

Turning Circle

OCTOBER 1983 No.5

Incorporating
The Courier



BOND - AGE

BARTHOLOMEW

FAMILY ATLAS OF THE WORLD

For every family and all ages

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TURNING CIRCLE
Editor: W. E. SUNDERLAND

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Sorry- no ejector seat!



EDITORIAL

I have great pleasure in announcing Turning Circle Number 5, featuring the Bond; a car of true individual styling and the result of a unique partnership between Standard Triumph and Bond Cars of Preston. Although there was very little published on these cars, we hope your curiosity will be satisfied by the various in-depth articles, specifications and history enclosed in these pages.

Whilst compiling this magazine, it has surprised me just how much of a stir the Bond created in the public eye, during its brief production period. Amongst the favourable reviews it received, there was always the view that it provided alternative motoring by combining built-in luxury and quality, whilst retaining all the features of a true sports car. This is something which is not often found today.

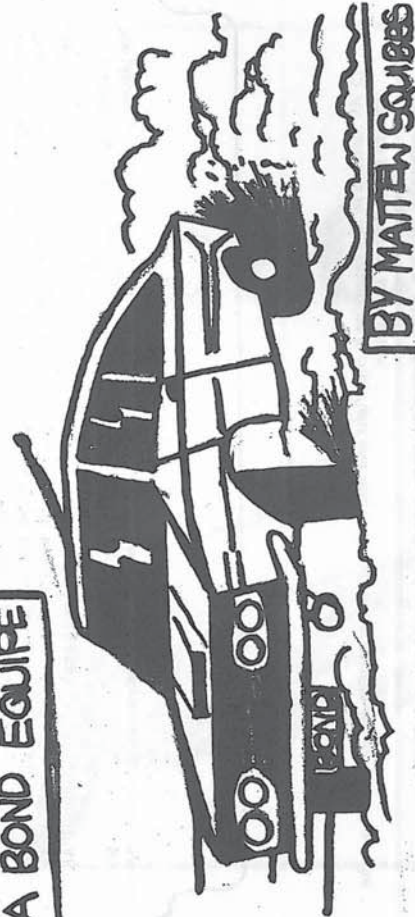
I recollect our former President, Paul Swanson, saying to me that it was while he owned a Bond GT4S, that his first thoughts of an 'owners club' occurred to him. Later, when he owned a Vitesse and realised the chassis was the same, he came to the conclusion that this was a strong enough link to form the TSSC. Things could have been very different if Paul had never owned a Bond!

Finally, thanks to John Cudmore and Chris Gardener for loaning me their Road Tests etc. and to everyone who has contributed in publishing probably the first comprehensive account of the Bond.

Happy reading.

BILL SUNDERLAND
EDITOR

A BOND EQUIPE



INTRO

BOND EQUIPE 1963 - 1971

The majority of our Triumph members, to a degree, lack in knowledge regarding the Bond range of cars. I cannot exclude myself from this group, as it was only last week that I drove a 2-litre Bond Equipe for the first time!

Hopefully, this in-depth 'Turning Circle' will go some way to providing us all with an appreciation of this Triumph Warranted car and perhaps encourage us to go and find out more and sample the delights of driving the various models.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I introduce this Autumn edition of 'The Turning Circle'.

INTRODUCTION:

The Herald range provided an ideal base (chassis) for the Preston Lancashire firm to expand into four-wheel cars. The Triumph factory agreed to sell their models to Bond who, in turn, approached a dozen Triumph dealers to market the new product. Triumph also agreed that they would offer their warranty on the cars, exclusive of non-Triumph parts.

The first Bonds utilised the Herald 1147cc unit and were designed by Lawrence Bond. He had earlier designed the Bond three-wheelers and also some motorcycles. The GT4S appeared in Mid 1965, powered by the Spitfire MKII engine but gained weight and the extra power provided little improvement in performance over the earlier model. In 1967 Peter Jackson of Specialised Models, Preston, designed the exciting and more attractive 2-litre GT. The first car used the 95 bhp Vitesse engine but in 1969 the MKII was introduced using the 104 bhp unit. A convertible model was also produced in small numbers.

Tom Gratrix, the Managing Director, sold out to Reliant in 1969, who in turn closed the Preston plant in 1970 and discontinued all previous Bond models.

The Bond 2-litre, which was a Standard-Triumph ally rather than a competitor, was clearly very advanced in styling terms when it was first revealed in the autumn of 1967. The elegant fastback, plastic body was certainly a very ingenious adaptation of the Herald/Vitesse chassis theme. At the time Bond advertised their new Coupe with the slogan, "Is this the most beautiful car in the country?" As I said earlier, last week I had the opportunity to road test a MKII Bond Equipe and I thought it would be a good idea if I wrote a road test on the car.

The car I had the pleasure to drive belongs to FIN JENSEN-EGELAND of Topsham Road, Exeter. Hence the registration 'EJ 3'.

Models:

The 2-litre Bond came in two body styles - the fastback Coupes and the Convertible. The MKI had the 95 bhp engine and early rear suspension whilst the MKII had the 104 bhp engine and the later improved wishbone type suspension. The car I drove was a 1970 MKII Equipe fastback Coupe (reg. no. EJ 3).

Construction The long bonnet and the elegant fastback make this a car of distinction and, bearing in mind their rarity, it is guaranteed to be a 'head turner'. Most of the large section panels are moulded in glass-fibre with steel reinforcement where necessary. The standard Vitesse chassis and suspension are used

together with Vitesse rack and pinion steering. Brakes are also Vitesse (i.e. front wheel discs and rear drum).

The Bond was renowned for its quality of finish and, whilst the car I tested was not 'concourse', it had certainly stood up to its 13 year life with flying honours. The Bond Equipe was always dearer to buy than the Vitesse but you were, of course, paying for the individuality. Many people consider the Bond to have the superior looks to the Vitesse and, whilst no one would refute that it was unique, the appreciation of the styling remains very much an individual thing.

Cost:

Coupe	£1,222
Convertible	£1,305
Vitesse	£1,082
Vitesse Conv.	£650
Vitesse Saloon	£450

These prices were correct in 1970!

Interior: The interior is quite different to the Vitesse in that it is finished in Black Ambia. The dash-board is covered in a perforated style of the material and to my mind, looks tasteful and sporty. The normal array of Vitesse dials are there (speedo, rev. counter, temp. gauge and fuel gauge). The car I drove had numerous additional dials including oil pressure, clock and outside temperature! The conversion had been completed with expertise and, to anyone other than a Bond expert, looked totally original.

The seats are better than the Vitesse, having more support. They more in line with the bucket type and accordingly add to the sports/GT image.

The driving position is very similar to the Vitesse, although the long bonnet gives a different visual aspect to the driver. Surely, there will never be a bonnet better in design than the Vitesse, which provides such perfect width judgement.

The standard Triumph gearbox is used which has those delightful ratios. As usual the gearlever never falls immediately to hand and, whilst the synchro. on the car tested was weak, the overall impression was one of complete consideration for the enthusiast driver.

Pedal positions are good and handbrake ideally situated (again as per the Vitesse).

I must admit to being surprised at the interior space of the Bond and certainly there appeared more room in the back than the Vitesse. Rear pockets are provided a la Vitesse and here Finn had undertaken a nice modification, installing separate lights in both pockets for map reading etc.

Incidentally, the front seats can be unfastened for cleaning - a good idea. Also the metal seat base, whilst similar to that of the Vitesse, is better in that it has more substantial platforms for the seat adjusting rubbers to sit on.

Performance/Engine:

As stated, I drove the 104 bhp version which, in this case, had only covered 46,000 miles from new. Consequently the engine, and for that matter the whole car was tight and free from mechanical harshness or rattles.

The six-cylinder engine is, of course, well known to all of us and with any of our cars, is an absolute delight. There can be no mistaking this magnificent six, its smoothness, its torque, its sound, places it in a class of its own. What modern car (box) has anything near this superb ohv unit.

Twin Stromberg CD 150 carbs are used and the unit develops 116 ft/lb at 3,000 rpm. This provides the car with the following performance. Other period cars are listed for the sake of interest.

Car	MPG	0-60 $\frac{1}{4}$	Standing $\frac{1}{4}$	Top Speed	BHP	Power/Weight Ratio
Bond 2-litre	24.5	11.5	18.1	102	104	112 bhp/ton
Vitesse 2-litre	26.0	11.3	18.1	102	104	113 bhp/ton
MGB GT	23.0	12.0	19.0	102	95	94 bhp/ton
Spitfire Mark III	32.0	14.3	19.2	94	70	96.4 bhp/ton
Sunbeam Rapier	24.8	12.6	19.2	98	88	88.0 bhp/ton
Rover 2000TC	24.0	11.6	18.2	110	124	108 bhp/ton
Capri 2000GT	23.8	11.2	17.8	105	113	115 bhp/ton
Triumph GT6 Mark II	23.6	10.0	18.7	108	104	120 bhp/ton

You will notice that the Bond and Vitesse appear to have very similar performance but in actual terms, the Vitesse is slightly quicker at the top end and also in mid-range acceleration. The Bond is, however, slightly quicker off the mark to 50 mph. The Bond loses out to the Vitesse because of its greater weight, which is more evident when comparing the fixed head versions.

Vitesse Convertible:	18.25 cwt
Bond Convertible:	18.5 cwt
Vitesse Saloon:	18.25 cwt
Bond Equipe:	

'EJ 3' did not have overdrive although this was optional. In my opinion, overdrive is a worthy extra as it allows 21 mpg per 1,000 rpm in top as opposed to 17 mph in direct top. This makes for economical, quiet cruising at higher speeds.

Handling:

The Mark II Bond uses the Mark II Vitesse rear suspension, with the transverse leaf spring acting as an upper locating link. At the lower end an inverted wishbone locates the vertical link to the chassis. A trailing link radius arm holds the hub fore and aft. Drive shaft plunge is absorbed by Rotoflex couplings. Normally, lever arm dampers are employed but in the case of 'EJ 3', it had been converted to adjustable telescopic.

Whilst I did not indulge in any fast driving in 'EJ 3', the car felt typically Vitesse and with new 165 boots, provided me with plenty of confidence. The car is rattle-free and felt taught and begged to be driven quickly. With the improved damping, the car was, of course, very 'solid' on the road with very little roll and, I am sure at reasonably high speeds, would provide the driver with neutral handling. I am uncertain if there is any difference in the weight distribution between the Vitesse and Bond but certainly the Bond looks slightly heavier at the front, with its very long bonnet. Whilst a lot of fibre-glass is used, much is reinforced with steel and, as said earlier, the Bonds are in fact heavier than the Vitesse models overall. On the basis that they do have more front end weight, I would expect the controllable Vitesse understeer to come in slightly earlier.

I also assume that, as with the Vitesse, forward weight transfer created by decelerating abruptly/hard braking, would entice the tail out when turning in fast. However, the margin of power enables the driver to balance the handling, counter-acting the basic understeer with power oversteer. The steering is, of course, superb, being precise, reasonably high geared and full of old fashion feel.

The Bond offers a sporty type steering wheel, which adds to the enjoyment of this fast, controllable GT.

I hardly need mention but, of course, the Bond has the good old Triumph taxi cab type lock, which aids parking. It is worth mentioning here, that it is always better to reverse any of the Herald based cars on full lock rather than drive forward into the lock. Reversing (pulling the front end round, rather than pushing) will place considerably less loads on the mechanical parts.

Brakes:

No problems here, although to an outsider Triumph brakes often need getting accustomed to, particularly in these days of no feel anchors! With our cars you do actually have to apply a bit of effort to the pedal as well, but they do stop.

Ride:

Again, with all our cars the ride is distinctly old fashioned - but I love it. Hard, choppy, full of feel and positive. Just like you would expect any car with a real chassis to feel. Actually, the Bond is, if anything, a little more civilised than most Herald chassis cars. Even though it is constructed of fibre-glass, it gives an impression of being very solid. 'EJ 3' was particularly quiet and rattle-free and I found the seating and general comfort first-class.

Luggage:

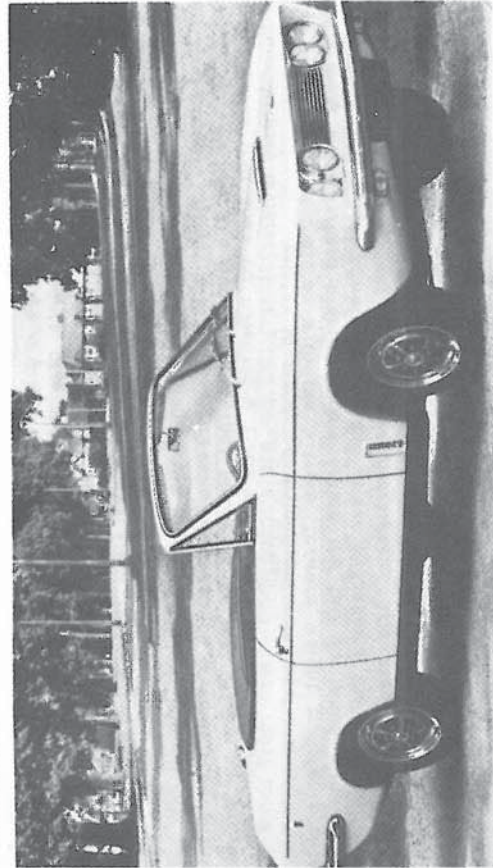
I was surprised how big the boot was, although its depth (i.e. floor to roof) is limited. The spare wheel is stored under wooden, removable floor pans and there are also smaller recessed areas provided for tools etc.

Conclusion:

I am indebted to Finn for allowing me to drive this cherished 46,000 mile example, which certainly impressed me. I must confess overall I still prefer the Vitesse styling but prefer the Bond interior. Having said this, the rear $\frac{3}{4}$ view of the 2-litre is most attractive (Fastback) and I am sure they will become more and more sought after as time goes by. Let's face it, they provide, fast, cheap, exciting motoring in a very distinctive package.

LONG LIVE THE BOND.

JOHN M GRIFFITHS
TSSC PRESIDENT



BOND MODELS 1963-1970

The first Equipe the Bond factory at Preston produced was the BOND EQUIPE GT2 + 2. This was introduced to the public in May 1963.

Incidentally, EQUIPE stands for 'team'. The word itself is pronounced EH-KEEP.

The Equipe GT2 + 2 was based on the Triumph Herald chassis, sporting the Spitfire engine and gearbox. The optional Herald front wheel discs were fitted as standard and the dashboard instruments were from the Spitfire. Different steering wheel and seats were used which made the car distinctive. Standard equipment included heater/demister, twin visors, vanity mirror walnut veneered fascia, full instrumentation, adjustable seats and carpets. Recommended list price, including purchase tax was £722. (A 1963 12/50 Herald would have cost you only £635).

This early model had quite small rear seats and only had conventional twin headlamps.

The next model to be introduced was the BOND EQUIPE GT4S, which was a full four seater with four headlamps. There were a number of amendments to the body, which were supposed to improve the looks. I am going to stick my neck out here and say I preferred the original design! Sorry, GT4S owners. The GT4S was introduced in October 1964 and had a collapsible steering column and reversing lights as standard.

In March 1965 the Spitfire MK II engine was fitted and a dual purpose spare wheel department introduced.

February 1966 saw the introduction of a heated rear window as an available optional extra and in April 1966 a sunshine roof option could be purchased.

March 1967 'heardeled' the introduction of the MK III Spitfire engine which was fitted to the GT4S. It also received the benefit of the improved Spitfire rear suspension. Large map pockets were added to each door and a 1300 badge was fitted to the nearside bonnet.

The model remained in production until August 1970. In March 1970 it was retailing for £997 including purchase tax. (The 13/60 Herald in October 1970 was £848).

August 1967 saw the introduction of the completely re-designed EQUIPE GT 2-litre. First known as the MK I, this used the GT6 2-litre, 6-cylinder engine, producing 95 bhp. It also had the 4-speed all synchromesh gearbox, front disc brakes and aerodynamic glass-fibre and steel body. In addition, it sported slim line bumpers and a fast-back Coupe style. Cost, £1,096 against MK I 2-litre Vitesse of £839.

October 1968 saw the introduction of the Mark II which, whilst similar in appearance, had the 104 bhp engine fitted and the revised wishbone/rotorflex rear suspension. Vitesse type wheel trims were fitted and a Convertible was announced. Overdrive remained an optional extra. Reliants bought out Bond in 1969 and in August 1970 all three models (i.e. 2-litre Saloon, 2-litre Convertible and GT4S) were dropped.

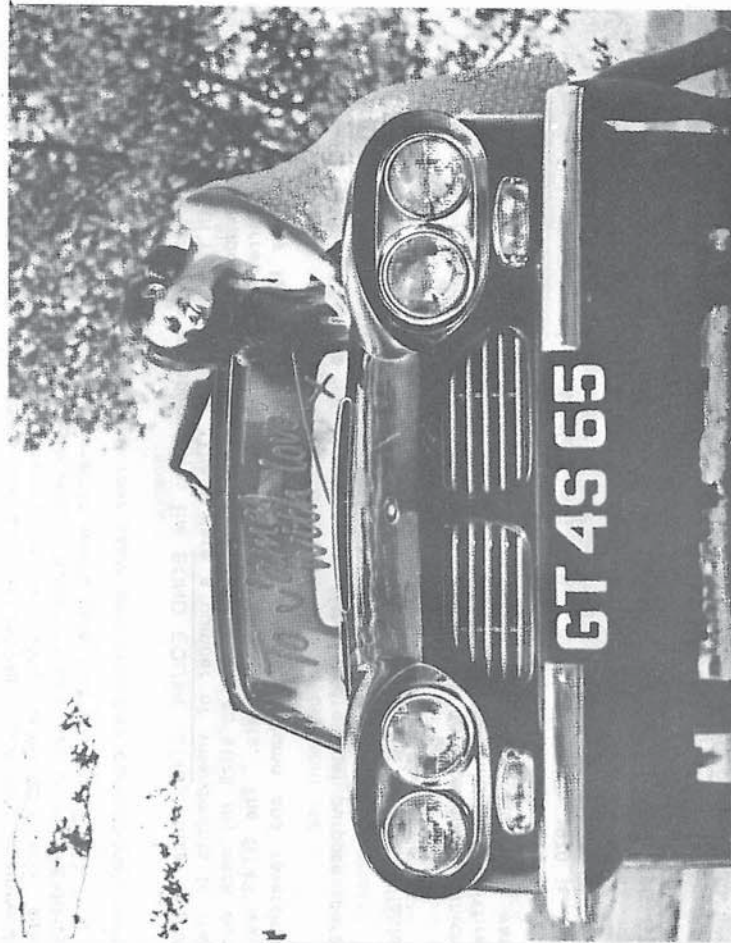
PERFORMANCE COMPARISON

	114cc	1296cc	1998cc
0 - 40	8.6	8.4	5.6
0 - 60	19.0	18.1	11.5

30 - 60
Standing $\frac{1}{4}$ mile
Top Speed
Average Fuel Consumption

JOHN M GRIFFITHS
PRESIDENT

114cc	1296cc	1998cc
13.7	12.3	8.1
21.8	21.6	17.3
86.0	90.0	102
29.9	27.2	24.5



BOND EQUIPE GT 4S

Built by Bond in association with Standard Triumph and available from Standard Triumph dealers
12 MONTHS GUARANTEE AND STANDARD TRIUMPH SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE U.K.

