

Editor: Jamie Hart

Ph: 084-220-0082

Email: jamie.hart@kingsley.co.za



NEWSLETTER – August 2009

Chairman's Chat

Looking at the pictures of the Cape when we were in the Free State, all I can say is thank heavens we have had such perfect weather for the last 2 club runs. Both of them took place in superb winter weather and made us really appreciate where we live, the weather in the middle of the month brought us back to the reality of the Western Cape in winter. Having said that, the temperature when we drove back from Clarens on our way to Port Elizabeth was minus 9.5 so it seems nowhere is perfect!

We also did a bit of a recce for a route to Nationals, I get the impression that road maintenance is very low on the Free State government's agenda at present. Our plan A route along the Maluti mountains was so badly maintained that we were doing 80 kph in the Audi to avoid the potholes which had been repaired with ordinary soil! The only bit that seemed relatively smooth was straddling the white line so when another car approached, it became a bit like driving on Zimbabwean strip roads for those of you that have had that experience. Plan B, the N5 route to Bethlehem off the N1 was being dug up and the 150 km took over 3 hours to complete with the stop go's in force. That was after dodging the trucks and the road works before we could get off the N1! Miracles might happen in 8 months!

It was great to hear from Bob Pretorius from the P E centre who was looking for scoring sheets for a pride of ownership competition they are hoping to run in August. The concept still needs some panel beating, but seemed to be popular at the Jaguar concours in February. I still have a huge problem with the way our concours scoring works as cars that have had sensible modifications made to them to allow for driving in modern road conditions are at a severe disadvantage to "original" cars with outdated technology. I can think of several cars that were high ranking d'etat vehicles in their heyday that I would not trust to get me around the block at present. I would welcome discussion from all centre's so that the concours competition becomes relevant for 2009 conditions.

Any way, enough of that, have a great month and hope to see many of you at our upcoming events,

Have a great one, Jamie

Editor's desk

A very big thank you to all those that have made contributions to this bumper edition of the newsletter, in fact I have had to carry some of the articles over for future editions. It is a club newsletter and it is great to see some of those previous contributors putting pen to paper. That said we can always do better but we have had quite a few comments recently on the standard of the letter, well done!!

Forthcoming Events - Please diarise!

Wednesday 19th August - NOGGIN at the clubhouse with a Talk by Les Hayden

Les Hayden (of Cobra fame) will be giving a talk at the noggin. He will be discussing things like chassis design and relating them to both his older cars and the new models that are in the pipeline. Some of these projects are really fascinating, Spitfire owners pay special attention, you might like his ideas on a new project!! Meet starts at 19.30 so be there early and bring your own refreshments.

Saturday 15th August GARAGE noggin at Gerhard's place 2.30 pm

Come to help Gerhard with his 3A front suspension rebuild. If he hasn't got all the parts back then the venue will change to Jamie's house to see how his 4 rebuild is going. We will let you know via SMS which venue it will be and a contact number for instructions. Bring your work clothes and learn how most Triumph's front suspensions work!

Sunday 30th August Go Cart challenge

Our annual challenge against the MG club and any other marque clubs will take place at the Kenilworth cart track (behind Access Park). The drivers briefing will take place at 10.30 and racing will begin at 11.00. Please get hold of TIM CRUISE on 082 920 4431 or tim@smsweb.co.za to book your place.



Saturday 26th September Wheels and Whales in Hermanus

This popular event will take place at the month end. We have been invited to attend so just giving you all advanced notice!

Saturday 24th / Sunday 25th October Worcester Wheels show

This show has been provisionally booked for this weekend and hopefully as happened last year we will make it into a weekend away for the club. Will keep you updated in future editions of this letter.

Sunday November 15th MMC show at Parow

The Multi motor club are organising their own bumper show at the rugby club next to the clubhouse, we have entered at least 20 cars so I will be twisting some arms to make sure we have maximum attendance from our members. Because of the show the British Sports Car Tour which was to have been on this day will be postponed to the end of March!

Wednesday 18th November A G M at the clubhouse

Please decide what jobs you would like to do and volunteer long in advance!!

