

ROAD TEST

Triumph Stag



The Stag is at its best either fully open or with the beautifully made hard-top in position. Removing or replacing the top, however, is a trial of strength



FOR : very well finished and equipped ; nice controls and instruments ; smooth, automatic transmission ; good ride ; enjoyable to drive
AGAINST : limited luggage and passenger space ; seats too flat ; hood difficult to erect ; hardtop too heavy

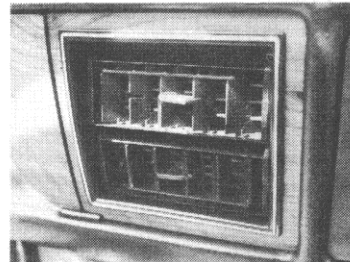
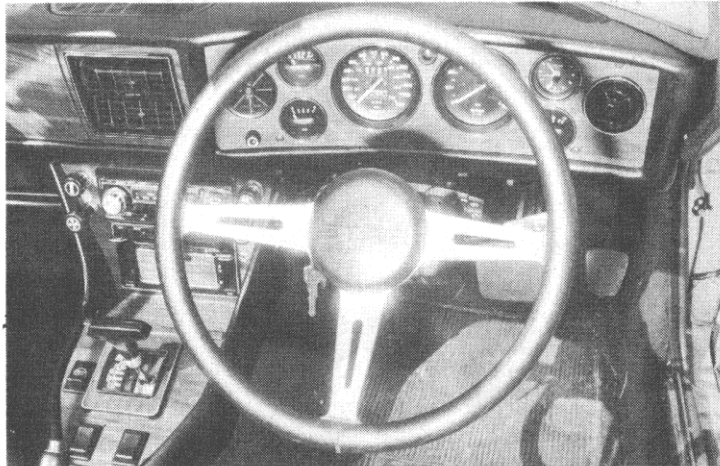
The predictable success of the Stag has resulted in a year's waiting list for Triumph's top-of-the-range model. This test of the latest automatic indicates that detail improvements have bettered an already good car, so the delays are unlikely to improve.

Some (subjective) improvements like the quieter and smoother engine and the tauter handling can only be explained by detail developments, perhaps better production, as there have been no design changes to account for them. Improvements that have been made include a reduction in assistance for the power steering to give the driver more "feel"; the inclusion of a divided braking system; an intermittent wiper facility; optional head restraints; flame retardant material for the trim; and optional alloy wheels. Modifications have also been made to the folding mechanism* for the hood, and the silencing system, and rationalisation has made the combustion chambers and pistons the same as those of the Dolomite. This has resulted in an insignifi-

cant increase in horsepower of 1 bhp, and a reduction in torque of 3 lb ft. Visual alterations include matt black stone-resistant paint on the sills and rear panel, and side stripes.

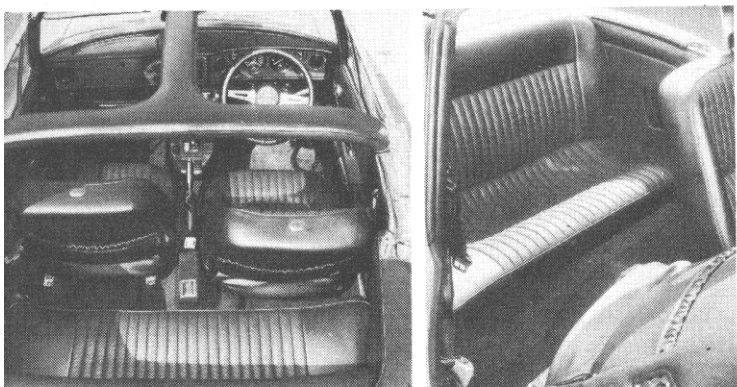
The Stag's alloy-headed V8—yet to be used in any other British Leyland vehicle—is based on two Dolomite engines put together, but with a shorter stroke giving a capacity of 2997 cc rather than 3708 cc. When we first tested the car we thought the engine was less smooth than it ought to be for a V8. Now we withdraw that observation as that of the latest car was very smooth indeed, and made very little clatter; the restrained burble from the exhaust is rather pleasing.

