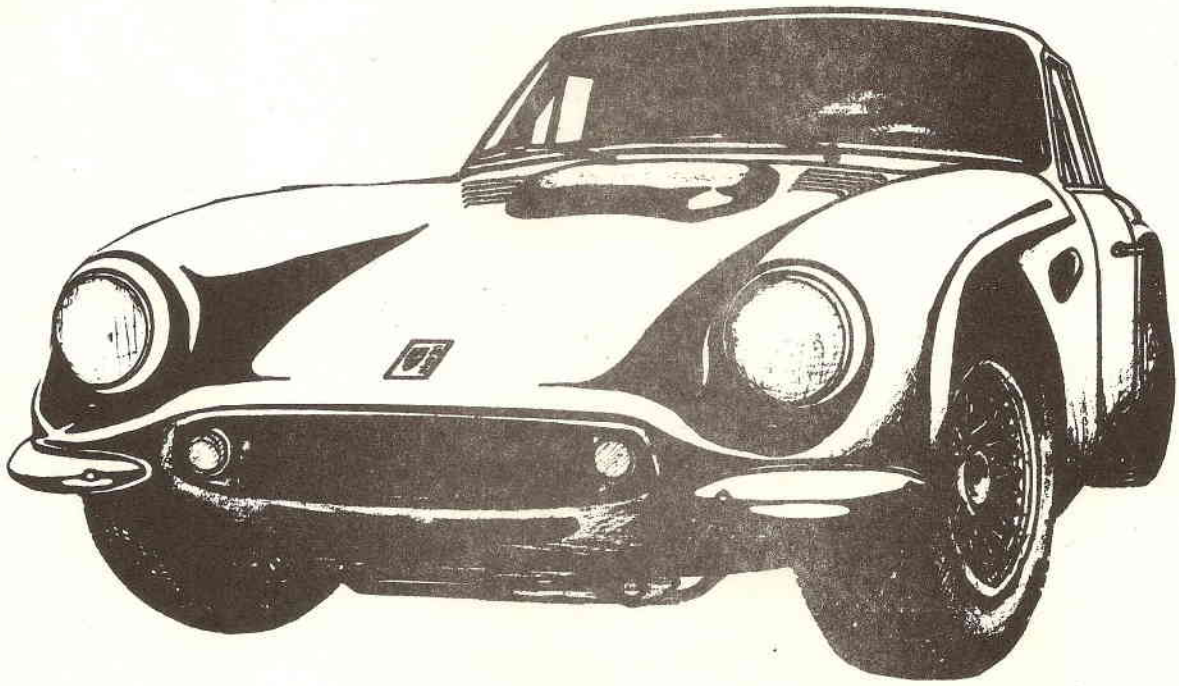


N E W S

Dues

Dues are due. This is the fourth newsletter for most members. If you have received four newsletters- Aug. 1980, Dec. 1980, June 1981 and this one, your $ 20.00 dues are due. Member participation in the club through dues is the foundation of the club and the means by which the club is able to further mutually beneficial activities such as the parts car and the proposed reproduction parts.

T-Shirts

The club is virtually sold out of the initial run of Griffith Club T-shirts. All that remain are 2 blue shirts in small.However, a totally new shirt is being designed and will be available to members. These shirts will be printed to the same high quality as the originals by the same printer. They will also be available in tan,yellow and blue and in the familiar S. M, L and XL. The cost of the Series II (nee 400 ?) shirt will be $ 8.50 postpaid. Please get your orders in ASAP as all or nearly all orders need to be received prior to printing.

New Members

The Griffith Club is pleased to welcome new members: Charles Coffell, Eugene Servelli, Ralph Hecht, Stutz Plaisted, Susan Ackerman, Richard Barger, Don Pike and F.W. Mc Kenny. Ralph, from Florida, recently purchased 2005007 which was advertized in Road and Track. He is interested in locating an original steering wheel as well as a second purchase of a totally stock Series 200. Charles Coffell is a machine shop instructor who has been reproducing various bits for Tigers. Eugene Servelli is the original owner of a Series 200. Stutz is the owner of a bent (cracked) TVR 1800 S. Susan Ackerman is the owner of the worlds' lowest TVR Vixen which has recently had a Volvo heart transplant. Don Pike is the owner of a Series 400. Rich Barger owns a TVR 1600 Vixen, while Mr. Mc Kenny's Series 200 is pictured herein.

