



# Northumbria Newsletter

January 2010

Happy New Year to everyone in Northumbria Group

(<http://www.groups.tr-register.co.uk/northumbria/>)



## Northumbria Update.

Xmas seems to have dawned and departed in the blink of an eye but hopefully everyone has been left with a lot of new TR toys to start the 2010 season.

**Sean Tindle** has been looking even further ahead with a present that can't be opened till March, but hot news over cyberspace shows us he has pre-empted the plate dealers with his latest TR related acquisition. An opportunity spotted in advance will allow him to advertise his appreciation of the TR marque wherever he goes, even when he's not driving one.



Keep an eye open for him in your travels.

The "**Life With Fred Dibnah**" evening organised by **Geoff** in early December was a good sociable night's entertainment with tales ranging from Fred's idea of a romantic date, 'climbing a 200ft chimney', to wedding feast table decorations, 'crossed spanners painted gold'. TR members from both Northumbria and Cleveland attended, along with a host of other Classic clubs and were enlightened to a lot of colour and events in the life of the Bolton Steeplejack that were not exposed on the small screen.

At the end of **December** we sampled the **Xmas Fare at The Skiff** to get in the mood for the holiday season. Thanks are due to Paul Anderson who organised the meal and raffle, which sent everyone away both well fed and feeling lucky. (The proper way to start Xmas).

A significant feature of the evening was the award of the **Dave Wright Trophy**. Named after a man who went everywhere in his TR. Our Treasurer Tom, who keeps meticulous records of such things, revealed the person who had followed in his footsteps by clocking up the most attendances at meetings in a TR during the past year. This proved to be a milestone for the Group in that the youngest member, and representative of the Register's new 'Yoof Group', **Simon Rutter** was the winner. This threatens to be a turning point of the youngest members showing the old dogs what the Register is about, 'getting out and using your TR'. Congratulations and well done to **Simon**, and **KBA 430 V**, Simon's TR 7. A sigh of relief for the rest of us that we're into a new year, which gives us a renewed opportunity to clock up some TR outings towards getting the Trophy for 2010.

**Classic Le Mans 8/12 th July** may seem a little way off but the up-date is that we have four cars fully committed to the Register camping package that you can find on the Register's web site.

[http://www.tr-register.co.uk/acatalog/Classic\\_Le\\_Mans\\_2010.html](http://www.tr-register.co.uk/acatalog/Classic_Le_Mans_2010.html)

Ashford to Calais 'chunnel' crossings on the Thursday morning and return Monday evening have been booked, giving some sunny TR travels to look forward to already. There is already a clamour to get on the Register list before the tickets run out, so if you are thinking about it, get in before its too late.

**Doretts** seem to be in the news lately. Like buses you never see one for ages then two come along, or is it that Geoff's re-commissioning in August has drawn the marque to our attention? Recent Classic Cars magazine reports a 1955 model for auction by Brightwells during December down in Leominster.

First registered in Sussex in March 1955, this overdrive-equipped Swallow Doretta has been subject to a strip down and rebuild over the past 10 years. Work to the structure of the car included: chassis epoxy coated and floors replaced; aluminium bodywork refurbished and repainted in the original colour; all bright work re-chromed. Trim items included new hood, tonneau and side screens; interior re-trim including leather seats and new carpets; new chrome wire wheels, splined hubs and spinners. Mechanical work included: gearbox and overdrive reconditioned; new wiring loom; radiator re-cored; new dynamo and regulator; reconditioned starter motor; new stainless steel exhaust. The engine is the original unit and the vendor believes that the 54,000 miles recorded is probably the genuine distance covered from new.

