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Book review – Triumph Cars – The Complete Story (New Third Edition)

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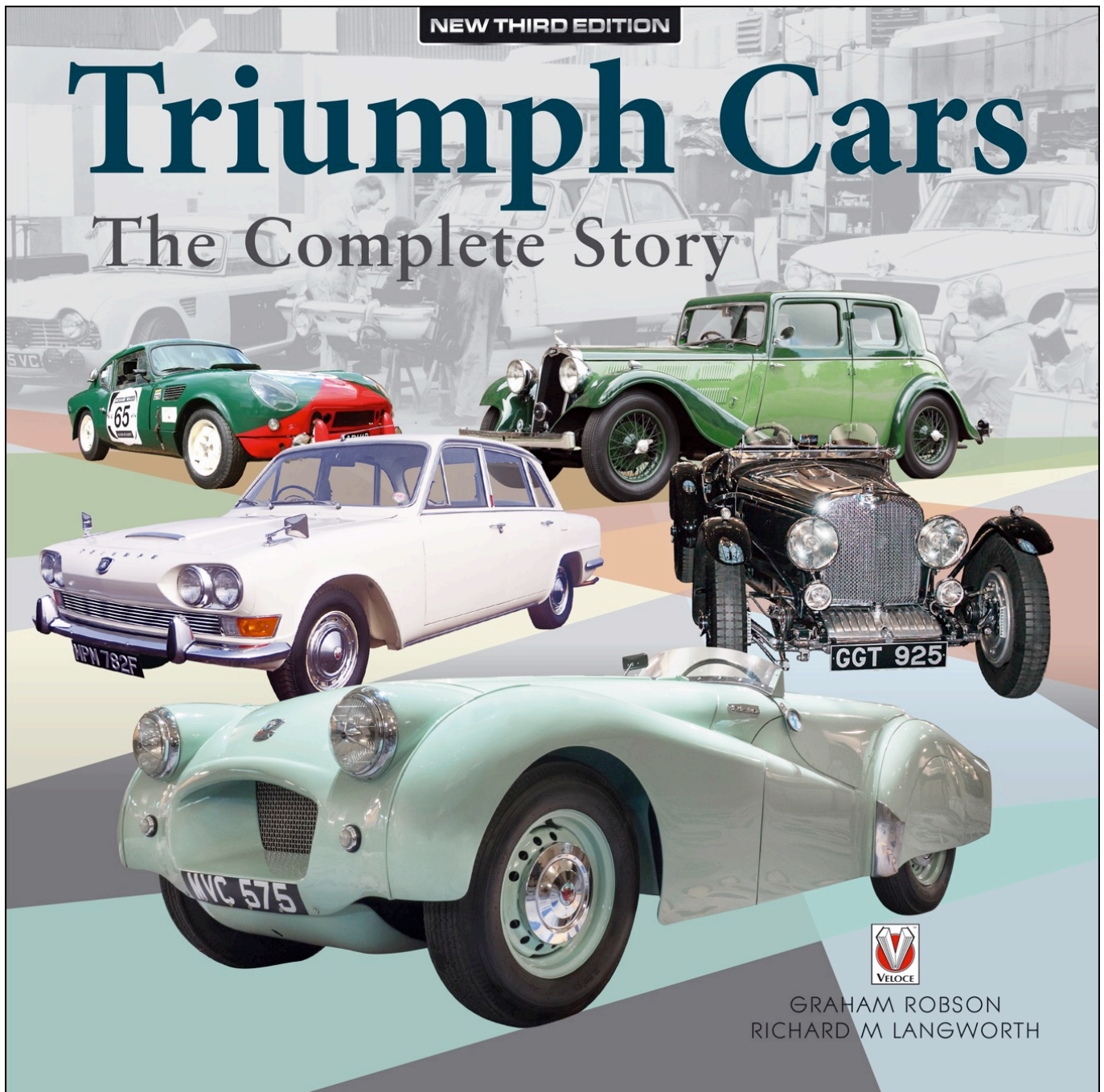
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Reviewed by Kieron Fennelly

Title: Triumph Cars - The Complete Story (New Third Edition)

Author: Graham Robson/Richard M Langworth



Published by: Veloce; Veloce.co.uk

256 pages; hardback

Price: £40 UK; \$65US

ISBN: 978-1-787112-89-6

The Triumph story, as this book shows, goes back as far as the nineteenth century and bicycles, later succeeded by the motorcycles for which the company became famous. Cars came in the 1920s: Triumph would be a respected name on the motoring scene for the next half century only to vanish ignominiously in the British Leyland débâcle. The authors, both Triumph devotees, originally produced their work in 1978 when it was hoped the brand might even survive the waves of mergers changing the face of the British car industry. Alas it was not to be, but the very fact that the authors' research was largely carried out when the company, its archives and many of its prime movers were still in existence means that their book, now in a revised third edition, has great immediacy and authenticity.

The narrative covers both the familiar - the TRs, and the rather less familiar, the Zebu, Standard Triumph's (as it was in 1957) new small car. This innovatively styled model with a cut back rear window and radical engineering - its gearbox and rear axle were combined, was abandoned after successful outings of the prototype because "another manufacturer" (Ford with the Anglia) was about to launch a similar body and Standard Triumph lost heart.

The rivalry between those quintessential mid-market competitors the Triumph 2000 and the Rover 2000 is described compellingly and it is just these sorts of historical details which make this book such an absorbing read.

Graham Robson, who narrates the story of Triumph's last 40 years, is a prolific auto writer whose light, flowing prose always has a natural pedagogy and few authors succeed in demonstrating their knowledge so unobtrusively. He is ably supported by Richard Langworth whose account of the pre-war story is carried by his engaging enthusiasm.



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VERDICT

For both auto historians and marque fans, it is highly unlikely that the Triumph story will ever be more comprehensively or convincingly told.