

Motors of Moment

Valve Bounce looks at the Herald

The Triumph Herald was one of the most significant small cars of the '60s and the 40th anniversary of the model's introduction was celebrated in 1999. In fact the first car, which was a coupé, arrived from Turin in December 1957 and the second, a saloon, in April 1958. It had been styled by Giovanni Michelotti who had a hand in all future Triumph designs, except the TR6, TR7/8 and the Acclaim. The car, which had been allocated the factory codename 'Zobo', made an instant and favourable impression on the Standard Triumph directors. It featured a separate chassis, no grease points and independent suspension, representing a

revolution in small car production for the company and causing quite a stir when it appeared in the showrooms in April 1959. Endurance tests had taken place in Spain and a remarkable proving exercise had been undertaken in Africa. A saloon and coupé, supported by a Standard Companion Estate and an Atlas van, drove from Capetown across the Sahara to Tangier. This venture, which was the subject of a film and a book entitled *Turn Left for Tangier*, proved the basic soundness of the design, but it soon

had to overcome build quality problems which turned the company profit into losses and brought about the takeover by Leyland. From then on, the model underwent progressive development and it can be seen from the table below just how

“The Herald caused quite a stir when it appeared in the showrooms”

many versions there were eventually and how many units were produced. These days, the Herald is regarded as a sensible classic car to own for

various reasons. All the models are mechanically straightforward and are easy to work on whilst spare parts are relatively easy to obtain from any one of the specialist suppliers around the country. We are grateful to *Autocar* for permission to reproduce the road test of the Herald coupé from 1st May 1959.



Production totals			Total
1959–62 Herald 948	saloon and 'S'	76 860 units	
1959–61 Herald 948	coupé	15 153 units	
1960–61 Herald 948	convertible	8262 units	100 275
1961–70 Herald 1200	saloon	201 142 units	
1961–64 Herald 1200	coupé	5319 units	
1961–68 Herald 1200	convertible	43 295 units	
1961–68 Herald 1200	estate	39 819 units	289 575
1962–67 Herald 12/50	saloon	53 267 units	53 267
1967–71 Herald 13/60	saloon	38 886 units	
1967–71 Herald 13/60	sunroof saloon	1547 units	
1967–71 Herald 13/60	estate	15 467 units	
1967–71 Herald 13/60	convertible	11 772 units	
	CKD*	14 978 units	82 650

In addition, a number of Courier vans were produced between 1962 and 1964.

* Complete Knock-Down

Chassis Numbers	
Herald 948 saloon	G1–G73 751
Herald 948 saloon (twin carb)	GY1–GY11 392
Herald 948 coupé & convertible	Y1–Y23 248
Herald 1200	GA1–GA249 873
Herald 12/50	GD1–GD55 689
Herald 13/60	GE1–GE83 433

	1959 Herald saloon	1960 Herald conv.	1961 Herald 1200 saloon	1962 Herald 1200 estate	1963 Herald 12/50 saloon	1967 Herald 1200 saloon	1967 Herald 1200 conv.	1967 Herald 1200 Estate	1968 Herald 13/60 conv.
cc	948	948	1147	1147	1147	1147	1147	1147	1296
0–50 mph (s)	19.3	169.9	18.4	17.3	15.2	16.0	17.1	19.0	12.5
0–60 mph (s)	30.4	26.5	28.6	28.7	25.2	25.8	25.9	30.7	17.7
Standing ¼ mile (s)	24.3	23.0	23.4	23.4	22.1	22.3	22.8	24.1	20.9
Max. speed (mph)	71.5	79.0	76.0	74.5	78.0	80.0	76.0	72.0	85.0
Overall mpg	32.4	27.6	31.7	32.1	31.3	28.1	27.7	26.7	28.3

Archive article: Herald history

By *John Davy*

By the mid-fifties, with the well loved Standard 8 and 10 models becoming a little passé in both style and mechanical specification, it was time for the directors of the Standard Motor Company to assess their requirements for a successor in the small car field.

They decided that not enough attention was being paid to safety, to ease of handling and control, and to parking problems. Important too, was the cost of servicing, which they were determined to reduce by the application of new techniques designed to make the grease gun redundant in all climatic conditions. To achieve this aim an inquiry into the needs of a wide cross-section of the motoring public throughout the world was made, in an attempt to provide not only an answer to small car requirements at that time, but also for many years to come.

With all this in mind, the Triumph Herald, then cloaked by the code name 'Zobo', was conceived about 1954, but it was not until the Geneva Motor Show of 1957 that the search for a stylist capable of creating an attractive car was ended by the engagement of the great Italian designer Giovanni Michelotti, whose designs were interpreted by Vignale, the specialist coach builders.

At Coventry, in less exotic surroundings, the project engineers were designing a new chassis, which meant that the Herald was the first small car for many years to be so equipped. This provided a firm mount for the body which was designed as seven major units, all of which are easily removed in case of damage. A special feature is the front end which, unlike any other popular small car, is hinged to give complete access to all the mechanical parts.

On Christmas Eve 1957 a prototype body arrived from Turin, and by the following March the prototype coupé was being tested in Spain and later at the MIRA proving tracks at Lindley. It was believed that this strenuous exercise was not enough adequately to test the new car in all conditions, so Heralds were shipped to Capetown to cover the entire length of the African continent – over all types of roads and in all extremes of climate, including a crossing of the Sahara, before returning to Coventry. The cars stood up well to the ordeal and by January 1959

assembly jigs were in use and the first of the new cars, in saloon and coupé forms, were coming off the tracks at Canley.