With its tiny power increase and lower overall gearing the acceleration of the automatic is almost identical to that of the manual we tested before, and there is nothing to be gained by using the manual hold and hanging on to the gears. But whereas the manual car (on which overdrive is now standard) will wind

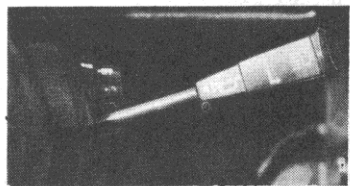


Above: the sumptuous seats lack thigh support despite the facility of a built-in cushion tilt. Top right: a smaller diameter wheel and less assistance give more feel to the steering. Below left: the built-in roll cage not only offers protection but stiffens the framework as well. Below right: entry to the rear is awkward and headroom limited. The seat, however, is comfortable

Above: the fan-boosted swivel vents in the centre are effective, unlike the ram operated side ones. Below: the stalk controls are excellent



The gearchange is sited too far forward, all other controls are well placed



up to well over 120 mph in o/d top, the automatic managed no more than 112.4 mph for a lap at MIRA, and 116.8 mph on the most favourable flying quarter mile. Even so, the automatic would be a comfortable cruiser at more than 100 mph were it not for considerable wind noise.

the move even at 5 mph.

Fuel consumption is also affected by the automatic transmission, the touring consumption deteriorating by as much as 4 mpg. Even so, the overall value of 18.9 mpg is not bad considering the performance and how hard we drove the car. With its 9.25:1 compression ratio, the Stag feeds on three-star fuel without pinking.

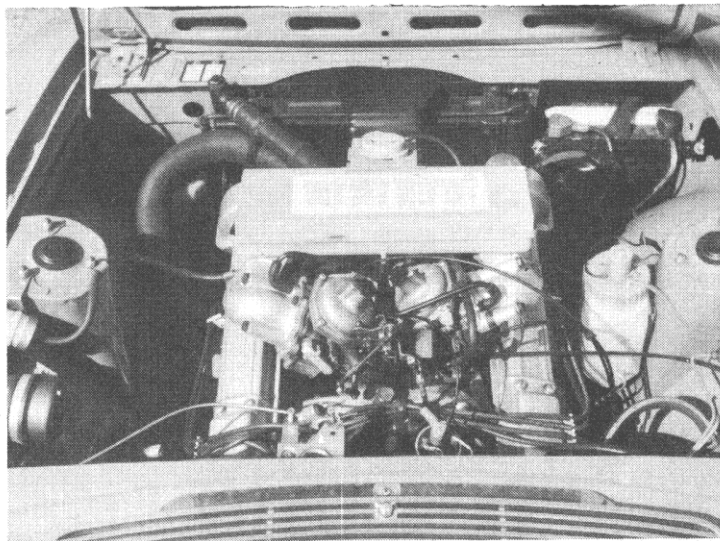
Perhaps the most significant improvement is to the steering. A smaller diameter wheel and a reduction in the amount of assistance has resulted in much better response and feel. You can now use the performance with much more confidence, though some say the steering is still too light.



The comprehensive instrumentation is easy to read and well-sited. We query the fitting of a battery condition meter in preference to an oil pressure gauge

An American-style "T" shift controls the Borg-Warner 35 gearbox. Its dog-leg change pattern is precise, but the positions are unnecessarily close. Moreover, the selection guide is set for LHD models and therefore is at times masked by the lever itself. One virtue of the dog-leg pattern is that it prevents inadvertent selection of neutral, a move that's all too easy on many other automatics.

Understeer is the predominant handling characteristic, though such was the adhesion of the fat Avon radials on our car that the breakaway point was very high indeed. Over bumpy surfaces the car is less tidy, with traces of lurch and diagonal pitch, and it is on these occasions that still more feel to the steering would be appreciated. Under most conditions, however, the car is very well mannered and can be thrown into corners in perfect safety. A slight wriggle after powering out of a turn suggests that there is still a trace of spline lock-up in the driveshafts, though this quirk is far less pronounced than it was on earlier cars.

