



# Griffith Club of America

May 1977

With an unusually severe winter gone by I'm sure everyone is taking advantage of the beautiful spring "motoring" at hand. Many winter restorations are hitting the streets adding to the number of already beautiful Griffiths. Club meet attendance and participation is steadily climbing. Our Fifth Annual this September should be a "record setter." If plans work out, Jack Griffith will be in attendance. So all you normally non-attending members get your cars tuned-up, driven up or trailered up to the Annual. Happy Motoring.

A Griffith register is now being compiled. We will try to account for as many Griffiths as possible. Frequently, various members have made mention of the Griffith across town or the parts car in their backyard, etc. Please search out and forward serial numbers, if intact, or Series and locations of all known Griffiths. When the register is 75-80 per cent complete it will be printed and mailed to all club members.

Foster Crippen has generously supplied us with Griffith windshield decals. These are available to all club members free of charge. To receive yours send a S.A.S.E. and the mailman will do the rest.

Bob and Judy Mariani will host a Griffith tour and meet at their home, Blood Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371 on Sunday, June 26th at 11:00 A.M. Hope everyone can attend.

Michael Dodson, Baltimore, Maryland writes that "High R.P.M. shifting can be improved 100%, if one is having problems, by replacing the hose between the clutch master cylinder and slave cylinder with aeroquip hose. Aeroquip hose will not expand under pressure, thus full pressure is applied to the slave cylinder and the clutch is sure to disengage. Also, anyone contemplating the purchase of a Hurst shifter can save money by purchasing the available shifter for a Sunbeam Tiger. The units comes with the short, straight, "super shifter" handle, so this handle need not be purchased seperately. I replaced my clutch master and slave cylinders, switched to the Aeroquip hose, and installed the Hurst. The car now shifts at ANY R.P.M.

Paul Hill, San Diego, California writes "I have just replaced the plexiglas rear window in my car and thought that my experiences might be of value to other club members. After removing the old window and measuring the dimensions, I purchased a piece of 19 3/4" x 63" piece of 3/16" clear "Acrylite", available at plastic outlets and glass suppliers. I set up the old window as a mold, covered with a soft cloth to prevent marring the new surface. After peel-



ing off the protective paper (save), I carefully heated the new plastic in a regular kitchen oven, one end at a time. I then formed it over the original. It is important not to overheat the plastic as it will bubble or distort. I heated the plastic only to the point where it formed over the mold with slight pressure. The oven was set at 250° F. I understand that a blow type hairdryer may also be used.

After the plastic has been formed and allowed to cool, reapply the protective paper and with the original over the new piece, trace the outline onto the protective paper. Use a sabre saw with a new fine toothed blade to cut off excess. Some plastic shops have the facilities to duplicate the window if so desired.

"Down here in Houston the sun shines long and hot on our Griffiths (mobile ovens)! The cockpit is about 110° while cruising and 130° at a standstill. No. 123 has the stock radiator and 3.90 differential. It cools marginally! I recently purchased No. 079 from Gary Courtney in Wolcott, Connecticut. It was towed to Houston behind a Citroen in December 76. That must have been a wierd sight for onlookers.

To look at this car makes one sad. Many miles had been put on it without the proper maintenance. Holes were worn through the inner fenders from weak original 200 springs. No frame damage from "bottoming" in the front, however. Several people have taken stabs at ressurecting the car but no one finished any work.

No. 131 (bought it new in 65) needed to be trussed up as the frame cracked because of the short travel of the original springs. I sold this car in 1968. Wish I hadn't.

I've just finished installing a Corvette 3.08 section in No. 079. I had to lengthen the halfshafts I got from a 1 ton Ford truck. Since the car had no radiator it forced me to design my own. Using the height and width of the stock one I had one built. The radiator is 6.5 inches thick (compared to 3 inches), has a greater seperation between input and output, and 30% more fins per inch than the stock radiator. I modified a Fiat electric fan to fit behind the radiator. The three brackets on the fan assembly can be easily modified to fit a Griffith perfectly. Thanks Fiat! I would guess that the Fiat fan moves 3 times more air than the factory set-up. When I get it all together I'll let you know how it works.