Taxed and MOTd until February 2010, it comes with a large file of bills relating to the restoration, various road tests and press cuttings relating to the model, an original owner's manual, original buff log book and modern V5C. An example of a rare and pretty sports car from a little-known episode of British motoring history. This particular car sold for £16,000, however the report mentions a second Doretta sold by the same company in September for £36,200, notable because it was a record price for the marque. You can see details of this September car, and a brief biography of the model at :



<http://www.brightwells.com/3rdparty/orphanspress/classiccars/viewdetails.php?id=1432>

## Coming Events.

- Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January** Monthly meeting at The Skiff.
- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January** Monthly meeting at The Lakeside.
- Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb** Cleveland/Northumbria Quiz
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March.** Triumph Spares Day, Stonleigh.
- Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April,** Sunday Run with East Riding Group

## TR Tips

Its the middle of the idle season for most TRs, so now is a good time to do a few bits and pieces that will make sure you can enjoy it when that first tempting sunny day arrives. Give the engine a run occasionally to keep the oil splashed round its internals and the cooling system moving. A full warm up that enables the heater to put a bit of warm air inside to deter any dampness .

This should put back more power in the battery than the starter took out but if there is any sign of tiredness put a trickle charger on it to make sure its up to strength next time.

While its running, shuffle the car in and out of the garage to flex the tyres and try to park it on a different patch of rubber when you leave it. This should make sure the clutch system, (seals and plate), aren't seizing and the tyres don't develop a flat spot.

## Member News.

The office reports a new member **Paul Kaiser** having joined the Register recently. Paul lives in the Corbridge area and hopes to be out and about in his TR 6 during 2010. Welcome from Northumbria Group to Paul and I'm sure everyone will be keeping an eye open and a greeting ready if they spot him.

## Archive Item.

Although the Register have recently acquired the Coca Cola TR 7, it hit the headlines previously with a review in Triumph World magazine in 2006. Barry Thomas has kindly provided a copy so the article is re-printed here for your holiday reading.



**I**n 1886, when Siegfried Bettmann first came up with using the name Triumph and put it on the bicycles he was exporting to Europe, little did he realise that in Atlanta, Georgia, another world-famous trademark was also being created.

Pharmacist John S. Pemberton formulated a 'brain tonic' syrup from water, sugar, phosphoric acid, caramel, caffeine and the extracts of coca and cola, but its dilution with soda water to create a refreshing soft drink came about almost by accident, after he discovered that a couple of his assistants were mixing the syrup with water.

The first batch of Coca-Cola was sold to the public in Jacob's Pharmacy on Saturday, 8th May 1886, at five cents a glass. Pemberton died two years later, having sold the secret formula to Asa G. Chandler, a merchant who established The Coca-Cola Company in 1892. From selling only 25 gallons of Coca-Cola syrup in the first year, by 1913 the annual volume was up to nearly seven million gallons – and that's just the concentrate, not the drink itself!

Pre-dating Triumph and Coca-Cola by some 36 years, Levis jeans originated during the California gold rush, when Bavarian immigrant Levi Strauss arrived in San Francisco, trying to sell canvas that could be made into tents and shelters. The miners, obsessed with getting rich quick, weren't interested in buying his material for temporary housing – what they needed was some tougher clothing that would stand up to their harsh working conditions. With the help of a tailor, Strauss turned the canvas into durable overalls – and another iconic name was born. Levi's original trousers were brown (the colour of the canvas), but he introduced blue denim after trying out a heavy cloth called 'Serge de Nimes' that was woven in the south of France – this material was then dyed indigo blue in the USA to ensure a consistent colour.

Triumph, Coca-Cola and Levis joined forces for the first (and only?) occasion in 1978, when three specially-prepared TR7s were given away as first prizes in a nationwide competition called 'All Summer Long'. As far as Triumph – and the TR7, in particular – were concerned, the year could hardly have had a worse beginning, with the Speke factory in Liverpool completely shut down by strike action. The dispute started in October 1977 and lasted for four months but, by the time the assembly lines got going again in March '78 it was too late – the decision had been made by BL boss Sir Michael Edwardes to close Speke and to transfer TR7 production to Canley.