Reportback - July month end run Salty Sea Dog at Simonstown by Peter du Sautoy

It was a beautiful day, with beautiful car and scenery. We all met at the Constantia shopping centre and ably led by Peter went the scenic route via Ou Kaapse Weg and Misty Cliffs to Red Hill and down to Simonstown. We had a good photo stop overlooking the harbour for Ronan to do his stuff and then went to the quay for parking. Monika had managed to talk very nicely to the car guard who let us use the no parking area in full view of the restaurant. We had a really good meal of fish and chips and lots of opportunity to catch up with everyone.



**I wish this was mine!
Gerhard in Adrian Morris's TR3 at Constantia**



At the top of Red Hill overlooking False Bay



Geoff and Jill at the top of Ou Kaapse Weg



The crew at the Salty Sea Dog

It was really good to see Adrian Morris in his new TR3, although he was unable to join us for lunch, and good to see Geoff and Jill Davis in their TR4A, its first official outing since breaking down coming back from Nationals at Hermanus. A big plus for Neville Dredge's rebuilding skills!

In all we had three TR3's, one TR4A, three TR6's, two TR7s and one TR7 V8 plus a couple of plastics and Tim C's honorary TRZ3! Where have all the Spitfires gone to, although one owner did approach us at Constantia and we gave him the details of the website for joining the club.

Tyre Safety by Jamie

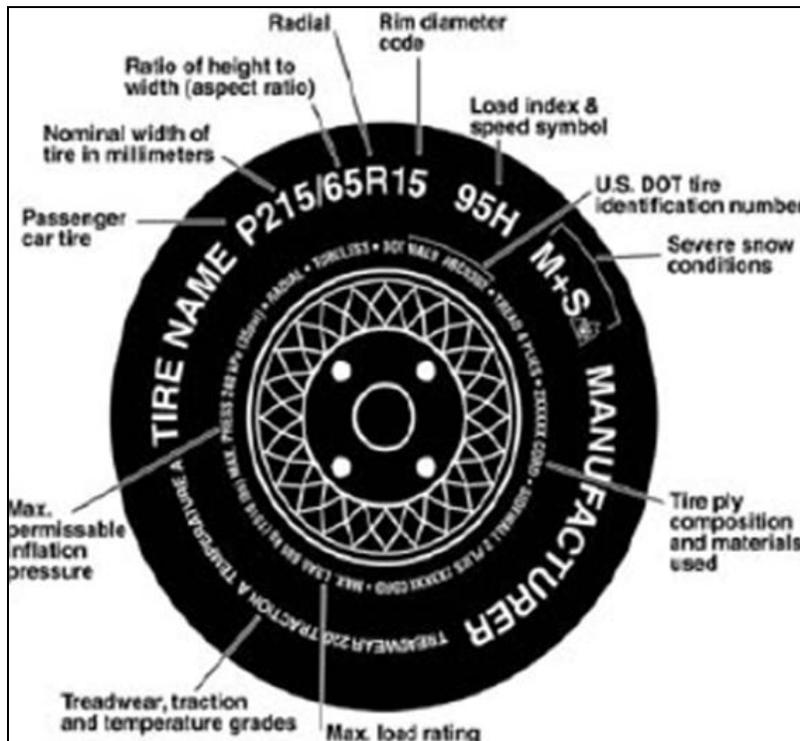
After my recent chat about tyres, Gideon Snyman sent me a very interesting article on tyre safety and the meaning of various markings that are on the sides of tyres. It is quite a lengthy article and a bit long to print here, but I am happy to send it on to any one via e mail that would like to read the whole thing.

In general, tyres have a 4 year validity period from the date of manufacture. There has been a lot of correspondence in magazines such as the TR Register’s magazine about the life expectancy of tyres, the general opinion is that after a life of around 6 years or so depending on usage, the tyre should ideally be replaced even though it is not particularly worn! There seems to be a body of opinion that beyond this date the chances of de-lamination increase relatively quickly when the tyre is subjected to rapid driving conditions.

