



WHALE TALES

THE CAPE TOWN TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

One thing that I learnt lately is that no matter how far science, discovery and technology have advanced there are still certain aspects of life that no-one can manage and or predict. Take this current situation of the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Who would have thought that in this modern era we live in, we would be in this situation where there is a worldwide pandemic, no vaccine or cure for the virus even 7 months after it was first discovered? I was in a similar situation when my beloved son GP passed away in 2016. He was diagnosed with appendicitis, appendix removed, but passed away 5 days later with liver failure. Although our trust was in the medical profession, they failed to do the correct diagnosis even though all the technology and equipment was available. I am not being negative, but these are the facts.

We have to make the most of here and now, time spent with family and friends are so valuable and if you have your health, then you have everything, look after yourself as money can't buy it.

The national committee in conjunction with the Johannesburg centre decided to postpone the national gathering for 2020 to next year and a date will still be announced, refer to the communication in this newsletter.

Our first virtual meeting was a bit of a non-event with again technology failing us, but we shall try again and I am positive that it will work. Please do participate and log in, we would love to “see” you there.

We are really looking forward to getting together again with our fellow TRIUMPH enthusiasts and have great outings and meals together.

Please do look after yourself and be safe!!

Triumphant regards,
Gerhard Vorster

THE EDITOR'S DESK

As Gerhard has mentioned, our first venture into online meetings was not a great success, it would appear that the problem was not so much on our side but the external providers such as Telkom seemed to have major problems so we will try again and see if we can get it right this time. It was great to catch up with Tom Dougan from Edinburgh complete with beer in hand, and to Ronnie Herzfeld from the Morgan club, sorry it was not the success we had hoped.

That said, as Andre said we are slowly being let out of our cages and life gradually returns to some sort of normal. Whilst I have done very little on my car during the lockdown, Gerhard has redone his TR7V8 in a lovely Mazda red and it looks very striking. Tim Kent has been slowly working through his TR4A rebuild and I am looking forward to seeing it on the road soon.

I have been looking at quite a few webinars recently, and one comment stood out for me. I know I am not meant to be political but somehow this comment put the whole pandemic into perspective. Up in Tanzania, every year there is a massive migration of wildebeest in the Masai Mara reserve as the animals move to new sources of food. Part of this migration means crossing a river in which lots of crocodiles lie in wait for their meal. The wildebeest cross en masse and whilst the crocodiles enjoy a banquet, the vast majority of the animals make it to the other side and are able to reach new grazing areas. The authorities are very mindful of the loss in life due to the crocodiles so they decide to put up a fence for the good of the wildebeest. The result is that no wildebeest die in the river but the whole herd starves to death due to lack of food!! Sound familiar?

On a very different note, the organising committee for the National gathering this year have decided to postpone the event until April next year as there is doubt about the lockdown ending by early spring this year. This means you will have lots of time to sort your car out and the following gathering will be in 2023 not 2022. On a personal basis I hope that this new date might coincide with the Stars of Sandstone event at Ficksburg, just round the corner, so hopefully I can see steam engines, vintage tractors and farm machinery as well as a host of military hardware that is looked after on behalf of the defence force.

As a postscript, Gerhard organised another Zoom meeting last night which was much more successful, good to welcome Tom Dougan and Brian McKirdy from Scotland and John Rademan from PE. Hopefully these meeting will gain momentum as we covered some good topics and great to talk to everyone, not as good as in the flesh but much better than not at all!

TECHNICAL TRIVIA

I was hoping to include some good news that we had fixed the carburettors on Roger Tyler's lovely mark 4 Spitfire that I commented on a few newsletters ago. The car was running very rich and was using a lot more fuel than needed so as Roger lives very near we tried a long distance "fix". Roger had bought the car from a lady in Constantia who hadn't used it very much so it took quite a bit of coaxing to get it started and driven to Roger's home in Glencairn.

It seemed pretty straight forward to tune the SU's and on opening them up the problems seemed obvious. We checked the levels of the jets and adjusted them to the datum level of 2 turns down, checked that the float chamber valves were operating properly and not flooding, as well as looking at the fuel levels when the pistons were removed. All seemed well and the car seemed to idle pretty well but the minute the accelerator was pressed clouds of black smoke came from the exhaust. Even with the jets screwed all the way up the car is still rich. We looked at the oil in the dashpots, that was fine so we are at a bit of a loss to work out what the problem is, any ideas??

A WHALE OF A TALE PART 8 BY TIM KENT

Having read this far you may be wondering how or why I had become so attached to this car. I mean, after all, it had nearly cost me my life, it had cost more money than was rational, and any sane person would have dumped it long ago in exchange for Datsun Bluebird. It had been a source of embarrassment, and still the problems continued. It had become almost a competition to see whose patience would run out first, and mine was ebbing fast.

This blood curdling screech from the clutch, in the middle of the Karoo, in the early hours was intensely irritating. But we arrived in Welkom by late afternoon and only thought about it the next morning.

So, seats out, gearbox tunnel out, disconnect the prop-shaft and three hours later the gearbox was also out. Have you ever tried to remove a gearbox with all four wheels on the ground? If you haven't don't, trust me. We did this because the consensus of opinion, by those who didn't know, was that it must be the clutch release bearing. We took it to the local Massey Ferguson dealer and bought another one, re-fitted everything and found that we had cured the problem, so maybe they did know after all, or were they just guessing? The car had been standing so long that the release bearing grease had dried up hence the screech. The 4A was now pretty much sorted and looking very good, so now I had to turn my attention to the Spitfire. It was a 1965 MK3, paintwork was camouflage green (which was awful) but being a Free State car there was no rust. The broken half shaft had been replaced, but we didn't find out till much later that the impact against a kerb which bent the half

shaft had also damaged the differential casing. For the time being it was ok so we didn't suspect any problems.

