

BONUS

COMPLETE 50 STATE CHART ON HELMET LAWS

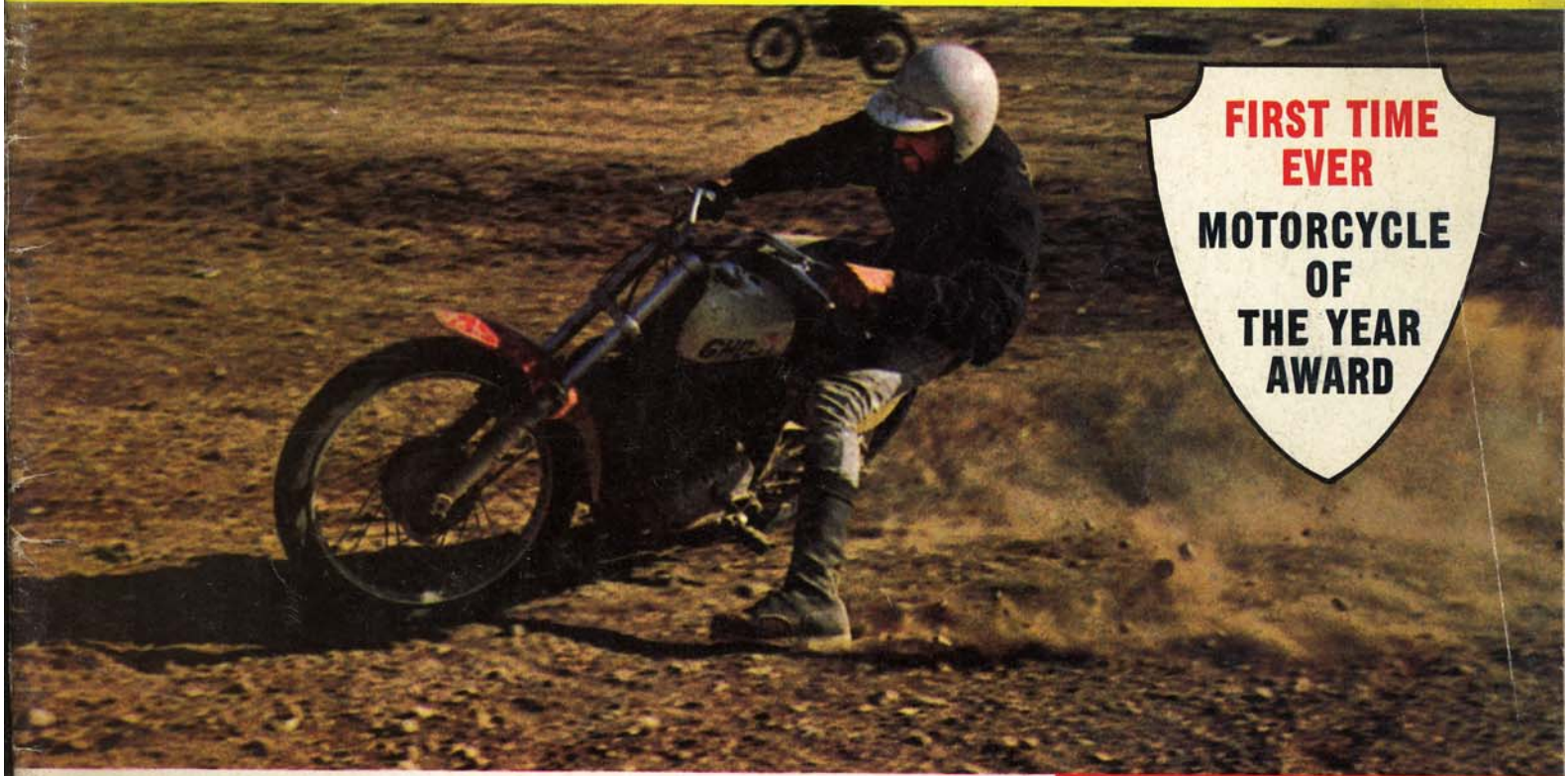
MOTORCYCLE

OCT. 1969



WE ARE THE ONLY MOTORCYCLE MAGAZINE THAT ACCEPTS NO ADVERTISING. WE SERVE THE CYCLING ENTHUSIAST WITH TRUE FACTS — HONEST OPINIONS.

