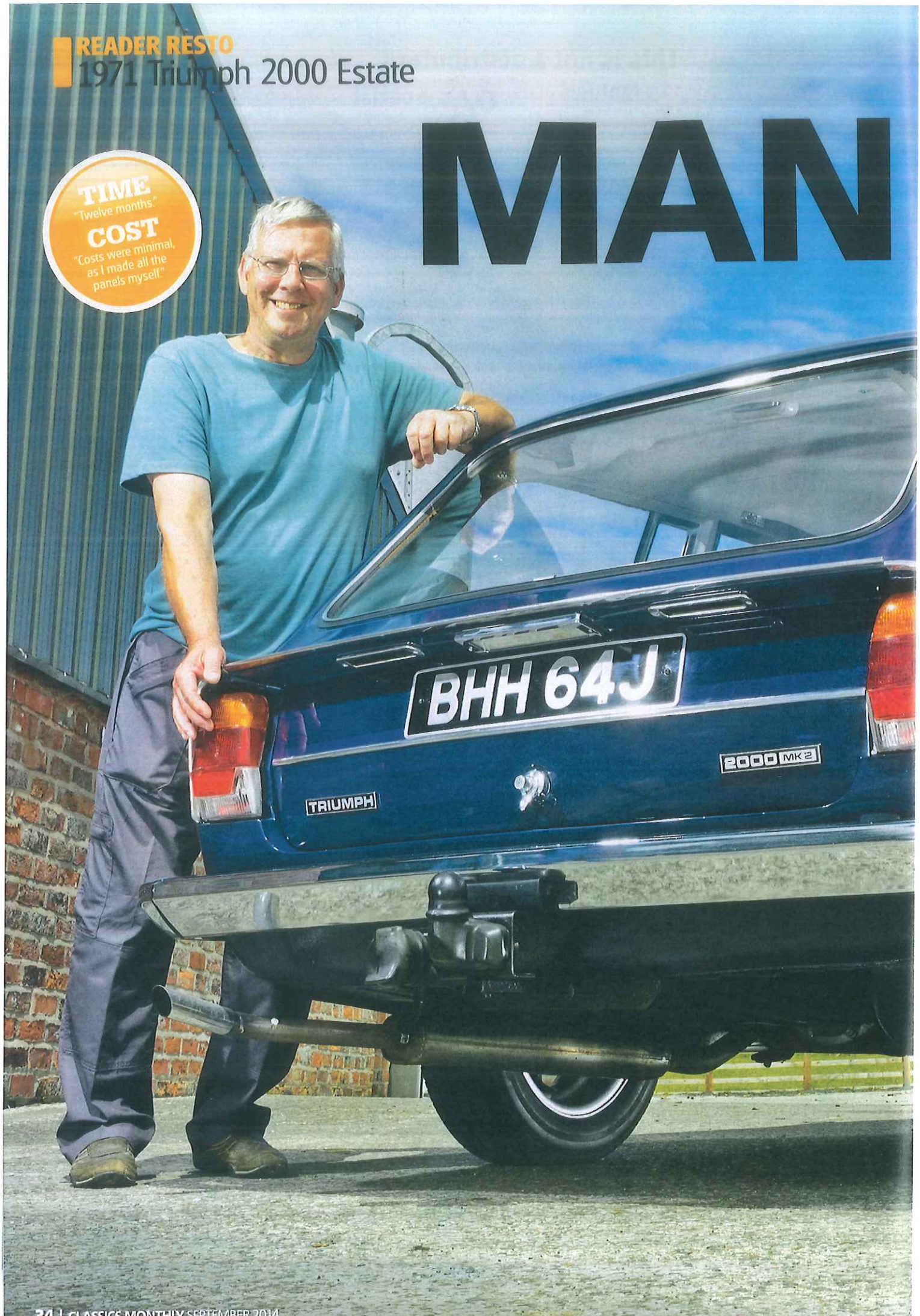
READER RESTO

1971 Triumph 2000 Estate

MAN

TIME
"Twelve months."

COST
"Costs were minimal, as I made all the panels myself."



1971 Triumph 2000 Estate

OF STEEL

From a 70 sq ft footprint, Ian Savage replaced 64 sq ft of rotten metal. His superhuman efforts included making all the repair panels himself, from scratch.

WORDS BY **NIGEL CLARK** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRIS WALLBANK**

Having restored a Stag, Ian Savage decided he wanted a second Triumph as an everyday car. It needed to be comfortable, spacious and relaxing to drive in daily use. The answer came in the shape of a Triumph 2000 estate; the combination of that smooth six-cylinder engine, overdrive gearbox, power steering, seating for five and a generous load bay would meet Ian's every need.

If choosing the right daily-driver classic was easy, getting the car on the road was anything but. To set the scene, it's worth mentioning that his car received the 'Heap of the Week' award at the Triumph 2000 Register National, shortly before the restoration began in earnest. ›

RESTORATION TIMELINE

1) BEFORE: AUGUST 2012

READER RESTO
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Interior still looks as good as it did the day it left the factory.