UNIQUE ASSOCIATION IS BASIS OF THE BOND EQUIPE

Take a well-designed and well-proven popular car like the Triumph Herald, strip it down to its sturdy chassis, build in the 67 bhp Spitfire Mk. II engine, cover it all with a smart, glass-fibre GT body shell, and there basically, you have the Bond Equipe.

The name Bond may conjure up fantasies of sumptuous living, fabulous women, and daring-do, but the Bond Equipe is a different exciting story. It's fact, not fiction.

In the Bond works in Preston, Lancs. to which transporters run almost a scheduled service from Standard-Triumph, Coventry, along the M6 with chassis, Spitfire engines and other components, around 50 Equipes are being turned out every week for sale at home and overseas.

The Equipe is really quite unique in the British motor industry. It has no close British rival, and owes its special niche in the market to a working association between a major manufacturer and a specialist constructor which again, has no true parallel.

What other special-bodied and craftsman built, relatively small-production car for instance, has full approval and co-operation of one of the Big Five makers, is distributed and sold through the big company's home and export dealerships, and can enjoy all the larger company's spares and service facilities and warranties throughout the world?

The graveyard of British motoring is fairly well covered with the brilliant, revolutionary, sometimes too-far ahead of their times designs of courageous companies with too few resources. For how- ever successful and famous some of their designs have been they were rarely backed by an adequate sales organisation and efficient service.

Bond Cars were fortunately well aware of this when they felt four years ago, it was time to spread beyond their three-wheeler Minicar market. They had had many years' experience of designing and laminating glass-fibre bodies with a good finish, and on production of over 100 vehicles a week, and 43 active Bond owners clubs round the country, was good enough testimonial to the robustness of their workmanship.

The well-designed, already well-proven

Triumph-Herald with the rare asset for a modern small car of a tough chassis could not be bettered as the base for Bond's entry into the four-wheeled class.

Bond's managing director, Tom Gratrix, and his engineers should know. They looked closely at just about every model on the market.

What made the prospect more interesting was that no manufacturer, Standard-Triumph included, had considered there was sufficient production potential for their assembly lines in a small, grand tourer of outstanding styling which would combine the comfort and most of the roominess of a saloon, with the handling and performance characteristics and racy appearance of the two-seater sports car.

But for Bond's 300 workers it was an attractive idea. Says Tom Gratrix, "We knew there were enough keen motorists around, from frustrated family men with sports car inclinations to spirited lassies who wanted to drive in a lively manner without having their hairdos blown about, who would gladly pay a little extra for a car like the Equipe".

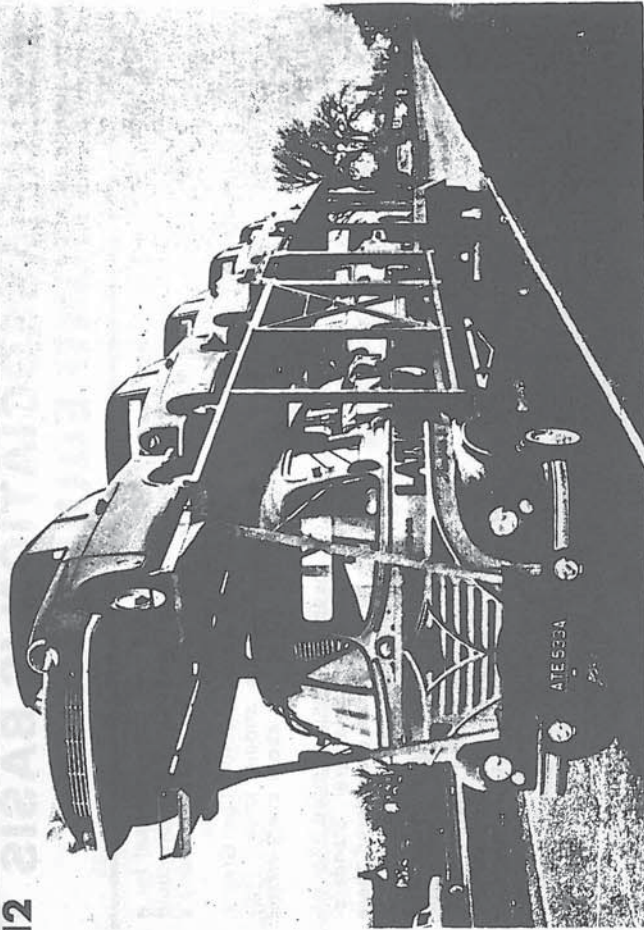
Bond put the scheme to Arthur Medlock, sales manager of Standard-Triumph's Special Products Division. He realised there was a neat slot for such a car in Standard-Triumph's own model range, and began to promote it with the management.

There were many details to be hammered out, and Maurice Goymer, at that time Standard-Triumph International's senior service executive, John Carpenter, then General Sales Manager, and Lyndon Mills, Standard-Triumph's home sales manager, became concerned in translating the whole concept into a business-like arrangement.

The result was that after prototype models had been built, evaluated and approved, Bond Cars late in 1963 were given an exclusive three-year licensing agreement.

So the Equipe 2+2 (two adults and two children), with a steeply raked roof coming right down, almost to the rear bumper line and anticipating by a couple of years the advent of the incoming "Fastback" style, made its debut at the 1963 Earls Court Motor Show.

Doors are always tricky devices to design, and Bond sensibly decided to



retain the Herald's own steel doors and window winding mechanism. They also retained the Herald's windscreen and scuttle, and married their glass-fibre body successfully to them.

The front bucket seats with plenty of sideways support, and the interior trim, were designed by Bond, and have consistently earned high praise from motoring journalists who have had the Equipe on test. The intention was to make this a luxury small car.

But as production built up, demand grew for more headroom over the rear seats so that adults could be accommodated. So at the Motor Show a year later, Bond introduced a new version, the Equipe GT4S.

The rear roof line was lifted two inches, and swept down not to the bumper, but to a "sawn-off" tail like a miniature Ferrari's or Triumph's own 2000 and 1300 models. This provided the Equipe with an enormous externally opening boot, and with new twin-headlight treatment at the opposite end, gave Equipe sales a rapid fillip.

During 1965 the Mk. II Spitfire engine was incorporated, and soon afterwards, even though the original licensing agreement was only one-third expired, it was extended for a further three years. "That's the best possible indication there could be of the success of our association", said Bond's Tom Gratrix at the time.

With the cancellation of the TSR2 aircraft, many aircraft workers in Preston became redundant, and Bond took many of them on to expand the Equipe's production.

Exports grew, until now, Standard-Triumph distributors have sold the Equipe in 26 countries. With a 100 car order from France to open up the market there, Bond exported altogether more than 12% of their 1965 output.

Standard-Triumph's Paris distributor, M. Bernard Lamy of Voitures Paris Monceau, has been running a sales cavalcade of Triumph models through French cities, and among them has been a Bond Equipe. The Equipe has in fact been driven by 19-year-old Andrew Gray, student son of Bond's chairman, Col. Reg Gray. Andrew's idea was to spend a six-months' between studies period, working in France, gaining some sales experience, and helping Bond's sales at the same time. The arrangement seems to have benefited everybody.

Overseas sales in 1966 began with a new order and a new market for four cars for Japan, and managing director, Tom Gratrix, is confident that this year the Equipe, "Built by Bond in Association with Standard-Triumph", will be doing better than ever.

A BOND

4-wheeler

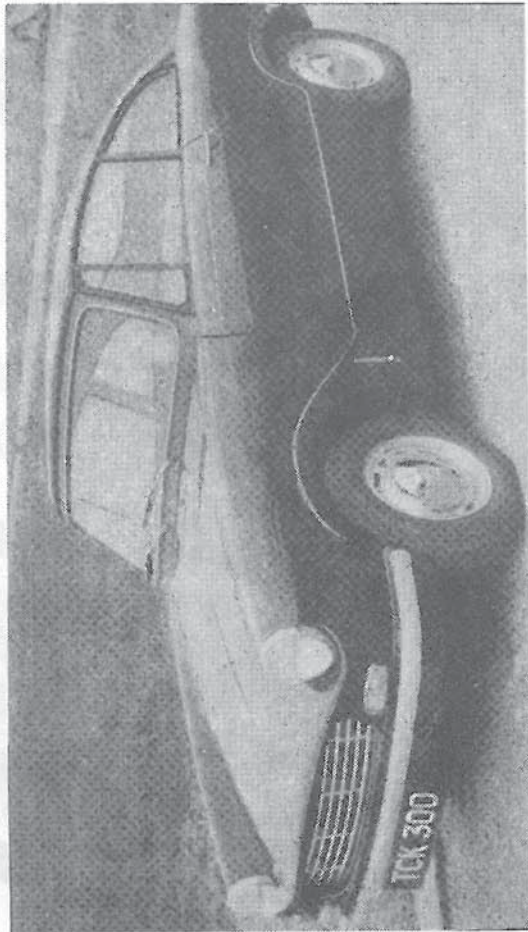
New GT car based on the Triumph Herald chassis and Spitfire engine

LONG known for their very economical Bond 3-wheelers, Sharp's Commercials Ltd., of Preston, Lancashire are branching out with a 4-wheeled sports saloon. Known as the Bond Equipe G.T., the car has a Triumph Herald chassis and under-parts, a Triumph Spitfire engine and is being built in association with Standard-Triumph International Ltd. The mechanical parts carry the normal Triumph guarantee and the Bond Equipe G.T. is to be sold through the S.T.I. dealership network. The basic price is £680 giving a total, with purchase tax, of £822 4s. 7d.

The new car, although low built and smart costs more than the normal Herald and Spitfire, but should compare favourably with other small G.T. cars. More than 90 m.p.h. is expected, with roughly Spitfire acceleration, the weight being comparable.

The box-section backbone and outrigger side members of the Herald are used in standard form, and also the Herald all-independent suspension, but the front Girling disc brakes, which are extra on the Herald, are standard.

The Spitfire engine used has two carburettors, a 9:1 compression ratio, a sports camshaft and an output of 63 b.h.p. net at 5,750 r.p.m. The gear ratios are also Spitfire, with a 4-11 top gear, giving 15.7 m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m. Peak power corresponds to a road speed of 90.2 m.p.h.



Use of Triumph parts is extended to the under-structure of the body, with a Herald pressed-steel scuttle and screen structure. This, together with the full-length floor pressings, provides a strong basis for the body which is of glass fibre. Herald pressings are also used for the main sections of the doors, which close on to steel pillars.

To these pressed-steel elements, the coachbuilders have bonded a sloping glass-fibre roof structure together with the rear wings into which the roof blends. At the front, a single-piece glass-fibre bonnet is pivoted on normal Triumph hinges, the whole swinging forward to give extremely good access to the engine. The headlamps are built into the wings on each side of the down-swept bonnet, and bumper elements protected by an aluminium moulding are formed in the base.

At the rear, similar bumpers are built into the tail which, in the modern fashion is high and inswept below bumper level.

There is a single very large rear window in the sloping tail and no unnecessary ornamentation.

The two doors give easy access to a nicely finished and distinctly sporting interior containing very well shaped sliding bucket seats for driver and passenger, adjustable for height, rake and leg length. Height and rake are adjusted by a two-hole front pivot point and a Herald four-position eccentric block for the rear support. There is 48½ in. of elbow room in the front and the handbrake is placed between the seats, with the gear lever just ahead of it.

There is more room in the back than is usual with a car of this type, although head room is distinctly limited. The rear seat is, however, fully upholstered and knee-room varies between 4½ in. and 11½ in. according to front seat position. Tipping front seats give access to the rear where elbow room is 47 in.

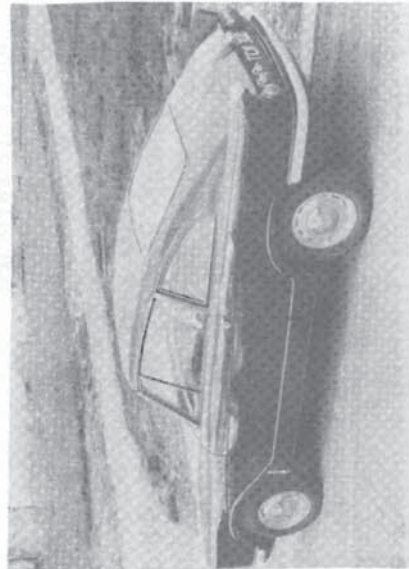
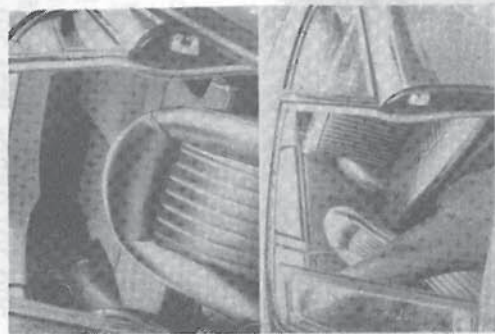
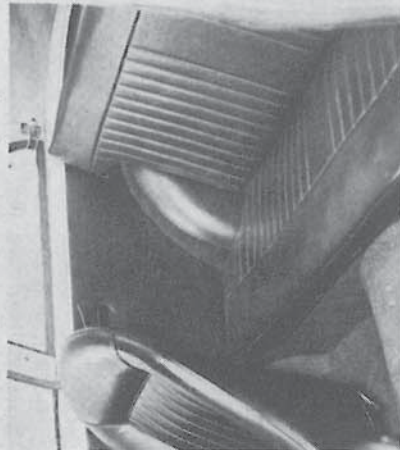
Luggage accommodation is somewhat limited if the back seats are in use, but there is space behind the rear squab for one sizeable suitcase and several smaller items. For two-up driving, the squab can be swung forward, estate car fashion, to give a floor measuring 49 in. fore and aft, with a minimum width between wheel arches of 36½ in. This is unobstructed except for a raised portion above the rear tank on the near side. The spare wheel is housed in a well below the off-side rear portion of the boot floor, where it is out of the way although not very easy to reach. Both the boot floor and the back of the rear squab (which forms the floor extension when the squab is folded) are carpeted.

An attractive internal feature is a three-spoke, wood-rimmed steering wheel. A polished wood fascia has a speedometer with trip mileage recorder, a matching rev. counter and water temperature and fuel gauges.

Equipment includes frameless winding windows, two sun visors (with a mirror for the passenger), a fascia ash tray, carpeted floors, anchor points for safety-belt harness, a facia-mounted courtesy light (with both an integral switch and courtesy switches on the doors), screen washers and an adjustable steering column designed to collapse on serious impact. Upholstery is in P.V.C. leathercloth.

A short run in the new Equipe G.T. model suggests that it has all the good Triumph handling properties, together with good vision and is very reasonably quiet for a car of its type.

(Below) The back seat is wide enough to take two, but headroom is insufficient for grown-ups. The deeply upholstered backs of the front seats fold forward for access to the rear. (Right) Herald associations are obvious in the interior. Note the block under the driver's seat for adjusting the steering. The spare wheel is hard to get at under a trapezoidal floor. The floor of the luggage space. The hump on the right contains the usefully large fuel tank.



Some of the interior fittings are borrowed from the Herald (the facia for instance) but the well-shaped seats are new. The rear seat folds flat to form luggage platform.

The large rear window is almost a skylight in the sloping back which sweeps down rather abruptly from the windscreen.

GILLIAN MERRELL PREDICTS

The line is waists!



WHILE the battle for mini, midi or maxi still rages and we are faced with a variety of different solutions from the fashion world, I have been trying to weed out a few of the new Autumn / Winter styles that will look

equally cool and elegant both before and after car travel.

One factor which does emerge is that waists are back — after trying to disguise them for the last few years it seems that we may now admit their existence!

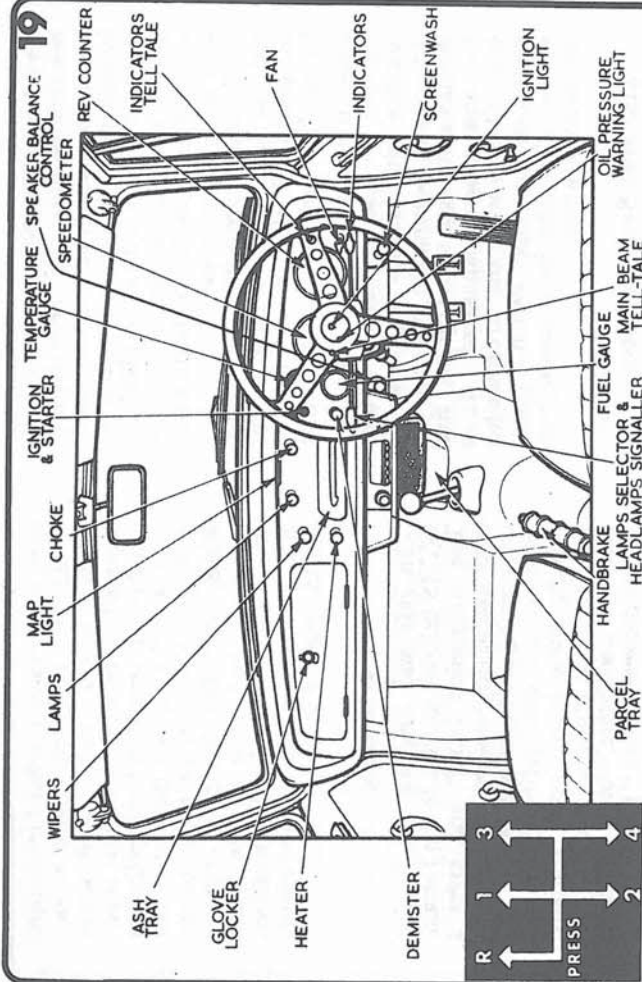
18 Bond Equipe GT 4S

1,147 c.c.