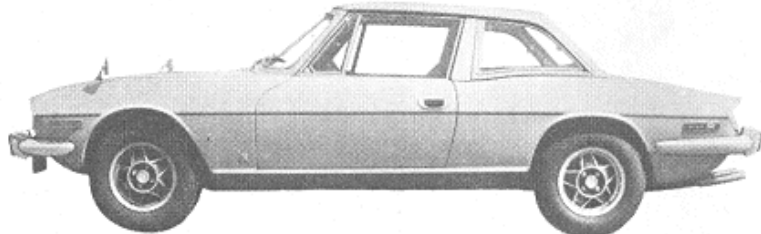


Automatic changes both up and down the gearbox are very smooth on part throttle, but can be quite jerky under full acceleration. The kickdown is also very responsive at mid-range speeds, but is reluctant to select first on

Another fault, perhaps peculiar to our test car, was slight sponginess in the brakes, the powerful servo-assisted disc/drum set-up needing an occasional pump to restore full efficiency.

Large catches set into the side of the seats release the backrests for access to the rear. This would be less of a scramble if the whole

MOTOR ROAD TEST No 53/73 • TRIUMPH STAG



PERFORMANCE

CONDITIONS

Weather Dry, wind 4-15 mph
 Temperature 58-66 F
 Barometer 29.8 in. Hg
 Surface Dry tarmac

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

	mph	kph
Banked circuit	112.4	180.9
Best 1/4 mile	116.8	187.9

Terminal speeds:

	mph	kph
at 1/2 mile	66	106
at kilometre	83	134
Speed in gears (at 6500 rpm):		
1st	55	89
2nd	89	143

ACCELERATION FROM REST

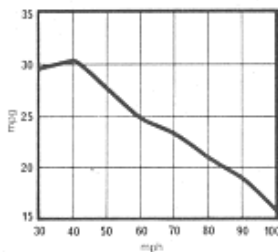
mph	sec	kph	sec
0-30	3.6	0-40	2.9
0-40	5.2	0-60	4.7
0-50	7.5	0-80	7.3
0-60	9.9	0-100	10.4
0-70	12.8	0-120	14.5
0-80	17.0	0-140	20.3
0-90	22.4	0-160	29.2
0-100	30.2		
Stand'g 1/4	17.6	Stand'g km	32.2

ACCELERATION IN KICK-DOWN

mph	sec	kph	sec
30-50	3.9	40-60	1.8
40-60	4.7	60-80	2.6
50-70	5.3	80-100	3.1
60-80	7.1	100-120	4.1
70-90	9.6	120-140	5.8
80-100	13.2	140-160	8.9

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Touring* 21.7 mpg
 13.0 litres/100 km



Overall 18.9 mpg
 15.0 litres/100 km
 Fuel grade 98 octane (RM)
 4 star rating
 Tank capacity 12.75 gallons
 57.9 litres
 Max range 276 miles
 — km
 Test distance 2119 miles
 3409 km
 * Consumption midway between 30 mph and maximum less 5 per cent for acceleration.

SPEEDOMETER (mph)

Speedo 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
 True mph 30 41 52 62 72 82 93 104
 Distance recorder: accurate.

WEIGHT

	cwt	kg
Unladen weight*	24.7	1254.8
Weight as tested	28.4	1442.8

* With fuel for approx 50 miles.

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

GENERAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Cylinders V8 (90°)
 Capacity 2997 cc (182.9 cu in.)
 Bore/stroke 86/64.5 mm
 (3.38/2.53 in.)
 Cooling Water
 Block Cast iron
 Head Aluminium alloy
 Valves 2-ohc

Valve timing

inlet opens 16° bt/dc
 inlet closes 56° ab/dc
 ex opens 56° bb/dc
 ex closes 16° at/dc

Compression 9.25:1

Carburettor Two Stromberg CDS (E) V

Bearings 5 main

Fuel pump Electrical

Max power 146 bhp (DIN) at 5700 rpm

Max torque 167 lb ft (DIN) at 3500 rpm

TRANSMISSION

Type Borg Warner type 35 automatic
 Internal ratios and mph/100 rpm
 Top 1.00:1/20.0
 2nd 1.45:1/13.7
 1st 2.39:1/8.4
 Rev 2.09:1
 Final drive Hypoid bevel 3.70:1

BODY/CHASSIS

Construction Unitary all steel
 Protection Phosphated by 7-stage process

SUSPENSION

Front Independent by MacPherson struts, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
 Rear Independent by semi-trailing arms, coil springs and telescopic dampers

STEERING

Type Rack and pinion
 Assistance Yes
 Toe-in 1/4 in.
 Camber 1° positive ± 1
 Castor 2° ± 1
 King pin 10 ± 1
 Rear toe-in 0-1/8 in.