Quick Q&A

Asked about the time spent welding his Triumph, Ian replies:
"I love restoring cars, it's my hobby. It's just what I do."

How much have you used the car?
"I've been to a few car shows, but need to drive the car more and deal with a few teething problems, so it can become my daily driver."

And would he take on another restoration?
The reply is an emphatic yes: "Maybe a Hillman Imp, or perhaps a Morris Traveller, but I don't know whether to buy the wooden frame or learn how to make it myself." We can guess the answer!

2-litre engine has been fitted with SU carbs, instead of the original Strombergs.

Starting from scratch

Many restorations have a particular theme or centre point; this is a story of one man's welding skill and determination to replace rot with steel. As purchased in 2012, the big Triumph's colour scheme resembled an automotive version of *Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, but the lack of solid steel beneath the garish paint was Ian's main concern. He got to work stripping the car immediately. Though the outer panels were largely sound, the underside was a different story, as Ian recalls: "Plates had been welded straight over rusty metal and new outer sills tacked on top of the rotten originals. There was no strength to the car once I started unpicking the patches. I had to rebuild virtually the whole underside." Asked about any difficulty in finding new panels or repair sections, Ian modestly replies: "I made them all." Incredible skill and patience lies behind those four simple words.

He continues: "I wanted the car to be strong and solid throughout,

2) SEPTEMBER 2012
The big stripdown commences. "What have I let myself in for…"

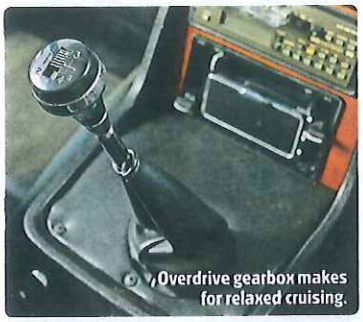
3) SEPTEMBER 2012
Spit roast Triumph - Ian found the body roller essential when dealing with rotten floors.

4) OCTOBER 2012
Here's a close up of how Ian achieved complex repair shapes by patchwork welding.

1971 Triumph 2000 Estate

RESTO TOP TIP
When extensive repairs are needed, use a body roller. It can be the difference between finishing or not.

> "An 8x4 sheet of steel only costs £20 and I could make a lot of panels from just one sheet"



Overdrive gearbox makes for relaxed cruising.

Ian retained the retro-fitted power steering rack.

but I didn't want to spend more than the car is worth. An 8x4 sheet of steel only costs £20 and I could make a lot of panels from one sheet. In fact, I needed two big sheets of steel to do the job." In addition to the sheet steel, Ian used two 5kg reels of MIG wire and three professional size bottles of shielding gas during the rebuild. In addition to his welder, another essential tool was a body roller: "When I saw how much welding would be needed, I started to wonder if the car was really worth doing. But a friend lent me a car rotisserie, so I could turn the shell easily to work on the underside." The welding took nine months altogether; working overhead, beneath the car for so much time would be impossible, so it's easy to see how important the body roller became. Ian says, "I would never do another car without a spit for the body."

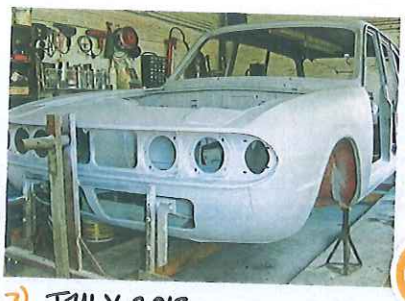
Ingenious repairs

He showed true ingenuity in making up repair sections. The complex curves for the inner wheelarches were formed by gently bending small individual pieces, which were then welded together to form the required profile, before cleaning up the surface with another of his essential tools, the angle grinder. Hammering sheets over angle iron in a bench vice produced reinforcing ribs in the floor sections. When it came to the outer sills, Ian explains that, "new sills had been tacked over the old ones and I managed to save them. I borrowed a spot welder, which was very useful when the time came to re-attach the sills."

When, after nine months, Ian could find no more rust, it was time for paint, which of course he sprayed himself; Ian chose cellulose, for ease of finishing in a home garage but says, "if I did it

5) NOVEMBER 2012
New inner sills, with jacking point and seat belt mount visible.

6) APRIL 2013
Yet more welding, as Ian fashions a huge repair panel for the boot floor.



7) JULY 2013
It's good to see the body in primer, and the right way up, too.

1971 Triumph 2000 Estate

again, I would use two-pack paint to get the durability for an everyday car, so I'm looking at getting a second compressor for an air-fed mask." Multiple coats of primer-filler were followed by hours of flatting down, a part of the project which Ian found tedious. With the body primed, Ian finished the car in a topcoat of Triumph Royal Blue, followed by more flatting, more coats of paint and final polishing. The resulting finish deserves the label 'good as new'.

RESTO TOP TIP
If panels aren't available, almost any shape can be remade; make complex curves in small sections then weld together.