The Nurse and I drove it to Cape Town, no problems. But it wasn't a car for long distance cruising. It was great for English country roads and the dash down to the pub on a Saturday night, but driving through the Karoo at 100kph was the most comfortable speed. But, when we stopped for the night in Beaufort West all the oil in the diff leaked out onto the tarmac, the stitch welding on the diff casing had had enough. Ho Hum, now what? As usual, in that part of the world, there are 'no problems' just solutions "Vat hom by Oom Jan, daar, ander kant van die brug en he sal dit reg maak vir jou," (take it to Uncle Jan, there on the other side of the bridge and he will fix it for you), which he did, in a couple of hours. But Oom Jan warned me that the repairs were not a long term solution and that the diff would have to be replaced. We got back to Cape Town safely, but slowly, and thankfully. It became my daily transport, but Nurse and I were now married and some of the essential ingredients for the 'rent controlled flat' in Sea Point were still missing, but hey, we were young, in love, and on the threshold of life, and three Triumphs parked on the street below, oh man, light up a Lexington, you'll be so glad you did!

And so, the TR4A was a delight to behold, the TR4 was outstanding (and probably a nicer car to drive) but the Spitfire needed finishing off. I took it to Jimmy's Trim Shop and had a new soft top and tonneau cover made and then had it re-sprayed in a blue colour to match the southern African noon day sky. I had forgotten about the diff but the day of reckoning was not far off, strange noises could be heard, a sort of "wuurring" which got louder as speed increased. The local Leyland dealer, Robb Motors, (Robb by name rob by nature) recommended a replacement diff, which for R400 which meant that we could either pay the rent or replace the diff, we replaced the diff. The land lord understood. However, the new differential, reputed to be the right one, wasn't. First gear became un-necessary and with the rev counter on 4000rpm, in top gear, Datsun Bluebirds with front wings flapping in the wind would overtake me easily. It turned out that the diff fitted was for a Triumph Herald, but it was Hobson's choice for me as it was the only one available, yep, sanctions against RSA were really starting to hurt.

Living in Sea Point and travelling into town every morning meant that this odd diff was not a problem, but then we bought our first house in Plumstead which meant using the new M5 freeway and the wrong diff made the darling little car most impractical. And then, oh no, blue smoke could clearly be seen wafting out of the exhaust when taking off from a stop. Chris Schultz diagnosed this as worn valve stem seals, or worn piston rings. It would seem that an engine over-haul was just pie in the sky. So it was relegated to the garage and stayed there for some time.

This is not the end, but when I returned to S.A. in 2007 I joined the Pretoria branch of the Triumph club and one Newsletter asked members to write about "Why I Love my Spitty" I responded, and won first prize, except that there were no prizes to be won and besides my offering was the only one received, and it went thus:

**I used to own a Spitfire,
The top was always down,
I used to be very pale,
But now I'm honey brown.**

**The Spitty was a dull dark green,
And not in very good nick,
In fact it wouldn't go at all,
But a new half shaft did the trick.**

**I bought it for a young lass,
Who soon became my wife,
We drove it down to Cape Town,
To start our married life.**

**We set to work to get it right,
She didn't like it hue,
We worked together without a fight
And painted it bright blue.**

**With a new top and tonneau,
The engine and gearbox fixed,
We would cruise along the beachfront
The sheer envy of every Joe.**

**Michelloti's greatest triumph,
Was our other beloved car,
The Spitfire's bigger sister,
You'll know as the TR.**

**She loved the little sporty car,
She loved me through and through,
And soon there were bambinos,
Not only one, but two.**

**We couldn't keep both the cars,
What with diapers to buy,
So we sold the darling Spitty,
And privately did cry.**

**Now the boys have fled the nest,
And my wife is still so pretty,
If I could find one of the best,
I'd buy her another Spitty.**



THE DREADED SPITTY

Ho Hum, just another spitty day in paradise,

Till the next time, drive in Triumph,

P.S. Triumph TR7 1977 for sale, breaking for spares.

**Complete car, automatic, power steering, electric windows, air conditioning,
but VROT (Rotten)**

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

2016 NATIONAL GATHERING AT HARTENBOS

This was the gathering organised by Cape Town at the AKTV resort at Hartenbos, near to Mossel Bay. It was a really good venue and great credit should be given to Dennis Cook and his team for organising a really good event, the venue overlooked the sea and the weather was perfect until the drive home but by then it didn't really matter. In fact could I put a punt in for another National gathering, possibly a coastal one, to be held here as it was pretty central for all the coastal clubs and had really good amenities.



CAPE TOWN PARTICIPANTS



DENNIS COOK'S TR3A



BARRIE DOWNES TR5



MIKE BILLINGTONS TR3A



THE LONG WALK TO CONOURS



DAANIE BARKHUISEN'S TR3



TR6 CONCOURS



SPICK AND SPAN TR4



TR7 CONCOURS



SIDESCREEN CONCOURS



BEFORE THE DRIVING TEST



**ANDRE GREYLING'S TR7, THIS CAR WAS
OWNED BY SUZETTE VORSTER**



CAPE TOWN WINNERS



GETTING READY FOR THE OPENING DINNER

TAIL PIECE

TIM KENT'S LOVELY TR4A BEFORE ITS ARGUMENT WITH A HOLDEN!