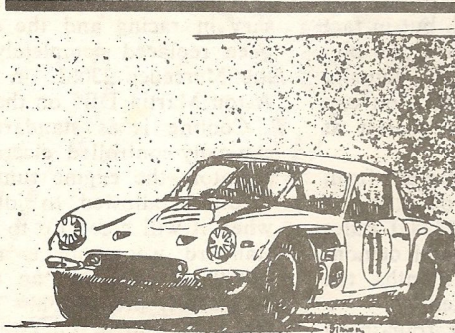
A question to everybody - where can the wide type windshield rubber be found?

Terry Keeton

We still have a limited number of embroidered Griffith Club patches available. The limit is one per customer at \$2.50. Price includes postage and handling.



Well thats about it! Thanks to Bob Mariani for Griffithtoons, Art Patstone for the Road Test, Michael Dodson and Paul Hill for the tech tips and Terry Keeton for sharing his Griffith experiences with us.



DRAWING: DENNIS SIMON

Sincerely,

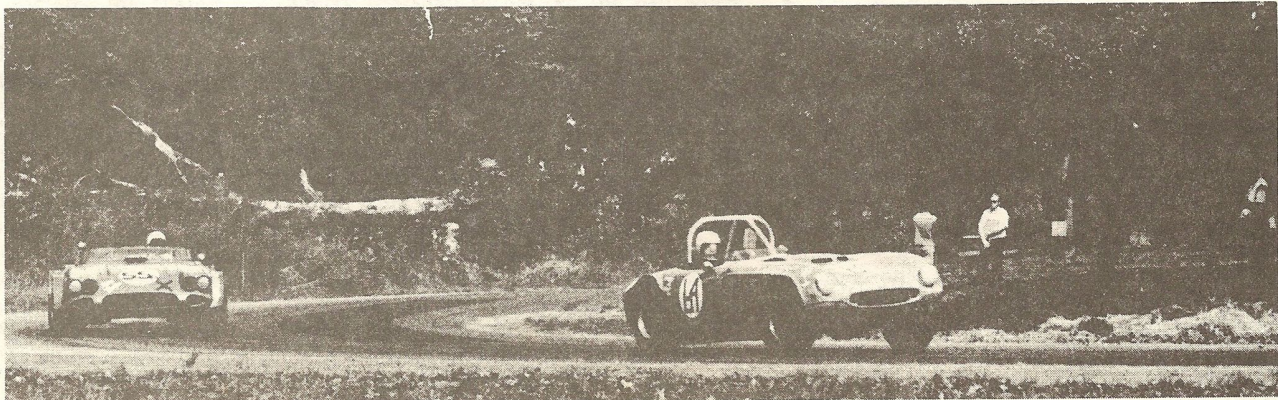
*Randy*

Randy Hartigan  
Bushy Hill Road  
Deep River, Connecticut 06417

(203) 526-5531



BOB ROWALD  
AND HIS GRIF-  
FITH.







# Track Test/TVR Griffith

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**R**ETURN of Power is the theme for the 1966 season, but there have been several attempts to get some hairier machinery on the grids already. One of these is the Barnet Motor Company's TVR Griffith, which when driven by Martin Lilley or Gerry Marshall provides both the drivers and spectators with some excitement.

The history of this car is rather interesting as it differs remarkably from that of most competition cars. Martin Lilley (who together with his father, Arthur, runs the Barnet Motor Company) originally bought a standard TVR Griffith from the factory about a year ago. Martin ran it on the road and in a few races, until a wheel came off at the London Motor Club's Brands meeting in June, and the car was virtually a write-off.

TVRs supplied Martin with a second-hand chassis and body, the body being presented as a "lightweight" one. It turned out that it had in fact been fitted with a sun-roof and boot (but these had been filled in with glassfibre) and was not a lightweight unit anyway. In fact, when they had rebuilt the car it weighed 24 cwt, which is about 4 cwt heavier than standard! At this point the only things fitted from the original car were the engine and bonnet!

While they were rebuilding the car, the TVR factory ran into various difficulties, and after some negotiations Arthur and Martin Lilley took it over. They then began to race the Griffith again, but without any support from the factory, even though they controlled the latter! Thus the car was, and still is, a private entry, although it naturally provides TVR with useful development information and Barnet Motor Company useful publicity.

The car was raced at Boxing Day Brands by Martin Lilley, who finished second in his class behind David Piper's Ferrari, but

soon after this fate struck another blow at this car, and several others in the company's showroom, in the form of a fire. Fortunately the damage was not too bad and not many parts had to be replaced. There was a lot of mess to clear up and the Perspex rear window is still bowed as a result. But they managed to get it all sorted out and the car has since been out again in two sprints with Gerry Marshall (the company's sales manager) at the wheel, and has recorded two BTDs.

