

Triumph Herald

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The Herald's angular styling, which still looks good over 50 years down the line, was a hallmark of this distinctive model.

Featuring a separate chassis, under-stated good looks, ultra-easy engine access for maintenance, and all-round independent suspension, Triumph's Herald has much going for it as a user-friendly, attractive classic. Kim Henson elaborates...

Arriving on the UK motoring scene in 1959, the Triumph Herald was a new compact, stylishly angular car from Standard-Triumph, and effectively replaced the Standard Eights and Tens of the 1950s. The newcomer was unusual for a car of its time in featuring a separate chassis frame, but this made easier the provision of a wide range of differing body



styles on the same basic platform (and can help in terms of structural restoration, for owners today).

The Heralds were sold in two door saloon, two door fixed head coupé, convertible, estate and Courier van versions. The cars incorporated styling by Giovanni Michelotti, with engineering by Harry Webster and his team.

Power was originally provided by the 948cc engine already proven in the Standard Tens of the 1950s, and this unit was developed through the years into 1147cc and 1296cc forms.

Advanced features for a family car of 1959 were all-independent suspension plus rack and pinion steering - and the Herald was also renowned for its very small turning circle, helping to make tight parking manoeuvres much easier.

Rare today are the Coupé and Courier van versions. The Herald convertibles have always been appreciated for their affordable blend of four seater practicality and open top motoring.



Pointed rear fins and minor bump resisting 'wrap-around' rubber bumpers came as standard.

The 12/50 saloons were more sporty than the standard versions, with twin carburettors and a standard-fit sun roof; they are still very enjoyable to drive, yet relatively affordable.



From October 1967 the new Herald 13/60 was fitted with a more powerful 1296cc engine, and this model featured a revised interior, plus a bonnet similar to that of the six cylinder Vitesse (but with just two headlamps, rather than four).

The interiors of all Heralds were finished to a high standard compared with many rivals of their time. Boot space is especially impressive for a car of fairly modest overall dimensions.

Advanced rust in the chassis and body can be difficult to rectify – although the construction of the vehicle around a separate chassis frame can make do-it-yourself restoration an easier proposition than for contemporary chassisless rivals. All the same, removing (and re-fitting) the body shell for major restoration work to be carried out is a huge and time-consuming job.

Check the chassis frame for accident damage and for rust – everywhere, but especially in the outriggers and side rails, along the main longitudinal members and rear extension pieces, and around all the suspension mountings.

The bodywork can rust around the main front bulkhead, in the front wing/bonnet assembly, along the lower edges of the doors and rear wings, in the front and rear valance panels, in the main floor pans plus the boot floor, and around the wheel arch lips.

Check that the panel gaps are all approximately even, and that the bonnet opens and closes easily (if not, this may indicate that at some time the car may have been involved in an accident).

Ensure that the engine runs sweetly, also that it does not emit excessive amounts of blue smoke (indicating piston/ring/cylinder bore wear), and does not rattle from the bottom end (crankshaft/bearing troubles).

Check that the gearbox is not noisy, that synchromesh action is effective and that the gearchange is positive in action (if not it may be just the linkage which requires attention).



Neglected Heralds are often ailing in terms of the front suspension (due to lack of regular lubrication; this **MUST** be carried out regularly to minimise wear) and drivetrain woes which can include worn universal joints (listen for clicking sounds).

A very major plus point in owning any Herald is the superb access to the engine, steering gear, front suspension and front brakes, courtesy of the forward-tipping bonnet/wing assembly, which tilts as a unit; this is a great help during maintenance/repair work. In addition, the gearbox can be removed from inside the vehicle, rather than from below it, for changing the clutch and/or gearbox. This is easier for many owners!

Prices for most versions are still affordable, although convertibles in particular can command higher figures (as can the ultra-rare Courier vans).

Heralds are inexpensive to run; fuel consumption is typically between 35 and 45 miles per gallon, and spares are widely available at reasonable prices, from a number of specialists.