WORLD 50¢



**FIRST TIME EVER
MOTORCYCLE
OF
THE YEAR
AWARD**

ROAD TESTS

600cc BMW R69 US

**650cc TRIUMPH
"TIGER"**



350cc DUCATI SSS

TWO DRAG-BIKE FEATURES

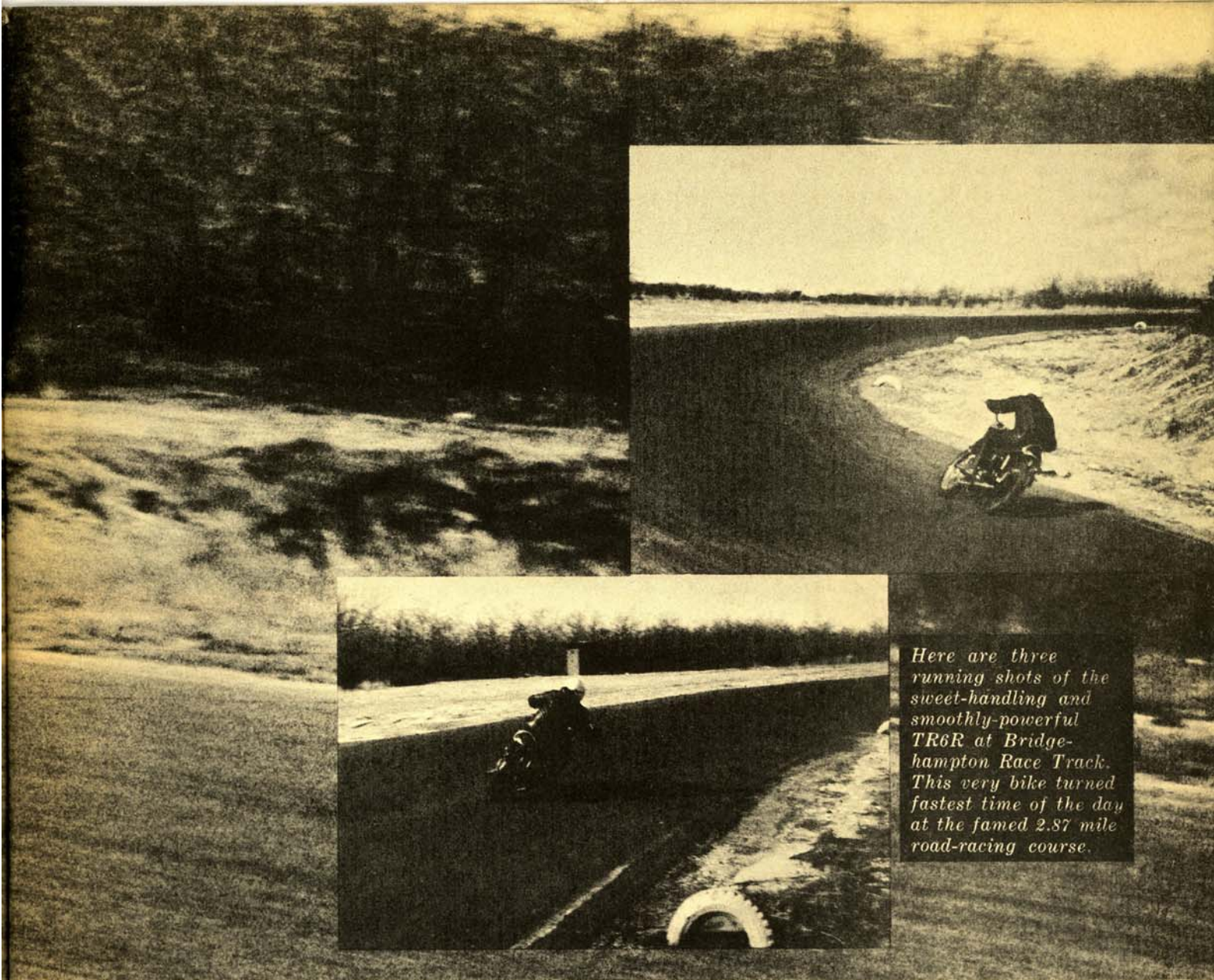
**TECHNICAL:
\$20.00 "SURE-START"
BOOSTER**

**RECORD RUN
AT DAYTONA**



TWIST THE TAIL ON THIS 650cc "KITTEN"
AND YOU'LL KNOW WHY IT'S CALLED THE

TRIUMPH TIGER 650 TR6R



Here are three running shots of the sweet-handling and smoothly-powerful TR6R at Bridgehampton Race Track. This very bike turned fastest time of the day at the famed 2.87 mile road-racing course.

■ "We don't sell motorcycles," stated an official of the Triumph Corporation on our recent visit to Baltimore to arrange a test of the TR6R. He went on to say that while our readers *might* be interested in technical aspects and statistic sheets, they definitely *want* one commodity in their machine . . . *Fun*. "That is what we sell . . . better than anybody else."

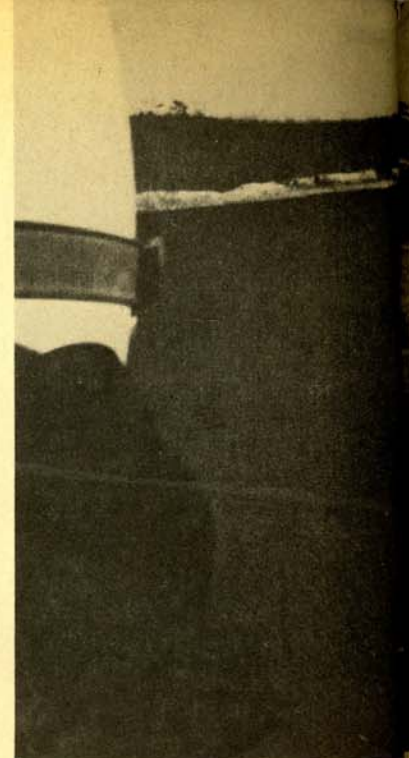
When someone gives us a point as clear and opinionated as that we (mentally) rub our palms and lick our lips. To prove that person wrong we go out of our way to refute what he holds most sacred . . . his own analysis. Regular readers of MCW know that, in the past, one of our most sardistically pleasurable duties has been the "what's wrong with . . ."

series of road tests. It gives us a chance to inform our readers of shoddy design, execution or service. Even more it lets us shake up the "Old Guard" in the motorcycle industry by showing them they've guessed wrong about you and me.