The date of manufacture of a tyre is on the side in a panel with two asterisks on either side, such as * 2603 *. This marking would indicate that the tyre was manufactured in the 26th week of the year 2003. Similarly a tyre with the markings * 2693* would have been made in 1993 and therefore would be 16 years old! The main problem is that the components used to manufacture the tyre harden with age and then begin to crack, thus causing the tyre to fail, especially in hot weather. In normal driving usage, the tyre will actually wear out long before this happens, but as our cars get restricted usage there is a very real possibility of cracking!

There are also a couple of other factors that must be taken note of. One is a letter after the tyre size that will indicate the maximum speed the tyre can be driven. Q means 160 kph up to Z that means 300 kph, Mr. Cruise please note! The other 2 number before this, for example 95 means the loading (in pounds) that the tyre can load to in normal service. The reason I mention this is that because most of our TR’s take a 15 inch tyre, some retailers will offer a glass fibre reinforced bakkie tyre that is totally unsuitable for high speed cruising that we all like to do if the opportunity arises! Beware!!

I am only too happy to forward this info if any one wants it, thanks to Gideon for forwarding it to me.



Delirious in the desert by Dennis Cook

We hope that you have not found the wet Cape winter as arduous as we are finding the summer here. Walking out of the front door is like walking into a blast furnace and life without the air conditioners would be intolerable. Daytime temperatures here average mid 40's for the months of July and August.

I start my mornings at work with a cup of coffee and a quick look at the daily blog on the web site of Cape Town tourism (<http://www.capetown.travel/blog/>) where there is a new photograph each morning by one of the members. Some of them are almost incredibly beautiful and it commences my day with a happier reminder of home. Occasionally, too, I get a sunrise photograph from that early bird at the Waterfront, our national chairman, to give me an additional boost- thanks Gerhard, it is much appreciated.

While thinking of things beautiful, the thoughts turn not just to the Cape's beautiful surroundings back home but also cars left in storage. I was remembering this morning a beautiful dark young lady who rented my garden cottage when I was still living in Johannesburg. At that time there was a white TR7 companion to my TR 6 and TR3A; the latter languishing in pieces. One day as she passed me on the way to the cottage she remarked that she thought the TR6 a very ugly car compared to the TR7. I was not offended because the TR7 with its wedge shape would obviously be more appealing, more modern, to a younger person. She became quite a longstanding tenant and towards the end of her tenure, having ridden in the TR6 with me, she informed me one day that she had changed her mind and now preferred the more brutish styling of the 6. Undoubtedly to use the hackneyed phrase, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". What is appealing to one is anathema to another, which makes collecting fun.

I was interested to read some while ago a survey by Time; published on their website; of the 50 worst cars ever built and very surprised to find two Triumph sports cars on the list. Of course, the inclusion was the opinion of the article writer and does not necessarily represent an empirical study. The two Triumphs included were, admittedly, seen as horrors in their time although with the passing of the years they have assumed a rightful place amongst collectors.

Rated as 20 th out of 50 worst ever cars is the **Stag**. The reviewer had this to say :

You could put all the names of all the British Leyland cars of the late '60s in a hat and you'd be guaranteed to pull out a despicable, rotten-to-the-core mockery of a car. So consider the Triumph Stag merely representative. Like its classmates, it had great style (penned by Giovanni Michelotti) ruined by some half-hearted, half-witted, utterly temporized engineering: To give the body structure greater stiffness, a T-bar connected the roll hoop to the windscreen, and the windows were framed in eye-catching chrome. The effect was to put the driver in a shiny aquarium. The Stag was lively and fun to drive, as long as it ran. The 3.0-liter Triumph V8 was a monumental failure, an engine that utterly refused to confine its combustion to the internal side. The timing chains broke, the aluminium heads warped like mad, the main bearings would seize and the water pump would poop the bed — ka-POW! Oh, that piston through the bonnet.

