. We went with traditional latch lock belts from G-Force. We felt they were plenty safe, inexpensive, and close in appearance to the belts that originally came with the car.

We decided, at least for now, that we would retain the original seat. Events like Monterey require, or at least request, that the car be as original as possible. While we don't feel that the original seat is the safest one in the world, we are trying hard to respect the originality and history of this car. We plan on mainly exhibition-type events for this season.

As the seat has a low back, we needed to at least build a head rest to meet vintage racing rules. We were able to fabricate a nice head rest that looks period-correct. It's also removable in case we add a full-length aluminum seat later on.

Now that the GT6+ would go around the block without issues, it was time to focus on the handling. The original race suspension on this particular Triumph is very trick and very adjustable. Group 44 Inc. got rid of the stock Triumph A-arm bushings and replaced them with concentric bronze pieces. We were able to get 4 to 5 degrees of negative camber just by rotating the bushings.

Obviously this was too much, so we settled on a baseline of about 1.5 degrees of negative camber up front and about 2.5 degrees of negative camber at the rear. Toe was set near zero at the rear and about 1/8-inch total at the front. We made further adjustments once we got to the track and took some tire temps. The total weight of the car was 1805 pounds while featuring all of its original glass.

With all of these jobs taken care of, we set up to run the test day at SVRA's Roebing Road event.





SHAKEDOWN

We loaded up the motor home with every tool, fastener and spare part we could think off, filled the GT6+ with 114-octane fuel, and headed north to enjoy some SVRA hospitality.

April 16th dawned cool and beautiful—the exact weather you would want when testing out a new race car. With lows in the 50s and highs in the 70s, Roebling Road was going to be the perfect place for our Group 44 Inc. GT6+ project car to turn a wheel in anger for the first time in more than 30 years.

We loaded up the motor home with every tool, fastener and spare part we could think off, filled the GT6+ with 114-octane fuel, and headed north to enjoy some SVRA hospitality. Our crew consisted of Tim Suddard, Gary Hunter, fellow Triumph club member Jere Dotten, and expert sorter Brian Rechiene of Vintage Racing Services.

We figured having an expert on hand would be just the trick to a smooth test day. Since Vintage Racing Services built the drivetrain and has become one of the the Northeast's best and brightest vintage race car prep and restoration shops, we thought it best to have Brian looking over our shoulder. He arrived bright and early and proved to be very efficient, friendly, well prepared and a consummate professional.

After a careful inspection of our handiwork, Brian took the car for a couple of slow laps at the back of the grid. He then came in and complained of having no power at the top end. A quick fuel-pressure and float-level adjustment solved the problem, and Brian once again hit the track. The second session was going great, but then the oil temperature raised unexpectedly. This was a shame, as Brian was starting to love the car. Aside from the issue, he reported that overall the car was a joy to drive—the brakes were great, and the handling, while not finalized, was rock solid.

Upon closer inspection, it became obvious that once the engine reached full rpm, the oil cooler and filter were not getting hot. We went through line by line looking for blockage. An inspection of the oil filter adapter built by Brian Furstenuau of Group 44 indicated that we had doubled up the oil filter O-ring, thus prohibiting the oil filter adapter from sealing properly.

This allowed the engine to pump the oil right back into itself, so we weren't cooling or filtering the oil. Although a simple mistake and an easy one to correct, the damage had been done. During our next track session, we lost oil pressure and quickly pulled into the pits. We cut apart the oil filter and found metal-bearing material.

Our test day was done. We headed back home to pull the engine.

On the plus side, our crew worked very well and we would highly recommend Vintage Racing Services to all of our readers, especially those who own smaller bore British cars. We also cured all of the initial teething problems, and the car was fun to drive—not evil at all. Of course, on the negative side, we had damaged our beautiful fresh engine and



Brian Rechiene of Vintage Racing Services adjusts for a little more rear brake bias after our first session.



Our Group 44 Inc. GT6+ hits the track for the first time since the mid-'70s.

