

Triplex Glass - Originality for MG-T Cars

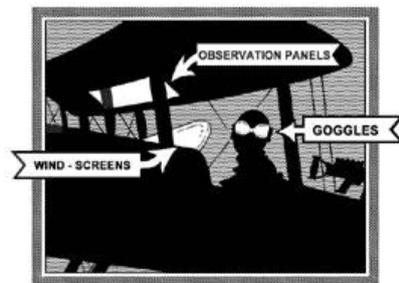
Brief History of Glass

The origins of Triplex Glass dates back to 1826 when the St Helens Crown Glass Company in England was founded by John William Bell. His technical ability was combined with the capital from three prominent families: Bromilows, Greenalls, and the Pilkingtons. The company was renamed Greenalls and Pilkington in 1829 and after the withdrawal of Greenalls the firm was retitled Pilkington Brothers in 1848.

In the late 1830's and early 40's the manufacturing of sheets glass had transformed from a process referred to as crown glass to the blown cylinder process. The cylinder process provided a more competitive advantage which allowed Pilkington Glass and a few other companies to dominate the market. By 1876 technology had advanced the plate glass process. This led to a boom in the plate glass industry throughout England. Other countries such as France and Belgium also benefited with increased productivity creating more local competition. With the United States becoming more industrialized and self sufficient the English export market began to wane. This meant that many glass companies failed by the turn of the century leaving Pilkington as one of the survivors.

Between 1883 and 1920 the plate glass process had essentially remained the same. Then in a cooperative effort with Ford Motor Company, Pilkington developed a continuous flow process and a method of continuous grinding and polishing. With the rise of mass production in the motor industry, the demand for plate glass was greatly increased. Therefore, the need for the specialized production of safety glass led to the formation in 1923 of the Triplex Safety Glass Company. Triplex was born.

TRIPLEX SAFETY GLASS



WAR Service has brought the intrinsic merits of Triplex Safety Glass more than ever to the front. Its wide use by the Allied Governments has undoubtedly saved the eyesight and lives of many pilots and observers (*vide actual testimony*). It is now being **SUCCESSFULLY USED IN THE CENTRE PLANE** and on the lower planes of many fighting machines. Triplex cannot be splintered no matter how badly it is smashed. Gives a perfectly clear view and cannot be distinguished from ordinary sheet glass.

THE TRIPLEX SAFETY GLASS CO, Ltd.,
1, Albemarle Street :: LONDON W.

Telephone:
REGENT 1340.

Telegrams:
"SHATTERLYS, PICCY, LONDON."

THE ONLY



SAFETY GLASS

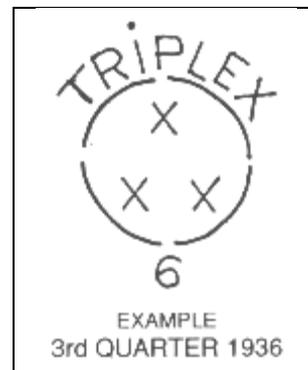
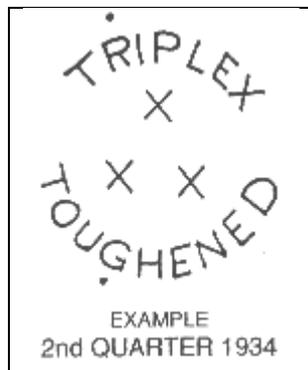
Dating Pre-War Triplex Glass 1929-1940

Toughened Glass:

In the Triplex trademark the words TRIPLEX and TOUGHENED were arranged in a circular formation around a triangular arrangement of the three X's. Glasses were defined by the quarter of the year (Jan – Mar, Apr – Jun, etc.) and the year of manufacture. The quarters were depicted by a dot above the word TRIPLEX. (The 4 quarters corresponded to the first 4 letters of TRIPLEX. T=1, R=2, I=3, P=4) The year was indicated by a dot under one of the letters of the word TOUGHENED (9 letters for nine years T=1931, O=1932, etc). For 1940 the dot would be placed to the right of the letter D.

Laminated Glass:

The Triplex trademark for laminated glass is made up of the triangular arrangement of the three X's surrounded by a broken circle, surmounted by the word TRIPLEX. The word laminated does not appear. The quarterly identification is the same for toughened glass. The year can be identified by the 0 to 9 beneath the circle opposite the letter P in the word TRIPLEX.

