

Motors of Moment by Valve Bounce

In 1961 the Standard Triumph management was already discussing the need for a Herald replacement which they hoped to have ready by 1964. For a long time Chief Engineer and Technical Director Harry Webster had wanted to build a front-wheel drive car and much time and innovative work was devoted to the design. Code-named "Ajax" the car was originally expected to appear in both 2-door and 4-door form and would be of monocoque design rather than have a separate chassis like the Herald family. Influenced somewhat by the arrival of the Issigonis inspired Mini and 1100, Standard Triumph examined the possibility of front wheel drive. However, they were determined to retain a fore and aft engine position. Michelotti produced his final body design in 1963 and the well tried "SC" engine which had started life with 803cc, then 948cc and 1147cc now arrived at 1296cc for the new model which was named the Triumph 1300. It was announced in October 1965 and became available for sale in January 1966. Two years later the 1300TC appeared fitted with the Spitfire Mk.III engine and a cheaper version, code-named "Manx" was developed but not produced. One four wheel drive car, Reg.No. LVC 151F was built for use in rallycross. That the car won the Car of the Year award for 1965/6 is a tribute to the success of the work which resulted in a quiet, well equipped saloon, the forerunner of a whole series of Triumph small cars which lasted in production until 1980 and which are still respected for their virtues. Indeed, how true is the often heard remark, "they don't make them like that any more".

In 1970 the front wheel drive programme was uprated to become the Triumph 1500 with the same engine now enlarged finally to 1493cc. However, before then doubts about the efficiency in terms of handling, servicing and finance had begun to appear and it was eventually decided to abandon the whole front wheel drive idea. By the mid-seventies the small saloons had all been rationalised into the Dolomite range. Total production of the FWD models was as follows:-

1965-1970	1300	113,008
1967-1970	1300TC	35,342
1970-1973	1500	66,353

Writing in *Car* magazine in March 1966, their technical contributor, Laurence Pomeroy, listed his reasons for making the

1300 his personal choice. "In the past six years there has, following the great success of Issigonis's ADO 15, been a steady swing to front driven wheels from a front mounted engine/transmission pack. The companies which have been converted to this layout delude Lancia and Fiat/AutoBianchi in Italy, Peugeot and Renault in France, Ford and Audi in Germany, Triumph in England and Oldsmobile in the USA. Of them Lancia, Ford and Renault follow the 30-year old Citroen theme of putting the engine behind and the gearbox in front of the front centres. Thus the back half of the engine intrudes on the passenger's space and tends to transmit noise directly to it. Audi put a miraculously compact engine ahead of the wheels, but this pushes the gearbox through the front floor. AutoBianchi string out a four cylinder engine, clutch and gearbox across the car with the final spur wheel drives rather out of centre, but are thereby driven to a very wide track in order to get a reasonable turning circle. Peugeot put the crankshaft above the transversely-mounted gear shafts just as in a Mini, but starting with no obligation to use existing parts the drive is simplified and more efficient. Full marks, then, to Triumph for combining simplicity and efficiency by mounting the engine **above** a conventional crown wheel and pinion running in its own little box with its private supply of hypoid oil. Behind it, and also beneath the crankshaft, lie the gears driven by a step down pair of spur wheels cut at an exceptional angle to ensure quiet running. These gears also have their own casing with their own oil supply. With a modern engine, such a unit fits between the wheel arches very nearly as snugly as a transverse power-pack – so that little is lost in space and much gained in terms of turning circle, quiet running and easy gear changing with fore and aft levers. Additionally an in-line engine can be more softly mounted than a transverse type without running into difficulty with the exhaust. The Triumph 1300 is not only an outstanding success in technical ingenuity but a thoroughly well turned-out car with an attractive exterior and a very well furnished inside which caters for the lignomania for which we English are notorious." Praise indeed, from such a well respected source!

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