The car does have some modifications from the standard model, but basically it is still a road-going car. The chassis is made of tubes, although it's not a space-frame, and the glassfibre body is bonded to it. This has proved to be strong enough for the 4.7-litre Ford V8 engine which is left absolutely standard except for the fitting of a Carter carb in place of the Holly unit to cure cutting-out on corners. A different silencer has been fitted, but in fact the engine still gives the standard 270 bhp and is fantastically flexible (I actually started off in third gear by mistake on one occasion and the engine didn't protest at all!).

The beauty of the car in its present form is its reliability and the lack of attention needed. It has now covered 33,000 miles as a racer, personal transport and demonstrator, and in the past six months the plugs haven't even been changed!

The gearbox is the Mustang four-speed unit as fitted to the engine normally, but a Cobra one-plate diaphragm clutch has been fitted to cope with racing starts which would burn out the standard clutch rather quickly. An E-type Salisbury limited-slip diff is fitted with a 3.77 crown-wheel and pinion, which gives a top speed of 155 mph at 7000 rpm (the normal maximum). Gerry Marshall has seen 5800 rpm on the tachometer before braking for Paddock at

Brands and he says this gives 122 mph and a feeling of insecurity! Fuel consumption is about 20-22 mpg on the road and 16-18 racing.

Front suspension is by wishbones, coil springs, anti-roll bar and Armstrong Firmaride dampers. Rear is by wishbones, coil springs to Barnet Motor Co specification and Firmarides again. Stronger than standard half-shafts are fitted, again to cope with the strain of racing starts. Steering is by Triumph Herald rack-and-pinion.

The wheels have been changed to spoked Cobra knock-offs to allow big tyres to be fitted—they have 6.00 x 15 front and 6.50 x 15 rear, both being Dunlop R6 Green Spots as Yellow Spots wear out too rapidly. The suspension settings and tyre pressures are being experimented with at present in order to achieve optimum handling.

The original brakes were not able to cope with the repeated applications necessary in racing and the calipers have now been replaced completely with units from the Mercedes 230SL on the front and the Aston Martin DB5 on the rear.

