

## It All Started in Nuremburg

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IT ALL STARTED IN NUREMBERG The Triumph story, according to Graham Robson and Richard Langworth, goes back to 1863 when a young and very ambitious 21 year old man by the name of Siegfried Bettmann decided to leave Germany and head to London to make his fortune. Siegfried was very bright, well educated and he spoke German, French and English. Given that he was very talented at an early age gave him advantages and is why his rise through the ranks was so spectacular. Siegfried had soon out grown his initial menial job as a translator and had created S. Bettmann & Co and obtained a number of continental companies for whom he was London agent. With the exception of one of these agencies most not that successful; the only one which was successful was a manufacturer of sewing machines from Saxony and S Bettmann & Co imported these sewing machines under this agency agreement to be sold profitably throughout the England. Bettmann saw that there was little to be seen of a profitable nature in importing but there was a real market in exporting, and at that point of time transport was in its infancy with the humble bicycle being the "new" mode of transport. At that time the "penny farthing" was all the rage. However Bettmann saw that the high front wheel of the Penny Farthing was not as easy to ride as the smaller front wheel and had a Birmingham company manufacture them for his company, he foresaw that there was a huge market over the channel. But he knew that calling these new bicycles the "Bettmann" would not be a good marketing product and he wanted a name which would be recognized worldwide, he came up with the name "Triumph" which he felt would be recognized throughout. Little was he to know that this name would become so well known the world over for such high quality cars and motorbikes. The Triumph Company has arrived! In 1887 Bettmann needed more capital to continue to expand this thriving small concern and he asked a fellow German countryman of his, a Mauritz J Schulte to be a partner, this partnership was to last over 30 years. The company was changed to a limited liability company when Schulte added his life savings of 150 pounds (which in those time would have been a large sum!) and the Triumph Cycle Company Ltd was created! Sales of bicycles continued to sell so much that Bettmann, being driven by the more astute Schulte asked several more financiers to assist in the expansion of the company. As part and parcel of this process the Directors made the decision to manufacture bicycles themselves rather than have someone else do the manufacturing. So they started to look for suitable location in Coventry; which was the hub of bicycle manufacturing at that time. The Triumph Cycle Company indeed found a suitable building in Much Park Street, in the West Mid-lands town of Coventry, the Company were to move to Priory Street in 1907 but some major factors propelled the company to become so much more successful and this was due to a number of factors; One was that Mauritz Schulte was more forward thinking and Secondly the link with a Dublin based Company, called the Dunlop Rubber Company in seeing what success the Triumph Cycle Company was having and wishing to be involved. These two factors were part of the process in changing the way the Triumph Cycle Company was to go into the future. On pneumatic tyres! By 1897 manufacturing of bicycles started selling motorized bicycles with very primitive and tiny motors; Triumph was also interested in this move forward and tried a number of different engines before deciding to build their own 3 & 1/2 hp engine. The company was still finding its way and by 1906 had started production in a small way. As mentioned above in 1907 the Triumph Cycle company sought larger space and some of the manufacturing moved to the Priory Street premises. Siegfried Bettmann started to move into politics while keeping an eye on the bicycle division which was his main interest thus leaving the other Directors to drive the motorcycle division forward. Siegfried's civic life saw him become a member of the City Council then President of the Chamber of Commerce and in 1913 became Mayor of Coventry. However the next link in this chain of events occurred in 1911 or 1912 when Siegfried became the Chairman of the Standard Motor Company. There is some thought that he provided some funds to Reginald Maudsley in order that he could obtain the controlling interest in the Standard Motor Company. Maudsley was to become a Director of Triumph as well. According to Graham Robson and Richard Langworth; Siegfried Bettmann did not have a very long period of involvement with the Standard Motor Company but it would be 34 years later that this relating link would come full circle. Bettmann had retired with a very handsome payout and the Company was now under the control of Mauritz Schulte, a much more dynamic and forward thinking individual with a new Company Manager, Col. Claude Holbrook who had been closely involved with Bettmann and Maudsley in the procurement of motorcycles as part of the war effort during the Great War. In fact the Triumph Cycle Company did very well during the war with large orders for motorcycles as part of the war effort, orders for machines increased from 3000 in 1909 to some 15,000 by 1923 and by 1929 this number had doubled! By then the Priory Street building was a seven storey building thanks to the high quality of material and workmanship which has made Triumph motorcycles famous. During the early 1920's management at Triumph were cashed up and were like a number of companies interested in building Automobiles. An article in The Autocar printed an article advising that the Triumph Cycle Co Ltd was interested in producing light cars and had purchased the Dawson Car Company who had built a 12 hp light car. Unfortunately the Dawson motorcar was not a success with some 65 cars built and there are apparently no survivors today. When this purchase was made by Bettmann prior to his retirement his intention was more for the value of the property that came with the sale which was only half a mile from Priory Street. When William Morris ran into financial difficulty he approached Bettmann with a view to buying the Morris Motor Company, however Bettmann refused, reasoning that he could build exactly the right complex for the production of the Triumph motorcar. In April 1923 it was announced that the production of wholly Triumph designed "Triumph 10/20" was to commence. The start of a long illustrious period of some 60 years for this famously named automobile! By Mike Greenwood &ndash; Adelaide