TEARDOWN : WORSE THAN WE FEARED

Upon inspecting everything, our suspicions were confirmed: We had spun some rod bearings, in this case numbers 1 and 4.

We got back from our test day around dinner time on Thursday night, and work began the next morning. Thanks to the diligent work of Gary Hunter and Jere Dotten, the engine was out of the car and disassembled by 3 p.m. the next afternoon.

Upon inspecting everything, our suspicions were confirmed: We had spun some rod bearings, in this case numbers 1 and 4. Worse yet, we had damaged the crank as well as the two corresponding rods. That dark sheen told us that something had gotten too hot.

Thankfully Vintage Racing Services had another balanced and blueprinted stock crank in stock. They also had another set of prepped stock rods.

We ordered those parts and sent the block to our local machine shop, Fred's Fastrac. They hot-tanked the block and inspected the cam bearings. All except one looked good, but since they're inexpensive we replaced the entire set.

Dave Anton of APT had the required gasket set in stock so we placed our order. Soon we'd be back in business.

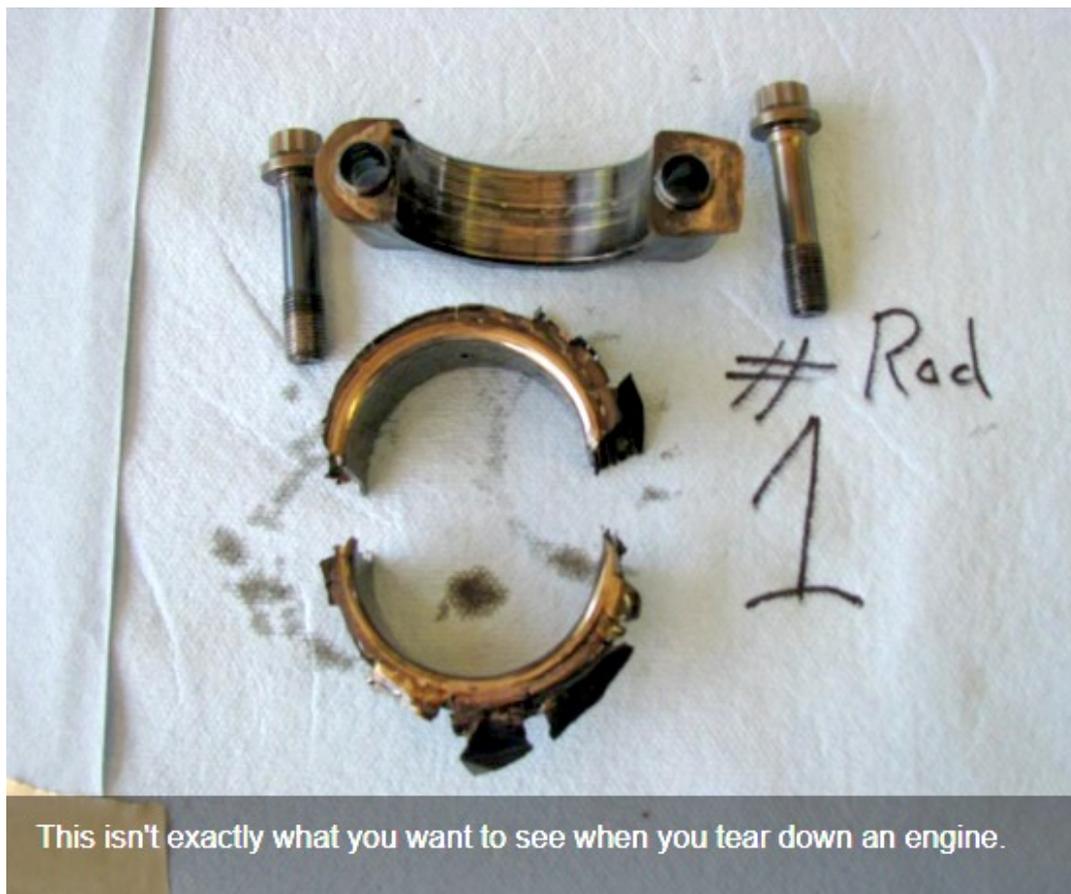
One week after disassembly, reassembly began. We'd have all hands on deck for this one. We pulled in another major favor and asked our old buddy J.K. Jackson to come down from Tallahassee

and oversee the procedure. He races a TR6, owns a Group 44 car himself, and has assembled hundreds of six-cylinder Triumph engines.

