

The Barn Find...

By Jeremy Sale

Photos by Matt Molson



The best barn find stories always begin with a casual conversation that leads to a connection which ultimately leads to, well, the barn find!

Scene One; The story begins with Matt Molson at British Car Day, in Bronte last September. This great event is hosted by the Toronto Triumph Club. Matt has been a long time TTC member; he began racing with VARAC in his blue Triumph TR6 in 2007. At the event Matt had a display of his latest interest; metal laser cleaning, with a sample camshaft showing the before and after of the cleaning process. During the day a spectator came along and showed interest in the camshaft. He introduced himself to Matt as John Westlake and the conversation naturally turned from camshafts to racing. At some point Westlake casually mentioned that he used to race Triumphs in Western Canada and the US, later in Eastern US and Ontario. "In fact", he said, "I still have the car, it's been in my barn for the last thirty years!"

Being both a Triumph enthusiast and a racer Matt's eyes widened and of course he said "Wow! Tell me more!" Well, it turns out the race car is a 1966 Triumph TR4A in which Westlake had success on many, many race tracks and it now resides in his barn in the Beeton area. Matt by now is super interested and says "John, I'd just love to come and see it!"

Scene Two; Some time later in the proverbial barn, (*cue suspense music here*). An indistinct shape inside covered by a blue tarp, duly lifted



to reveal a dark green TR4A race car. On the back of the car is written "Callie's Car", Callie being the name of John Westlake's wife, Carolyn.

After walking around admiring the car and hearing more about its long career Matt said he was definitely interested in purchasing and restoring the racer to its former glory. Now John Westlake was by no

means anxious to get rid of the car, and in fact Matt said there was a long “interview” process as Westlake discreetly ascertained that Matt was a genuine race enthusiast who would take care of his baby. I guess Matt must have passed the interview, so terms were arranged, and the day came to pick up this gem in the rough.



Matt said that of course there were a few tears in the eyes of John and Carolyn Westlake as the car was loaded up to be taken to its new home.

I should mention here that Westlake had come out once a month over the thirty-some years that the car had sat in the barn and manually turned over the engine! So the car really has been looked after and has great potential, apart from being a wonderful “rescue” project.



The really great part is that Matt will take this piece of racing history apart with care and genuine enthusiasm in order to get it track ready, perhaps even for this year! So stay tuned, there's more to come on this great barn find story!



Above; John Westlake racing his Triumph TR4 back in the day.

Below: Pictured in the Mosport paddock in the Fall of 1972 at the Player's Race of Champions, the Canadian runoffs.

