

RAGTOP

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On Vacation with TS2



Inside:
Canadian International
Auto Show Supplement

Works Team TR4s • My TR8 • Fear of Driving?

2088 Miles in TS2

BY DON ELLIOTT, MONTREAL

It all started with a dream

I bought my TR3A brand new in 1958 from one of the four Standard-Triumph dealers here in Montreal. I had saved my money while I was working in the shop and later on the drafting board at Pratt & Whitney, manufacturers of aircraft engines. At that time, they were building piston engines. I drove "TRusty", my new TR for the next 14 years during which I rallied it extensively from 1959 to 1965. In 1972 with 83,000 miles on the clock, it was a very sad basket case.

In 1987, I decided to restore it. That was when I joined the TR Register in England as well as the Toronto Triumph Club. It took three years to finish the body-off restoration. Between 1990 and this summer, I have driven TRusty a further 109,000 miles.

I'm very proud of my TR and for years, I have dreamt of shipping it to England to drive it there and to visit some of my friends who are members of the TR Register, but it was not to be. The companies who insure



The author and TS2. Driving on the left side of the road was no problem.

cars in North America would not insure my TR for a tour of UK and/or Europe and all of the insurance companies in UK would not insure my TR to tour UK, because I don't own my prime residence in the UK, also the car would need to be registered in the UK. It was an unbelievable dilemma.

In the spring of 2011, Mark Treadwell, Alec Pringle and Diane Pringle, also known as "the V8 lady" came up with the idea of offering me TS2 to tour the UK and to partake in the TR International Weekend. "What is TS2?", you ask. It was (and still is) the 2nd TR2 ever built and the Commission Number (VIN) is TS2. The first two TR2s were hand built because the production line was not yet fully operational. TS 1 LO was finished in June 1953 (the L is for left-hand drive and the O means that it left the factory with the optional overdrive). It was shipped to Montreal where it was driven to Toronto for the Automobile Show held at the Canadian National Exhibition. The day after, TS2 was completed and was shipped to the Dublin Auto Show in Ireland where it was driven for 46 years. Then it was returned to England and restored to its former glory in 2001.

PHOTO BY MARK FARRINGTON

This unbelievable offer of TS2 to me was confirmed by the executive of the TR Register and it took me less than 5 seconds to accept. My dream of touring England in a TR was about to come true.

The dream in reality

In July 2011, my daughter Catherine, who had been living and working in London for 11 years had just accepted a new position in Edinburgh, so I flew there to see her and to get rid of any jet-lag. During the next four days, I toured Edinburgh and then I took the train south to Didcot to pick up TS2. I had first seen it in about 1998, sitting in the garage at Didcot, before its restoration had started. What a thrill to drive this famous historic TR.

That first day with TS2, I filled it up with regular petrol and drove to Market Deeping where I stayed the night with Phil and Andrea Jane. Phil had invited me to comment on his progress with his powder blue TR3A. The next two days were spent with



There were about 35 TRs including a beautiful dark blue Swallow Doretti, 40 Stags and almost 1000 other antique cars of all types dating back to 1902 at the Newby Hall Car Show held near Ripon in Yorkshire on a rainy Sunday in July.



PHOTO BY PASSEY-BY
The author standing next to the Triumph Monument on Herald Avenue in Canley on the site of the former Triumph factory. In 1996, Don suggested that a monument be built on the former site so visitors would know where the factory used to be. He attended the unveiling in 2000. Notice TS2 in the rear.

my niece Liane and her family in Suffolk. Liane Elliott was raised in Mississauga and has lived in England for the past 22 years. Then it was off in pouring rain to Yorkshire for the Newby Hall Car Show near Ripon, where about 30 TRs from the local clubs braved the rainy weather. The TRs and the thousand or so other antique cars on display from all over the world were superb.