For Sale

Bill Clearfield in Denver has notified the club that he is interested in selling his 1963 TVR Grantura. This car is RHD , fully set up for autocrossing and has a full race Chevy II 4 cyl with automatic. Bill also has a full race 289 engine with a 3x2 setup. Contact the club if interested.

Freebies

The club still has quite a few copies of the October, 1979 Super Ford Parts Exchange. This is the issue that had a two page five photo Griffith 200 article and a single page picture/synopsis of the Griffith.Contact the club if you want one.
The club also has large size Series 200 and 400 wiring diagrams available for the asking.

Series 400 Rear Windows

The club has just received the Series 400 rear window mold that Chuck Gutke was using to reproduce plastic windows. The club should be able to shortly offer both the Series 200 and 400 windows. Contact the club regarding price and delivery parameters.

Reproduction Parts

Currently, two reproduction projects are being considered: sponge rubber door seals (the club owes many thanks to Rick Hall for all his work in this area) and the Sparto rubber light boots. Both projects are quite expensive in terms of mold/setup charges, and members must contact the club regarding their their needs. Before either project can be undertaken, the club must have some idea of potential sales.

Parts Car

Hopefully, everyone has their body parts by now. Working through the labyrinth of box making/postal and UPS weight and size regs is outrageous ! Remaining parts include the cowl (in 2 pieces), the hood, the roof, the rocker panels and the front inner fenders.

Short Stuff

* Steve Ferron has joined the ranks of the double Griffith owners with the purchase of a Series 400

* Please continue sending your interview questions for Jack Griffith

* Club phone number is 813-238-0586. Best advise is to keep trying.

* Windshield/rear glass gaskets are still in stock as is the inner fender seal rubbers.

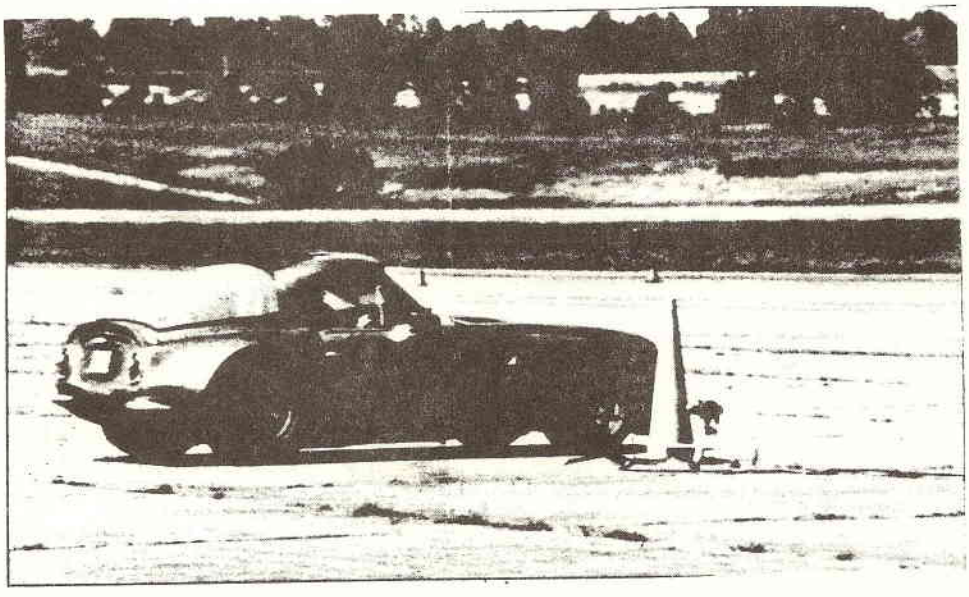
Technical Data

Active club member Gary Courtney provided the following information on Spicer part numbers necessary to install heavy duty half-shafts in the rear of the Series 200 Griffith.

Part	N Req'd	Spicer P.N.
Flange Yoke	4	2-2-389
Stub Yoke	2	2-28-357
Stub Shaft	2	2-40-1031
Slip Yoke	2	2-3-1284
U-Joints	4	CB 1270-HD (Republic part no.)

Use of the above stub shafts and stub yokes requires minor machining. Members interested in using these parts are encouraged to contact the club for exact specifications.