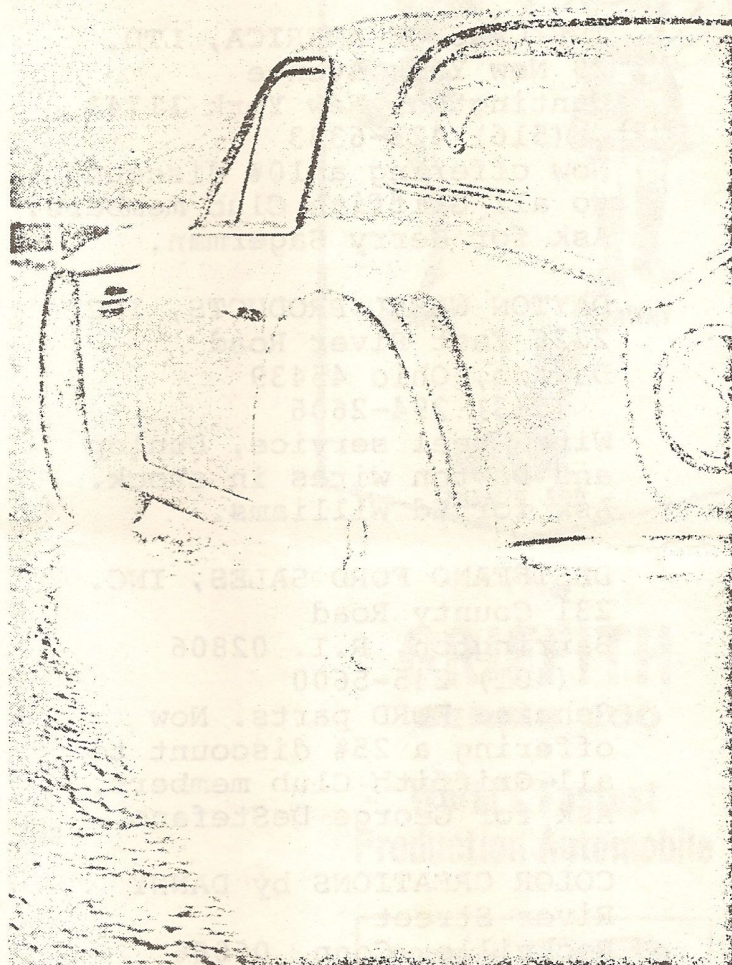
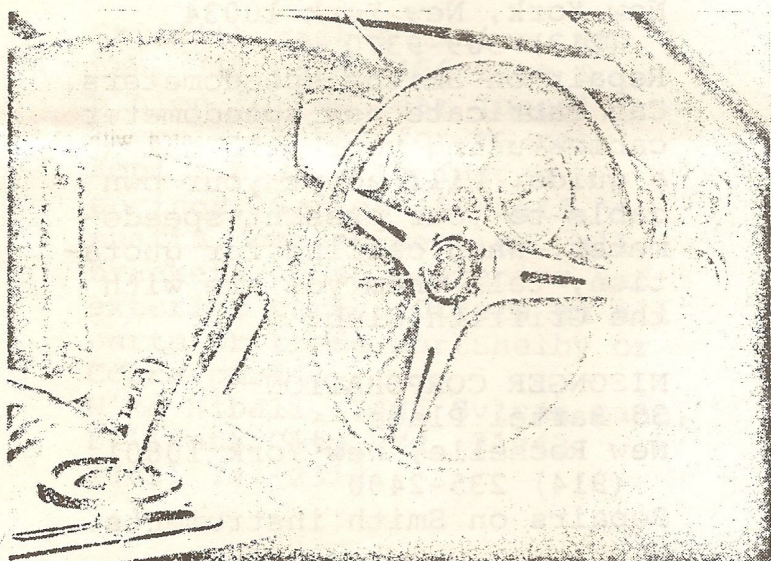
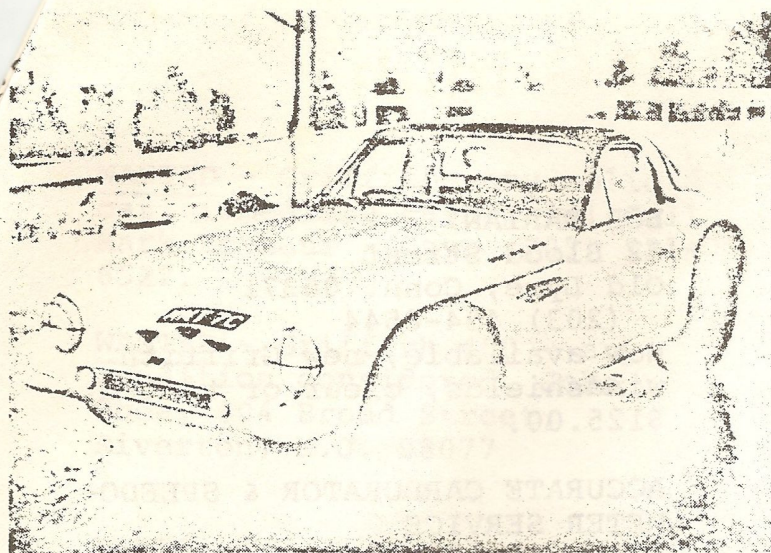
Cooling is as standard with a thermostatically-controlled electric fan behind the radiator—the engine runs at about 75 deg C unless allowed to idle for some time, when it will creep up to 85 deg or so. The standard wet sump is retained and Esso 40/50 oil used, but an oil cooler is fitted as a safety precaution. The fuel tank is in the rear with a quick-release filler on the right-hand rear wing and two SU pumps supply the engine.

The only other modifications are the fitting of Perspex windows all round, and a roll-over bar, although this has no forward-and-aft support.

Getting into the car is no problem and the seats are quite comfortable. Kangol Magnet belts are fitted and the driver is held quite well all-round and can use the







gearbox tunnel as a brace for his left leg. The trim and dash are in black leather and all the instruments are in front of the driver, although the two most important, the oil and water gauges, are the least easily seen. The driver sits quite low in the car, although this doesn't affect visibility. The angle and blue tint of the rear screen make it difficult to see anything coming up behind if there's rain about—and there was rain by the bucketful on the day of my test!