Manufacture of the 1978 model year TR7 started in August '77, the first car of Rest of the

World spec (i.e. for outside the North American market) carrying commission number ACG 35001. The final Speke-built non-US TR7 was produced in May '78 with commission number ACG 37661. The Coca-Cola TR7 seen here has commission number ACG 35038, meaning it was amongst the first of those August '77 cars, raising the question: where did it spend the next six months or so?

Given the unfavourable publicity surrounding the industrial relations problems at Liverpool and the poor build quality of the cars themselves, at first glance a tie-up with top international brands such as Coca-Cola and Levis seems a little unlikely. On the other hand, from the very outset, the TR7 was designed to appeal to the American motorist. It was a modern shape and heavily promoted towards the younger generation – perhaps the agency that organised the competition decided that the Triumph's sporting image outweighed any shortcomings? Or perhaps BL was only too glad to get the three cars off its hands?

Whatever the reasons behind the choice, sometime in the early summer of 1978, Star Vans, of Luton, in Bedfordshire, was employed to convert the trio of TR7 fixed-head coupés. Bodywork alterations were kept to a minimum, a full-length Weathershield sunroof being the only structural change (this was later made available on the production TR7s). Then a respray in Coca-Cola bright red, with a flowing white stripe down either side and across the bonnet representing the Coke logo. TR7, Coca-Cola and Levis emblems in white were added to the right-hand side of the boot lid and the centre of the bonnet. Last, but not least, the standard Triumph rims were ditched in favour of a set of polished Wolfrace alloy slots.

The interior was re-trimmed using blue Levis denim, with authentic patch pockets on the door panels and sun visors, plus matching blue carpets on the floor and parcel shelf (normally in black). A Pioneer stereo radio/cassette player was installed in the dash and the prize cars were also supposed to have a small refrigerator in the boot (to keep the Coke cold) and a portable television, but these two latter items are missing from our featured car.

Under the bonnet, the 1,998cc four-cylinder engine is as it came from the factory, with only a bigger alternator (needed to cope with the extra electrical consumption) and an air-conditioning system to differentiate it from any other TR7. The four-speed gearbox and remainder of the running gear are also of normal specification.

As for the 'All Summer Long' competition itself, that was run in three phases – with the first prizes of a TR7 and £500 cash presented on 1st July, 19th August and 18th November 1978.

There were also runners-up prizes (possibly 500) of a long-playing record featuring twelve tracks by popular groups, including the New Seekers' Coca-Cola advert anthem 'I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing' on both sides!

Chris Turner bought VOX 793T in November 2004, after some protracted negotiations with the Cars of the Stars museum at Ingliston in Scotland (then an offshoot of the main museum in Keswick, Cumbria) when they were rationalizing the collection. He ended up paying £1,500, plus £200 to have the car delivered to his home in Sheffield, where it joined his assortment of historic TR7, TR7 Sprint and TR8 models – currently numbering about a dozen cars. Chris (the early cars registrar of the TR Drivers Club) certainly knew what he was buying – and has managed to piece together most of the story behind the three prize TR7s.

The lucky person who won VOX 793T was David Guest, of Wolverhampton, and the car then passed through two or three owners before Don Matthews acquired it and carried out some renovation work, subsequently selling it to Robsport International which, in turn, sold it to the museum. Robsport has also owned one of the other two 'S' reg Coca-Cola Levis TR7s, this second car being sold to a chap in Northern Ireland. This one was said to be in a pretty poor condition and in need of a full restoration (although Chris Turner

for an unusual item." The runners-up prize LP mentioned earlier is a perfect example of this. Chris bought two of the records for only 99p each after they were advertised without mentioning the Coke competition, whereas he's seen an identical disc fetch upwards of £40 once the Coca-Cola provenance was revealed.