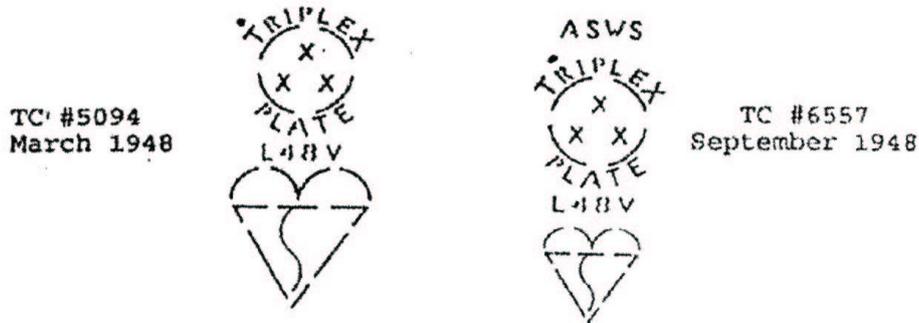


Breaking the Post-war "TRIPLE X Code"



The Pre-war "TOUGHENED" logo continued on from 1945 – 1949. However, the "kite" or "heart" was added below it. What was the significance of this addition? The kite was the symbol or icon for British Vehicular Safety (BVS). If you look closely at the kite, you will see the 3 letters forming the kite. Additionally, a "P" has been added between the logo and the kite. The significance of the P is unknown. This picture was provided by Craig Seabrook of his TC0911 made in June 1946. You can see that the glass was manufactured in 4th quarter of 1945.

In 1947 a variation of the above logo surfaced that corresponded to TC's that were exported. The variation was that TOUGHENED was replaced with PLATE. It is thought that as safety standards changed, the glass was fitted according to the destination of the vehicle. Some vehicles brought to the United States initially with toughened glass had to have the windshield replaced with plated depending on the state laws and registration practices of the time.

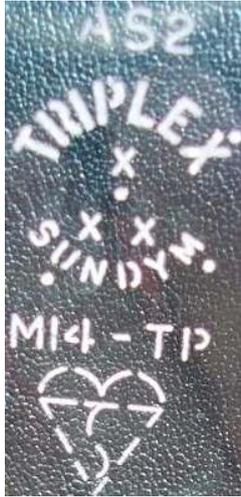


The above drawings were provided by Bob Watts, a member of T-ABC, duplicated from his cars. Notice that the broken circle also correlates to the pre-war laminated design. Also, the plated glass is dated by the year being displayed below PLATE. Bob's examples are interesting as he noted the following: "Over the above 6 month period the TRIPLEX windshield logo changed. The "heart" at the bottom shrank in size and the letters ASWS were added at the top. The central part remained the same size, but the letter "A" changed. Why was it changed? Maybe to maintain the exact total vertical dimension? What does ASWS stand for? Does the L mean laminated? What does the V mean?" These are all good questions yet to be answered. On 14 Dec 1948, TC7380 was manufactured as the first EXU. The EXU models had the Triplex "Plate" logo also.

Although the Triplex "Plate" logo appeared on exports, the MG "home models" continued to display the "TOUGHENED" logo. (Home models were vehicles sold in UK). According to Peter Ross, a member of T-ABC, all UK TC's and most other cars for a long time afterwards were fitted with toughened windscreens for normal road use. However, if you raced under the RAC regulations in England, and you weren't using aeroscreens, you needed a laminated screen and could special order one. Therefore, there may be some home model cars found with a plated or laminated windshields.

I do not know when the "TOUGHENED" logo ended. However, if you look at 1950's vintage logos and beyond you will see additional variations and symbols yet to be decoded. The word TOUGHENED was not only replaced by PLATE but also ZEBRAZONE. Notice that ZEBRAZONE was also 9 letters. This was a specially toughened windscreen that when broken, it had a central 'clear' area so the driver could still see through it. Another variant is the quarter of the year it was manufactured is determined by the first and last 2 letters of TRIPLEX. The glass to the right was made in the 3rd quarter 1956 as you can see.





This is an interesting follow-on to the story. To the left, is a picture of the glass from a 1969 Rolls Royce. Notice the continuation of the Trade Mark characteristics from the previous years such as Triplex, 3 X's, the 'kite', etc. However, also note that 'toughened' is now replaced with SUNDYM which means tinted. If you add the numbers corresponding to the 2 dots (2+6) that equals 8. This glass was made in the 4th Quarter of 1968 which makes sense for the year of the car.

Originality

In my quest for the "truth" on originality, I found that as with other aspects of the MG's there is nothing absolute.

The logo in most cases can be seen in the top right corner as you are standing in front of the car looking at the windshield and readable from the same position. Etching is done on the outside of the glass also. It will be approximately 1 inch from the top and side, inside edges of the chrome. The diameter of the TRIPLEX/TOUGHENED circle is about 7/16" and the total height from the top of Triplex to the bottom of the kite is 1 1/8". However, there are examples of the logo being located on the driver's side and etched and readable on the inside. Did this mean that logo was sometimes etched with disregard to the side of glass cut down for the wiper wire or was the glass cut down after the logo was etched?

The logo installation does appear to be different for the later TC exported "plate" glass. In this case the standard placement is top left corner as seen standing in front of the car looking at the windscreen. The logo is etched on the outside "in reverse" and readable from inside in the driver's seat. Although the sampling numbers are small due to availability, the trends are clear. I would welcome future comment on the subject with documentation or pictures to illustrate originality or any other aspects of the Triplex logo.

What story does your original windscreen tell and does it match the birth of your car? It may be fun to check and to also note who has a "triplex" windscreen at the next car show. I hope you enjoyed this bit of MG trivia.

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