THERE has always been a demand among motorists for the car which is not quite the same as the next man's, and which is not built in thousands—one which combines distinctive looks with at least a sporting performance. Such cars usually cost considerably more than mass-produced equivalents because of the hand-work involved. It is for these buyers that the Bond Equipe has been developed; the Equipe GT 4S is the most recent version which replaces the two-seater we tested some 18 months ago. It is billed as a full four-seater, having a boot space, with its own outside lid, separated from the passenger compartment, and a re-styled bonnet with four headlamps. Being a relatively small manufac-

turing company, previously well known for 3-wheeled cars, Bond did not have the resources to design and put into production a complete car, so they decided to purchase major mechanical components from one of the "big five" to build into a body designed and built in the Preston works. All the mechanical components, therefore, and the doors, come from the basic Triumph Herald, with spring rates and damper settings adjusted to suit the different weight arrangement, while the engine is now



the latest Spitfire Mark 2 unit, producing 67 b.h.p and giving the Bond substantially more performance than any of the Herald range.

The Equipe GT 4S is about 1cwt heavier than the previous Equipe, due to extra structural members around the tail and the additional appointments of the four-seater, so its acceleration is understandably rather slower. The standing-start quarter mile took 21.4sec compared with 20.8sec for the two-seater, and the GT 4S took nearly 2sec longer to reach 70 m.p.h. Initial set-off was also less brisk, although all these figures are somewhat better than its "parent"—the Triumph Herald 12/50. The aerodynamics of the latest bob-tailed car are a little better than before and the Mk. 2 Spitfire engine produces 4 b.h.p. more than previously. As a result, the GT 4S managed a mean maximum speed of 91 m.p.h., an improvement of nearly 9 m.p.h.

We limited our speeds in the indirect gears by changing at 6,000 r.p.m. where the red warning sector on the rev counter begins, although the engine felt perfectly smooth and

sounded happy at this speed—so much so that unless a wary eye is kept on the rev counter one can easily exceed this limit.

Transmission

Some choke is needed for cold starts, but the engine warms up quickly; this is helped by the new water-heated inlet manifold.

A diaphragm-spring clutch is another new feature and while it undoubtedly cuts down the pedal pressure, the clutch felt a little "soft" on our car, spinning during fierce starts and completely failing to grip on a 1-in-3 test hill. The handbrake held easily on this incline and we restarted without trouble on 1-in-4. A helper spring is fitted to the clutch pedal to reduce the over-centre effect of the diaphragm spring, but there was still a rather uncertain feel to the control on full depression and the pedal seemed to lag when releasing the load.

The gearbox is identical with that of the Herald and Spitfire, and the ratios are rather too widely spaced, with bottom gear in particular being

very low. The Stage 2 conversion box may be fitted after delivery, giving closer spacings and higher speeds in each gear. The actual change, in typical Triumph fashion, was fast and light to use, and the lack of synchromesh on first gear is no shortcoming with such a low second.

All controls are within easy reach, and the layout of the fascia is unchanged from that of the original Equipe. A wood-rimmed steering

wheel is standard; its rim masks the tell-tale for the indicators. Those familiar with Heralds will have no difficulty in locating the switches, but initially a stranger to the car may find the arrangement haphazard. It is impossible to work the screenwiper button and the wiper switch together without removing both hands from the steering wheel.

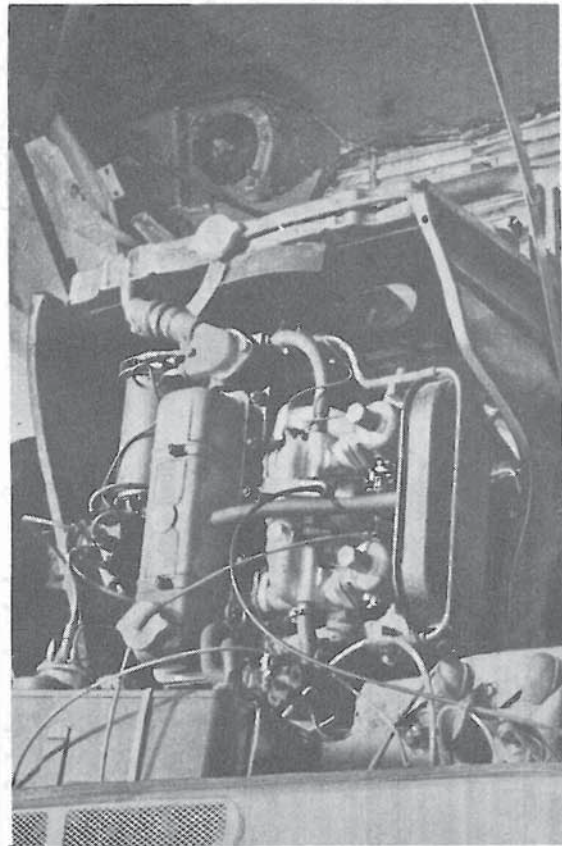
Multiple Seat Adjustment

A wide range of seat adjustment is provided, including four angles. The front seats, designed specifically for Bond, are soft and comfortable with good support against cornering forces from the wrap-round backrests. How-

ever, a little more rearward movement would have been appreciated as our tallest testers found themselves cramped. The steering column is adjustable for length and collapsible in case of accidents, but the seat is not directly in line with the pedals or the wheel, the offset being in opposite directions, and some drivers found elbow room too restricted. Occasionally one's knee fouls the awkwardly placed window winder.

Handling

In ride and handling the Equipe GT 4S behaves much like the Herald. The suspension is soft and gives a comfortable ride on good surfaces, and the steering is delightfully precise and positive; the outstandingly compact turning circle is retained. Initially, slow cornering produces safe and predictable understeer, but at faster speeds the rear wheels "jack up" and there is a sudden transition to strong oversteer, the rear of the car tending to flick rapidly outwards unless quick and firm steering correction is made. This characteristic, while entertaining to an experienced driver, limits the



pace at which a winding road can be tackled, and on wet surfaces this habit will be noticed at some time by almost all owners. On pavé the car runs quite straight at 30 m.p.h. but vibrates severely. There were some rattles, and the scuttle on this car was not well braced; under these conditions there was almost enough shake to pull the steering wheel from the driver's hands.

The Bond has 9in. dia. disc brakes at the front, and 7in. dia. drums at the rear. During our prolonged fade tests they effectively withstood repeated applications at 0.5g from 70 m.p.h. with hardly any loss in efficiency. Pedal pressures are always light, and only 50lb was needed for these tests. The maximum deceleration recorded was 0.9g with 100lb load on the pedal, this limit being set simply by locking of the rear wheels.

Compared with the original version, many changes have been made to the car's general equipment. There is a new four-headlamp system like that fitted to the Triumph 2000, which gave well-spread main beams but not quite such good range as the larger single pair of units. At the rear the boot edge kicks up by its "sawn-off" edge giving a practical, square shape to the luggage compartment. Inside there is a 10gal fuel tank in the nearside corner, but still plenty of useful stowage space. The boot lid requires an independent key which is not the same as that used for ignition and door locks.

Practicable for Four

The fuel filler is large and has a quick release cap; it accepts full-flow delivery from the modern garage pump without blow-back.

Inside the car, the rear seat squab no longer folds down to make a luggage platform. The claim to be a full four-seater is true if the full rearward adjustment of the front seats is not used, otherwise there is no space for legs. Headroom in the back, despite the slope of the coupé roof, is

adequate, there being only 3in. less than in the front. The wide Herald doors make access to the back quite easy once the front seats are tipped forward. Seat belt anchorage points are provided on the floor.

The polished walnut veneer fascia and its layout appear to be the same as for the latest Vitesse. Spitfire instruments are used, but do not include either an oil pressure gauge or an ammeter. Spare space to the right of the large dials would take two more gauges. There is a glove box with lock in front of the passenger and a sizeable tray for oddments on top of the gearbox tunnel; this was masked on the test car by the radio installation and speaker. In addition, large map pockets are provided in each door, and the single ashtray is mounted centrally. Fitting a smaller, less-dished steering-wheel has not marred the accessibility of the switches on the steering column. The dipswitch, incorporating a headlamp flasher, is reached from the left, and may be used without removing one's hand from the wheel. It is just as well that the dipswitch is not on the floor as foot room beside the clutch pedal is restricted by a large gearbox tunnel, and the driver's left foot can only be rested underneath the clutch pedal.

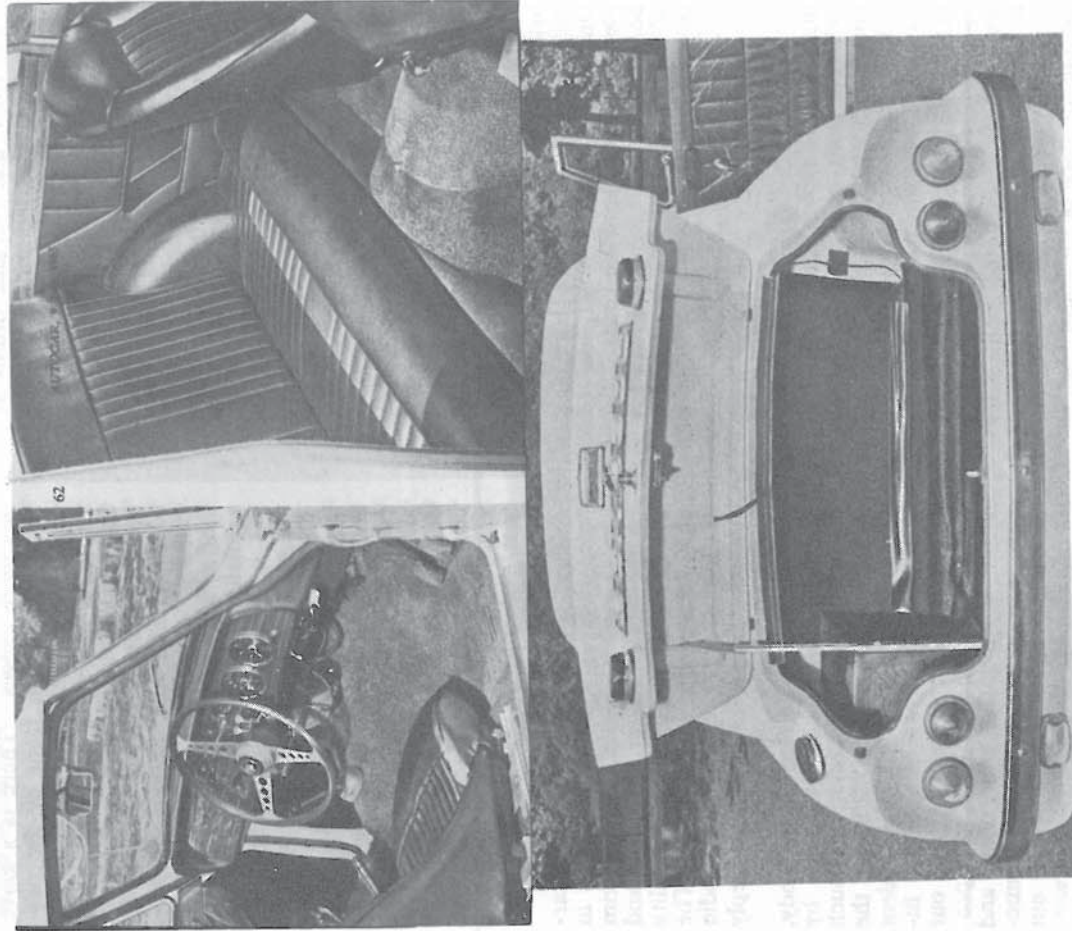
Floor covering is thick-weave carpets, while the seats are trimmed in Ambla stretch plastic. All the trim on the white test car was black and added an extra air of good quality and well-made furnishings. The chrome grille over the rear radio speaker reflected badly in the steeply sloping back window.

A general inspection of the body, which is moulded and trimmed by Bond themselves, indicated that much effort had gone into justifying the extra cost over the equivalent Triumph model, all components fitting together accurately. Unlike our earlier Bond Equipe, this one produced no excessive wind noise, and there was no tendency for the frameless side windows to be sucked out at high speed. The rear quarter win-

dows can be opened as extractors, thus aiding the flow of fresh air, and avoiding any direct draughts. Their over-centre catches showed no tendency to close at high speeds.

The Bond Equipe GT 4S is a "different" car. It sets out to provide those amenities which may hold up mass production lines and in this

respect succeeds quite well. The choice of Triumph components should mean that spares can be obtained easily and the entire range of Triumph Spitfire tuning and performance equipment is available for this model. We have already seen several examples fitted with wire wheels and more powerful engines. ■



EQUIPMENT OR THE BOND EQUIPE SAGA

By D W BAYLISS

23

Being an Aquarian, my tastes in motoring should apparently be somewhat different from other Zodiac signs. I have always hankered after something different from the bread and butter family saloons. Make no mistake, I have had my share of Anglemores, Minis, Escorts and the like but I could never get enthusiastic about cars that have had facts and figures fed into one end of a computer and almost identical tin boxes spewed out the other. The only difference being a hump, or not, in the window line, and different badges. So it was then that I fell in love with a Bond Equipe GT4S a few years ago, and ended up buying a Hillman Minx!

Every day I used to pass it sitting on the garage forecourt resplendent in its British Racing Green, or whatever its official colour was called and four fat tyres. Any would-be boy racers' dream. I inspected it, patted its flanks, drove it, pronounced myself satisfied, and started to haggle. Either I wasn't very good at bargaining or I was too slow, because within two days the car had gone and I bought the Minx. I watched this particular Equipe because it stayed in my area and ended up a scruffy heap parked in the road. Mind you, mine is a scruffy heap too at the moment, but it won't be. Also at this time, not many Equipes were for sale and those that were, were generally snapped up pretty quickly, and at inflated prices. In fact, I was once gazumped over another Equipe.

Time passed and whilst driving about in one of my other motoring interests, a Rover 80, which is a lovely old bus, I decided that I would see how the market was for Equipe GT4S's. They were still changing hands quite regularly, but the prices had come down considerably. Eventually, I found one, and after handing over the ready, drove away and stopped. No petrol! Well we had driven round the block and up the road, hadn't we? The fuel gauge said full, didn't it? Naïve as ever, I thought I'd bought a full tank of petrol with the car! Having sorted out the sticking petrol gauge with the addition of a gallon of the best, I drove home. Funnily enough it still flies across to full whenever there are only a few millilitres, or fluid ounces for the unconverted, of petrol left in the tank.

Anyway, VXV 436F came into my possession. I drove the car for about four months and thoroughly enjoyed it. After a while I decided that I would like a GT6, and the Equipe could go. I made all the necessary excuses to myself, no more running people here, there and everywhere, no room for awkward shopping and who needs four seats anyway! So a MKI GT6 joined the stable. I liked the car while I had it, but about a month and five hundred miles later, its purchase proved to be a complete disaster. I was brought up in the sticks, but now I'm a townie. One night/morning, driving home in the GT6, I reverted to my agricultural upbringing, and decided to get some ploughing practice in. My 'field' happened to be a roundabout near Uxbridge, and not being designed for such manoeuvres, despite its Massey-Fergusson links, I wrote my high speed tractor off. My only defence is, that I was asleep. Not that that is much of an excuse. While in the dock and nowhere to go except for a few quick laps of the hospital in my wheelchair, I had time to reflect that I was a sorer, poorer in pocket, and very much wiser motorist than previously. Incidentally, in the seat belt controversy, I'm for compulsory wearing of belts, in the front seats at least.

When I was able to drive again, which was hastened by the lack of London Transport buses on a particular route that I used, the trusty Bond was again wheeled out. Eventually, after many miles of motoring, problems arose!

The first one was a noisy gearbox, mainly in first. This tended to be ignored, and I hoped it would go away. The second and much more spectacular snag was the

bonnet. The wheelarches/mudguards became progressively detached from the bonnet and allowed the bonnet to wave about in the breeze. Motoring around town, this front end flexing wasn't too bad. However, on the M1 one day, what with cruising at an indicated eighty, and strongish crosswinds around Leicester, the bonnet began flapping around alarmingly. I had to keep my cruising speed down after that whenever I did an open road trip, as I had visions of the bonnet flying over the top of the car! Night driving wasn't so frightening, as the bonnet couldn't be seen flapping, and one could press on a bit!

Driving home from work one day the inevitable happened and fibreglass met rubber. The judicious use of a few wooden props sorted that out, the only snag being repositioning them after opening and closing the bonnet. Equipe GT4S owners, have you ever tried locating a spare bonnet, if not new, then in reasonable nick? I found it impossible. I know now, of course of Bob Joiner, but I solved my problem in a different manner.

Not being able to find an original bonnet and in any case, beginning to think that it was an ugly and somewhat dated lump, and could do with a face lift (sorry to the purists), I began looking at the alternatives. The Spitfire/GT6 bonnet wouldn't fit but the Herald/Vitesse might. Having four headlamps from the fibreglass bonnet, I went for the Vitesse. After being caught surreptitiously measuring up a Vitesse bonnet in a car park, like a would-be undertaker, the decision was made. Actually, the owner of the Vitesse was very helpful, after I explained what I was up to! Perhaps he is now a member of the TSSC Club. Light Blue MK1 Vitesse, Hounslow, about April 1976 - ring any bells?