On the way to the Border Centre 30 th celebration recently we stopped off at Sedgefield Classic cars where there was a red automatic Stag on sale with the original Triumph engine; still in good running order 30 years on. Nikki Booysen (Gerhard's father in law) who was driving his TR7 remarked that he thought that the Stag had to be the ultimate Triumph sports car- so take that Time! Much has been written about its poor build quality, propensity to rust and its unreliable engine. This is another classic which , in the hands of a caring enthusiast, will usually have these problems sorted out and there is no reason why the Triumph V8 engine cannot be as reliable as any other.

Rated 26 out of 50 worst ever was the **TR7**. The reviewer had this to say about the last of our TR's

The shape of things to come" quickly became the shape that came and went, in a great cloud of "good riddance." The doorstep-shaped TR7, and its rare V8-powered sibling TR8, were the last Triumphs sold in America and among the last the company made before it folded its tents in 1984. The trouble was not necessarily the engineering, or even the peculiar design, which looked fit to split firewood. It was that the cars were so horribly made. The thing had more short-circuits than a mixing board with a bong spilled on it. The carburetors had to be constantly romanced to stay in balance. Timing chains snapped. Oil and water pumps refused to pump, only suck. The sunroof leaked and the concealable headlights refused to open their peepers. One owner reports that the rear axle fell out. How does that happen? It was as if British Leyland's workers were trying to sabotage the country's balance of trade..

To this he should probably add the difficulty of ever trying to remove a cylinder head from the engine block. Happily good maintenance and care have enabled many satisfied owners to make reliable and enjoyable sports cars out of their wedges. I can recall back in the days when we were still the TR register of SA, discussions amongst members then as to whether to allow owners of TR7's to join the register because they were not really TR's at all. Having owned a couple and having driven the long distance from Johannesburg to the Cape in one, I feel that qualified to say that it is an very underrated opened tourer ; an absolute pleasure to drive, particularly if you do something about the brakes, and at the sort of prices being asked for good TR7's today, I recommend anybody looking for a sports car to buy one of these incredible bargains.

On the list which spans almost 100 years are cars that everyone would expect to see such as the 1958 Ford Edsel, Renault Dauphine; Amphicar; Chev Corvaire; AMC Gremlin and Pacer (truly ugly ☹) Ford Pinto, de Lorean etc. Not surprising also the inclusion of the MGA twin cam- *"It was a leaking, piston-burning, plug-fouling nightmare of a motor that required absolute devotion to things like ignition timing, fuel octane and rpm limits, less the whole shebang vomit connecting rods and oil all over the road"*

To get another perspective, I researched a number of lists published of the "ugliest " cars ever, but I am happy to say no Triumph sports car appeared on any of these lists although most of the other cars that I have listed above contained on Time's worst car list were included on the majority of these ugly lists. Imagine buying a car that is useless and ugly too.

Look after your beauties, there will always be someone to appreciate them, and they will continue appreciate. I can remember when a rebuilt TR3 could be had for R20,000- which is the price now of a good paint job. Having an appreciating asset that gives you so much fun is more enjoyable than collecting any other valuable!

Cheers till Spring- Dennis

[Internet Triumph - a now sporadic series by Paul Mitchell](#)

Uh-oh, he's back...

Having a spot of inspiration and a bit of time, I thought I would help Jamie plug a gap in his latest newsletter. I've been looking at car related stuff on the web a bit lately, and thought that I would point those of you who are interested in the direction of one or two interesting things.

What first prompted this was the TR Register site (www.tr-register.co.uk), which has some nice stuff on their annual gathering in Malvern, but also some good TR buying guides and service instructions. Look under 'downloads'. Secondly, if you know what an RSS or blog reader is, and there is probably one built into your browser, then you might like to subscribe to the Telegraph's classic car feed, which is at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/motoring/classiccars/rss>

Then there is this picture, which I spotted on the Times website (<http://tinyurl.com/krnk6l>) attached to an article about divorced couples remarrying each other.