The fizzy drink in a curvaceous bottle that originated in Atlanta 120 years ago is not Chris's only link with the confectionery trade – he actually builds ice cream vans for a living! Easily the most unusual occupation we have come across since this magazine started, he admitted that the facilities of the family business did make looking after his stable of wedge-shaped sports cars a lot easier, but bemoaned the busy period leading up to the summer season because that prevents him from attending to them. A keen supporter of all things Triumph and a champion of the smaller car clubs, Chris also has some refreshingly frank opinions about the way the classic vehicle movement should proceed in the future. Although he still has an unfulfilled desire to own a TR2 or TR3, Chris conceded that maintaining his accumulation of TR7 and TR8 models is enough to keep him busy over the next few years to come.

Speaking personally, we are all rather puzzled as to why Chris would even entertain the thought of buying another type of Triumph sports car – after all, hasn't he already got the first prize? 🗣️

has been told that the TR7 was apparently spotted not so long ago, still languishing in the docks at Birkenhead).

The third car currently belongs to Keith Morphet, of Stonehouse, in Gloucestershire, who has recently completed a comprehensive rebuild to a very high standard. Having owned the car for ten years, Keith now finds that he has too many projects on the go. Therefore, at the time of writing, the TR7 was up for sale with a price tag of £5,000 (Tel: 01452 740241 or 07774 154481).

Chris Turner's car remains as it came from the museum. In other words basically original, with just some remedial attention paid to the paintwork, etc – and that's how he plans to keep it. And it is his intention to hang on to this TR7 for as long as possible. "I know a lot of people say they will never sell a car," said Chris, "and I've said it myself about some of the other TRs I've owned in the past but, in this case, I really mean it – this TR7 will not be put up for sale by me, ever."

In the meantime, Chris has been accumulating a variety of Coca-Cola memorabilia (including a reproduction cool box to go in the TR7's boot) and getting to grips with the vagaries of the Coke collectables market. "It can make a big difference to the price of an object if it is put up for sale in the Coca-Cola category on eBay, for instance," he explained. "That way it attracts the serious collectors, who are often prepared to pay more



**Above:** Levis blue denim trim on seats and door panels makes the interior of the competition prize TR7 unique. A top-of-the-range Pioneer stereo system was something else that the winner could enjoy



**Above:** Two-litre, slant four-cylinder engine has a heavy-duty alternator to cope with the demands of the extra accessories, but is otherwise standard. Car is also fitted with air-conditioning

## Tailpiece.

Did you know that there is such a thing as, “self-repairing car paint”? Media reports say scientists in America have developed a polyurethane coating that mends itself in less than an hour when exposed to sunlight and they plan to develop it as a paint for cars among other things. It was discovered at the University of Southern Mississippi and created using natural materials found in the shells of crabs and shrimps.

When the molecules within the paint are split in scratches and scuffs, the ends exposed are repaired by the ultraviolet light from the sun, using a chemical called chitosan from the crab shells. The process is not affected by moisture so dry or humid climates will not be detrimental. Only sunlight varies the time of reaction, scratch healing in the sunnier Southern States being three to four times faster than in the North.

So there you have it. We've only got to live long enough to see it properly developed and launched on the market, then all those stone chips on the bonnet will heal themselves. Oh, and we might need a bit more sunshine in GB but then Global Warming will probably fix that for us.

**P.S.** If you have anything you can send about TRs, or your motoring, a holiday snap of the TR, a one liner of how you hit a pigeon, or a special spanner you found useful, please send them to Paul or myself. Any information is useful for the Newsletter or Social Scene reports.

John Scarr

---

**Events Co-ordinator**  
**Barry Thomas 0191**

**Group Leader**  
**John Scarr 0191 5843366**  
e-mail; [j.scarr@talk21.com](mailto:j.scarr@talk21.com)

**Treasurer**  
**Tom Smith 0191 274145**

**Technical Adviser**  
**Bryan Archer**  
**01661 881705**

**Web Author**  
**Sean Tindle**  
**0191 5420108**  
[seantindletr@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:seantindletr@hotmail.co.uk)

**Reporter and Photographer**  
**Paul Anderson**  
**0191 4821016**