



# WHALE TALES

## THE CAPE TOWN TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER

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### CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

This year rapidly coming to its end and before we know it, it will be 2020... The Japan rugby world cup started and we are hoping and praying that our boys will not disappoint this time around, let's hold thumbs. We have only a handful of events left for this year – look out for the events calendar in this edition - and I ask you to please attend and support us, after all, it is your club... We are still looking for cars for the Killarney Car Show for 27 October, please let me know if I could register your car.

The annual general meeting is coming up at the end of November and I am appealing on you to please not only attend the meeting, but be available to assist with the management of the club. Next year will be a big one with the 2020 national gathering at Golden Gate being hosted by the Johannesburg Centre. Watch out for the registration details in the Sabrina and let me know who would be interested in attending.

On a personal note my daughter living in Centurion, Bernadette and Thinus was blessed with the birth of Janko Meyer on 11 September. He came a full 6 weeks earlier than planned weighing in at a full 2.010 kilograms and 40 centimeters in length. He was in ICU for some time and released on 27 September, then re-admitted again on 28 September after he stopped breathing, back in ICU. We are hoping and praying that he will be OK. Suzette went to assist them after his birth and will stay with them until he is out of danger.

Be safe and God Bless.

Triumphant regards,

Gerhard

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

As Gerhard has said the end of the year is coming up fast and the most important event is the AGM on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. The reason for this is to ensure the club has a good committee going forward to 2020 so that we can really get things moving again.

The current committee have done a really good job to right the ship but they need help. Even if you don't want to be on the committee but are happy to organize a noggin or a run, this will be marvelous as every little thing helps. It is also a National gathering year and this time it will be at the Golden Gate national park in the Free State. This is a spectacular venue from a scenic point of view but quite far from a driving from Cape Town perspective. One possible option is to put the cars on the train and drive down from Johannesburg to the venue which is about 3 ½ to 4 hours. I will try to do some investigation, if there is some support, to look at prices for a group booking and the overall reliability of the train service.

## REPORT BACKS

### Darling Wild flower outing report back – Gerhard Vorster

What a lovely, enjoyable event... We were a little concerned about the weather but although it rained on Saturday, we had good weather on Sunday. We got together at the Melkbos Total filling station on the West Coast road for a cuppa. I arrived first and was joined soon afterwards by Tim and Brit Seldal in their beautiful TR3A. Jamie met Tim and Brit in Simonstown when they drove their TR3A to the local shopping



centre and Jamie managed to walk out and saw them. They then had a chat, exchanged details and the rest as they say is history. Tim & Brit live in Gauteng, but have a property here and spend some time here. They recently bought a lovely TR3A and enjoys driving it at the coast in the beautiful scenery and outings. More Triumphs arrived and we were 6 TRs, my TR3A, Tim & Brit – TR3A, Danie

Barkhuizen – TR3, Andre & Terri Bredenkamp – TR6, Eddie & Lynne Hughes – TR7 DHC and Tim Kent in his TR7 FHC. Ashley & Maggie arrived in their lovely Jaguar F-Type. Allan & wife Harris and friends went straight to the show and met us there. We had special area where we parked at the show. The other classic cars that were on show came from Langebaan, a really friendly bunch.

The flowers at this show are particularly spectacular and the organisers really went out of their way to pick wild flowers from the area and present it in a large hall with



old wheelbarrows, stuffed animals and water features. There is also an area where you can see the exact flowers, not in arrangements but with their botanical names.



We went our separate ways and met up later at the tent where the live entertainment was where we had take-away meals, local wine, lots of chatter and catching up.

This was surely a great outing enjoyed by all and could become a regular event on our calendar.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NOGGIN 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 10AM AT THE CLUBHOUSE

I am going to give a talk on my journey with my TR4. Essentially I will be giving the reasons why I chose a TR4, and the philosophy behind the restoration and modifications I have done to the car.

We will be serving bacon rolls and coffee before the talk and look forward to explaining what I have been up to.



## KILLARNEY MOTOR SHOW 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

We still have places available at the show, please contact Gerhard to book yours.