The club scene is very active. Organisations worth contacting include:

Club Triumph. Tel. 01932 562514. www.club.triumph.org.uk

Triumph Sports Six Club. Tel. 01858 434424. www.tssc.org.uk



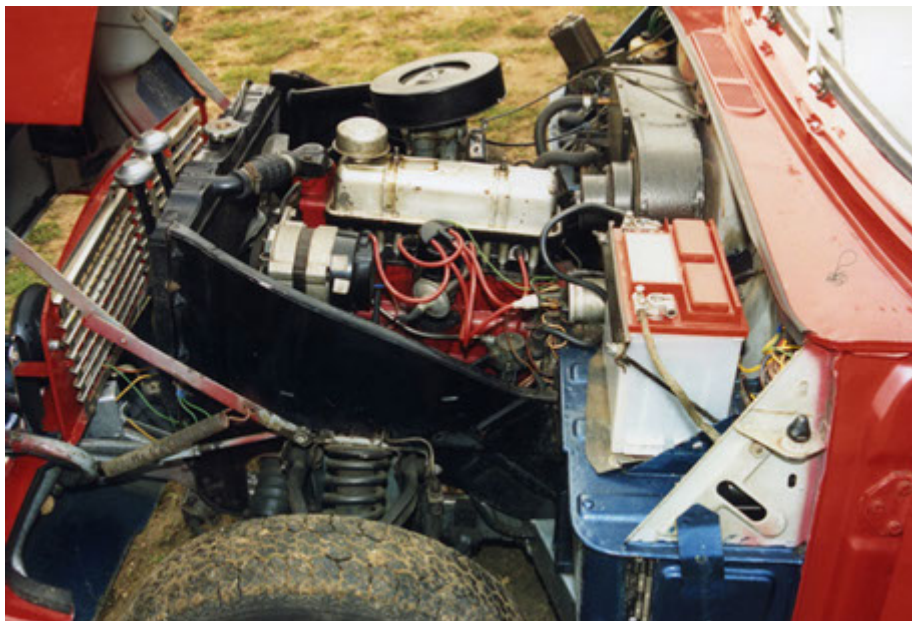
Comfortable seats in Triumph's smallest model were more classy than in many 'budget' rivals.



A wood-finished facia was a nice 'luxury' touch for the Herald.



The wide, deep and long boot will accommodate a family's holiday luggage; the estate versions will carry even more.



Superb access to the engine and front suspension components is great news for do-it-yourself maintenance enthusiasts.



Pointed rear fins and minor bump resisting 'wrap-around' rubber bumpers came as standard.

PRICES

Saloon: Rough, £400. Good, £1,200+. Top Notch, £2,750+

Convertible: Rough, £1,000. Good, £2,500. Top Notch, £4,500+

Coupé: Rough, £700+. Good, £1,500+. Top Notch, £3,500+

FACTS AND FIGURES

Built:

950: 1959-62

1200: 1961-70

12/50: 1962-67

13/60: 1967-71

Bodywork:

Two door saloon, coupé, estate, convertible, 'Courier' van

Engine:

Overhead valve, in-line four cylinder.

950: 948cc; Single carburettor, 34.5 bhp; twin carburettor, 42.4 bhp



1200: 1147cc, 39 bhp (48 bhp from Nov. 1964)

12/50: 1147cc, 51 bhp

13/60: 1296cc, 61 bhp

0-60 mph:

950: Single carburettor, 28 sec; twin carburettor, 22 sec

1200: 24 sec (20 sec from Nov. 1964)

12/50: 19 sec

13/60: 18 sec

Top speed:

950: Single carburettor, 70+ mph; twin carburettor, 80 mph

1200: 75 mph (80+ mph from Nov. 1964)

12/50: 80+ mph

13/60: 85 mph

Typical fuel consumption:

35-40+ mpg