When we were told where we could pick up our test-machine, we knew that Triumph wasn't going to be easy to prove wrong. They had selected the Hank Slegers Co. to "set-up" the test machine. We know Hank and his master-mechanic, Jack Creelman. They are motorcycle people of the first rank; square-shooters and unimpeachably honest. Not to mention the fact that they're highly skilled. We had no fears of the bike's being "fiddled-with"; dishonesty is not in

Slegers' and Creelman's scheme of things. But we did know that, for a change, no little diddly-bop problems were going to crop up to interfere with our road test. The exact factory specs and quality control would be adhered to; *no more and no less!*

This also put us on our toes; since anything that would go wrong would be a fault with a properly set-up machine and would *have* to be judged on that basis. Feeling that we were up to the task, we took possession of the machine and headed for home. The machine had 9 and 2/10 miles on the odometer . . . breaking it in was our responsibility. We did not follow our normal test-break-in procedure. We beat hell out of that bike.



Two views of the Bridgehampton circuit from the rear of the TR6R. Coming out of the hairpin and accelerating for the gentle straight and curved section (above) and (above right) rocketing down the "chuté" before the last turn.

Having picked the bike up on a Thursday night (and finding it necessary to work for a living Friday) Saturday morning found us with only 58 miles on the odometer. But, we were going to change that . . . oh boy, yes! It seems that a friend of ours had invited us out to Bridgehampton Race Track for the weekend. The Madison Avenue Motorcycle Club was having one of their "Boy-Racer-Weekends" and we were going.

We trucked two bikes out; the TR6R and the Ducati SSS. We were determined as hell to break both bikes in fast. (We cover our Ducati test elsewhere, so we won't go into any details about the SSS 350, here).

The only preparation given to the Triumph was a topping-off of gas, an oil and tire pressure check, and the removal of the air cleaner. We fitted up a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch velocity stack to the 30mm Amal Concentric 930 and got out on the track.

Other than our first few orientation laps on the 2.87 mile course (which features a 3,000 foot straightaway that drops into a very fast right-hand turn) we drove each lap progressively faster. As other riders got a look at the swift, throaty "single-carb-Bonny" we received many re-

quests for rides on the Triumph. Figuring "why not?," we finally let nine play-racers in all go out and scratch around the course. Now, anyone who knows anything about machines, can tell you this is a cardinal error. Suffice it to say that our TR6R set the fastest lap of the day, and that yours truly had a little dice with a '68 Bonneville that was out there. The results are interesting.

A fierce headwind was blowing up the straightway, making it impossible to reach more than 6,800 rpm in third or fourth gears. We were all sort of doing our thing when I found myself behind the Bonneville for a few laps. Noticing that the rider of the Bonny was doing more braking than down-shifting through turns, I devised a little plot. Coming off the last turn before the straight I tromped it in 3rd gear and started my charge. The Bonneville had been about 125 feet ahead of me in fourth gear. (It's also worthy to mention that I outweighed the other rider by about 30 pounds) I slowly crept up to and past the Bonneville on the straight, reading 95 mph on the speedo before sitting up to slow slightly for turn one. By this time the Bonneville was 10 yards behind and never did repass me on the following laps we took.

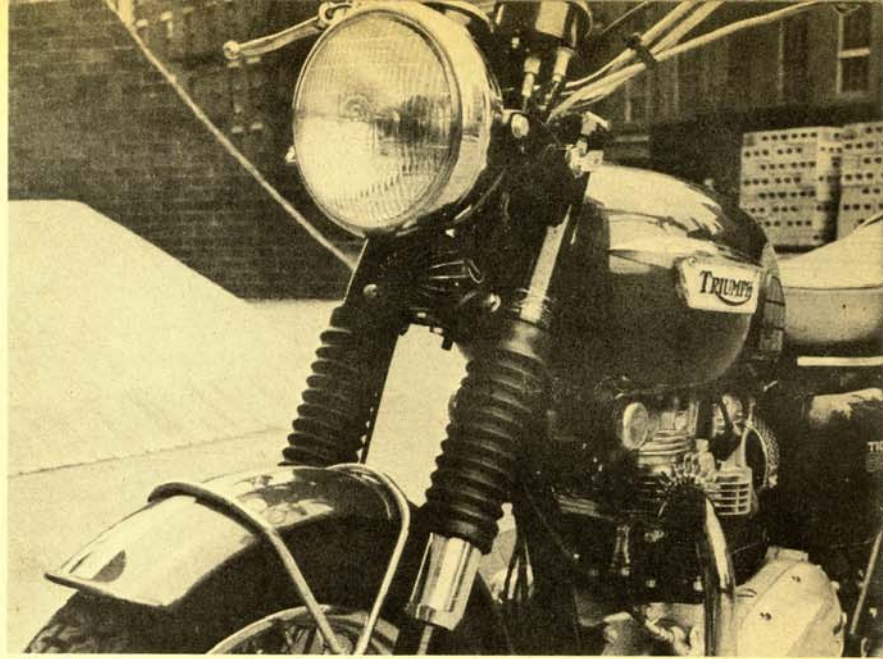
While this is certainly not a definitive comparison (as a road