The monies collected from this show go to defray our costs at the multi motor club so it is worthwhile. It can be a long day so bring chairs and snacks although there will be stands selling these at the show.

## TSCC CAPE TOWN AGM

**Notice is hereby given of the Triumph Sports Car Club - Cape Town – Annual General Meeting to be held at the Multi Motor Club clubhouse on 30 November 2019 @ 13h00**

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of last year's AGM
4. Matters arising
5. Treasurer's report
6. Chairman's report
7. Prize giving
8. Election of office bearers
9. General
10. Close

		EVENTS CALENDAR 2019		
Date	Time	Event	Organiser	Contact No.
OCTOBER				
26th		<b>Noggin.</b> Jamie Hart presenting his TR4		

27th		Killarney Motor Show	MMC	
NOVEMBER				
10th		Run : Roland Lloyd takes us on an historic tour of Wellington and surrounds	Roland	
30th		Noggin, AGM and Concours	Barrie Downs	
DECEMBER				
8th		End of year function and prize giving	Gerhard	

## WHALE OF A TALE PART 4 BY TIM KENT

If you have been following this story, Part 4 will need no introduction, but if you have not, or you are new to the Triumph Sports Car Club of Cape Town, then this is the story of the Triumphs I have owned, still own and hope to own until my dying day.

Part three, closes with my first visit to the Free State, having delivered the Nurse to her home and experiencing a great welcome, good food and typical Boer hospitality. As I drove into the setting sun I wondered if I would ever go back to see the Nurse and repay, in some way the great kindness I had experienced. Well, not long afterwards, Nurse phoned to invite me for Christmas, which was not far off and I gladly accepted. I had also accepted an invitation to go and stay with some new friends in Durban. So, after a very different Christmas, (no roast turkey or plum pudding) Nurse and I set off for Durban in the TR, top off, not down as it had the Surrey top, but still no rear window.

This was every young man's dream. As we dropped down past Pietermaritzburg, a Datsun SSS, wanted a challenge, so he got one! When I clocked 90mph he gave up with a wave of his hand and flash of headlights, as much as to say "ok you win" There was only one problem with my victory because as I reached 80mph we could see and smell smoke seeping out around the gearbox tunnel, but the smell of victory was greater than the smell of oil burning, and anyway was this not part of what driving fast was all about? Those racing aces, Nuvolari and Fangio would have reveled in it. As it turned out this was a very simple problem to fix, except no one knew what was causing it, and it would take another two years before the cause of the problem was discovered. (Do you know what the problem was caused by? Answers on a postcard please) The following morning I noticed a great pool of oil under the car and upon checking the dipstick found it to be bone dry. No problem, drive the car slowly to the nearest garage and fill it up, simple! We drove the car every day during our holiday without, it would seem any problems.

Nurse and I had a memorable two weeks in Durban with our new friends and then it was time to head back to the Free State, in the rain, and no rear window. But this was not the least of our troubles, because in those days of sanctions all the petrol stations closed at 5pm and guess what? We needed to fill up and it was now 6pm. It

sounds strange now, that fuel was rationed but no one complained, this was part of life in the Republic; at least we didn't have power outages! I remember the bumper sticker that we were urged to affix, as a token of solidarity, "*Wees bly Jy kan 'n tenkfol kry*" If you were English speaking you had one which said "*Be thankful for your tankful*"

The garage forecourt was full of other cars and bakkies in the same predicament but soon someone started a braai fire in a dustbin lid (this was before dustbins were plastic) and although we had nothing to contribute to the roadside 'fees' we ate and drank as much as we could, in a "hail fellow, well met" atmosphere and fell asleep at about 10pm in a wet car. Halcyon days!

Back in Welkom, Nurse's father and I set about finding the cause of the disappearing oil. We put new washes on the rocker cover bolts, new felt washer on the dipstick and we made a new rocker cover gasket. As long as I kept it under 80mph it seemed ok, but it wasn't because at every petrol refill I checked the oil and found that it needed at least a pint. During one of our investigative sessions, Nurse casually mentioned that her favourite Triumph was the Spitfire, to which I replied that if we could find a nice one I would buy it for her. Well as luck would have it she just happened to know where one was, in fact it was around the corner, on blocks. The young owner had over cooked it on a roundabout and broken a half shaft. I agreed to buy it if I could get a new half shaft, and in the fullness of time I was R300 poorer, but the Spitfire was back on the road, and Nurse was the envy of all her fellow students. The car was a complete MK3 in a colour which was closer to bovine excrement than it was to green.