So it was then, after locating a front end for sale, that on a fine day in May, with an upturned Vitesse bonnet on the roof rack of a friend's car, and the wind sounding like a demented harmonica player as it whistled through the grill, I solved my front end problem. The fact that my Bond is blue, and the bonnet is white with a black stripe didn't matter. The whole thing is due for a respray sometime anyway.

During the summer of '76, I covered thousands of miles in my modified Equipe. Very little maintenance was done or needed, although it was beginning to use enough oil to gladden the heart of any Middle East Oil Sheikh. The gearbox was getting even noisier: crawling along in traffic it emitted a growling sound. More use of second, and clutch slipping was used. At least the kids in the street could only laugh at the "funny looking car", and not at the gearbox noises too!

In September last year, a 'clonking' from the rear nearside drive shaft told its own story, very loudly at times. In October whilst leaving the car park at a motor cycle race meeting, the ground and my exhaust pipe had a coming together, and on this occasion the ground won. What with the steadily accumulating list of defects, I decided to put the Bond off the road and do some maintenance. My day-to-day transport being taken care of by my Rover 80, or Auntie, as some people irreverently call them.

After writing off my GT6, the wreckage was transported to a friend's garage, where it lay like a cuckoo's egg in some other bird's nest all of summer '76. I began wondering if it might be possible, subject to accident damage, to transplant the GT6 mechanics into the Equipe. After all, I reasoned, the Bond needed a complete mechanical overhaul from stem to stern, and the GT6 was functioning perfectly up to impact, at least I think it was! I still had most of the GT6 mechanics, so what the hell, let's suck it and see.

The mechanical transplant went fairly well, the engine being the most awkward. The original motor (Spitfire MKIII) came out very easily complete with clutch and gearbox. Putting the GT6 engine and clutch caused a certain amount of spanner hurling and blue air! The engine is considerably heavier than the Spitfire one, some

415 lbs total weight including clutch and ancillaries but not gearbox, and when one's fingers are trapped, well!

When I was swapping the drive shafts and differential the shafts presented no problem, but the diff. caused some bother. My maintenance manual says when refitting the diff. "Replacement commences by refitting the differential lugs to the rear mounting points on the chassis, and doing up the nuts on the retaining bolts, finger tight". Don't believe it! At least not totally. I tried and there is no way that the diff. can be fitted using this method. The chassis mounting web and the diff. front mounting turrets get in each other's way. I found the reverse to be correct, i.e. having first located the rear mounting lugs in the box section adjacent to the mounting bolt holes, fit the front mounts loosely, and then swing the diff. up into position and secure the rear mounting bolts.

Incidentally, the man who wrote the manual knew a thing or two, in the section on removal of the diff., he says "Take the weight of the hypoid unit on the jack, or better still, get a friend to hold it,"! I can only agree lying on one's back or side trying to manoeuvre the diff. into place, it gets flipping heavy. Actually, I used the jack method.

I had, by the end of 1976, rented a garage, and moved all my bits and pieces in. Not having many people to exchange information with, I had to persuade one person in particular and a couple of other innocents, to let me run a steel rule over their cars and compare results with mine. As was discussed at the Scratchwood meeting, spares are becoming hard to obtain, so I became adept at foraging around the breakers' yards. I have several yards in my area that I used, two of them charge high prices, but one can generally relieve them of something they didn't know they had, free gratis, and so redress the balance!

The items I need, or needed, to complete the transplant were as follows:-

Radiator - fan - engine mounts - sump - rear end plate - complete clutch - flywheel - bell housing and bolts - gearbox input shaft - gearbox remote control extension - propshaft - exhaust system - a throttle linkage.

I am at present still using the original end plate and flywheel. The Equipe radiator was too small, but I have now obtained a good one from a 2 Litre Vitesse and beaten and overheating problem. The end plate and flywheel both turned out to be unsuitable. However, the flywheel may come in handy at a later date. The damage was machined off the original flywheel, and that is now back in service. The replacement end plate holes didn't line up, so the original end plate was literally pressed into service. Some 9½ tons pressure was required to straighten it. Luckily, the end plate fits the engine and the bell housing with no distortion. The bell housing nuts and bolts don't exist as spares, at least not according to the parts catalogue at your friendly dealers. Try looking at the Vitesse/GT6 book, and you may find a picture of a bolt peeping coyly through the bell housing, but no part number for same. As mentioned in Newsletter No. 2, Stanley Motors of Hounslow are pretty good for spares, but as yet no discount. The nuts and bolts and pressing were taken care of by the Airline that 'Flies the Flag', or as this is an update of an old article 'The World's Favourite Airline'.

The gearbox input shaft and various gaskets came to £19 odd, which was a bit of a surprise to say the least. The gearbox remote control extension I robbed from the original Equipe box, it had snapped off just behind the four mounting studs. The propshaft came from a scrap MKII Vitesse and at the time of writing, has been fitted but not tried. I may have a problem, as the propshaft yokes don't line up. Either somebody reassembled it incorrectly, or they had balancing problems. I also had a problem with the throttle linkage. The original Equipe set-up is all cable, as

I believe are most Viteses, some however are rod, as was my GT6. The exhaust system is a modified GT replacement exhaust.

While my engine was stacked away in a corner of a garage, I often wondered if it had sustained damage in the crash. I poured on Redex and engine oil while it was stored, and I used to turn it over by hand to keep the bores lubricated. Everything moved so things looked promising.

Eventually, the day to start it up came. After a few attempts, although it turned over, nothing. Disappointed, but not unexpected, after all it had last fired twenty months previously, I started a systematic search. Plugs; points; coil; wiring connections all re-checked, and then, like a bulb being switched on in the old memory bank, engine earth strap flashed into mind. Sure enough, I'd forgotten to fit it! Feverish spanner work and another attempt: It fired and stopped. A couple more tries, each one accompanied by a cloud of carbon and smoke from the manifold, and then, joy of joys, it was running. Rather noisily and certainly breaking all emission regulations. However, as it had no exhaust pipe, and after all the Redex and engine oil that had been poured in to do it good, like the cod liver oil and malt that was poured down my throat when I was a nipper, it is hardly surprising. After rigging up a water system and a rough exhaust, the engine was allowed to run for a few minutes. A slight roughness while it was cold disappeared, and having warmed up a little, it ran as smoothly as ever.

Taxi trials, to borrow an aircraft expression, have started, and by the time this appears in the Newsletter, full road tests will have taken place. Braking and handling are obviously going to be the first priorities. The brakes at the moment are a bit of a mixture, having GT6 8" drums on the back, and retaining the Equipe/Spitfire 9" discs at the front. The front brakes are not immediately inter-changeable. The hubs and bearings are different sizes as are the discs and calipers. Also the guard plate has a different mounting. Probably the easiest way of modifying the brakes is to change the vertical link as well, as this allows to disc guard plate to be used. Fitted with suitable pads and linings, together with the correct servo, the beast should stop. The handling is going to be something else! Providing the thing is still in one piece after flying off the road backwards as it probably will do initially, I'm hoping to compete in hill climbs with it.

At the moment it has original Equipe suspensions, the dreaded swing axle with eleven leaf spring and normal Spitfire wishbones and coils at the front.

The first thing is a letter to Speedwell and SAH with a few enquiries about their camber compensators, and also the advisability of fitting an eight leaf rear spring ex-GT6, or recambered spring. Adjustable shock absorbers at the rear end should also help improve the handling. The front end has obviously got to be stiffened up, and uprated springs and adjustable shockers will sort that out. Probably a stiffer anti-roll bar will be needed too. The original wheels and tyres have been discarded and 155 x 13's fitted. These will be used for the time being, but wider wheel arches can accommodate without extensive body mods.

TEN THOUSAND MILES ON

The theorising of the last article had to stop and the device actually tried on the road. Outside my garage I have a thirty yard drive, and initial tests were carried out on this. One end has the back entrances to shops and a service road and the other, suitable catch fencing for over enthusiastic acceleration or brake failure. After several trips at walking pace, I backed the car almost into the stock-rooms of the shops, wound the motor up to about 3,000 r.p.m. and dropped the clutch! The beast shot up the drive and more or less stopped at the fencing. It stood there snorting and panting with steam issuing from various orifices, and then the engine died.

Having recovered from the fright, not of the brisk acceleration, my TR5 accelerates faster, but the lack of brakes, I put the car away and went home to ponder. I think someone was watching those preliminary tests, because some days later, new heavy duty fencing was installed!

A few days later I was poking around the car and noticed brake fluid on the nearside rear wheel. Sure enough the wheel cylinder seals were leaking, and the off side one was completely seized. To make matters worse, they were of different sizes. Obviously this state of affairs could give rise to uneven braking and at the least, a bit of a scare. Apparently at some time in its life, the GT6 MK1 wheel cylinders were increased in size and one of the previous owners had only changed one side. Having sorted that and the adjusters out, and fitted new rear linings, the time came for proper road tests.

Out one the road for the first time and what a feeling, especially as the car was an unknown quantity and also slightly illegal! Initial tests were conducted at a great rate of knots on a local housing estate, and on several occasions I saw cats and dogs fleeing (sorry!!!) for their lives. It's a good job they ran in the right direction, otherwise they would have been despatched to that great kennel in the sky a bit rapidly, for the brakes were abysmal. The trouble lay in the front pads, which were past their best. Having fitted new pads, the brakes are much better, but not as good as I would like. However, that will be rectified by the fitting of GT6 calipers and discs.

On one of my road tests I just managed to get back to my garage before the car ran out of petrol. Seeing as this was becoming a regular occurrence, something had to be done as I estimate the fuel consumption was about 15 mpg. There were two reasons for this, one the carburettor diaphragms were cracked and split, and two, the carburettor tops were fitted wrongly, causing the slides to stick.

Having got the car more or less servicable, I took it to be MOT'd, it failed! Too much play in the front trunion bushes was the reason. After replacing the bushes, I tried again and it got a clean bill of health, apart from and aside that the handbrake needed adjusting. As it was perfectly alright on the first test the day before, and also in use, I chose to ignore that piece of advice.

The main, and continuing problem is vibration. Up to forty miles an hour everything is fine, above that and to about seventy, the vibration is like that of a vigorous massage machine. After a long journey on the motorways or good open roads, my teeth are loose! Push the speed up a little and the ride is quite enjoyable, until around eighty-five to ninety, my eyeballs seem to vibrate at the same frequency as the car but slightly out of synchronisation, thus producing blurred instruments and a strong feeling that all is not well? The car feels as if it is hopping about all over the road, but people who have followed me say that everything appears correct.

The general roadholding seems quite good, providing the power is kept on whilst negotiating corners, thereby preventing the swing axle from taking over. However, a corner is occasionally met where the brain takes over from the right foot and that's when the trouble starts. I suppose the brain thinks, "to hell with science, we're not going to make it," and tells the right foot, "get off the loud pedal and start braking." Of course the nose pitches down, the rear wheel tucks under and hey presto, you've just joined the young farmers. On the rare occasion there's a slip road/track you can always take to it and pretend that was the route you intended taking. Very handy when you have passengers, or want to do a bit of field study work, late at night!

Some of the early members of the Club may remember I was hoping to compete in hill climbs along with John Griffiths. Unfortunately, the car just doesn't handle well enough, unless I wish to spend quite large sums of cash. Probably in a

closed to Club type meeting it would be alright, but against other manufacturers' competition hardware, no. The back end now appears to be too light with the increased weight at the front, and to this end I had thought of fitting a second petrol tank. Maybe another 80 to 100 lbs of weight would reduce the rear end lightness, plus giving an extra range. Extra weight in competition of course is undesirable. So it remains single tanked and still in need of a respray. The respray I kept meaning to do, but have never got round to for one reason or another.

My first long trip in the car was to Prescott last year to watch the hill climb and support John Griffiths. I had a glorious burn with a couple of MGB's, and the honours were even. Won one, lost one! Actually, the car does seem to be an MGB eater amongst other things. The list of rapid journeys is now quite long. I'm sorry to go on about MGB's, but returning from the British Leyland day at Mallory Park last May, I came up to a roundabout and there was a 'B' with three young lads. The reaction was typical from them and they proceeded to out accelerate me. Now my Bond really does go in second and third, and having let them pull away very slightly, I wound it up in the gears and left them way behind with crinkly grins on their faces. Incidentally, I hope any members of the Club who have or have been thinking of obtaining an MGB have seen the error of their ways, and are now on the lookout for a good GT6 MKII.

When I get involved in the Traffic Light Grand Prix, motorists think the Bond is a pushover, until they find themselves looking down that long exhaust pipe, or worse, many yards behind and unable to do anything about it. I've even seen people check that they haven't left the handbrake on, or that they are in the right gear! Of course all this irresponsible driving can have only one result, and it cost me twenty pounds and an endorsement! Actually, it was quite amusing at the time. The young officer who gave my car the once over, was hopping up and down trying to ask questions while I was being cautioned by the other policeman. I must admit to a twisted sense of pleasure when they said they had a job catching me. Somehow it proves the basic idea was right, and if the handling could have been sorted there would have been no need for the later and very different 2 litre Equipe.

Apart from the persistent vibration I spoke of, which new propshaft UJ's reduced but failed to cure, the car has behaved rather well except for three occasions. The first was on Richard Goldschmidt's birthday, when the car had been misfiring and I was getting so fed up with it, that after giving it a hefty kick and hurting my foot, I very nearly gave it away. The snag just disappeared the next day, well it was a TSSC event: STIR 3. The snag reappeared during the bad weather at New Year, when it wouldn't start, and turned out to be a hairline crack in the moving contact of the CB points. The place to look is on the sharp radius of the moving contact on AC Delco distributors. Also the fibre heel had worn rather badly, which may have had something to do with it. The third occasion was when the car started, ran for a few seconds and then stopped. The snag? A broken LT lead at the coil.

Obviously the car had got the sulks because I am moving on to another project, and it knows its days are numbered, as all manner of electrical snags have cropped up just prior to the AGM. However, it has been an interesting and enjoyable year charging about in my Bond Equipe GT4S+ or TriBond GT6, or whatever other names have been coined for it.

Eventually the car was sold minus the engine and transmission to David Hughes, the then Editor of the Newsletter. David kept it for a while and I believe it moved on again for a total rebuild. I often wonder, and perhaps someone can tell me, if VXV 436F is still in the Club, or has it been laid to rest somewhere?

D. W. BAYLISS

PREMIUM SAVINGS BOND

There it was, all £50's worth of it, the result of a momentary brainstorm by a person of the age that should know better, and with enough on his plate without taking on a sorry looking lame duck for rejuvenation.

Having wended my weary way home amid sundry rattles, a much too fast tick-over, snatching brakes, rumbling big ends and mains, weaving steering (which I had no doubt was the clamp bolt where the steering column joins the rack) and looking along the glassfibre bonnet that seemed to gather more and more cracks as I drove on, my heart began to sink.

But when I trusted myself to take another look at the sick Bond, and convinced myself that this was indeed the challenge I had set myself, I set about a survey.

The doors were typical Herald, with a long crack from the quarter light down to the body midrift, and comprised of 50% metal, 30% rust, and 20% filler. These obviously had to go, and in fact after a miserable morning crawling round a local breakers I removed two good doors from Heralds that were more deserving than my Bond. They cost me £15. I then went to another breakers that I knew were breaking a Vitesse and there I obtained door linings, complete dash intact, seats, alloy carpet strip, bulbs, handbrake and gear lever rubber boots, and sundry small items for a cost of approximately £7. Bargains indeed. Yes the Bond interior

BOND EQUIPE GT 4S 1300

was black and the Vitesse trim was blue, but with the latter being in good condition, the colour difference was trivial.

I had fully intended that I would refurbish the Bond as cheaply as possible so that should I become disheartened, I would not have lost a great deal—which, added to the fact that I had only ever built one other special in my life before, and that when I was very young, I considered sensible.

With considerable nervousness I crawled underneath to survey the chassis, and much to my surprise found that it had recently had new outriggers welded on and also boasted two second hand skirts, so I was off to a reasonable start. Two tyres were bad, so I obtained two part worn but good tyres for £7; where would we be without breakers?

As the Bond's glassfibre body was in a bad way, and would have to withstand winter weather because I was by now pretty certain that it would take more than the three months I had innocently given myself, I started by gouging out

the cracks with a file, and chewing out the holes and chips which turned the body into a typical cheese. The worst damage was to the boot and lid which had sixteenths of an inch thick gel peeling off in great lumps, so this I stripped with great difficulty and filled with Holts Filler, removing the surplus with an Abradisk which does not clog, is capable of bending and can be immersed in water without too much damage. Finally, I finished off with cellulose putty and wet and dry paper. All other cracks and holes got the same treatment.

It took only one week of rain and sun to point out the areas that I had not attacked as drastically as I should have done, so these all had to be redone with the knowledge that a good paint finish was a must. With this in mind, I approached a local spraying unit for advice, as during my excavations into the glassfibre I found that the car had had different coats of cellulose and varnish paints—thus my first attempt to put on a white undercoat of cellulose had resulted in a cracked pimply surface. Anyway, the answer was that I should use a synthetic paint by the name of Permobel Plus which I was reliably informed would cover anything. Thinking of easing my work load, I then asked if they would be prepared to spray the car if I did the donkey work, and despite the brave attempt to sound enthusiastic, it was obvious from the fellow's sickly look that he would do it only under protest. Not on, thought I, so it was decided to stick to my original plan to keep it cheap by hand painting the car. This I did, and the result was extremely good (though not as good as a respray, of course), the painting being better than most paints I have used in that one coat covered completely. Also, it was easy to apply, as although it dried quickly, it took about twice as long as cellulose and thus gave you a chance to rectify faults.

I next directed my attention to the boot, the lid of which was a write-off,

and started inside with the floor. Being glassfibre, this had many serious cracks caused, I presume, by irate motorists who, on returning the spare wheel to its resting place, had dropped it from a height of several feet! The wheel locating bolt and plate had become loose as water had entered the cracks, though not staying long due to the numerous outlets. My course of action was to cover the floor with a thick sheet of glassfibre and then clean and paint the lot.