racer, I mix a mean martini) it does show the capabilities of the TR6R. One of the reasons, we felt, was the new balance tube that connects the exhaust headers about two inches out from the block. Since the cylinders fire alternately, each exhaust cycle is taken by two pipes, rather than one. Besides providing a quieter machine, the performance of the bike is definitely improved. Our TR6R had this advantage; the '68 Bonneville did not.

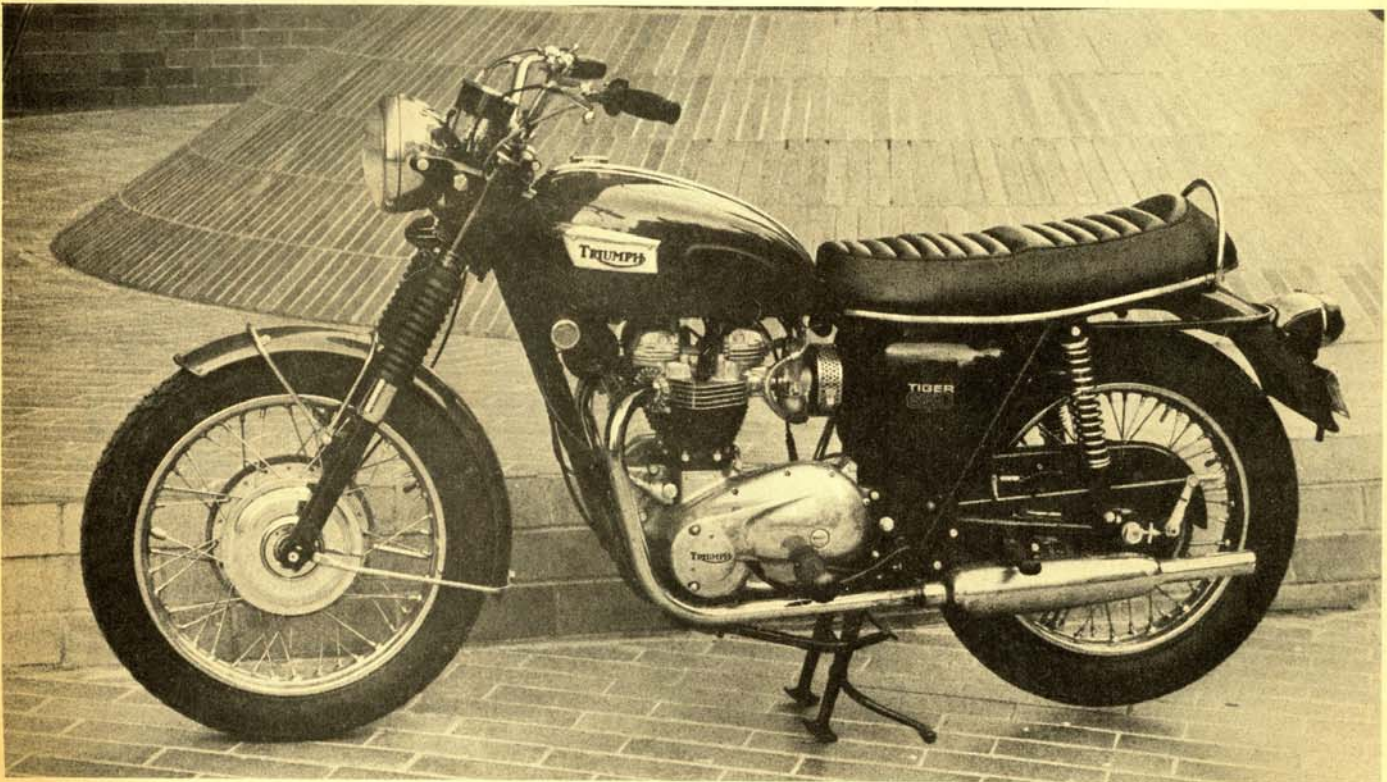
The fact that the TR6R and the Bonneville are very closely related also bears mention. The same basic engine is modified for the Bonneville with the addition of a hotter cam and two carbs. Utilizing only a single carb permits the TR6R much easier starting than the Bonneville, whose fuel tank is also much smaller than the Tiger's.

The R in TR6R stands for road. As a result, the handling of the Tiger must be mentioned. Beautiful . . . consider it mentioned. As to why it's so good, read on.

Brakes, which are customarily good on Triumphs, are better than ever on our test model. The 8" racing-developed double-leading-shoe front brake is the same as was used on the '68 650's, but the detail on the air-scooped unit is modified. The brake actuation levers, which used to be parallel to each other and are connected by a



The handsome front end on the Tiger. Note the Zener Diode under the headlight; the rubber-gaitered front forks, and the safety reflector under the tank. We also like the ignition key position next to the light.



