



The Numbers Never Change Until The Numbers Change

Being a Triumph Parts Man can be challenging. Being a consumer trying to make sense of Triumph's part number systems can be challenging and quite frustrating. While parts books are a good place to start they can contain a lot of confusing information. Triumph part managers around the world can relate.

Customers often don't have the information when looking for the right part. One thing that catches owners out, and mechanics alike, is for many reasons the year and model of the bike is unknown, or it is a bitsa made up from parts from various years or models. I can't tell you how many times I have asked: Which Bonneville do you have? and got the answer, "The red one."

Carburetors are a good example. Looking for throttle cables for a 1967 Triumph T120 when the original Monoblocs have been replaced with Concentrics can cause a lot of frustration. Also the 1967 Monobloc's throttle cables are a one-year-only throttle cable.

Some part numbers have several itera-

tions, and often they are not interchangeable. For example the 70-2879 roller bearing comes in two iterations. One with CN and another with C2 internal clearance. In 1977 when Brian Jones changed the bearing specification he did not change the part number. Also selecting the right 70-1591 ball bearing for the 650 twin and the 750 triple is another place to get it wrong. The 650 twin's 70-1591 use a C3 condition and 750 triples a CN condition.

To add to the confusion Triumph had three different parts books for a single year and model. There was the Domestic, the General Export and then one for the US models. The US books try to cover East and West coast models, but you are about to hear from me that they don't do that very well. If you are doing a restoration you will need additional copies of the addendum sheets for each part book supplied to dealers for the East and West Coast models.

As the season went on further corrections were needed as other changes were made. These showed up at the dealers

in the form of Part Bulletins. These sheets of colored paper showed up in the mail often. The best dealers would copy this new information into the books they used to serve their customers. You see the drawings were drawn and lists annotated long before the bikes were put into production.

As computers started to get a foothold in distribution, the old ways just didn't seem to work. Computer memory then was expensive: you have more memory in your iPhone now than Triumph had in their nineteen seventies era computer.

Our old A-Z card index file (photo opposite) with manufacturer's archaic way of identifying parts (W for wheel parts, T for transmission parts) went through a big change. People writing computer code needed to apply their own kind of sense of all this.

Pour yourself an inch or so of your favorite, get comfortable and let me take you through some of the twists of the world of part numbers.

The first thing they did was to change the format:

Triumph's Number Interchange

<i>D</i>	<i>becomes</i>	<i>60...so...Old D696...becomes</i>	<i>60-0696</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>.....70.....</i>	<i>E495.....</i>	<i>70-0495</i>
<i>E1</i>	<i>.....71.....</i>	<i>E13455.....</i>	<i>71-1345</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>.....82.....</i>	<i>F4129.....</i>	<i>82-4129</i>
<i>F1</i>	<i>.....83.....</i>	<i>F11365.....</i>	<i>83-1365</i>
<i>H</i>	<i>.....97.....</i>	<i>H95.....</i>	<i>97-0095</i>
<i>S</i>	<i>.....21.....</i>	<i>S1833.....</i>	<i>21-1883</i>
<i>T</i>	<i>.....57.....</i>	<i>T1606.....</i>	<i>57-1606</i>
<i>W</i>	<i>.....37.....</i>	<i>W1230.....</i>	<i>37-1230</i>

In the late 1960s, when changing the part numbering system to adapt to their new computers, the BSA Group converted Triumph and BSA part numbers from BSA's Numeric system (68-625 or 2-49) and Triumph's Alpha-numeric system (F1339 or T23) to a part numbering system using a prefix and suffix:

The part numbers would become a prefix of two digits, a dash (-), followed by suffix of four digits, like this: Two number Prefix (00), a Dash (-) and a four-number Suffix (0000)

For BSA:

68-625 became 68-0625

2-49 became 02-0049

For Triumph

F1339 became 82-1339.

T23 became 57-0023

Then They Ran Out of Numbers:

In 1969, when Triumph ran out of the 4-digit suffix numbers and BSA started to com-

bine the BSA and Triumph numbering systems, they added a 5th suffix number. To accomodate this, and continue with the 00-0000 format, they introduced the 71 and 83 prefix series. This way they could continue with the 00-0000 format.

This changed F11286 to 83-1286 and E10070 to 71-0070

Of Course It Isn't That Easy:

I love what they did with parts that began with S. All parts beginning with "S" became 21-xxxx. Except of course the ones that didn't. Most "S" parts will convert directly to a 21 series prefix: 21-0000

So S620 becomes 21-0620 and S1883 becomes 21-1883.

So here we introduce the S parts that include a dash (-). Converting numbers beginning "S" including a dash, like S35-7, are not so easy. In these part numbers the "S" is NOT converted to 21 prefix. They convert to a regular standard 7 character format (00-0000). In this case a S35-7 becomes 60-3552. Go figure! This is where a good search engine will come to the rescue.

Then There Are Those Orphan Part Numbers:

There are some Triumph numbers like NW100, WE259A, PO172A, PT104B, etc. You will find reference numbers for most of these in your favorite search engine by using : Triumph Motorcycle NW100 or Triumph Motorcycle WE259A.

There Is An Elephant In The Room:

The most frustrating of these part number conundrums is Triumph's head-scratching insistence on using the same part number for several iterations of a part. The classic one is the chrome front wheel cover: 37-1332 (W1332). it was first used on the pre-unit in 1958-1959 The second iteration came in 1963 to 1965, and last used on the 1966-1967 models. The first iteration had two radial rings with radiating flutes. Then it came with inner and outer rings. Finally with just an outer ring. All three sported the moniker 37-1332.

Another is the tachometer - speedometer bracket 97-1946 it had two iterations, but sorting this one is a bit easier. There are at least a hundred such part numbers that have more than one iteration.

A knowledgeable parts man is worth his weight in Whitworth hardware. It is a good feeling when you finally get a parts book for your market, make, year and model. That is until you start trying to use it.