Racing News



From the August, 1981 SCCA Newsletter comes the following information on an unknown (non Griffith Club) Series 400. The car is owned by Walt and Ann Wurzbach and is campaigned in Solo II, Dixie Division. Recently, Walt was first in the EM/C class, while Ann was first in the EM/L class. Walt and Ann... where are you ?

The Griffith club is still waiting for an apology from the SCCA for the quote " The new EM/C class winner was Walt Wurzbach in a Griffith (a what ?)".

The club prefers the comments of fellow racer Gary Courtney who claims that Griffiths don't get older...they just get faster.

Griffith Review/Critique

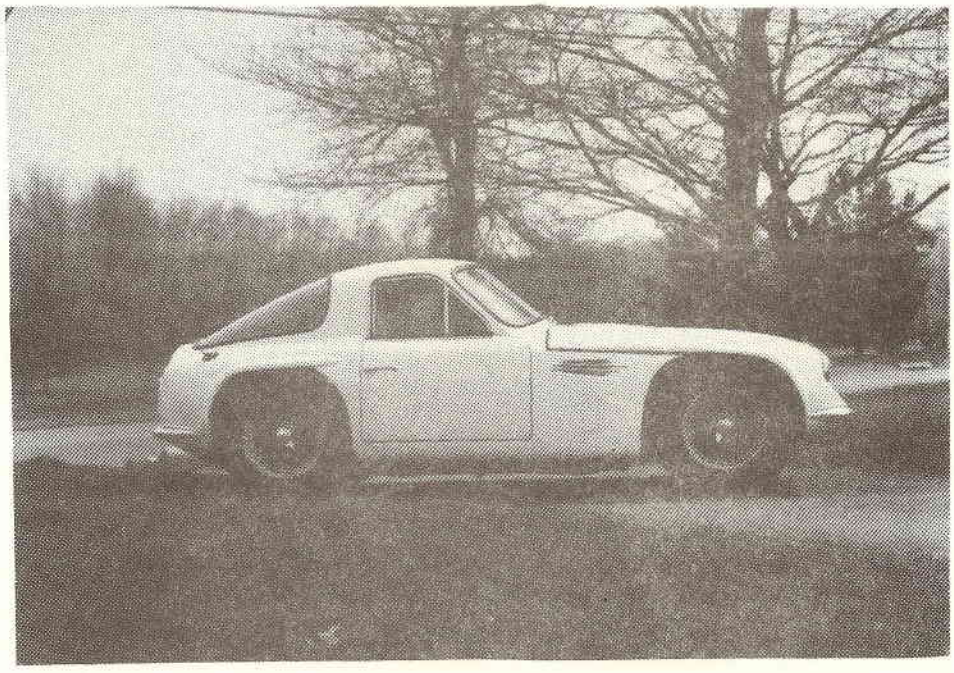
An interesting (to say the least) review of the Griffith may be found in Modern Classics by Rich Taylor. Mr. Taylor, an alleged automotive author has written for various publications and is currently auto editor for Good Housekeeping or some other equally prestigous organ. The following is reproduced verbatum and unedited, which was a very difficult task. Bear in mind, however, that the following diatribe was based on ONE drive.

" The most ambitious of these schemes was started by a Long Island entrepeneur named Jack Griffith, one of those irrepressible movers and shakers who are congenitally driven to bite off more than they can chew. Griffith was a Ford dealer and his buddy Dick Monnich was the TVR importer. You can guess the rest. The TVR was a funny little British specialty car designed by Trevor Wilkinson in 1954. It had a tube frame, an indescribably ugly fiberglass body, a teensy little wheelbase, no overhang, and a perfectly acceptable MG engine.

Griffith's scheme was easy. As David E. Davis tells it "Griffith substituted his surname for the TVR badge and a great chuffing 289 Ford for the MG part, thus changing it from a passive little car that did nothing wrong to a manic little car that did nothing right." The V-8 in Griffith's Griffith sat over the front wheels, by God. On a wheelbase of only 85 inches, the Griffith pretty much pivoted on the front wheels to go around corners, with the insignificant weight of the rear just sort of fluttering out behind.