By midnight that evening, we had our engine all back together. By 3 p.m. the next afternoon, the engine was back in the car and ready to fire.

Had we not wired the Pertronix ignitor backwards, we are certain the engine would have come to life. Unfortunately, we will have to wait until Monday to hear that glorious noise once again.

Obviously an undertaking like this doesn't happen easily. Thanks to our Tech Editor Per Schroeder for overseeing the hunting and gathering process; Jere and Gary for their diligence; Paul Suddard for his help; and Marjorie Suddard for moral support and patiently putting up with the long hours.



CRUNCH TIME

Which is where our best-laid plans went awry. A combination of too little sleep, dulled reflexes, and the GT6's somewhat demanding nature found us getting a little too friendly with a track barrier. Ouch.

Just a few short weeks ago we got the word that our Group 44, Inc. Triumph GT6+ was accepted for the Monterey Historics. We'd have less than two weeks to get the car ready, so we put together a pretty straightforward plan: Button up the rebuilt engine and sort out any remaining issues so we could test and tune at our Ocala Gran Prix test track before heading up to Road Atlanta for a proper shakedown. If all goes well, then we'd head west so we can make our Baja Cantina kickoff party.

Yes, it's a tight schedule with little room for error. Welcome to our world.

We worked on the car into the wee hours Tuesday morning, but before collapsing for a few hours of sleep we were feeling pretty confident. The car looked great and seemed to be running well. We were ready for the test track first thing Wednesday morning.

Which is where our best-laid plans went awry. A combination of too little sleep, dulled reflexes, and the GT6's somewhat demanding nature found us getting a little too friendly with a track barrier. Ouch.

Luckily, the damage to the car was strictly cosmetic, and our friends at Body Werks have worked miracles for us before. They quickly took care of our tweaked nose and door, and we were back on schedule.

Monterey, here we come.





MONTEREY MANIA



Once we unloaded the car and set up, we finally felt like we could relax and entertain the growing crowd surrounding the GT6+... Monterey was shaping up to be a very nice week.

After some last-minute drama in our Monterey preparations, we were finally ready for Monterey. Luckily, the weekend proved to be full of good excitement—no more of the stressful kind we'd already experienced too much of.

Thankfully, the trip out to Monterey was uneventful. The GT6+ arrived Tuesday, towed by our Group 44 support van.

Once we unloaded the car and set up, we finally felt like we could relax and entertain the growing crowd surrounding the GT6+.

We were in full entertainment mode Thursday night at our annual Baja Cantina Monterey kickoff celebration. Peter Brock of BRE fame was a special guest this year, which made the party even more memorable. Monterey was shaping up to be a very nice week.

Practice and qualifying went well, too—nothing broke, blew up or fell off—so we changed the plugs, cleaned the car a little more, and readied our nerves for the feature race Sunday.

Once again, we enjoyed more good luck. The GT6+ looked great, posted consistent lap times, and made it back into the paddock safe and sound.

As Monterey wound down, we loaded up the car and made one last stop before heading back to Florida: We dropped by Jay Leno's garage, where he and his crew filmed the GT6+.