A profile shot of a very handsome machine. The well-upholstered seat is just as comfortable as it looks.

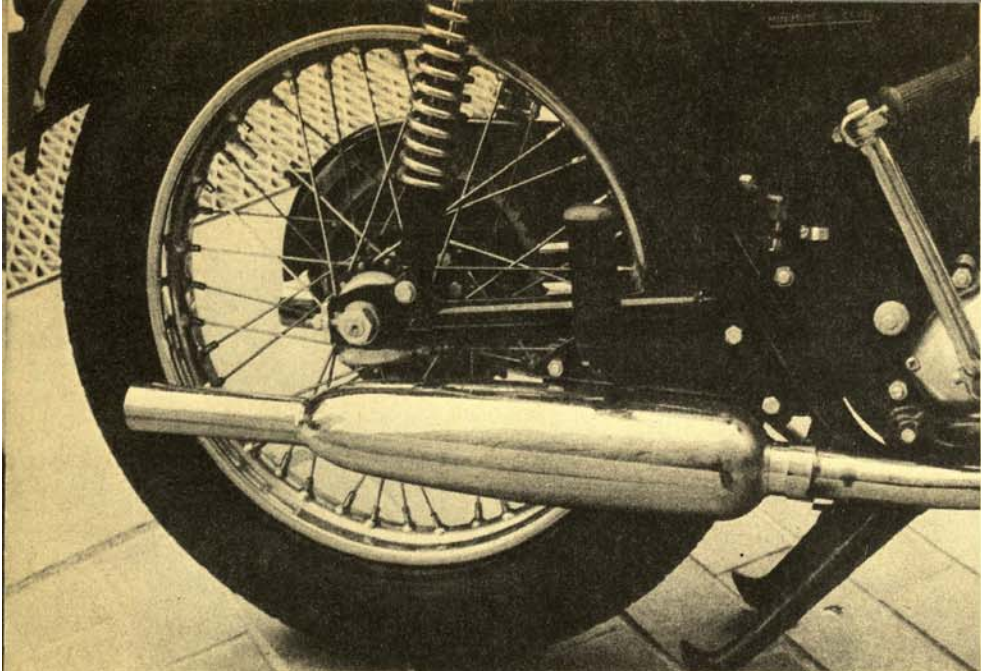
single rod (as they still are) had the cable running directly to the front lever which was actuated by a rearward pull. The cable has been re-routed down the right front fork tube and the forward lever, as a result, is actuated by an upward pull. The whole affair looks neater and is less likely to get damaged (the cable that is). Our test bikes brake felt very mushy, but continually stopped

beautifully. We were told that the Ferodo linings necessitated a long "bedding-in" period and that the unit was purposely adjusted for this. The seven inch rear brake was also fine, you could really bind the wheel with it.

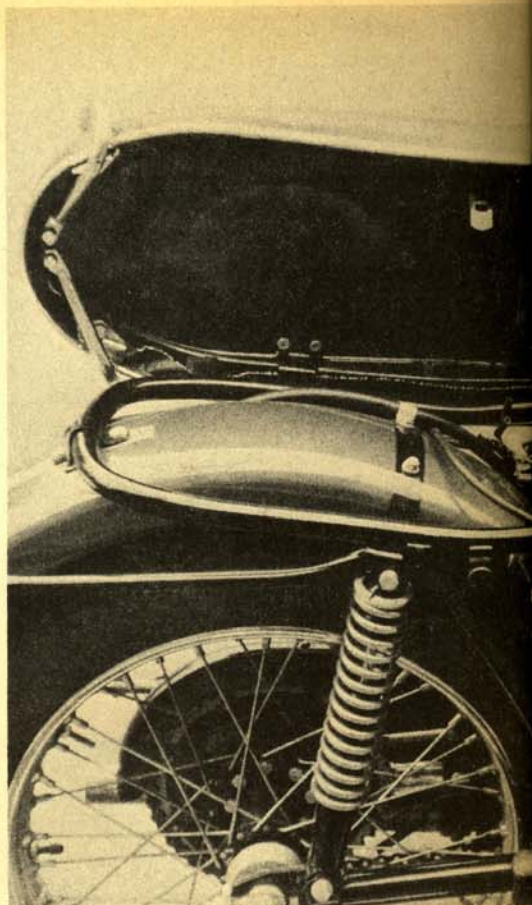
After about fifty fast miles around Bridgehampton, the previously quiet valve train got louder and louder as valve-lash became pronounced. That is to be

expected, though, during break-in. A simple adjustment will soon put everything back into (relatively) quiet shape.

The rear springs now have open springing. Attractive, without hurting the effectiveness of the Girling 3-position units. The front forks worked in an exemplary fashion. The shuttlecock hydraulic damping-valve works



Exposed springing on the rear shocks are another '69 Triumph style change. Also visible are the effective and good-looking mufflers, folding passenger pegs and centerstand (not in use in photo).



The very neat flip-up seat is shown here. Battery and oil-filler are located under this unit. We liked the addition of a dipstick to the cap of the oil tank, new on the '69 650s.

very positively and, almost as a bonus, removes the need for springs, washers, or even a screw-down adjuster.