Inside the car, I found that the steps in front of the door pillars that carry the hinges were gone, and the stop behind the central pillar had also gone. The steel floor on the drivers side was thin in places, and the rubber plug in the floor under the rear seat had gone along with a circular area of floor pan about three inches in diameter. This all pointed to famous Herald body leaks, which from experience I had found come from an unlikely source, the door hinges. Most people assume this cannot happen as, if the doors are that heavy and the hinges so loose you would be bound to spot it very quickly. This isn't necessarily so, I can assure you. Even so, you can live and learn, and I was to find after weeks of exasperation and frequent cans of water poured liberally over the car, that the windscreen was leaking. So, as a firm believer in sealastic, I shot the gunge all round using the smooth plastic nozzle to lift the rubber, and this proved to be the cure. At last I was able to rebuild the floor with zinc mesh and fibreglass over the missing and thin sections, covering the end result with paint. In doing so, I was surprised to find several more manufactured holes made during production which I can only assume were put there to let in water to rot the carpets!

It was at this point that, laying in the car to check loose wires and check circuits, I thought I had dropped my fag and set something alight. However, with growing alarm I realised that the wiring

was alight as clouds of smoke filled the car. I rushed for my extinguisher, and on returning found the fire had gone out, the culprit being a bad connection from the panel light—the wire of which had fortunately parted stopping any worse damage. Having rewired a Herald 1200 from headlight to scuttle after a burn out during the rush hour at the Oval in London years ago, I had no difficulty in fixing this problem. Yes I should have disconnected the battery, but how do you check circuits?

The blue seats and door trim I painted with vinyl paint. The results from this Humbrol product are surprisingly good; however, I have yet to find how well it wears. The head lining was a cream orange and rust colour, slightly sagging. I contemplated this for some time, eventually coming to the decision to use ordinary household emulsion. After a good rub down I applied the emulsion which pulled out the sags and did a good job. I used it in favour of the vinyl paint as unless you are extremely careful, I found that on such as the door panels it could cause sagging, not prevent it. Also, as I would be hanging upside down in a confined space, it would be difficult to be as careful, not to mention that the smell from the vinyl paint would probably have asphyxiated me before I had finished.

I now came to the collection of spotted, rusty, virdegreased, dejected fittings, the immediate thought being that even chrome cleaner would be useless, and the rubbing required would do more harm than good. So I found an old brass suede brush, and with the aid of soap and water found that rust and grease removal needed only a couple of strokes with the brush to restore the chrome which looked none the worse for the experience. Then I clear varnished the lot.

The old heavy front grill was replaced with a modern cut down version from a Vauxhall crash job which cost me tea

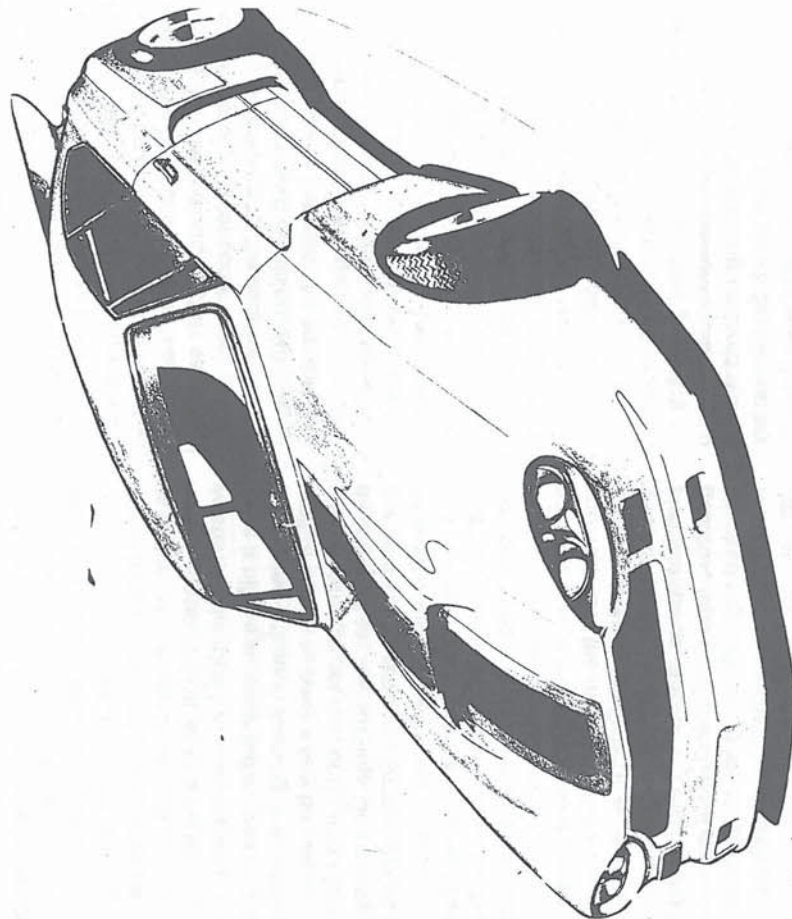
money from my local breaker. All metal parts that needed rebuilding or repairing were wire brushed and treated with D-Rust, which I found has to be allowed to dry properly or a permanent bond is not made with glassfibre. This probably sounds like pure logic, but I found that while appearing to be dry, D-Rust can be quite deceptive, so it is better not to be wise after the event.

There was of course a great deal more detail finishing that I have not mentioned but that would take a great deal of space. The Bond was now in a fit state for its MOT and needed only a long final checkover—after all, I had still only driven it in its dejected state. However, as I have an aversion at my age to hanging inside a bonnet in a north westerly, I decided I would probably leave it till the summer before working on the engine—though running and starting well, it seems to have a few bits and pieces trying to get out, and I don't like paying road tax for nothing. So only by the time you're reading this tale should I be driving the car again.

As an amateur I feel that despite Filby and his derogatory remarks (*wot, me?*—*Ed*), the Bond is a good little car for such as I to get his teeth into before embarking on a more expensive kit car, and sorts out the men from the boys. Apart from this, the Bond is all Herald, and has all the Herald attributes like plentiful spares, a forgiving engine and gearbox, long life if the chassis is checked regularly and treated, loads of working space, smallest turning circle, easy starting and, thanks to the glassfibre body, excellent economy. And I should know, having had a 1961 1200 estate and, at present, a twelve-owner 1963 Herald 1250 with 80,000 on the clock which never lets me down.

Going back to the Bond, it may appear an ugly car from certain angles, but in a small place like Swanage it has caused a great stir of interest as the youngsters

here do not have much going for them in the way of interesting pastimes, and generally take it out on motorbikes. Also, I have been inundated with people asking when they will see it on the road, and how striking it is. What might I get my hands dirty on next? Well, it has to be a Marlin!



BOND EQUIPE:
A NATURAL FOR THE IMSA LOOK, WIDE BOX SECTION, WHEEL ARCH FLARES, FRONT AIR DAM AND REAR SPOILER, BONNET SCOOP AND ENLARGED FRONT GRILLE OPENING ALL CONTRIBUTE TO THE RACER LOOK.
NARROWED AND LIPPED HEADLAMP RECESSES AND WINDSCREEN STRIP GIVE THE CAR A SENSE OF AGGRESSION. SURE WOULD MAKE A STUNNING ROAD CAR, ESPECIALLY WITH A BRIGHT COLOURED GRAPHIC PAINT JOB.

Bond introduce 100 mph 4-seater GT

Only four years after introducing their first fastback Equipe, Bond Cars of Preston have placed on the market a completely new 100 mph plus grand tourer. And this is a full four-seater model intended to run concurrently with the Equipe GT 4S 1300—the first time Bond have offered two four-wheel cars off their production line.

The new Bond Equipe 2-litre GT is like its smaller predecessors in having a craftsman made glass fibre reinforced plastic body, with all the advantages claimed for this mode of construction.

Whereas the original Equipe, based on the Herald 1200 chassis and engine, was a two-adult, two-children car, the two-litre has real space for two adults in the back seat and specially designed, fully adjustable individual bucket-type seats for driver and front passenger.

Under the long sloping bonnet (which boasts four flush sealed beam headlights) rests the smooth 95 bhp Triumph two-litre engine of 1998 cc as used in the Triumph 2000, Vitesse and GT6. This is married to the Triumph all-synchromesh, four-forward speed gearbox and transmission, and the whole is mounted on the lightweight high-strength Triumph chassis.

Rack and pinion steering, all independent suspension, fade-free front disc brakes, a telescopic adjustable steering column, luxury interior finish and padding where it is important, are other features of a striking addition to the British-made car range.

Performance figures are:—
0–60 mph in 11.5 secs.
20–60 mph in 9.1 secs.
Top speed 100 mph plus.

Other features include hinged rear quarter lights, walnut veneered fascia with lockable compartment, built-in hidden radio aerial, fresh air heater and demister, wheel trims, main beam

flasher, boot light, reversing light, padded leather rim steering wheel.

For luggage and those small extras there is a 16 cubic feet boot, rear parcel shelf, map pocket in left-hand footwell side panel, and pockets in rear seat side panels and in door trim panels.

Dimensions:—

Length 13 ft. 10 in.; width 5 ft. 1½ in.; height 4 ft. 4½ in.; wheelbase 7 ft. 7½ in.; track: front 4 ft. 1 in., rear 4 ft. 0 in.; ground clearance 6½ in.; turning circle 25 ft. 0 in.

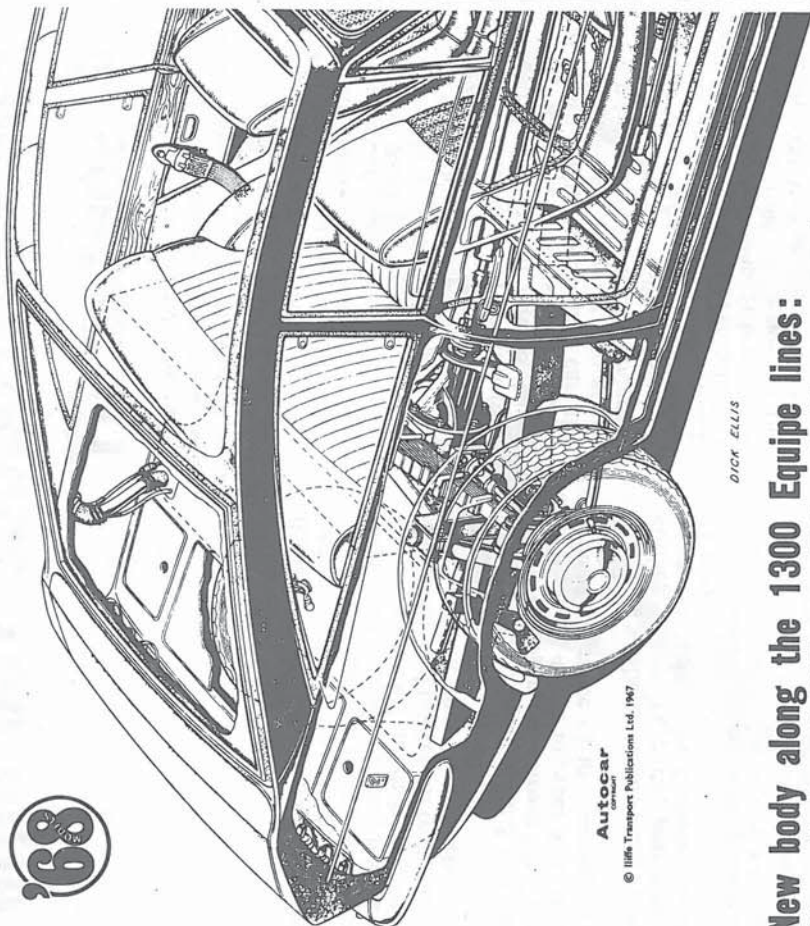
Fuel tank 9 gallons; engine sump 8 pints; cooling system 11 pints; gear box 1½ pints; rear axle 1 pint. Complete weight 18 cwt.

Twin side-draught Stromberg carburetors; compression ratio 9.5:1; 8½ in. diaphragm-type clutch, hydraulically operated; Synchronesh on all forward gears. Maximum power 95 bhp at 5000 rpm; Maximum torque 1408 lbs. in. at 3000 rpm; Standing quarter mile 18 secs; Front disc brakes 9.7 in. diameter; Rear drum brakes 8 in. dia. × 1½ in. wide, leading and trailing shoe type.

Extras: Laycock de Normanville overdrive; wire wheels; heated rear window; non standard colour.

The Bond Equipe two-litre GT sells for £890 plus £205 13s. 6d. PT making a total of £1,095 13s. 6d. in the United Kingdom.

'68



Autocar

© 1968 Transport Publications Ltd. 1967

New body along the 1300 Equipe lines: Six-cylinder, 1,998 c.c. Triumph Vitesse engine

DICK ELLIS

Performance

Performance figures below recorded for the mechanically

Performance tests carried out by *Motor's* staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley.

Test Data: World copyright reserved: no unauthorised reproduction in whole or in part.

Conditions

Weather: Light winds up to 5 mph; one shower during fuel check.

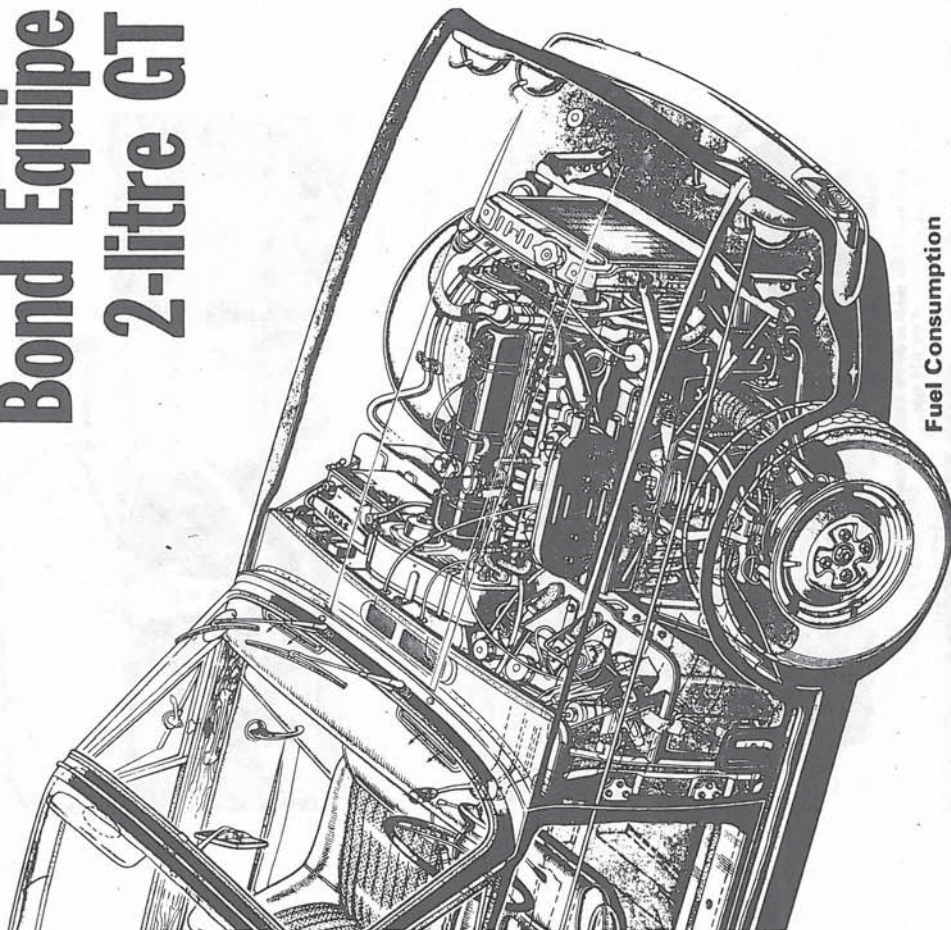
Temperature: 39-44°F

Barometer 29.4 in. Hg.

Surface: Damp tarmac/adam and concrete
Fuel: Premium 98-octane (RM) 4-Star rating

INTENDED to sell alongside the Equipe 1300. Almost unmodified Triumph chassis and mechanical parts, clothed by a steel-and-glassfibre Bond body. A well equipped GT fastback, with four seats and a top speed of about 100 m.p.h. To be sold through Triumph dealers with the full STI guarantee.

Bond Equipe 2-litre GT



Fuel Consumption

Touring (consumption midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum less 5% allowance for acceleration)
28.3 m.p.g.
Overall 23.0 m.p.g.
(= 12.3 litres/100km)

Total test distance 780 miles

Acceleration Times

m.p.h.	sec.
0-30	3.9
0-40	5.6
0-50	8.2
0-60	11.3
0-70	15.0
0-80	20.2
0-90	29.3
Standing quarter mile	18.1

Maximum Speeds

m.p.h.	k.p.h.
Mean lap banked circuit	101.0
Best one-way 1/4-mile	103.5
Direct top gear } at 5,600 r.p.m.	95
O/d 3rd gear } at 6,000 r.p.m.	81
3rd gear	57
2nd gear	38
1st gear	31
"Maximile" speed: (Timed quarter mile after 1 mile accelerating from rest)	98.9
Mean	101.1
Best	

Bond in Belgium

A visit by members of the Triumph Automobile Association to the 24 hour Production Car Race at Francorchamps in July, coincided with the provision by Bond Cars Limited of a Bond Equipe 2 litre GT model, in white, for extended road test.

Basically, the Bond is conceived around the Triumph Vitesse 2 litre which transfers the advantages of Triumph service and parts availability to this distinctive model which, body-wise is an happy alliance of steel and reinforced glass fibre. Mechanically, the well proved 6 cylinder, 1998 cc engine is at the heart of the car, driving through an all-synchromesh four speed gearbox, which was, on the test car, supplemented by a Laycock overdrive on top two gears. The maximum power is 95 bhp at 5000 rpm. Disc brakes at the front and 8" diameter drums at the rear provide ample stopping power and the Goodyear radials could not be persuaded to spin on a dry road unless one deliberately stamps on the loud pedal in low gear.

A few days in Belgium before the event at Francorchamps, plus the return journey Coventry - Dover - Coventry, resulted in nearly 1700 miles being covered in effortless comfort at an average of 27 mpg, with liberal use of the overdrive.