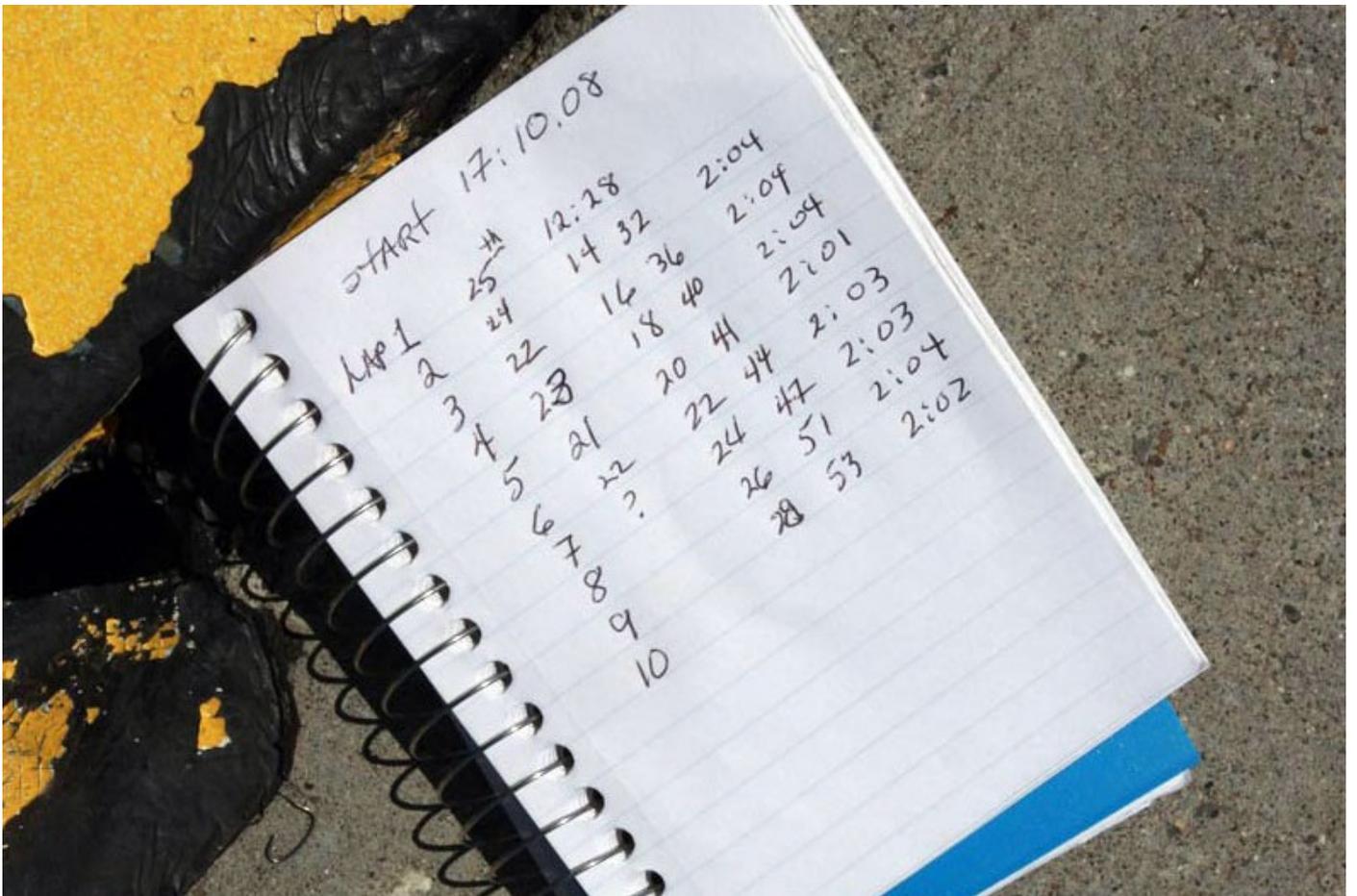


That's Tim in the green shirt and JK Jackson—lead wrench—with the pipe. Gary Hunter, who helped with much of the Restoration is next to JK.