The frame is strong; basically a single downtube that "Y's" at the front engine mount and continues under and up to the swinging arm pivot. The backbone tube, which also ends at the swinging arm pivot, starts at the steering head. This configuration, coupled with the large diameter tubing, provides a rigid and vibration-free frame. The Zener Diode remains in its protected position under the headlight just ahead of the fork tubes.

Since we've touched on the electrics we might as well describe them. They are units provided by that venerable English firm, Lucas (spelled L O U S Y). The headlight hi and low beams went out on our bike and were fitfull before that. The hi beam indicator light was indecisive and insecure, coming on or going off at whim. The Ammeter light resembled nothing so much as a high-speed ping pong match, with high speed not being necessary to set the little needle off on its lonely

search for a corner.

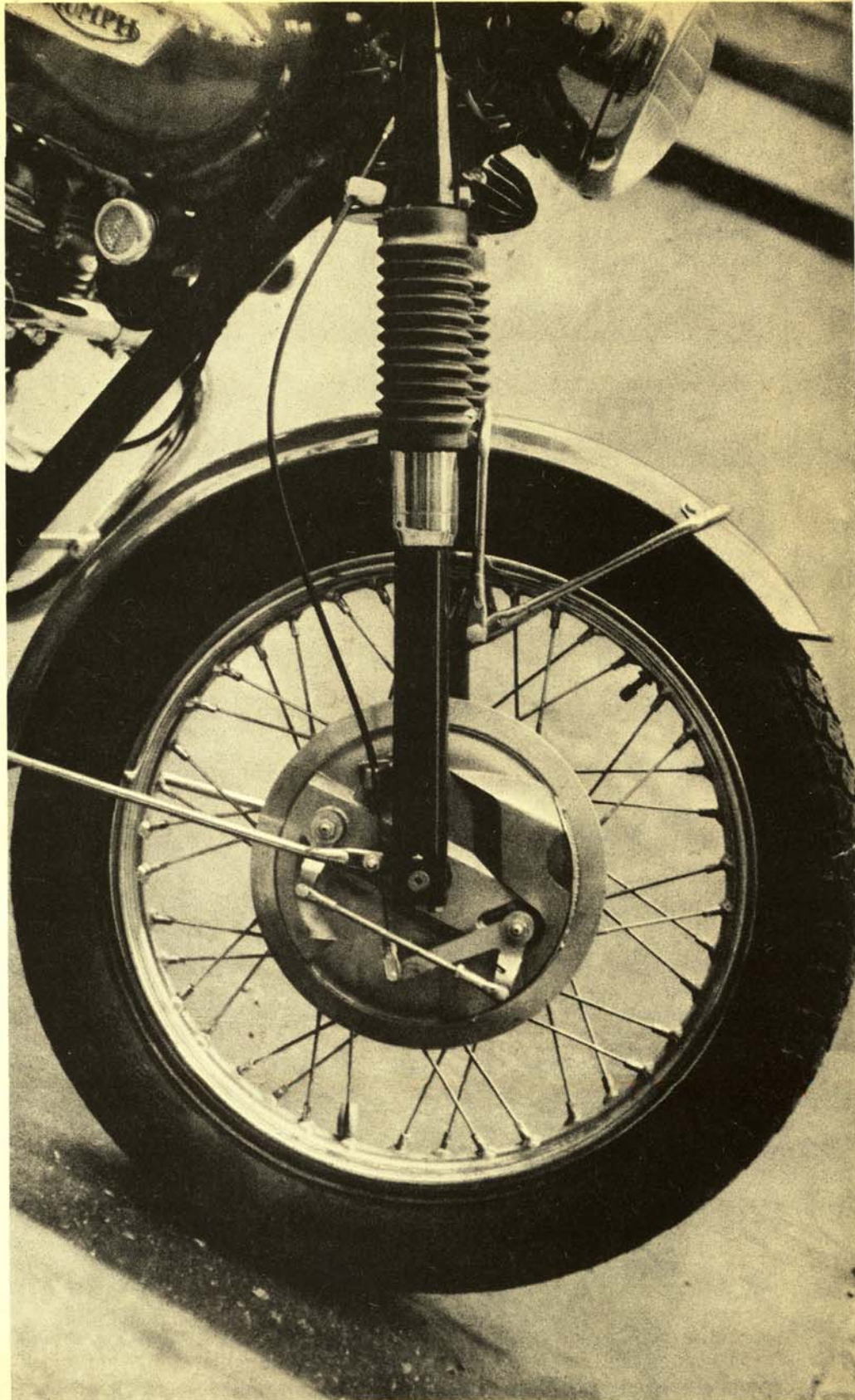
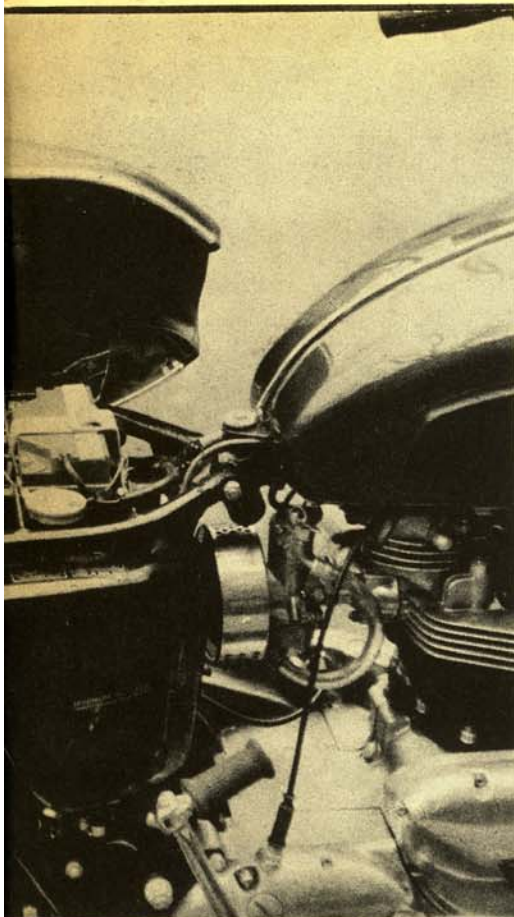
In contrast, the Smith's tachometer and speedometer/odometer with trip-reset lever were accurate and consistent. It certainly shows that someone at Triumph knows something. Only where was he when the salesman/demonstrator for Lucas paid his nefarious call at the Triumph base in England . . . out for tea? On a machine that sells for about \$1,260.00 it's inexcusable to use inferior electrical equipment. Where's the "Fun" in that Triumph?