The stock Ford's 210 hp gave the car better than 1 horsepower per 7 pounds of car, so the Griffith would run 145 mph and 0 to 60 in something like 6 seconds. I've driven a Griffith ONCE and vowed never to set foot in one again. My racing Yamaha at 150 mph on the high bank of Daytona (you're supposed to be impressed by this) is safer than a Griffith sitting in your garage (and a hell of a lot safer than old Rich who is sitting in the pits watching his rider on the Yamaha).If there ever was a killer kar (sic.) this is it. Flimsy, overpowered. really vicious handling that will spin you out just accelerating away from the curb...there has never been a more dangerous production vehicle. For $4500 Griffith was doing a land office business in rolling death traps and its a lucky thing for him Ralph Nader wasn't on the scene or he'd still be peeking out 'twixt iron bars. If you ever need an expert (?) witness, you can quote me."

Feature Car



This newsletters feature car is chassis 4006045 owned by Paul Lipp. This car may well be the finest 400 extant and is obviously well cared for by its owner. Paul reports that " finding suitable garaging facilities (for the 400) was the most important part of his search for a new residence".

The following is Pauls' description...

"The car at present is probably the finest original condition known. I am constantly being assured of this fact by Bob Mariani. It is cirrus white with, of course, the stock black interior in immaculate condition including the carpets which look showroom new. The engine is the stock high performance 289 Ford. It is equiped with a super road and drag camshaft with a valve lift of .508 which requires flycut racing pistons. Also fitted is a Cobra intake manifold CFJK-9424-C with a Holley carb. The heads have been reworked to Cobra specs and are being used with thin shim head gaskets that reduce the combustion chamber height by .03". The engine is completely balanced including the flywheel

and clutch assembly. The car also has a beautifully tuned exhaust system built by Tubular Automotive of Rockland, Mass. The car is still fitted with the original tires, Dunlop SP-41's. I also have the original American Racing Equipment mags, but, at present, the tires are fitted to wire wheels. Mileage on the car is a little over 15,000 miles."

East Coast Micro-Meet

A northern New York micro-meet was held in September. In the above are (L to R) Rick Hall, 2005155; larry Lohman, 2005024 and Bill Zinssar, 2005012.

Car Show News

The above is Alan Jones, 2005028 at the TVR Club's concours held at the Scenic Lodge in New Jersey this October. Alan's exceptionally nice Series 200 won the award for the best Griffith at the show. Actually, it was the sole Griffith, but it deserved the distinction.

F.W. Mc Kenny's immaculate 200 before restoration

Taken from Modern Motor 1/66

THE ONE THAT GOES SO FAST

What is it? It's the 140 mph TVR Griffith. It's got a British body, an American V8 engine, and it's here in Australia. Peter Bakalor reports his road impressions specially for Modern Motor

FEW people get the chance to drive a car with a power-to-weight ratio of better than 230 bhp per ton; such vehicles are very rare, and almost always very expensive. One of this breed recently arrived in Australia, and it was with great alacrity that we accepted an offer from Lindsay Walker, sales manager of Motor Imports Pty. Ltd. (an offshoot of Peter Owen's well-known tyre business) to try the new TVR Griffith.

The Griffith is basically similar to the little MG-engined TVR Grantura coupe recently raced here quite successfully by Kevin Bartlett and Peter Owen; but in this car the BMC engine was replaced by a 4727c.c. Ford V8.

The car was assembled in Sydney by Kevin Bartlett, the first car being used as a demonstrator and market test vehicle. The price for the 195 bhp car we tested, including local assembly and tax, and fitted with MkIV Avon Turbospeed tyres, was £2995; optional extras include a limited slip differential, a 271 bhp motor and automatic transmission.

Though there was less than 1000 miles on the clock, the performance was shattering. Even in top gear the car had acceleration that pushed one right back into the softly padded bucket seats. But first a word about how it's all put together.

Construction

One or two problems arose when assembling the first Griffiths, due in part to unfamiliarity and in part to TVR sending the wrong bits. These problems included a few leaks during heavy rain (cured by adjusting the door-rubbers), some noise from the rear suspension and drive-shafts and a dashboard wiring problem which has been resolved.