Early the next morning, after three days and nights of camping in the rain, I packed the soaked camping gear into the TR2. It was still raining as I headed from the campground in Broborough Bridge to-



The Heritage Center Museum in Gaydon has an extensive exhibit of almost every car ever built in the UK. Here we see TS2 neatly parked near the front entrance for all visitors to admire. After this photo, the top and sidecurtains were stowed in the boot for the next 17 days. The weather during the rest of the trip was sunny, but very cool.

Portmerion, a Mediterranean setting created by a British architect along the coast of Wales was the location where they shot the TV series "The Prisoner" starring Patrick McGoochan who used to drive a BRG Lotus 7 at the start of each show. It was here that the author met Andy and his 13-year old daughter Margaret - both fans of the series. Here we see Margaret dressed as one of the actresses from 1976 holding a huge balloon which played prominently in some of the films. She also kindly washed the bugs off TS2 with her father watching. She also checked the tyre pressures on Andy's Morgan.

towards Coventry and it rained on and off all day. Near Coventry, I stayed at a B&B where the lady in charge took all my wet things and put them up to dry. Then she went on line and found a store in Canley called "All Outdoors" and she told me to go buy a new tent! The next day I packed up and did just that. The store is located on Dolomite Road just off Gloria Circle and Herald Avenue where the Triumph Monument was erected and unveiled in 2000. Many of you may remember that I was there on that memorable day. I asked a chap walking by if he would snap a photo of me beside the Monument and to try to make sure we could see TS2 in the background. I also toured the Coventry Transportation Museum and

toured The Heritage Center in Gaydon. This was my third time visiting Gaydon and I parked TS2 in full prominence at the front entrance, for all the other visitors to see.

Afterwards, it was off to Chipping Norton in the Cotswolds for three days of camping. By now the sun was out and I stowed the hood and the side curtains in the boot. In fact, they stayed there for the next 17 days, the weather was so agreeable. That evening I attended the local Chiltern TR Group and met more new TR friends and renewed my acquaintance with Neil Hawtin. It was back in 1988 that I had attended a Guy Fawkes Night fireworks party in Neil's garden in Kidlington just north of Oxford. (Guy Fawkes is famous for plotting

The following day, I visited Ashley James to see his red TR3A before heading up to Shropshire where Simon Beresford took me in his TR6 (V-8) into Wales to see the bridge-like aqueduct canal in Llangollen, used for narrowboats to cross a valley. We also visited the ruins of the castle in Whittington. That same evening David Somerville came by in his TR4 and we dined together at the pub named after Mad Jack Mytton.

Both had invited me to come with TS2 the next day on a drive in

the countryside with the Shropshire and the Stoke-on-Trent local groups of the TR Register. We drove about 100 miles in and out of Wales and forded a creek where the paved road at the bottom of the hill traverses a stream. The water must have been about six inches deep.

The day after, I drove across Wales to Criccieth on the coast where my Grandfather was born on Castle Square just next to Criccieth Castle. I also took the time to find the tombstone of my Great Grandfather. The day following, I drove to Portmerion where they filmed "The Prisoner" starring Patrick McGoochan for the 1967 cult TV series.

Then I drove north to Broborough Bridge for three more nights of camping. On the Friday, I drove to Harewood in Yorkshire where the RAC (Royal Automobile Club) supervises the Harewood Hillclimb. The TR Register had me listed for three runs with TS2 in the morning and three more in the

afternoon. Early on Saturday July 30th, I arrived at the Yorkshire Showgrounds in Harrogate to enjoy the two-day TR Register International Weekend. It was estimated that as many as 750 TRs attended. It was the 50th anniversary of the TR4 and there must have been a hundred or more all parked together for a group picture. What a sight.

After setting up my tent and touring the huge site, I met more TR friends, some whom I had not seen since I attended the unveiling of the Triumph Monument in Canley in 2000. There were driving competitions, a driving display where a new Mini slid all over the parking lot and drove up on a 45 degree angle with two wheel about four feet up in the air. There were many stands where you could buy new TR parts and also many stalls where they were selling used parts. Finally, there were Technical Seminars covering a vast array of topics.