Speaking of fun, one person who seemed to have it was a rider we knew only as "Charger." Setter of the fastest lap and seemingly the most adept non-factory rider at Bridgehampton that weekend, Charger offered some comments on the TR6R. He liked the handling, braking and power very much. The Dunlop Gold Seals stuck very well, according to him, and the entire unit provided him with enough enjoyment to allow us to persuade him to pose for pictures and finally take us for a high-speed tour of the course to take pictures from behind him.

About his only negative comment concerned the gearbox. "Too stiff, missed a number of 3rd to 4th shifts . . . but it does seem to be loosening up." We checked out what he said and found that the one down, three up gearbox did have a tendency to grind when going from neutral into first, but by the time we reclaimed the bike, most gearbox problems caused by stiffness had been ironed out.

The battery and oil tank filler are located under the seat of the big twin in a very fastidious fashion. The seat is released by pulling a knob and is kept from flapping all the way over by a steel cable secured to the sub-frame. One touch which we appreciated during our look under the seat was the closed-tube run-off pipe for battery acid. Unlike earlier models which could spit out corrosive juices in a haphazard way, this inexpensive attachment runs down in front of the rear wheel and lets any battery run-off dribble harmlessly onto the tarmac.

When we were done at Bridgehampton we found that our speedometer/odometer unit now read



232 miles. This meant that 174 miles of mostly flat-out running had been the steady diet of the Tiger; which rumbled on unhaltingly. We put about 60 miles of traffic time onto the odo, and felt that rather than bothering our red and chrome machine, the fast break-in had made it more tractable. It idled well, never flooded or bogged down and remained a one or two kick starter with gas mileage at about 40 miles per gallon.

About the only unexpected problem we had was an oil leak. We say unexpected since Triumph has tightened up its quality control and doesn't leave those cute little spots on the cement any more . . . usually. But, there beneath our test bike was an oil leak and we were really disappointed; we had been totally won over by our test bike. Further investigation succeeded in dispelling the cloud of gloom that had settled over our magazine garage, however. It seems that the pounding that we had given the bike had succeeded in loosening up one (and only one) nut on the bike. The nut which holds the

The 8 inch front brake is a real grabber. The exhaust balance-pipe can be seen in this shot, as well. We found the Dunlop Gold Seals to be very good tires in most conditions.

electrical oil pressure gauge fitting into the crankcase, of all things. Now, why in the world Triumph wanted this gauge in the first place we don't know . . .

particularly since the TR6R had already been fitted with a mechanical gauge. But, anyway, the gauge nut had been loose for some time and had bled into the rubber

boot which covers the attachment. Finally the oil had started to dribble out, covering our floor. It is important to note here, however, that tightening secured the fix and that at no time in three weeks of testing had the cases or fittings (other than the above-mentioned) shown even the slightest tendency to leak.

Triumph thinks of the TR6R as a touring bike and we can easily concur. The seat (comfortable) footpegs (well-placed) handlebars (western style) and other accoutrements all combine to produce a very relaxing and smooth ride. Quick, too. We tested our machine from zero to 60 and produced a best e.t. of 6.4 seconds. Our quarter mile was covered in 14.1 seconds at 93 mph even.

The other things that a Triumph provides, such as the new front brake/rear light actuation but a tool kit that doesn't supply all the wrench sizes necessary to tighten the (too) many different sizes of nuts and bolts on the bike is a "win a few, lose a few" proposition to our way of thinking.