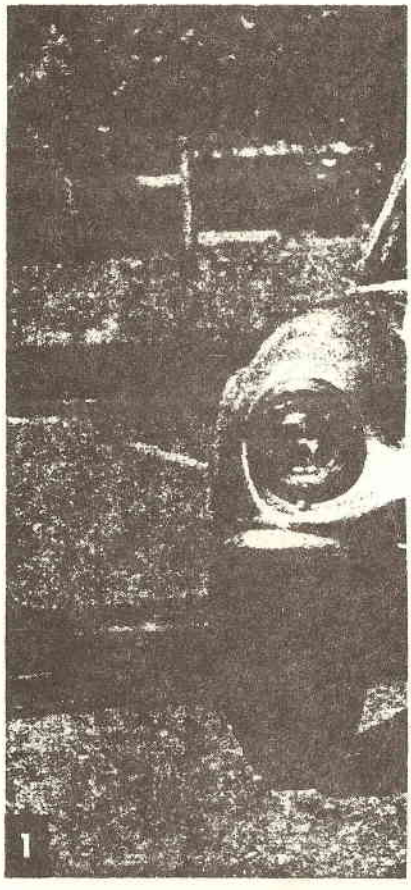
During the past three years many English low-production specialist car firms have swung from the traditional hard-working small capacity engine and gone shopping for more power in America. Jensen and Bristol went to Chrysler, and others, most spectacularly AC and Sunbeam, went to Ford. The Blackpool firm of Grantura Engineering, makers of the MG-powered TVR, soon followed suit, persuaded by their American distributor, who saw that the chassis had the potential to handle far more horsepower than an MGB motor could provide.

Fitting a V8 into the space intended for four cylinders was not the only problem that needed solving before the TVR could go V8 and be called a Griffith (after the American agents). After all, the Grantura 1800S model had a mere 98 bhp almost exactly half that of the projected V8. Consequently a much-strengthened drive train comes with the 289 cu. in. Ford motor, and this includes a Warner T10 four-speed all-synchromesh gearbox and a Salisbury differential.

Simultaneously the body style was changed, a large sloping rear window reducing the manx-cat effect of the earlier models. This new body style is now also used on the MG-powered 1800S model.

The TVR's chassis is a multi-tube affair, the main stresses being taken by a group of tubes forming a backbone arourd the drive-train — in

(Continued on page 18)



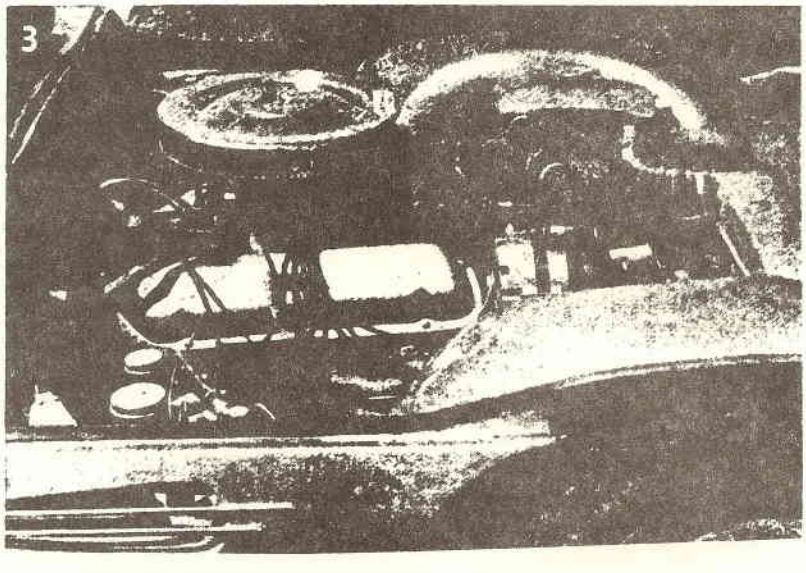
1. Fast cornering in the TVR is fun—and remarkably safe, too.