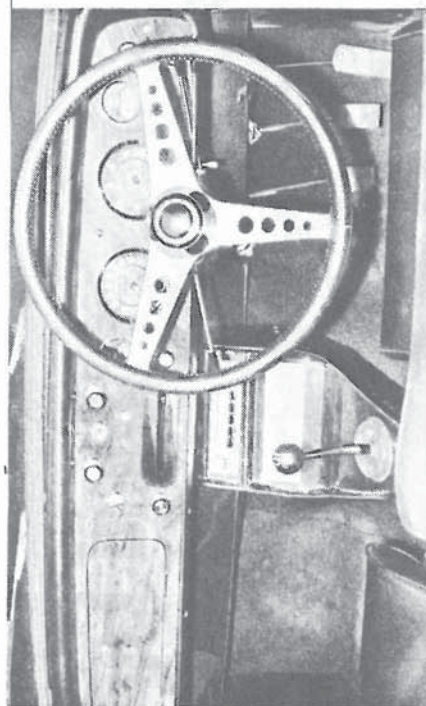
The Bond is an ideal car for long distance continental travel and, in particular, the two bucket-type front seats, trimmed in Ambla leathercloth, are supremely comfortable and enable one to drive 200 miles at a stretch without fatigue in this high-g geared carriage. The fascia is trimmed in black leathercloth and has the comprehensive

array of instruments, including a tachometer, which one would expect in such a well appointed car.

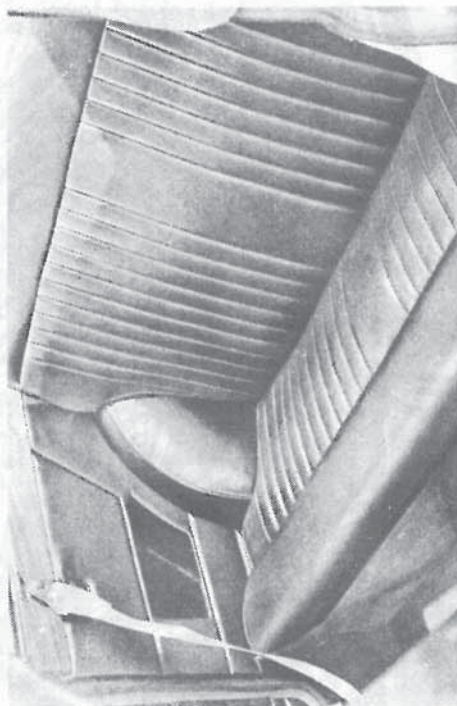
The hinged opening rear quarter lights provided sufficient air extraction to keep the inside temperature reasonably cool on the hottest days until one of the catches succumbed after a succession of rough surfaces and thereafter provided an incessant rattle. The luggage compartment suffers somewhat from having a 'letter box' type lid which is inevitable with the body styling, but proved capable of swallowing a surprisingly large amount of cases and travelling miscellanea.

Two useful tool boxes are moulded into the glass fibre behind the rear wheel arches, but access to them, and the recessed spare wheel, can only be achieved when the boot mat is removed.

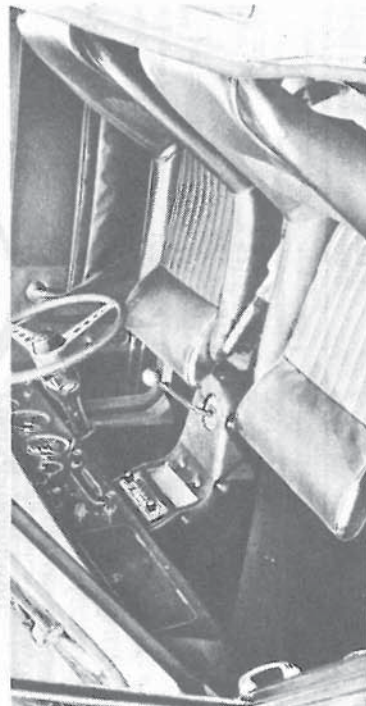
As tested, with overdrive, wire wheels and heated rear window the Bond Equipe 2 litre GT costs £1214, including tax, and with the ability to achieve an indicated 105 mph, coupled with the provision of four comfortable seats in an attractive package, it will be popular with the family man with sporting tendencies. Certainly its rarity caused a minor sensation on Belgian roads and this alone may satisfy those who seek to achieve one-upmanship!



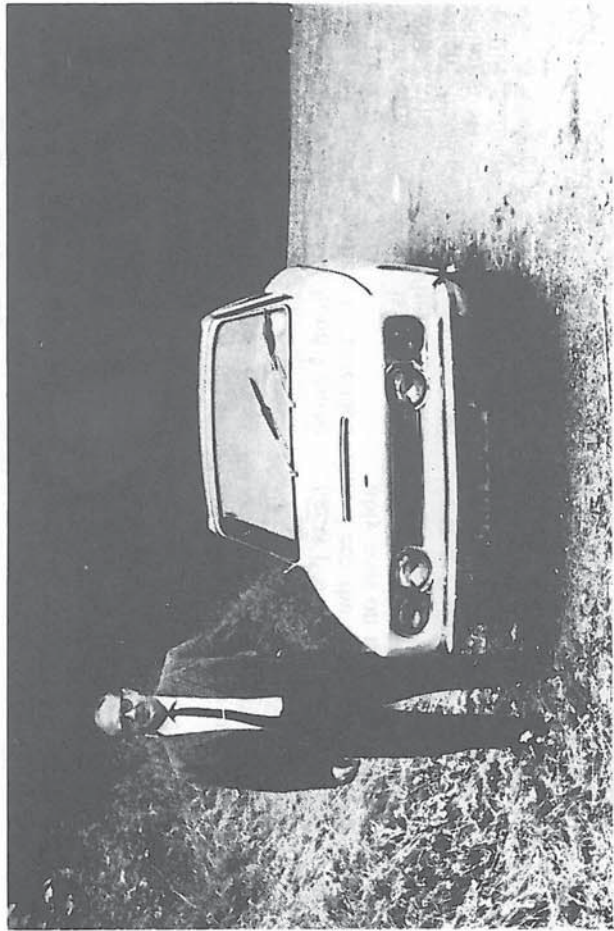
Above: Facia panel is from the Vitesse and the steering wheel from the GT6



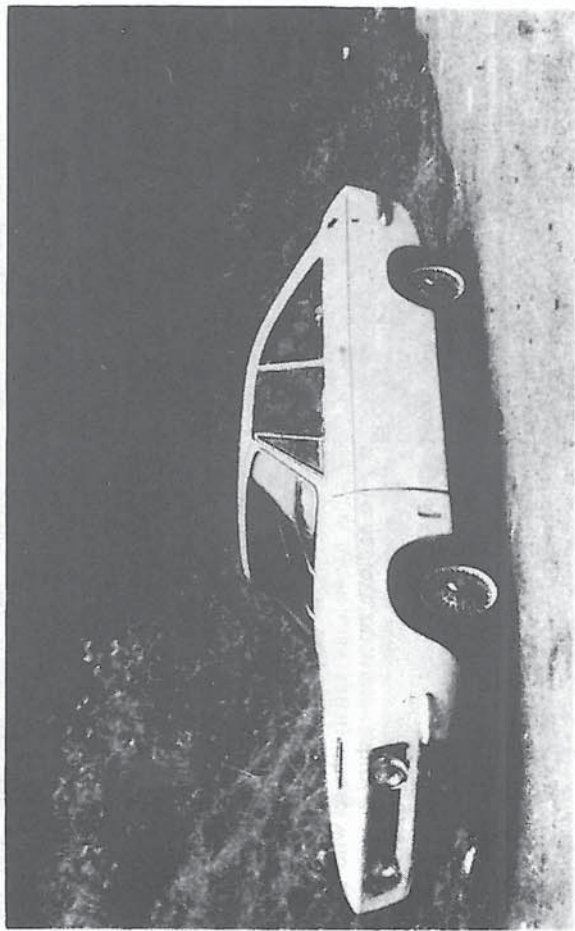
Above: Back seat is the same as on the Vitesse. Below: Front seats are Bond's own adaptation of the GT6 type



Mr. John Davy, Standard Register Registrar and organiser of a pleasing navigational rally through the Ardennes, took the Bond to one of the rally check points ahead of the competitors.



The Bond pictured on one of the country roads of the lovely Ardenne.



BOND: A BEAUTIFUL ANACHRONISM

There's no production line at Bond.
Their car, the Equipe, is the other extreme from mass-produced.

It's a genuine 4-seater.
And it's hand-built.

One of the few prestigious cars that still are.

Bond craftsmen have imaginatively hand-moulded its rust-proof body.

Hand-sprayed its seven-coat finish.

Hand-trimmed its roof lining.

Hand-fitted its accessories.

Hand-hung its doors.

Bothered about its every out and inside detail to substantiate the difference between a production-line and a very particular car.

But, for all its particularity, the Equipe's dead easy to service because it's built on a Triumph chassis using a Triumph 2-litre engine which gets you from 0-60 in 10.6 seconds and gives you over 100 m.p.h. in top.

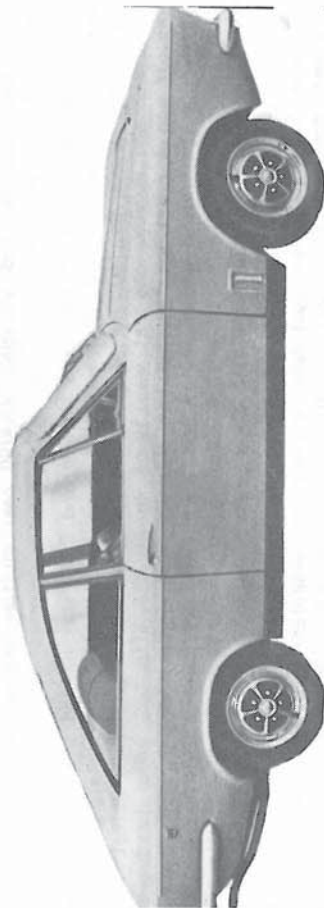
This means that any Triumph dealer can do its routine service and that spares are always just a telephone call away. And, of course, every Bond dealer gives a full 12-month warranty.

A hand-built car with nation-wide servicing facilities. These days, an anachronism.

But a beautiful one.

£1223 including purchase tax. Or £1305 (inc. P.T.) for the convertible.

Built by Bond in association with Standard Triumph.



A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT BOND?

Back in 1974, I owned a Vitesse 2-litre, MK1 Convertible 1966, registered HJ1 175D. After a year in my possession and about 14,000 miles, the vehicle was found to be suffering from three cracks in the main chassis members. At that time a new chassis was £300 fitted and as a Vitesse was, at that time, just an old car and not really a collectors vehicle, it was decided to bid it farewell. I was now on the lookout for a suitable replacement; one that would give me the same pleasure and excitement that 'HUGH' had. I was passing a car showroom on the way home from work, when a white, Italian looking car caught my attention. M reg., £480, one owner, 46,000 miles and overdrive. I went and had a closer look: it had BOND on the bonnet and boot, 2 litre by the bonnet catches but what was it? I had never heard of it before. A closer inspection was a must. On looking inside the car, I was surprised how similar the dashboard was to a MKII Vitesse, except that it had black mock bamboo weave everywhere that the Vitesse had wood. The front seats were a bucket shape and very comfortable, as I was to find out later. A centre console, which was standard with this model, was unfortunately minus the also standard radio. There was a very large rear seat which easily sat three. Other equipment included; opening rear quarter lights; heated rear window; Triumph 1500 chrome headlight rims; Vauxhall Cresta rear lights incorporating integral reversing lights and push-on mock Rostyle hub-caps. Front and rear bumpers were from unknown vehicles, the rear being three piece and extending down the sides to the rear wheelarches. The doors were extremely large affairs and very heavy but it was noted that the inner part was from a Vitesse, having the skin removed, extension sides and curved skin refitted. The boot, although not very high, was very deep and also had hidden storage space under the boot floor.

On lifting the bonnet, which looked like it was going to be heavy, was in fact far from it. It was also at this point that the realisation that the vehicle was mainly made from fibreglass struck me. In fact, it was noted that from the top of the windscreen, skuttle to and including the floor pan and doors, to just after the rear axle, was all metal but everything else was fibreglass. Underneath was a standard Vitesse chassis. Back to the bonnet area and nesting snugly between the front chassis members, was a GT6 MKIII engine of six-cylinder, 2-litre capacity. Suspension was from either GT6 or Vitesse with later type wishbone. The exhaust was a straight through system of large, single bore with Vitesse front muffler and Vauxhall VX4/90 rear muffler and what a lovely sound it made when it fired up!

A part exchange of £185 was agreed and £300 was handed over - a lot of money in those days. WLR 116M was now mine. After a weeks motoring it was noticed that there was a loss of power somewhere. A compression test was carried out and number one pot was found to be the offender. The head was taken off and a crack was evident between the inlet and exhaust valves. It was sent away to be welded and skimmed and, on re-assembly, everything was A OK. From then on WLR was very reliable, needing only normal servicing and allowing me to spend my money on titivating her.

It wasn't until an MG's rear end took a disliking to the driver's door of WLR, that it became clear just how rare the four wheeled Bonds are. The search for a new door was very nearly endless. Most people I spoke to insisted that there was no such thing and that the car WAS as three-wheeler. When I told them otherwise, they would not believe it. However, there was a glimmer of light on the horizon in the form of Bob Joyner & Sons of Oldbury, Worcestershire. A



gentleman there, whose name escapes me, was extremely helpful, to the point of explaining all about Bond cars and Reliant Motors. One very interesting point he mentioned was that Bond had negotiated agreement with Leyland and their dealers, which included that Leyland had the franchise to sell Bond cars in return for all normal Leyland warranties. He also made me look a lot more closely at WLR.

An article was published in Car & Car Conversions, headed 'Secondhand Buy' in, I think, 1975 and the differences between WLR and other Bonds became more apparent. They related mainly to external trim items such as WLR's fuel filler which was on the nearside rear wing, underneath where the roof joined the wing; whereas other Bonds had it below the nearside rear quarter window. WLR also had the letters BOND on the bonnet, instead of the Bond motif. On the bootlid it also had the letters BOND plus a square block motif saying MKII (this was from a Vitesse). Other Bonds had EQUIPE in script. At the front tailing end of the bonnet, just above both opening handles, it also had these MKII badges, whereas other Bonds had the 2-litre badge which was placed on the rear wings. WLR had an aluminium rain gutter running the full length of the side windows and this I had not seen on any other Bond. The windscreen wipers parked the opposite way to all other 2-litres.

On checking with Bob Joyner, WLR's chassis number indicated that after Bond had sold out to Reliant and stopped manufacturing, there were so many spare parts floating about the factory, that Reliant decided to build ten more cars from the bits. It was then exported to Jersey where it's first owner was acquired in August, 1971. When the owner moved to Enfield, London in 1974, he brought the car with him and it was re-registered, hence the 'M' suffix. I then became the second owner.

Moving back to the search for a new driver's door, Bob Joyner explained to me that they had very few spares left and only one driver's door. They did, however, have all the moulds but were not, at the time, prepared to re-manufacture. Needless to say, I bought a new door.

The new door was sprayed and fitted and WLR took to the road again. The only other problems I encountered were mostly mechanical due to old age. A replacement gearbox was fitted to 62,000 miles and new carbs shortly afterwards. A differential at 88,000 miles. New trunnions front and rear at 91,000 miles and at 93,000 miles, the original engine was re-built totally using all new parts. The chassis was also re-built at just under the magic 100,000 miles. Then at 108,000 miles, a new steering rack was fitted.

So, after eight happy years in my possession, circumstances changed and a four door car was needed for business, so, sadly WLR had to finance it. It had to be another Triumph and the only Triumph worth a pinch of salt, to my mind, was the Sprint. After many months looking for a good one, a December 1979 Dolomite Sprint, manual with overdrive, was purchased and has given excellent service over the past two years. However, as soon as finances permit, I shall add another Bond 2-litre to the stable.

JEFF BAKER, LONDON



Car fit for a King

IT'S not every day Bond Cars get correspondence from a Palace.

But they did, a few months ago when a letter inquiring about the possibilities of purchasing an Equipe 2-litre arrived at the Preston headquarters.

The Letter, from the Royal Palace, Katmandu, was on behalf of the King of Nepal who had seen a Bond advertising leaflet linking the 2-litre GT with James Bond's ejector-seat car.

The King inquired about the fitting of an ejector-seat. Bond's managing director, Tom Gratrix, said: "We explained our slogan was purely a humorous reference to the celebrated James Bond. We subsequently received an order that we were honoured to fulfil".

The order for the car stipulated that the colour must be black, the first Equipe ever produced in this colour. The

only other departure from standard specification was that the interior trim and upholstery should be of red leather.

When Britox, the seatbelt people heard of this they offered to supply matching red seatbelts free of charge to His Majesty.

"This was a wonderful gesture on the part of Britax", said Mr. Gratrix.

As the completion of the car drew near, Bond's export department was busy arranging transit insurance and passage.

It was shipped from Birkenhead docks on the "Albia" bound for Calcutta. From there it was to be taken 600 miles to the Nepalese border by train.

BOND MOTOR SHOW SPECIAL

NEWS

Two new ones for the show

Two-litre Convertible

Bond's first new four-seat production convertible for six years brought a foretaste of Springtime fresh-air motor-touring to the Motor Show. The Bond Equipe Convertible packs a sumptuous interior and a six-cylinder two-litre power unit into sleek, head-turning coachwork.

And its price? Only £1,277 6s. 1d. including £279 6s. 1d. PT, a figure that indicates big sales ahead among drivers seeking low-cost individuality.

The Equipe Convertible, in common with its Equipe GT sister, is based on Standard-Triumph International mechanical components; chassis, transmission and engine. It gets the full international warranty and servicing facilities of Triumph thanks to a unique 'partnership' agreement, in which all Equipe models are marketed in UK and export markets through the STI dealer network.