BRAKES

Type Disc/drum
 Servo Yes
 Circuits Yes
 Rear valve No
 Adjustment Self-adjusting

WHEELS

Type Steel 5J
 Tyres 185 HR14 radial
 Pressures 26 F; 30 R

ELECTRICAL

Battery 12 volt, 56 ah
 Polarity Negative earth
 Generator Alternator
 Fuses 12
 Headlights 4 x 5 1/2 Quartz Halogen

COMPARISONS

	Capacity cc	Price £	Max mph	0-60 sec	30-50* sec	Overall mpg	Touring mpg	Length ft in	Width ft in	Weight cwt	Boot cu ft
Triumph Stag	2997	2685	112.4	9.9	3.9	18.9	21.7	14 6.75	5 3.5	24.7	3.6
Reliant Scimitar GTE	2994	2517	—	8.7	7.6	21.7	28.2	14 2.25	5 5	22.8	—
Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV	1962	2849	115.3	8.9	10.9	20.8	26.9	13 4.5	5 2.5	20.2	6.8†
Datsun 240Z	2392	2690	125.1	8.3	9.0	25.7	31.2	13 7	5 4	20.3	11.4
Lotus Elan +2S 130	1558	2789	121.0	7.7	8.5	21.0	26.1	14 0.5	5 3.5	16.8	4.2†
MGB GT V8	3528	2309	125.3	7.7	6.2	19.8	25.7	12 9	5 0	21.2	6.6
Opel Commodore Coupe GS	2490	2800	106.8	12.0	4.7	17.1	21.3	15 0	5 7.5	24.3	11.3

*kickdown for Stag and Commodore †measured with boxes not cases

Make: Triumph

Model: Stag

Makers: British Leyland (Triumph) Ltd, Coventry England

Price: £2303.0 plus £191.92 car tax plus £249.49 VAT equals £2744.41. Automatic transmission £45.29 (in lieu of overdrive), Sundym glass £45.29, alloy wheels £68.52, total as tested equals £2903.51

seat tilted forward. Once you are installed in the back, headroom beneath the hood or hardtop is limited, and the backrest is a little upright. For short journeys, however, there is sufficient room for two adults.

Boot space is very limited, but there is excellent stowage for oddments, with map pockets in the front doors and the back of the seats, handy trays to the side of the rear seats, as well as a parcel shelf and glovebox in the fascia and a flat area on the console ahead of the gearlever.

The driving position is very good and can be adjusted to suit all shapes and sizes. The steering column, for instance, can be altered for reach and rake and a handle on the front of the seat alters the tilt of the cushion, though we found the range of adjustment insufficient and the cushion always too flat and lacking in thigh support. The backrests will recline fully.

A large brake pedal allows for left- or right-foot braking, but some of our testers complained that both pedals were offset too far to the right. A rare and welcome refinement is a footrest for the left foot.

The traditional Triumph fingertip controls now include parking lights and electric washers, as well as the newly added intermittent wipe facility. The instruments are unchanged apart from a slightly restyled calibration.

Though Triumph say no alterations have been made to the suspension, the ride seemed better than before. It can become a little turbulent on poor secondary roads, where it feels underdamped, but unlike so many cars that are comfortable at speed the Stag has an excellent town ride.

Ram pressure through the eyeball face vents is poor but output can be supplemented by the opening quarterlights and the fan-boosted swivel vents in the centre of the fascia. Overall, the heating and ventilating system is good. Our only complaint being heater tends to bleed too much air from the ventilation system.

Road noise was always subdued on this car and engine and exhaust noise have both been cut down, so it is only wind noise that breaks the peace. When the car is open or fitted with the well-sealed hardtop, wind noise is tolerable, but it is very loud with the hood up.

The Stag's equipment can only be described as lavish. Fittings include a clock, map, reversing and parking lights, heated rear window set into the hardtop.

Although the hood and hardtop have been improved, erection of both is still a trial of strength. Fixing the rear hood catch in place calls for much struggling and the hardtop, though beautifully made, requires two strong men to manhandle it on and off.

This test of the updated Stag reaffirms our initial impression that the car is not only unique in character and a highly desirable property, but that the standard of finish makes it a world-beater at the price.