Getting back to our way of thinking, stated at the beginning of the test. We tried, oh lordy, how we tried; to prove a point about the Triumph 650cc TR6R. But in the end we were singing the praises of this bike as loudly as anyone. And you know why? Well, brothers, we had FUN! ●

MOTORCYCLE WORLD ROAD TEST SUMMARY

MAKE *Triumph*..... MODEL *TR6R*... CC. *650* CYLINDERS *2*.. 2-cycle 4-cycle
SUITABLE FOR: Street Racing Scrambles Trails Other

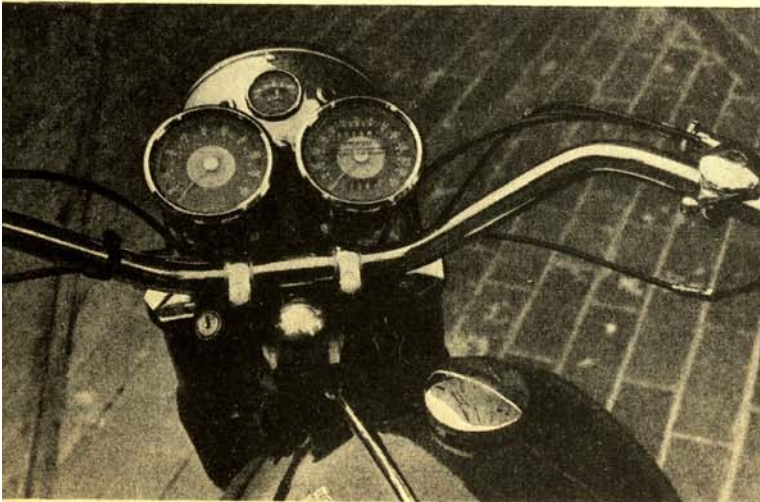
COMFORT EVALUATION

Seat *VERY COMFORTABLE*..... Instruments *GOOD, NEARLY ALL, EASY TO READ*
Kickstand *GOOD, AS IS. CENTER MOUNTED* Start mech. *GOOD*
Pegs *WELL-PLACED*..... Shift mech. *STIFF, BUT GETTING BETTER*
Grips *COMFORTABLY SQUEEZED. FULL HANDED* Throttle *EXCELLENT*
Front brake *EXCELLENT*..... Choke *ADAPTABLE*
Rear brake *VERY GOOD*..... Clutch *GOOD, NO DRAG*
Switches *NOT SO HOT, THEY'RE. LUCAS* Bars *WIDE + COMFORTABLE*

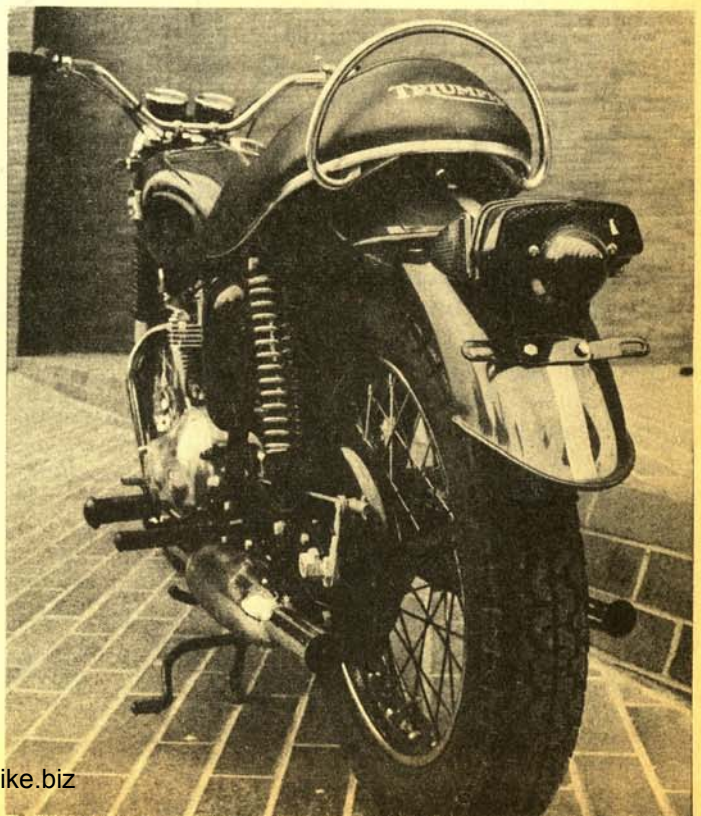
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Suspension (on flats and bumps) *VERY GOOD*
Handling (straightaway, banks and turns) *ALSO VERY GOOD*
Gear ratios (all speeds) *JUST RIGHT*
Shifting *SHORT THROW, BUT A TRIPLE STIFF WHEN NEW*
Braking *EXCELLENT*
Acceleration *DAZZLING, NOT SMOOTH*
Starting *EASY*
Lighting *NO GOOD*
Noise levels *ENGINE, EXHAUST, QUIET BUT THROTTLY*
V.A.L.U.E.S. GOT NOISY AFTER AWHILE, REQUIRE ROAD USING
Overall impressions *THIS IS, AS WE WERE TOLD, A FUN BIKE!*

Evaluate Your Own Motorcycle



The instrumentation is good in the case of the Smiths Tach and Speedo. Terrible in regard to the Lucas Ammeter. Lever visible at right is the choke.



A last look at a fleet and dependable machine. Probably the view most other bike riders will see most often. Take note of the quality of finish.