GT6+ STUB AXLE MYSTERY



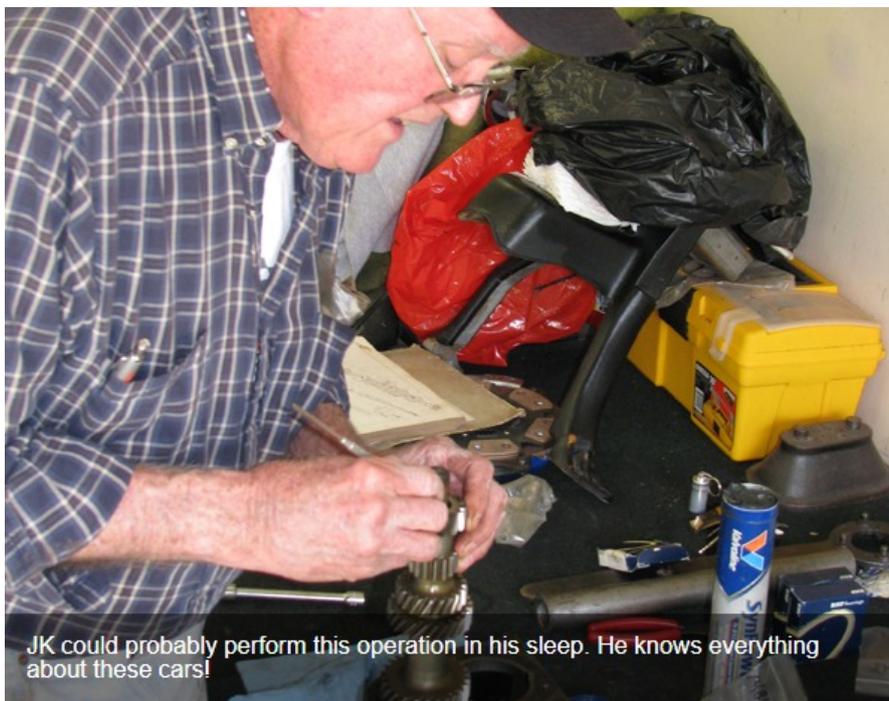
Does this look like a TR6 piece to you? If not, what is it?

Our research with Group 44 Inc. mechanic Lanky Foushee indicated that our GT6+ used a Corvair rear stub axle. However, since we currently have both the GT6+ and our 1964 Corvair apart at the same time, we realized that the stub axle in our Triumph is definitely not a Corvair piece. It's not a Datsun part, either, according to expert Les Cannady. There aren't that many IRS cars out there from this time frame. Now we're thinking that the stub axle may actually be a Triumph TR6 piece, as it slides into a TR6 yoke. But maybe it's a Corvette piece? What do you think?

GT6 BACK IN ACTION

We recently had to rebuild the transmission in our Group 44 GT6+. There was an alignment problem between the engine and gearbox that caused premature wear in the transmission. Fortunately our Triumph guru, JK Jackson, figured out the issue in a hurry and got our gearbox back together. We'll put it back in the car this week.

Also, a bit of news: We get to run the car at the VTR National convention this fall.



JK could probably perform this operation in his sleep. He knows everything about these cars!

GT6+ ON THE ROAD AND ON DISPLAY

Now that our Group 44 Inc. GT6+ is in complete, running order, we decided to take it out and show it off some more. Last week, Classic Motorsports staff members Gary Hunter and Jere Dotten packed the car onto a trailer and headed north to attend the U.S. Vintage Grand Prix at Watkins Glen and the British Invasion car show in Stowe, Vermont.

The trip went well, and Gary and Jere enjoyed displaying the car before hundreds of Classic Motorsports readers and enthusiasts. Even on the trip to and from the show, the guys got plenty of thumbs-up from fellow motorists.

After a full weekend of activities and a few days of transit time, the GT6+ is now back home. Since we don't have any immediate plans for the car's next outing, we're going to keep it on display in the Classic Motorsports home office. If you find yourself in the Daytona Beach area, come on by and check it out in person. Heck, we'll even give you a tour of our place.





The British Invasion car show in Stowe was a great place to meet readers.



With this long trip is behind us, we're going to let the Group 44 Inc. GT6+ relax in the office for a while.



When you're on the road for weeks at a time, finding a nice roadside diner is a blessing.

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