Fast forward, now, about 12 months and I had been offered a position in Head Office, in Cape Town and I had asked Nurse to marry me, so I had the job I had always wanted and the girl I didn't know I wanted until I met her. So shortly I would be leaving for Cape Town in the TR4A to find a nest and begin a new chapter in life.

Be patient for the next chapter, next month!

## TECHNICAL MATTERS

### TRIUMPH STAG

Technical matters and Triads are combined this month with the advert to sell Ron Grace's magnificent Stag. I have always thought that the Stag could have been the car that made Triumph, but the disaster called British Leyland effectively sabotaged the operation.

I went to a really interesting talk at the Crankhandle club where Ron gave a very good history of this particular car and the Stag in general. When it was originally designed by Harry Webster and Giovanni Michelotti, the car was designed for the 2.5 fuel injected engine as fitted to the 2.5 PI and the TR6. The directors of Triumph wanted a V8, however, as the USA was their target market and they loved their V8s.

The original plan was to fit the Rover V8 into the Stag as by that time Triumph and Rover had combined so it was a logical choice.

At the time I could never understand why this didn't happen and assumed it was some Machiavellian plan by Rover to upset their stable mate. Only when I read the story of Rover by Graham Robson did the real reason come to light. The Rover V8 was produced under licence from Buick in the USA and they were really worried what effect the Stag would have on their Corvette Stingray market, so much so that they forbade Rover from selling the engine to Triumph. Given that the directors wanted a V8, and wanted it quickly, Harry Webster developed one by combining 2 of the slant 4 cylinder blocks used in the Dolomite to give a V8. This actually worked pretty well in the test lab but had some fatal flaws in engineering that more testing would have shown up. Number one flaw was that the timing chain tensioner was too short, as soon as the timing chain started to stretch then the tensioner popped out of its guide and the chain broke, with disastrous results!

The second problem was the same as caused the Dolomite engine to be very unreliable, namely the cylinder head studs were made from the wrong grade of steel and stretched under load, causing the head gasket to fail. Add to this the wrong grade of coolant and you have the makings of a major problem. The piece de resistance was, however, that these problems were found very early on in the car's life, and for example the cylinder head studs would have cost very little more to have been made with the correct grade of steel. Add the sheer stupidity and ignorance of the bean counters that ran Leyland who wanted to do the repairs under warranty rather than fix them at source, you have the recipe for a very unreliable car which is exactly how the market reacted!

The outcome was a beautifully designed car that could have been a world beater being sabotaged by senior management at Leyland, and the car was a commercial disaster. Those enthusiasts who managed to get hold of cars fitted a new engine, usually the Rover V8, or sorted out the original Triumph engine that then gave good results after some careful re assembly. We had a Stag in the club until about 2 years ago that had the original engine and it ran beautifully. The one Ron is offering for sale has the 2.5 engine fitted and runs really well, if I had any space in my garage I would definitely buy it!!

## TRIADS

1972 Triumph Stag. Red in colour. Unfortunately I have to sell it as I recently bought an MGC Roadster and now have too many classic cars. This is a reluctant sale. All my classic cars are showroom cars used for shows or occasional Club outings only. Fitted with a 2.5 six cylinder Triumph Chicane engine with four speed manual gearbox with overdrive. Gold Medal winner at last year's Triumph Concours in Bloemfontein. This year I drove the car from Langebaan to the George Old Car Show and back and she went beautifully. Any test welcome. Asking price is R165 000-00. Phone Ronnie Grace at 072 229 8859 or (022) 772 1916 or e-mail [rongrace@mweb.co.za](mailto:rongrace@mweb.co.za). I live in Langebaan along the West Coast.





**WHAT A GREAT WAY TO FINISH**