Equipe two-litre mark 2

The new version of the fast-selling Equipe 2-litre GT gets a power boost to 104 bhp, scorching performance, better road handling and interior revamping. The Equipe's eye-catching fastback styling in hand-built glass fibre is unaltered.

It's a luxury full four-seater, designed for the motorist seeking performance and individuality at modest cost. Since its introduction in August 1967, the 2-litre Equipe has given Bond a production headache - they couldn't produce enough to satisfy demand.

The Mark 2 version represents even better value at £1,196 16s. 1d., including £261 16s. 1d. purchase tax.

A standard fitting on all Equipe GTs is a radio aerial concealed in the glass fibre roof, where it is impervious to vandalism and corrosion. It can be connected to any car radio.

A specially designed fold-away hood which can be raised or lowered in a few seconds gives open air motoring without fuss.

The twin carburettor power unit gives 104 bhp at 5,300 rpm and a maximum speed of 100 miles per hour - plus depending on conditions. General performance is outstanding, aided by the superb handling characteristics of the new wishbone independent rear suspension.

Standard luxury specification includes: magnum wheeltrims, black perforated leatherscloth facia and trim, recessed instruments and controls, armrests, leather-bound steering wheel and automatic reversing lights.

Separate bucket-type front seats give good support and are adjustable for height, rake and leg length. Rear seat is full-sized, taking two adults.

The twin carburettor power unit gives 104 bhp at 5,300 rpm and a maximum speed of 100 miles per hour-plus depending on conditions. General performance is outstanding, aided by the superb handling characteristics of the new wishbone independent rear suspension.

Dimensions, capacities, weight, gearbox, performance, etc., as listed except for saloon height which is 4' 4".

OPTIONAL ITEMS AT EXTRA COST

Overdrive on two gears (both models)
Sunshine roof (saloon only)
Heated rear window (saloon only)
White sidewall tyres (both models)
Tonneau cover (convertible only).

DIMENSIONS

Length	13' 10"	4115 mm
Width	5' 11"	1562 mm
Height: Hood up	4' 6"	1371 mm
Height: Hood down	4' 4"	1320 mm
Wheelbase	7' 7 1/2"	2325 mm
Track: Front	4' 1"	1245 mm
Track: Rear	4' 0"	1220 mm
Ground clearance	6 1/2"	165 mm
Turning circle	25' 0"	7.6 metres
Boot capacity	16 cu. ft.	

CAPACITIES

Fuel Tank	9 galls.	40.89 litres
Engine sump (drain and refill)	8 pints	4.55 litres
Cooling system	11 pints	6.2 litres
Gearbox	1 1/2 pints	0.85 litres
Rear axle	1 pint	0.57 litres

WEIGHT

Dry, excluding extra equipment	17 1/2 cwt.
Complete, including fuel, oil, water and tools	18 1/2 cwt.

GEARBOX

Four forward ratios and one reverse. Synchronesh on all forward gears. Silent helical gears.

	Top	3rd	2nd	1st	Rev.
Ratios	1.25	1.78	2.65	3.10	
Overall ratios	3.89	4.86	6.92	10.31	12.06
Compression ratio	9.25:1				

PERFORMANCE

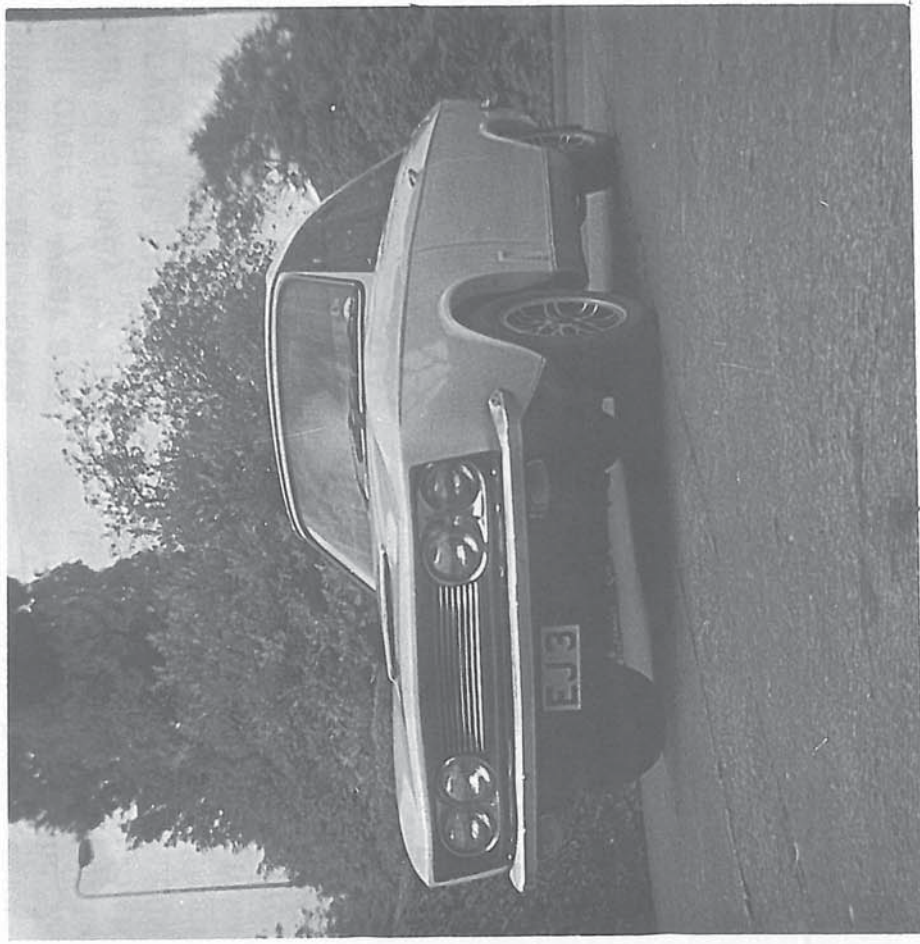
Maximum power: 104 bhp at 5300 rpm.
Maximum Torque: 1400 lb in. at 3000 rpm.
(Equivalent to 144 lb/sq in BMEP)

Piston speed of 2500 f/min, equals a road speed of 88.5 mph (142.48 kph) in top gear.

	Top	3rd	2nd	1st	Rev.
Engine speeds (rpm) at a road speed of:					
10 mph	586	733	1045	1560	1820
10 kph	365	455	650	970	1130

Road speed at 1000 rpm in top gear is 17.7 mph approx. (27.33 kph).

Maximum Speed .. 103 mph plus, depending on conditions.



'TOPLESS' DECISION AFTER SURVEY

BOND NEWS REPORTERS

BOND Car's decision to go topless was made well over a year ago after a survey of the convertible market.

The firm's engineers noted that at that time the trend in the automotive industry was away from convertibles.

The models from other manufacturers were all good-looking — and selling. But they didn't fit into the rationalisation of the industry.

The mass production of convertibles was almost non-existent. It was in May, 1962, that the last four-seat convertible had appeared.

DECISION

Broadly, motorists had a choice of small, sports cars with "fiddly" hoods or expensive, imported, luxury jobs.

Bond was by then enjoying success with the 2-litre Equipe GT, selling to motorists seeking a high degree of individuality with an equally high degree of reliability from proved components provided under the agreement with Standard-Triumph.

Why not, asked Bond, attempt to scoop-up the quite healthy topless market for themselves. A big, roomy four-seater of attractive design with a really good hood, and selling at the right price, should fill the gap created by other manufacturers' rationalisation.

The decision was made — a Bond Convertible was in the offing.

As with all new model proposals, Bond consulted with Standard-Triumph on the idea. They want Bonds to be complementary to the ST range, not competitive. No difficulties occurred, and design work went ahead with Standard-Triumph's full co-operation.

A new body was designed to fit around the ST mechanical components, chassis, engine and transmission. Although broadly similar to the Equipe GT body, major restyling was necessary to accommodate the Convertible "look."

Bond's designers and engineers were determined to retain the full four-seater specification of the GT sister, and the 16 cu. ft. boot capacity.

The hood was specially designed and was to incorporate all the latest developments such as

"friction" fastening to ensure maximum weather-proofing around the lower edges.

PROTOTYPE

New moulds for the body shell were designed and made, and after six months' work, the first prototype took to the road to be subjected to a series of stringent tests. The convertible came through with flying colours, only a few minor changes being necessary.

Consultations with Standard-Triumph engineers showed that a whole host of mechanical changes were in the pipelines. These were to be incorporated in the Equipe GT, and the production of Convertible was arranged to coincide with the availability of the new components.

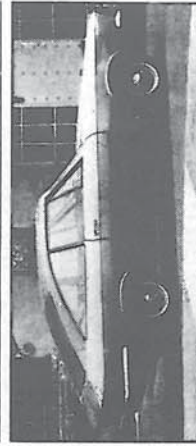
A new production line was laid down to construct the Fibreglass bodies — entirely by hand — and assemble the many components.

The first of the new models are expected to be

delivered during December.

Bond's managing director, Tom Gratrix said: "The introduction of the new convertible is part of our long-term aim to provide our franchise holders with a comprehensive range of cars that will sell readily among that section of the public which appreciates the finer points of this individual motor car."

SPOT-CHECK



BOND EQUIPE 2-LITRE

When the three-wheeler manufacturer Bond decided to enter the GT market in 1963, they did so in an apparently sensible way: they took a proprietary chassis and running gear, in Bond's case from Triumph, and added their own bodywork. In fact, not only did Triumph supply the mechanical components, they co-operated wholeheartedly so that the Bond Equipe became a sort of upper-class Spitfire/Herald GT. The original GT was fitted with the 1147cc Spitfire engine and was followed by the GT4S which later on had the 1296cc Spitfire unit plus more interior space as well.

In August 1967 the 2-litre Equipe was announced, with the Vitesse's six-cylinder power unit and a totally revised body shape which no longer incorporated complete Herald major components such as doors and scuttle. Just over a year later, in October 1968, the Mk 2 version was announced, following Triumph's revision of the GT6 and Vitesse, and the Equipe incorporated these changes which included the wishbone rear suspension and the 104bhp (up from 95bhp) engine. There were minor trim changes as well. One distinguishing Mk 2 feature was the external rain gutters, but to confuse

matters some Mk 1s had them as well. Rostyle wheels à la Vitesse were another.

At the same time as the Mk 2 was introduced, the Convertible made its bow, so there were no Mk 1 dropheads. However, in 1969 Bond were taken over by Reliant and on July 31, 1970, the Preston factory was closed and that marked the end of the Equipe.

According to Chris Gardner, Bond secretary of the Triumph Sports Six Club, the major problem with the Equipe is the "steel content"! On the saloons the A-posts are the major culprit, particularly at the bottom where the body mountings are - it seems Bond were a little lax in applying anti-rust proofing... Other areas liable to rot are the doorsteps and the screen frame. The latter was made by Bond themselves, and was often not even painted internally! Look for bubbling around the rubber on the lower corners, and check the top where it joins the roof. Another check point is the front quarter lights: these were specially made and did not come from the Herald and, since the rubber surround is porous and the metal is not primed, they tend to fall to bits.

On the whole the body, being unstressed and the glass fibrework of good quality, usually survives well: leaks though can mean a rotted floor pan and rear parcel shelf and, in the case of the Convertible, the hood well which has no drain holes. And the steering wheel (made of Duralumin) can break! Windscreens are expensive and rear windows are not available.

Mechanically Equipes are pure Vitesse, so look for Vitesse problems: those notorious rear outriggers, for example. Repair is best carried out with the body off (straightforward enough) so that all rot can be attended to. And check the transmission since, if it's been abused, it could be suspect.

FOR: Cheap: something different: spares inexpensive and readily available: individual styling

AGAINST: Vitesse handling on Mk 1: rust problems: individual styling!

CLUB CONTACT: Chris Gardner, Preston 54469. General enquiries to Triumph Sports Six Club, 24 Prince Rupert Avenue, Desborough, near Kettering, Northants NN14 2PH.



In my opinion the Bond Equipe GT4S is a car that never looks dated. To me the Bond is a very special car but is a car that you either love or hate. As an impressionable youth, I've got to admit that I fell in love with it.

In the summer of 1974, I purchased a bright red Bond Equipe, registration FKW 533D via a good family friend. I was amazed to find that this specific model was mechanically a MkII Triumph Spitfire, with the unique Herald chassis which upon Laurie Bond had designed this well-finished, glass-fibre bodyshell, all in all a good combination.

During 1974 and 1979 the Bond was an everyday car, used to commute from 'A' to 'B', experiencing all the problems inherited with the Triumph Mechanicals. By 1980 I could feel that the car was now a little dated, with a grand total of 80,000 miles on the speedometer. I decided on a total rebuild, my aim being was to build it with the best Triumph could offer and to keep it strictly Triumph.

I began my rebuild with the chassis. A donor chassis was obtained from a Convertible Bond Equipe, which had the later MKII suspension. This chassis was descaled and relieved of its ageing outriggers, it was then given a coat of metal base primer. A replica chassis was fabricated which overlapped the original chassis. Outriggers were formed from 16swg galvanised sheet and welded with oxyacetylene and religiously zinc sprayed after welding had been carried out. Another coat of metal primer flowed by a coat of glossy, red oxide and then a final coat of damp proofing which came as a tar-base material. So, with the chassis completely made of 16 gauge galvanised sheet and a fibre-glass body, I would think that I had limited my rust problems.

With my donor chassis mounted on axle stands, I could now plan ahead; rear suspension units which came from the Equipe 2-litre, were in bad repair - this was through lack of maintenance.

The bottom wishbones were seized and the rotolux couplings had dried out, subsequently breaking through the joints: These were taken care of by renewing the lower wishbone trunnions and new rotolux couplings. Halfshafts and a 389.1 diff were installed and uprated rear dampers and spring were retensioned to give it more flexibility.

The front suspension came under scrutiny: I had decided on a six-cylinder transplant, so I had to have an uprated suspension, which came in the form of Spax adjustable shock absorbers, along with Demon Tweek springs.

Brake callipers, along with the discs and steering rack, came from the 2-litre Equipe.

After months of hard work, I eventually managed to get the chassis into a position where I could just drop the Bond body onto the donor chassis. We dismantled FKW 533D over a period of two weeks, taking care not to damage anything.

All trim, doors and glass were removed and the twelve or so bolts, which hold the body to the chassis, were removed but to relieve the body of it's chassis, we had to hoist the car up towards the apex in the garage roof, by care of trolley jack and two pairs of axle stands.

With the Bond body lashed by ropes to the garage roof, we slowly let the jack down, easing the chassis away from the body. With the body suspended three feet from the ground, it allows work to be carried out on the underside with ease.

New floor pans along with door steps and extra plate for the bulkhead, were needed to put back strength into the body floor. The donor chassis was positioned beneath the body and the body was slowly let down onto its' new chassis. Geometry of the chassis proved to be correct, when all the bolt holes on the body fell in line. Decisions had to be made as to what power unit was to be installed, my quest for a reconditioned overdrive gearbox took me to a garage nearby, who had a reconditioned 2-litre bottom end, which I bought for £65. The ridiculous price came about as the engineer told me there was no demand for six-cylinder engines off the shelf.

It was not until I came to buy gaskets that I found out, by the engine suffixes, that it was a 2.5 unit - this did not deter me. I battled on and bought another 2.5 PI engine for the ancillaries.

The donor PI engine was stripped of its injection equipment, the cylinder head was sent to a garage for new valves, springs and to be generally cleaned up. On the front side of the block there is an engine plate which carries the mountings. This was changed for a front plate from the Vitesse 1600 but there had to be slight modifications, as the elliptical hole which is cut in the plate to go around the crank, was not quite as big as the 2.5 front plate - this was filed to accommodate the crank.

Another difference was noticed: A duplex timing chain was used on the 2.5. The difficulty did not arise until I came to mount the gearbox to the 2.5 engine. I was advised by a TSSC member to retain the Vitesse flywheel and pressure plate and also to use the backplate from the Vitesse, as these are different in the way of bolt holes: They don't pick up with the Vitesse gearbox. But my problem came about where the gearbox would not pull up to my engine backplate; it was $\frac{1}{2}$ inch away from the endplate. Apparently, the engine I had bought as a reconditioned unit, had a crank which is an inch or so longer than that of a Vitesse MKII engine; so, rather than think of ways round this, I thought that the crank on the donor PI engine would suffice, as this did not have the larger rear extension. The cost incurred was an extra £48 for a crank grind and new Van Der Velde shells. The engine was rebuilt, retaining the PI camshaft but this was not to be the end of my problems.

I had used the 2.5 sump pan. I thought it was identical to the 2-litre sump but, because of the crank webs being larger on the 2.5, the sump was $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deeper at the front. Consequently, the sump sat on my steering rack. There was no effect on the steering but somehow the engine was in need of a lift at the front. This lift was obtained by slackening the engine mountings and by jacking up the front of the engine to lift it off the steering rack. Space between the two bolts on the rubber engine mounting was obtained. This space was taken up by shims; these shims came in the form of the front fulcrum suspension spacer. Three shims per side gave adequate engine lift. On the ignition side, the Lucas D25 with tacho drive from the Vitesse engine, was installed.

The Vitesse MKII exhaust manifold and dual silencers took care of the exhaust. Tripple 40 DCE Webbers took great care of carburation, these were installed professionally by Pederal Developments.

The Equipe 4S bonnet took slight modifications on the underside, as it fouled the Vitesse radiator on the fully-open motion. Three inches were cut from the bonnet and this sorted out the problem.

The wiring harness came from the Vitesse, being of the negative earth system. This proved to be a great advantage over the positive earth system which I had previously had.