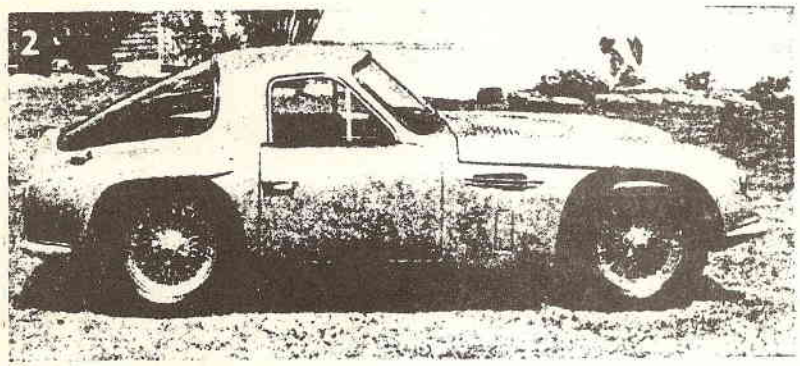
2. Fastback lines help push the TVR Griffith to 140 maximum.

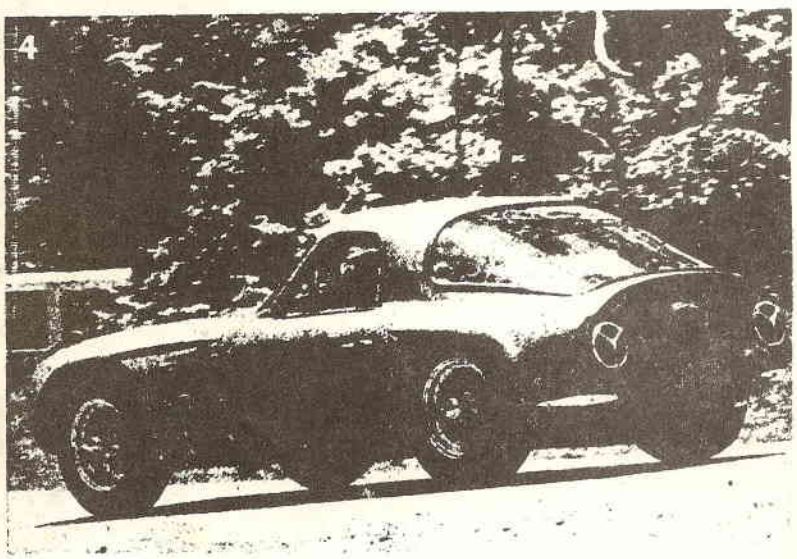
3. They got that big V8 into the TVR bay all right — but it can't have been too easy.

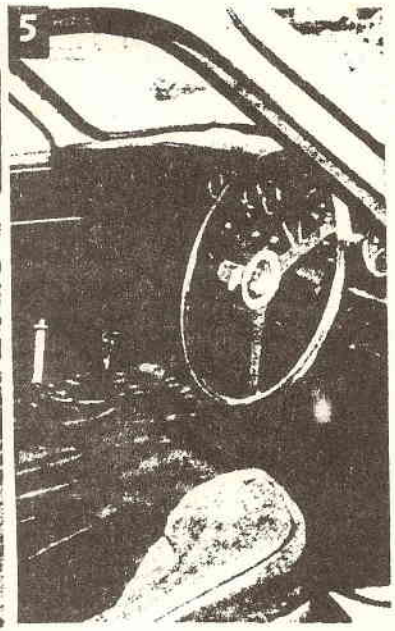
4. Tail-shot shows how big that glass fastback really is.

5. What it's like inside. Note hump of transmission tunnel.









(Continued from page 16)

effect achieving the same thing as a Lotus Elan's box-section chassis. Driver and passenger sit on each side of this huge backbone, out of which stick up the stubby gear lever with its lift-up reverse lock.

The handbrake is between the gear lever and the driver, but does not get in the way. The driver sits very near to the side of the car, looking out over the low bonnet and front-wheel arch, which seems almost in front of him.

Suspension is by double wishbones front and rear, the wide based lower rear unit having a neat thread adjustment, so that the more appreciative driver can have the car set-up to his own taste.

In front Triumph uprights are used, and the rack-and-pinion steering comes from the same source. An anti-roll bar and the usual coil-spring/damper units provide the springing.

Two coil-spring/damper units are fitted on each side at the rear, where Girling drum brakes are mounted on special light alloy hub carriers. The rear drums may be replaced by optional 10¾in. discs similar to those fitted in front.

The interior is neatly trimmed with thick carpeting and sound absorbing material, which—combined with two excellent bucket seats—gives the car a quite luxurious decor. The seating position favors those with long legs, and there is not much seat adjustment.

