

FEATURED ENGINE AND VEHICLE MAKERS AT POP 2014

TRIUMPH MOTORCYCLES

Triumph motorcycle will be showcased at this year's Power of the Past, 112 years after first going into production (see below). It is also 61 years since 2 young men rode around Australia to prove that Reynolds Chains could do the job. Michael Lockyer is shown in Figure 1 with his Triumph Twin in 1953 about to set off on the ride. It is anticipated that Mike (now in his eighties) will attend Power of the Past this year. A replica of his Triumph was ridden around Australia last year (no dirt roads this time!) to re-create the event.

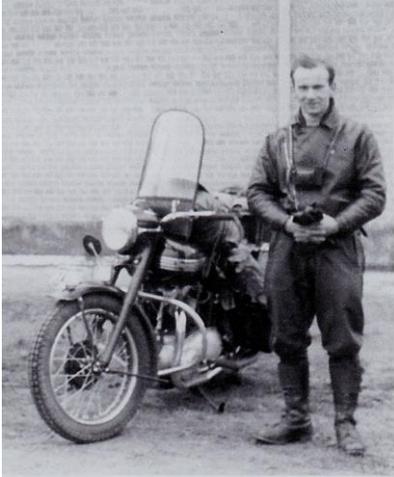


Figure 1 Mike Lockyer in 1953 about to ride around Australia on a Triumph Twin.

Brief Triumph Motorcycle History

Triumph is a privately-owned British company with over 100 years of history. Triumph has always had its own distinctive character and a history of creating bikes that become design classics since they first came to market in the 1900s. Like the rest of the British motorcycle industry, Triumph went out of business by the 1980s. But the brand was resurrected in the 1990s by British industrialist John Bloor who has built a lineup of cutting-edge sportbikes and nostalgia-themed “throwbacks”.

1883-1902 Triumph Cycle Co Ltd established initially as an import-export company trading in sewing machines and bicycles. Following repeal of onerous road laws, motorcycle import and manufacture commenced.

1903-1913 Triumph opened a subsidiary in Germany to build and sell motorcycles. Initially engines were sourced from JAP (the initials of James A. Prestwich), and later motorcycles were constructed (in UK) completely in-house. New models came with a variable pulley to help with difficult inclines. To change gears, the rider comes to a complete stop, gets off the bike and moves the belt by hand! Triumph went on to develop the first practical clutch and a prototype 600cc vertical Twin.

1914-1919 Despite its strong connection to Germany, Triumph supplied 30,000 Type H motorcycles to the Allies over the course of WWI.

1920-1929 Triumph produced the 550cc Type SD, the company's first bike to feature a chain-driven rear wheel and the 350cc Model LS, the first Triumph with an oil pump driven by the motor (previously, the rider had to pump oil by hand). The 500cc Model P was a commercial success curtailed by the Wall Street stock market crash.

1930-1939 Several new motors were created, including a 150cc two-stroke and 250, 350 and 500cc four-strokes. The first attempt at a 650cc Twin was a commercial failure; the public preferring V-Twins. The 498cc Speed Twin (T100) with a top speed of over 90 mph became the definitive British motorcycle and established a pattern for Triumph bikes that lasted for more than 40 years.

1940-1949 All motorcycle production was geared towards the war effort with 50,000 units sold to the military. With the return of peace, the company focused on three models, the Tiger 100, the Speed Twin and the smaller touring 349cc 3T. All models featured telescopic front forks.

1950-1959 In this decade Triumph sold more bikes in the U.S. than any other market, including Britain. New models were introduced including the very popular T120 Bonneville 650. It was an evolution of the Tiger, fitted with twin carbs, and remained in production until 1983.

1960-1969 Triumph developed a new three-cylinder motor released in 1968 as the 750cc Triple powering the Triumph Trident. Although the motor was powerful by the standards of the day, it was too little, too late. Within weeks, the world was buzzing with news of the Honda 750-Four, which had overhead cams, a front disc brake and electric start to boot.

1970-1979 During the decade the BSA group, which included Triumph, posted a huge financial loss and despite a merger with Norton, production ceased. Factory workers formed a co-op but there was little capital to sustain output.

1980-1999 After some lean years, the factory closed its doors. English property developer John Bloor bought the remains and licensed the Triumph name to a small shop that continued to assemble a couple of Bonnevilles a day until 1985. Bloor outfitted a new factory with mass-production tooling and the export of new Triumphs to America began with 50,000 produced by 1997.

2000-Present A massive fire gutted the main Triumph assembly plant however the design and R&D shops were undamaged and continued new-bike development while the factory was rebuilt and refitted with state-of-the-art tooling. Production focuses on supersports bikes for International racing and "top-end" markets.