I hasten to add that I wasn't particularly interested in the subject matter, but noticed the picture on their homepage. Having said that, and to revisit one of my favourite themes, there must be those who rekindle their affairs with cars having suffered a big break up. I know there are people who are serial owners of certain models, but will anyone own up to buying the same car twice? Buying the same model repeatedly is like someone dating the same type of person in an eternal search for one who doesn't smoke in bed / hog the

remote / leak oil on the floor. It speaks to a certain optimism. Buying the same car is closer to the Times article - realising that you've made a terrible mistake, it wasn't so bad, and you can't get the same thrills any other way. Of course there could be a certain nostalgia to the whole thing as well, a hope that you can re-ignite the relationship with advancing years, and you don't need a new model to get the same excitement.

I know a guy who bought his wife a dark green frog-eye Sprite for her 21st birthday. Two kids and several years later she had to sell it - a forced separation. Years later, this guy saw it again - the same car, either nicely restored or very well looked after. He slipped a fiver to a friend at the vehicle licencing department, and found out where it lived. Luckily enough a few days later he "just happened to be passing and noticed the car", and made the new

owner an offer. A few weeks later he presented the car to his wife for the second time, on her 40th birthday. And who says romance is dead?

The club of yesteryear by Margaret Young - Part 1 of an occasional series

Jamie asked Nic and I if we could write about some of the Old timers so that our newer members might know some club history.

I joined the club exactly 22 years ago after having seen a concours of our cars on the Sea Point promenade. Des Rudolph was the Chairman at the time and was most welcoming when I phoned him to inquire about joining. The next day Trish the secretary (who married Des soon after) phoned me and arranged for me to get a lift to the next function which was a lunch at Spier. I remember seeing the bright turquoise TR with Brian and Sheila Maggs come swooping in, followed later by Nic in his white Spitfire "Dinky". On being asked why he was so late, Nic replied that he had got lost. *(Nic and I have got lost on quite a number of occasions over the past 22 years!)* The next concours we had was in grounds near the Howard centre in Pinelands and I took my Herald, Ricky, along, and just as well I did because Chris Schultz was doing some judging and on looking at my engine he called me over and showed me that the brake fluid was almost empty! He immediately jumped in his car and drove to his home on the other side of Pinelands to fetch some brake fluid for my car. So one could say that Chris had possibly saved my life as who knows what might have happened on the Hospital bend on the way home if my brakes had failed? Now I am more clued up and always check brake and clutch fluids.

One of our more beautiful Triumphs was undoubtedly the scarlet Roadster belonging to Dr Gert Vlok who lived in the northern suburbs. Because he was a busy Doctor we seldom saw him at our functions but he usually managed to attend concours and a few vintage car shows, and his beautiful car always drew gasps of admiration. Sadly, we never see him now and I wonder that has happened to the Roadster? A handsome couple was Dr John and Jenny Ireland who lived in the southern suburbs. John was a Pediatrician who also saved my bacon once. He had a treasure hunt and I took my best friend Enid with me in Ricky and Nic went in Dinky. Whilst on Signal Hill I had a great problem starting Ricky which was puzzling as he usually started well. We were the last to arrive at the docks where we were to have lunch at the then Harbour tavern, which is where the Heldebrand restaurant now is, when I got to where the aquarium now is Ricky came to a sudden stop and refused to start again. I sent Enid to the restaurant to rustle up some men to help us, and about 4 came to the rescue, John Ireland, Nic, Dave Gordon and 1 other. John immediately dived under the dashboard and did some fiddling with the wires and announced that the ignition wire was the culprit and had come loose. I was very grateful to him and it has been fine since then.

HEARD AROUND TOWN

Congratulations to Adrian Morris on his new TR3, looked great at Constantia and I am sure you will get a lot of enjoyment out of it in the future. Glad the "clonking" noise was sorted out.

In one of those quirks of fate, Ashley Ellis has bought my TR3, I bought my TR6 from Ashley several years ago. I hope you have as much fun in the 3 as we have had in the 6!!

I am not sure whether Ashley now needs even more cars, but he has bought the TR6 that belonged to Tony Hug. It would appear that future plans include converting to electronic fuel injection; we will be fascinated to see how this goes.

Great to see Marion Went on the Simonstown and Blouberg run.



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