The engine starts first time on every occasion and ticks over very quietly, and it responds immediately to any suggestion of throttle. The clutch pedal is higher than the other two pedals in the car and the clutch itself is fairly light by racing standards. The gear-lever is spring-loaded into the third and fourth gear plane and it was this which caused me to select third first time and find out how tractable the engine is! With a rev limit of 6500 rpm for the first few laps, I trundled slowly off (in third) on to a streaming wet track to find out what the car was like.

For these first few laps I also had a brave passenger in the form of Nick Brittan, who also wanted to see what the Griffith was like. At Paddock on the first lap the wipers stopped working, which was inconvenient to put it mildly as the rain was still bucketing down. Nick therefore busied himself with trying to make the wipers wipe (perhaps he didn't dare look where we were going!), while I had my

hands full trying to keep the car in a straight line. The trouble was that as soon as the car hit one of the several rivers running across the circuit, it would slide about three feet sideways, but I had been warned not to lift off the accelerator under these circumstances.

When we had floated through one of these rivers I would try a gentle squirt of throttle, the rear wheels would spin, and the car would go sideways, mainly due to the rear tyres having seen better days. After three very slow, but adrenalin-moving laps of this (with wipers working only spasmodically when Nick beat a fist on the dashboard to make a bad connection connect), I pulled into the pits. Nick ran for the safety of the Control Tower, where he and the Motor Racing Stables personnel watched the rest of the proceedings from a safe distance!

Gerry Marshall sorted out the bad wiper connection, and I went out again to try to master the car. After another six laps of sideways motoring I still couldn't find the courage to use full throttle anywhere on the circuit except Top Straight as the wheels kept spinning, so I came in to let Gerry Marshall have a go. In fact, both he and Tony Lanfranchi did a few very spectacular laps and both said that the car was unmanageable in the conditions—which is rather what I had felt, but didn't like to say so. It was a great pity that I couldn't have tried the car in the dry, but due to circumstances it was not possible.

However, I did get some impressions of the car, and these were all favourable. The steering was precise and light and the brakes worked well, although you do have to push a long way as the pedal feels quite spongy. The only gears I used were third and top and I imagine that these are the only two necessary even in the dry as the torque of this engine is fantastic, even as low as 2000 rpm. The normal handling is remarkably good, as far as I could tell in the conditions, and although the suspension is fairly soft, there is not much body roll. The car is not terribly noisy inside as one might imagine, and there is not much vibration except at tickover. If the car had had better rear tyres and the circuit hadn't been quite as wet, I could have obtained a truer impression of the car, but as it was I really only furthered my knowledge of aquaplaning!

However, there's no doubt that the car is interesting for the driver and spectator alike and in 1966 it should be well to the fore in club GT racing. It will continue in its 1965 colours of silver and blue and the Barnet Motor Company will also be entering Gerry Marshall in an Elan and a TVR 1800S (the model with the MGB engine). None of these models are winners against international competition, but the Griffith (now renamed the TVR V8) certainly provides exciting, reliable and fairly cheap sport for anyone racing for the fun of it.



## PARTS & ASSISTANCE

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WANTED - Griffith 400 - any condition considered. John Shea, 604 Broad Street, Riverton, N.J. 08077

#### PARTS

Griffith rack & pinion, (1) new, (1) used, 456 ring & pinion for MG rear (used), Detroit Locker for MG rear, Koni shocks with Tuscan springs, Series 400 half shafts, center section, all brackets, Misc. interior and exterior parts. Offers on all parts or trade for Shelby or Cobra parts.

Mike Nibali, 3405 Sylvan Lane, Ellicott City, Md. 21043  
(301) 747-2312.

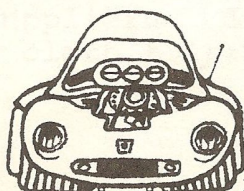
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The classified section is open to all Griffith Club members. All ads will run for two issues, whereupon it will automatically terminate unless it is resubmitted. If you want to sell or purchase any item, send your ad to:

Griffith Club of America  
Bushy Hill Road  
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Please notify us if car or part is either sold or located.


\*ALL ADS DUE BY THE 15TH OF THE PRECEDING MONTH\*

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## The GRIFFITH SERIES 200

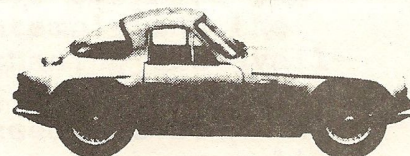
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