In April 1959 the Herald was launched with a touch of theatrical drama at the Royal Albert Hall. It was described as a 'new experience in motoring' and acclaimed as such by the press, public, and the trade (who were keen to get on with the job of selling the new creation which, they rightly believed, would provide unrivalled opportunities to develop the Triumph image throughout the world). They were treated to a special demonstration when a team of four apprentices showed that specially 'doctored' Herald could be assembled and running in 3½ minutes. This act was repeated various times and on TV, and enthusiasts who had been reading Lotus advertisements of the period were prompted to write to the Standard Motor Company asking whether they could purchase the Herald in kit form!

The Motoring Correspondent of *The Times* summed it up. "The Triumph Herald introduced by the Standard Motor Company is more than an interesting new model with many ingenious features: it is the Company's considered answer to the intensifying struggle between British and Continental firms in the world market for small cars."

What would the public make of these new cars which they could buy in colours fancifully described as Targo Purple and Alpine Mauve? They clearly liked the new recipe, especially the separate chassis, and this was reflected by the sales for 1959, which reached nearly 27 000 cars in the remaining months of the year. While the average motorist enjoyed driving the model, competition enthusiasts were busy tuning their new cars, and Sandy Morrison chalked up a class win in the International Scottish Rally. Two privately entered coupés, making their first appearance in a major continental rally, completed the tough Alpine Rally. That

driven by Tiny Lewis and H Nash won a Coup des Alpes for finishing without incurring penalty and ninth in the general classification.

By September 1960, the Herald convertible was announced and in March 1961, with the new £2½ million assembly hall at Canley in operation, came the Herald 'S', a cheaper version of the saloon at £664. Heater and windscreen washers were extras, so predictably the Herald saloon, which continued at £702, found more favour – although the engine was soon to be replaced by the highly successful 1147 cc power unit which was to provide the motive power for the 1200 range. The Herald 1200 was only £6 dearer than the 948 cc model, boasted rubber bumpers and, clearly, an uprated performance. Thousands followed the advice 'Dial for a Drive' and sales increased, while the estate car version was a popular addition to the range.

The outright winner of the 1961 Tulip Rally was Geoffrey Mobbs of Bristol, and by this time several fans were offering

"The Herald is more than an interesting new model with many ingenious features – it is the answer to the intensifying struggle between British and continental firms in the world market for small cars"

'souping' equipment for the Herald. Jack Brabham went the whole way by changing the normal 'cooking' power unit for a Climax 1200, which made his coupé comfortably exceed 100 mph. Needless to say the brakes, tyres, and cooling arrangements received the same attention.

The Leyland takeover of 1960/61, with the twin goals of economy and quality, resulted in considerable activity on the sales side and much more emphasis on dealer development, which had been strengthened by the popularity of the Herald range. With hindsight, Sir Donald Stokes wrote: "Although at the time we from Leyland were comparative innocents in the sophisticated world of the private motor car, the concept of the Herald appealed to our engineering thinking, and we recognised that here was a formula which would appeal readily to the more discriminating top 10 per cent

of the small family car market in many countries of the world”.

Sales of the Standard-Triumph range under the new administration were encouraged by a rare reduction in purchase tax which took off £40 from the price of the Herald. Early in 1963 the Triumph Herald 12/50 was introduced, and was the only volume production British car to be fitted with a skylight roof as standard equipment. A new polished aluminium radiator grille distinguished it from the 1200, and disc brakes (hitherto an optional fitment on the 1200 range) were part of the package which had an up-rated engine propelling the car at a top speed of 82 mph. A slightly heavier chassis frame became a feature of all the Herald range and using this basis, Sharps Commercials were busy with a new recipe which involved taking a Herald chassis and mating it with their own glass fibre bonnet and roof to result in the Bond Equipe.

Overseas the Herald is assembled in six factories, but by far the most interesting of these is the plant in Madras, where the four-door standard Herald is built, still with the 948 cc engine, which suits local conditions. The proportion of locally built content in the Indian Herald is now 95 per cent, as the progressively tightening import controls imposed by the Indian Government have resulted in parts to the total value of £15 11s 2d being included in the kit despatched from Coventry.

Through the years the Herald has been improved in detail, including zone-toughened screen glass, stiffer crankshaft, diaphragm clutch, and negative earth electrics. Then, in November 1967, the first of the 13/60s were released in saloon, convertible and estate car versions, replacing the 12/50 saloon and the 1200 estate and convertible models. The 1200 saloon continued as the least expensive model in the Triumph range, and has enjoyed an uninterrupted production run of eight years.

The 13/60 retains all the well-proven features of earlier Herald models with a greatly enhanced interior redesigned to give greater luxury and comfort and better sited controls. Perhaps the three most important features are the improved performance, the increased room for rear seat passengers, and the crisp restyled front end, which was again from the drawing board of Michelotti.

Over a 10-year period, the Herald has been such a success that it can blow its own trumpet, and many satisfied owners have reason to be happy with their choice of a car which has been developed to give reliability and increased performance, rather than rush to buy a new model. So once again the Triumph Herald will feature on the stand this year at Earls Court, among its larger stablemates, and will attract the attention of the discerning motorist seeking one of the best of British small cars

This article is taken from the long defunct BL magazine *High Road* and was probably written in 1969. John Davy, who died at the end of 1984, was a well-known authority on both Standard and Triumph cars. He was the founder and registrar of the Standard Register and principal originator of the Standard Triumph International Rally (STIR). He was a regular contributor to the company magazine, *The Standard Triumph Review*, and later to *High Road*. In addition, he was the author of the first illustrated history of Standard cars and Standard-built cars, published in 1967.