For my own peace of mind, I had it set up on a rolling road and I was told that apart from it being a torque engine, it did not need any adjusting. I keep it in tune myself with the use of a timing light and a colour tune. I was also told that in 3rd gear, without overdrive, at 80 mph it has 105 bhp, the following gives an idea of the car's specifications:-

Engine	-	72-74 PI unit
Gearbox	-	Vitesse with overdrive
Differential	-	389.1 ratio
Exhaust	-	Dual silencer system
Suspension	-	Spax adjustables with Demon Tweek 25% uprated springs and uprated levers
Wheels	-	Cobra Super Slot
Tyres	-	Goodyear Grand Prix S
Electrical System	-	Negative earth wiring system, Triumph Stag battery and Daimler petrol solenoids on the fuel line
Ignition	-	Standard Lucas D25
Fan	-	Electric
Electric Aerial	-	Operates automatically on radio and CB
Cooling	-	Vitesse radiator
Instrumentation	-	Standard speedometer, rev. counter, oil pressure gauge, water temperature, fuel gauge
Paint	-	Datsun Flamingo Red
Chassis	-	MKII Vitesse
Brakes	-	Girling servo with Mintex pads and shoes
Carburation	-	Tripple 40 DCE Webbers



52 MY STORY BY SEXIE

(WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM GILL BOWDEN)

Hello, I'm Sexie. I'm a Bond GT4S. My registration number is SXC 30E, (hence my name) and I have wire wheels and a beautiful, golden body: Well, it was beautiful once. That was when I first met my family.

I was ordered in 1966 by a man - I never did know his name - and I was taken to the garage to wait for him but he never came. "Cancelled order" they said. There was I, in all my shiny new paint, woodwork gleaming, wire wheels sparkling, waiting at the church, so to speak, stood up, unloved, unwanted and winter fast approaching. Oh gloom!

As the days shortened, the nights became colder and I was shunted unceremoniously around the garage, feeling very much in everyone's way. My depression deepened. However, through my haze of misery, I gradually became aware that someone was taking notice of me. A family came to the garage regularly in a green Vitesse 1600. While HE fussed over the Vitesse, SHE came and looked at me, peered inside, admired me, pointed out my nice back seat to her two little children and they said that I was lovely. I began to feel better and more hopeful, as they came and talked to me every time the Green Vitesse came in for petrol. "That car would suit you", the pump attendant said. "Not a chance, can't afford it", SHE said. My heart sank. "I really would like it though", she added. I felt a bit better.

Then, one day, I saw them talking to THE SALESMAN and my hopes soared again, only to be dashed by the Green Vitesse, who was looking a bit glum. "They're trading me in for a new, 2-litre Vitesse", she said. "They only bought me for HER to learn to drive. I've had three owners already". G. V. added. "I've had none yet", I murmured sadly.

Sure enough, when January 1967 came, a gleaming, white 2-litre Vitesse appeared on the forecourt. 'My' family arrived a little later and, ignoring me, they crowded around the newcomer, who was immediately named Pixie, leaving me and the G. V. disconsolately standing on the forecourt.

For a few months life went on as usual. 'My' family still came in for fuel and servicing but now with Pixie. The G. V. was bought by a kind looking bloke and she drove away quite happily. Then, one day it happened! What started out as my darkest hour became my salvation. I heard the garage people talking, "New 1300 Bond GT4S just out", they said. "That 1147 thing is out-of-date now". Me! Out-of-date and not yet registered! This is the end, I thought.

A few days later, 'my' family came and parked Pixie next to me. I saw them talking to the SALESMAN again and I was not impressed. "Are they trading you in for another car?", I asked Pixie. She looked worried. "I don't think so, I thought they still liked me". Then they all came out and looked at me and I heard those dreadful words again - "Out-of-date now". Then they said something about price reduction and everyone looked pleased. "What's going on?" I asked Pixie. "I don't know", she replied. "I'm younger than you are. We're not cars of the world like the G. V.". By now the two little children were jumping up and down all round me and there was lots of hand shaking going on - very odd! Then 'my' family all got into Pixie and drove away.

A few days later, someone came and put two, shiny new number plates on me, I couldn't quite read what they said. Then 'my' family arrived and crowded round me. "She's Sexie", they said. "I'm what?", I thought. Pixie was chuckling.

"It's your registration", she said. "Now you've got a name and a family". It was true. SHE drove me home. At last I really belonged.

The next ten years were sheer bliss. Oh, I know - I got bumped and bashed around a bit. SHE - Gill - was not a very good driver and my poor nose soon got crunched in an argument with a Mini, then a lorry tore off half my back bumper, leaving a large hole in my rear wing and, one morning, a passing bus removed my offside door. But, fortunately, HE - George - was very good at mending me and he soon had me looking and feeling my old self again.

I was introduced to The Ensign, a stately, grey Standard, which the grandparents had owned from new and which they used when the whole family (all six of them) wanted to travel together. The rest of the time I took Gill to work, while Pixie looked after George. At weekends, Pixie and I took it in turns to take the family out for rides in the country and we arranged our summer holidays so that we both had a chance to explore new roads. Gill's driving gradually improved and life was wonderful.

It was too good to last, of course. 'Fickle is womankind', they say. How true! How was I to know Gill had always nursed a secret longing for an open sports car? Well, one day, shortly after my 10th birthday, they all piled into me and off we went. It was getting a bit of a squash as the two children, Annette and Paul, were not so little now. They all seemed to be very excited about something and I soon found out what it was. We arrived at a strange garage and there waiting for us was this 'thing'. It was very low and mean looking, with a long, red fluted bonnet and aggressive looking black wings. 'My' family jumped around it, squeaking stupidly and calling it Moggie. Then George got in and drove it home and, although I tried ever so hard to keep up, I just couldn't. "Oh dear, I must be getting old", I thought and for the first time in ten years, I felt sad.

The next two weeks were equal to all the misery of my first year of life. The sun shone from a cloudless blue sky and 'my' family were out in this brazenly topless Moggie at every available opportunity. "I hate Moggie", I sulked to Pixie, as we stood side by side in the dark garage while the sun shone outside. "Me too", she agreed. However, it being England, two weeks continuous sunshine was about the maximum one could expect and we woke up one morning to torrential rain. "I'm not taking Moggie out in this", I heard Gill say. "I'll take Sexie today". "Oh will you", I thought. "We'll see about that!". Good as gold, I started as always, at first touch; I backed out into the deluge and started off down the road but I was thinking heard - how could I get my own back? Then I had a brainwave. The bolts holding on one of my wheels had developed hairline cracks following one of my earlier mishaps. I had been hanging onto them like mad over the last few years, as I didn't want to let Gill down but now I thought "Why should I bother? She doesn't think about my feelings", so I just relaxed my hold on the wheel and I felt the bolts begin to shear, one at a time. Gill must have noticed something too, as she slowed down, listening - it was getting a bit noisy! Then she stopped, got out and kicked the wheel but, of course, with my weight on it, it seemed perfectly firm, so she got back in and drove on - silly cow! A few yards further on, the wheel broke away. It overtook me and rolled off down the road. A moment later my side hit the road and rolled sideways and landed in a convenient ditch at the side of the road. "Oh dear", I thought, "Perhaps that was not so clever after all". Gill clambered out, not easily as my door was above her head. A passing car had stopped nearby and to my dismay, Gill got into it and was driven away, leaving me all alone and helpless.

A long time passed and it was beginning to get dark when I heard voices. Someone put a hook rather roughly under my nose, an engine started and the hook

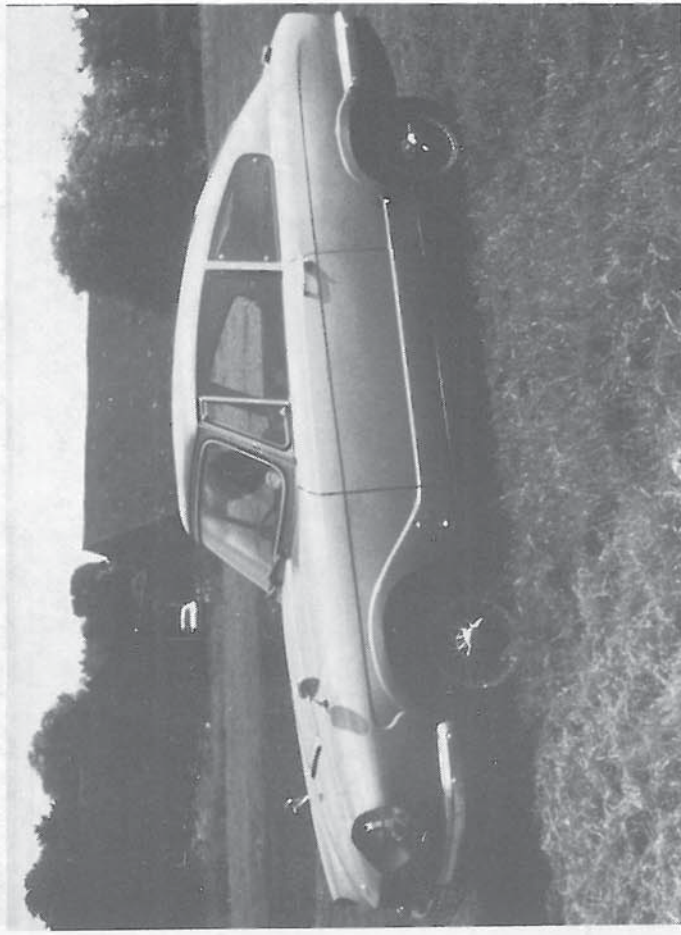
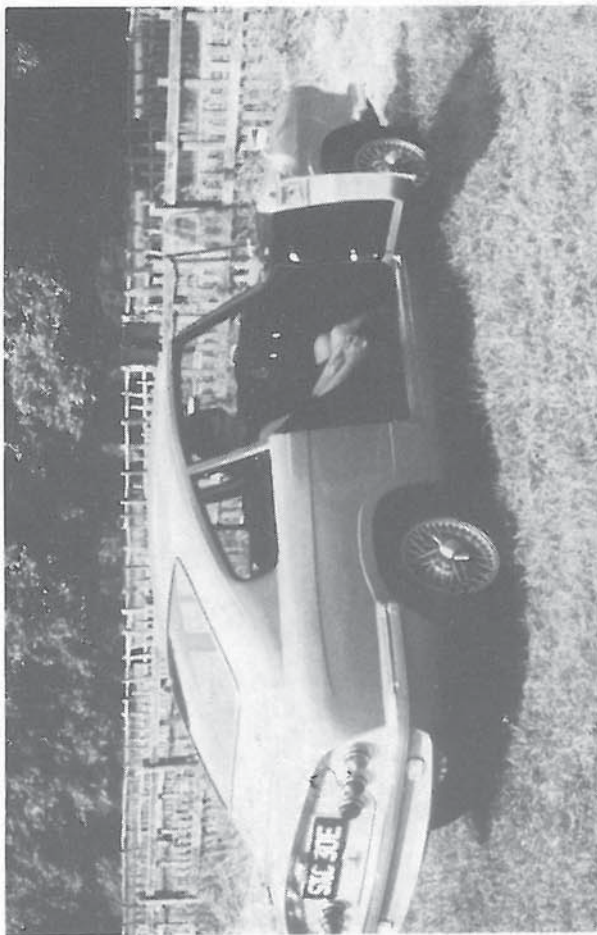
suddenly bit into me - oh AGONY. Then I heard George's voice, "Careful how you drag her out". The strange voice answered, "Doesn't matter guv, this car's a write-off, not worth saving. I'll take it straight round to the scrapyard". I couldn't believe my ears, I was shattered. And then George spoke, my knight in shining armour, my saviour. "No you won't", he said, "This car is good for many more miles yet, so please be careful what you're doing with that hook". "Yes guv, certainly guv". The pain eased as the hook was repositioned in a more suitable place and I was dragged gently from the ditch and towed back home. Both Pixie and Moggie were round eyed with dismay when they saw me. "I do hope they can put you right again", said Moggie. "You were so pretty - I really think you were one of the prettiest cars I have ever seen". "George can do it", I said. "He's had to do it lots of times before. It's because Gill is such a rotten driver you see", I added, winking at Moggie with one of my bent headlights and thinking she might be quite a nice little car after all, in spite of her gaudy colour scheme and her habit of going topsless whenever the sun shines.

Well, George was as good as his word. Perhaps he did not quite manage to make me as good as new again but he got me back on the road with a promise of a complete restoration when he has time to give me all his attention. I know this could be a long way off yet but I don't really mind now because I know that 'my' family would never part with me. We've had wonderful times together. I've taken them over the Alps in winter for a Christmas ski-ing holiday in Italy. I've taken chains on my tyres to help me climb the snowbound mountain passes and I never faltered. It was tremendous fun.

I am now part of a much larger family because George became so fond of me - having had to mend me so often - that he has started to collect some more Bonds to keep me company. There is the Green Goddess, a beautiful, 2-litre MKI Bond Saloon, which George restored and resprayed. Then there is Black Beauty, a 2-litre MKII and Bianca, a white 1147 GT4S, both awaiting restoration. He is at the moment working on Red Arrow, a red 2-litre Convertible who is having a chassis-up rebuild - she is going to be beautiful again one day.

The grey Ensign has come to live with us now, as well as two Herald 13/60's, a Convertible and an Estate, used by Annette and Paul when learning to drive. Paul has just acquired the remains of a MKI Spitfire, which is destined for a total rebuild, possibly for the race track. So you see, with all this lot and Moggie and the ever faithful Pixie, we are quite a family.

The other day, I think I had my proudest moment yet: George is beginning to get keen on restoring a car to concours standard. He stood in the drive of our home, surveying his vast fleet of cars and one by one he counted them out as potential concours winners on various small points of non-originality. Even my dear friend, Pixie, has been rebuilt on a MKII chassis, as no MKI chassis was available at the time. Then his eyes rested on me and he nodded, "Yes", he said, "Sexie is really the only one that is still totally original. She is my future concours car". How about that then? Tatty and old I may be, my woodwork fading a little under the crack in the varnish but never mind, I'm going to be a concours winner one day - you'll see!



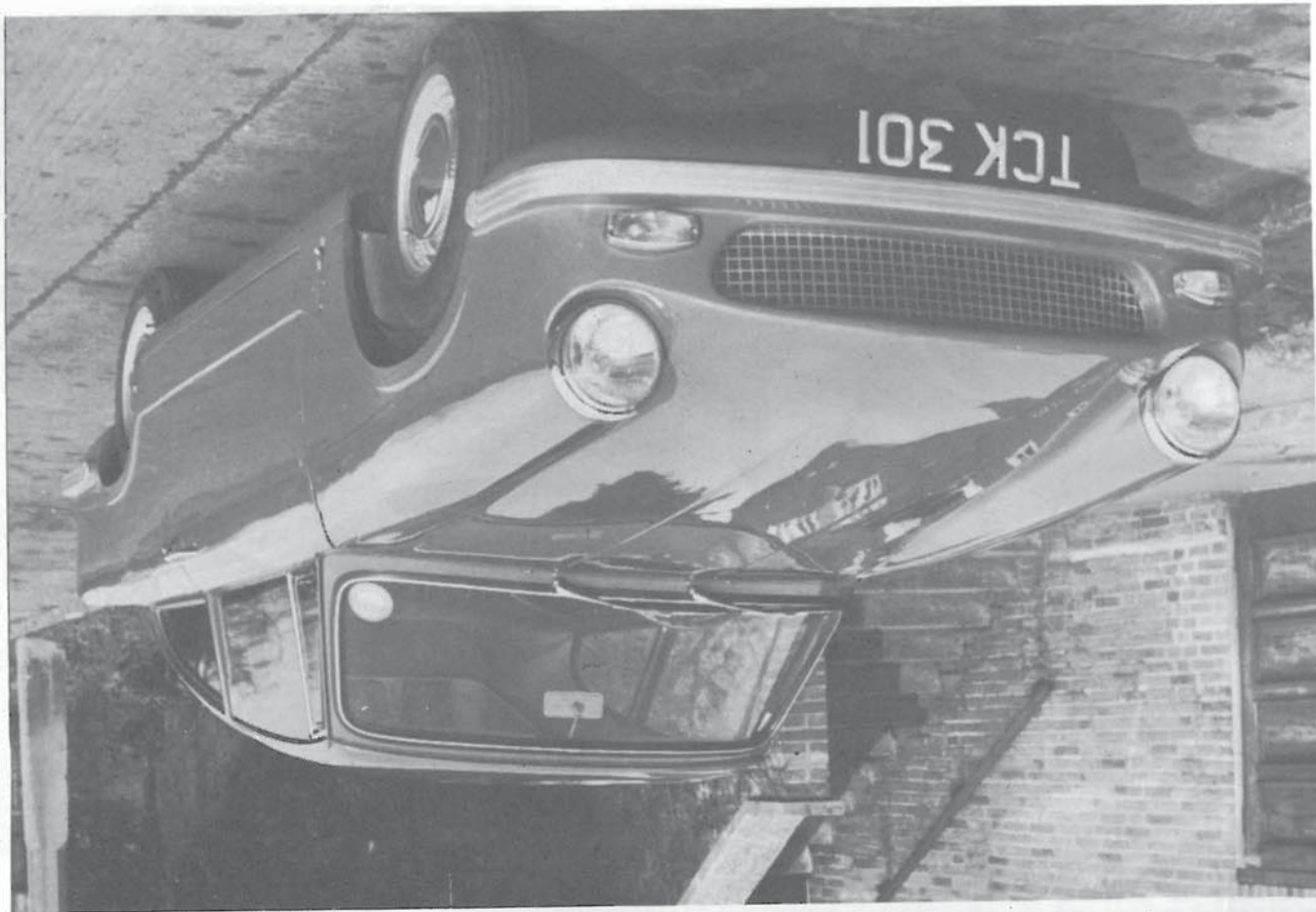


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 Triumph Herald Chassis (*eel-like*) **X** Put on an
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 headlamp system (*search-like*) **X** Plus a vast boot
 (*cave-like*) **X** Expand to take 4 in comfort (*stretch-like*)
X Add full G.T. trim (*club-like*) ...

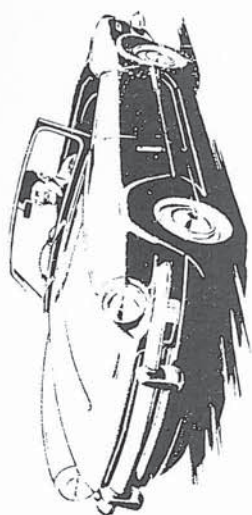
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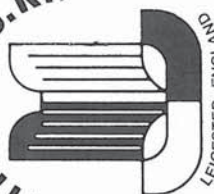
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