The instruments are in two groups, the four minor gauges for fuel, alternator charge, water temperature and oil pressure being in line across the large central panel; the speedometer and tachometer are directly in front of the driver, but for some reason they are of unequal size.

The test car did not have the optional-extra limited-slip differential, but the effective rear suspension cut down wheelspin to a minimum under dry road conditions—although dropping the clutch on 4000 rpm once caused the car (not surprisingly) to sit in its own tyre smoke for quite a while.

The most impressive feature of the car is its enormous flexibility, for—although the engine's mild state of tune, with maximum torque at only 2400 rpm, makes flexibility a thing to be expected—it is rather stunning to be able to pull smoothly away from rest in top and then accelerate rapidly away to nearly 140 mph in the same gear!

Acceleration times in top were all under 4.5sec. for the ranges 30-50, 50-70 and 70-90. After this the car just went on and on accelerating, sweeping up to well over 120 mph and still accelerating appreciably. There was no reason to doubt that the car will do the 140 mph claimed for it.

Performance testing came to an abrupt halt when the accelerator cable broke; after borrowing a soldering iron from a nearby Tanked Tiger salesman we took things rather more gently, doing only one 0-100 time, this being 20.0sec.

During this testing, the water temperature rose to over 100deg. centigrade several times, but a short run at moderate speeds cooled things off.

It seemed strange that a car using Triumph parts should have as large a turning circle as the TVR, but, apart from this, the steering is light and direct, giving plenty of road feel.

The first day of the test was very wet, so the vast power had to be fed out very carefully; the solution seemed to be to get into third or fourth as quickly as possible, when the car's flexibility came to the fore.

In the dry the car proved sure-footed, and at high speeds it was very stable, running without deflection by wind or road surface irregularities. The ride was quite firm, and bumps were solidly felt, but cornering was little affected by mildly rough roads.

In addition to the Griffith's tremendous straight-line performance, it proved very good on both fast and tight corners, the latter being taken in frantic powerslides or neatly (and probably more rapidly) — depending on how often one could afford a new set of Avons. Part of our test route included a long succession of hairpins, where great bags of first-gear power was used to bring the tail round — tremendous fun. Generally the rear end behaves itself when cornering hard, the amount of oversteer being directly dependent on the throttle opening.

To match all this, the brakes needed to be good—and they certainly seemed up to the job. •

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE: 8 cylinders, o.h.v., vee formation; bore 101mm., stroke 72.9mm., capacity 4727c.c.; compression ratio 9.1:1, maximum bhp, 195 at 4400 rpm, maximum torque, 282 ft./lb. at 2400 rpm; single twin-choke Holley carburettor, electric fuel pump, 12-volt ignition.
TRANSMISSION: Single dry plate clutch, four speed all-synchro gearbox; overall ratios: 1st 6.75, 2nd 5.00, 3rd 4.02, 4th 3.07, final drive ratio 3.07:1.
SUSPENSION: Independent front and rear by unequal length wishbones, front anti-roll bar; combined coil-spring/damper units (two each side at rear).
STEERING: Triumph Herald rack-and-pinion.
BRAKES: Girling 10¾in. discs front, 9in. by 1¾in. drums rear.
WHEELS: 72-spoke chromed wire, tyres 6.40 by 15.
DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase 7ft. 1¾in.; track, front 4ft. 4¼in., rear 4ft. 5¾in.; overall length 11ft. 8in., width 5ft. 4in., height 4ft. 1¾in.
FUEL CAPACITY: 17 gallons.
WEIGHT (manufacturer's figure): 17 cwt.

PERFORMANCE

CONDITIONS: Fine, very hot, two occupants, premium fuel.
TOP SPEED: See text.
STANDING quarter-mile average: 15.3sec.
MAXIMUM IN GEARS: 1st 56, 2nd 72, 3rd 92.
ACCELERATION from rest through the gears: 0-50 4.9s., 0-60 6.9s., 0-100 20s.
ACCELERATION IN TOP: 30-50 4.5s. (3.1s. third, 2.8s. second), 50-70 4.1s. (3.4s. third), 70-90 4.3s.
FUEL CONSUMPTION: Normal range 17-24 mpg.

GRIFFITH
Series 400

F.O.B. Plainview, New York $4895.00

GRIFFITH MOTORS, INC.

Griffith Club of America

OCTOBER, 1981