One of the huge halls held all the TRs, which were being shown for the concours competition. The TR Register has separate classes for each model of TR and any member can choose to enter his TR in the main "Concours" event or at the "Pride of Ownership" level. There seem to be more TR2s in Europe compared to shows in North America and there were very few TR3As seen at the Harrogate event. Everywhere you looked, it appeared like there were more TR2s and TR3s compared to the few TR3As which attended.

Every TR owner who enters his TR in either of the indoor show competitions wins a trophy, a plaque or both. Even if their TR did not finish as a winner, each owner takes home a prize for having competed. One of the conditions that I accepted when I was offered the use of TS2 by the TR Register was to help with handing out all the trophies and prizes following the concours event. I was delighted to do this - just as I had done in 1992 at the TR International Weekend held at the Staffordshire Fairgrounds.

After the IWE (as it is also called), I packed up my camping gear and drove southwest through the Peak District for one final night of camping. Then I spent the next four days about eight miles south of Worcester with another niece, Suzy Elliott who was raised

in Richmond Hill. It was while I was here that the starter in TS2 would whizz and whirr, but it wouldn't start. I called the TR Register who arranged the local towing service to take TS2 to The Worcester Classic

Car Co. about six miles away where they installed a new starter and sent the bill to the TR Register office. The small pinion on the front end of the starter shaft had become



TS2 leading the International contingent with Chris Cunnington the Chairman of the TR Register holding the Canadian flag. There were over 50 TRs from overseas, mostly European and Irish.

disconnected and it had fallen into the bottom of the bell housing.

This was the only time that TS2 caused a technical problem in 2088 miles over 23 days. I feel that TS2 is a solid and very reliable TR, much as my own TR3A is. There are no squeaks in TS2, nothing was loose or rattling, the steering was direct without being heavy and it had no sloppiness at all. During the first few days of driving in the rain, quite a bit of water came in over the top of the windscreen and up the sides, because the sidescreens could not be tucked in behind the chrome plate on the stanchions, as they should be to keep the rain out. But once the rain stopped, I drove the final 17 days with the top down and for me, the problem was no longer there.

They told me that the engine had been tweaked. A mild cam has been installed.



Don at speed driving up the Harewood Hillclimb in TS2 the day before the TR Register's Annual International Weekend. Harewood is in Yorkshire about 30 miles south of Harrogate.

The original carbs and intake manifold are still installed. TS2 has better acceleration than my own TR3A and I would even say it was very noticeable. I feel it must be the cam that made the difference. The displacement is still at the original 1991 cc – like mine. I got 28.8 miles per Imperial gallon, using the lowest UK grade of unleaded petrol and I managed to easily reach 80 MPH on the motorways a few times.

After these four days in and around Worcester, I drove TS2 back to the TR Register office in Didcot, a few miles south of Ox-

ford and handed in the keys. Then Allen Forster, the manager drove me and my luggage plus camping gear to the station to catch the train heading back to Edinburgh. I spent these final days with my daughter Catherine and we took in several of the stand-up comedy shows at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Then it was back to Montreal via Heathrow on British Airways. All in all, it was a wonderful trip. It was a dream come true.

Next year, the 2012 International Weekend will be back at the Malvern Showgrounds where it was held from 1999 to 2009. Malvern is famous for Morgan Cars being built there. **RAGTOP**



All the TRs that were shown at Harrogate were in one of the huge buildings for the Fairgrounds. In the Masters Class is the TR2 Francourchamp belonging to Patrick Van Houtven from Belgium where these unique cars were built. Notice in the side view that due to the rigid roof, that the door is lengthened for easier entry and the rear dogleg (quarterpanel) has been trimmed. The windows crank up and down with a simple crank and bicycle chain guides on sprockets. Since all the TRs assembled from kits in Europe were sprayed there, the colour, in many cases was not the same as the cars assembled in Coventry.

A review of the TTC display at the 2012 Canadian International Auto Show

TRIUMPH The History! The Glory!



A supplement to

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