Mechanical refresh

Moving on to the oily parts, the engine was assessed thoroughly. Dropping the sump, Ian checked the crank bearings and deemed them suitable for re-use. There was no need to remove the cylinder head, though a leaking water pump was replaced and the outside of the engine freshened up with black paint. Neither overdrive gearbox nor differential needed attention, so both were refitted. The rear suspension proved to be a puzzle, says Ian: "I put the car back


Differential was sound, needing nothing more than a clean and repaint.

Buying a Triumph 2000

Triumph's big saloons and estates are undervalued, so thorough repair or restoration is often seen as uneconomic. Watch out for cars that may look good, but have been repaired on the cheap. The good news is that if you can find a cosseted car, it's excellent value, as the best still cost under £5000.

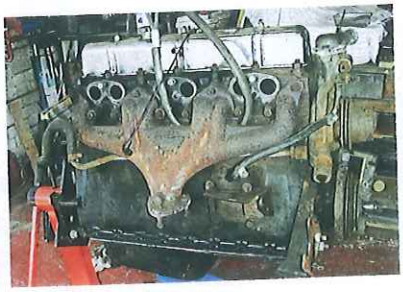
When inspecting a potential purchase, body condition is everything. Mechanically, these cars are tough, but check for worn crankshaft thrust washers and clunks from tired driveshafts.


Generous load bay means this Triumph can earn its keep when required

TECH SPEC

Triumph 2000 MkII

- **ENGINE** 1998cc/6-cyl/OHV
- **POWER** 84bhp@5000rpm
- **TORQUE** 100ft lb@2900rpm
- **GEARBOX** Four-speed manual + O/D
- **BODY** Steel monocoque
- **BRAKES** Front 9.75" discs, rear 9" drums
- **FRONT SUSPENSION** MacPherson struts/coil springs
- **REAR SUSPENSION** Semi-trailing arms, telescopic dampers
- **WHEELS & TYRES** 13 x 4.5" pressed steel wheels, 13" radial tyres
- **TOP SPEED** 100mph
- **0-60MPH** 13.3 seconds
- **ECONOMY** 23-28mpg



8) AUGUST 2013
Now the heavy six-cylinder engine receives some TLC.

9) AUGUST 2013
Engine bay refit is well underway.

10) AUGUST 2013
Only the electrics and interior to go, then the job is finished.

1971 Triumph 2000 Estate

Updated and uprated

- 15" Minilite wheels
- Fully polybushed suspension
- Anti-roll bar
- Power steering

Contacts

- **Chris Witor (parts)**
  www.chriswitor.com
- **Rimmer Brothers (parts)**
  www.rimmerbros.co.uk
- **Triumph 2000/2500/2.5 Register**
  www.triumph2000register.co.uk
- **Club Triumph**
  www.clubtriumph.org.uk

together and found huge negative camber at the rear wheels, but couldn't understand why. Parts supplier Chris Witor found the answer – incorrect brackets had been used in the past to fit the rear trailing arms." With new brackets sourced and fitted, the estate now sits square on the road.

Electrical systems were reconnected, but the heater plumbing was more problematic. Having ordered new heater hoses, Ian found five in the kit, but space for only four on the car. Again, Chris Witor provided the answer – the engine had originated from another Triumph model and lacked a heater take-off point from the cylinder head, which was easily dealt with by removing a blanking plug and fitting an adaptor.

Graft pays off

Finally, after just over a year and more than sixty square feet of new sheet steel, Ian refitted the interior and the car was finished at last. The MoT test, not surprisingly, yielded a first-time pass and he could start to enjoy the fruits of his labours.

On the road, Ian has found a few minor shake-down problems: "There's a bit of vibration at speed, which may come from worn splines in the rear driveshafts. I've also found that the new rubber door seals have slightly the wrong profile and don't seal well, which is frustrating." When Ian allowed us to take his Triumph for a short spin, it was immediately impressive. The body feels absolutely solid, as expected with so much new metal, and totally free from creaks and rattles. The ride is so smooth as to feel modern; Triumph's all-independent suspension coupled with polyurethane bushes and the large wheels and tyres explain the 'magic carpet' feel. The power steering is comfortably light after jumping from a modern car and the straight-six engine purrs smoothly, but in a car weighing 1¼ tons, it needs to be worked hard. Ian is thinking of fitting a 2500 engine, which would cope more easily with the car's considerable bulk. This is a minor criticism – Ian's Triumph 2000 estate is without question the comfortable, practical car he wanted for daily use.

> "Incorrect brackets had been used in the past to fit the rear trailing arms"

The finished car is certainly no trailer queen – Ian plans to enjoy using it on a daily basis.

CM SAYS...

Ian's commitment to replacing rotten bodywork with new saved a car that could quite easily have been scrapped. His restoration produced exactly what he set out to achieve – a sound, reliable car that meets his everyday needs.

On the road his car drives beautifully, with a sense of solidity and comfort belying its age. His restoration is a complete success – the richly deserved result of his impressive skill and determination. It's great to see a classic saved and used as intended when new. CM