



# WHALE TALES

## THE CAPE TOWN TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER

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### CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We are in the last quarter of this year and I am sure you all feel that it has been a difficult, different one, something that none of us expected even in our wildest dreams. Roll on 2021 and I am positive that it has to be a better one. Our club started this year with a real bang, with great outings, many new great members joining the club and then boom, lockdown, social distancing and chaos.... Let's hope that we don't have to go through this "trauma" again soon, although it is not over yet, but let's be positive.

Next year the Johannesburg will host the 2020 postponed national gathering at Golden Gate and it promises to be a great one, yet again. What I enjoy of the national gatherings is that you all stay at the same resort and where-ever you look, there is Triumphs parked all over the place. You hear them start up in the mornings, friend cleaning and working on their pride and joy. Then there is also the outings where you can see up to 70 Triumphs in convoy and all over there are just Triumphs. Watch this space.

We are looking forward to going on our monthly runs and noggins again soon and am sure that you would also welcome it and join us for more fun and games.

Triumphant Regards,

Gerhard Vorster

## **THE EDITOR'S DESK**

Even between Gerhard's chairman's chat and getting the newsletter together, life has begun to change with the news that at long last we can use the multi motor club again but subject to strictly following the rules of social distancing.

We had hoped to have another picnic on the Somerset West side of town but our initial plans were scuppered by the weather on two occasions which shows how lucky we were to get the picnic on Chapman's Peak in. Hopefully we may find an alternative venue in the Somerset West area pretty soon as there seemed to be a lot of support for the picnic idea.

One of the other positives for going to stage 2 is that the Post Office seems to be starting to deliver at long last. I am not sure whether it was the lack of driving over the lockdown or what, but when I looked at my car a few days after the last run there seemed to be more oil than normal on the garage floor. On reading my May copy of TRaction from the TR register which arrived yesterday, there was an interesting article on selling the TR7 written by someone who used to work at a London distributor of Leyland called Henlys. There used to be a branch of Henlys on the Great West Road near my dad's garage, and I often used to call in there for spares when I was working in dad's workshop. I always remember looking at the Triumphs of one sort and another but the one thing this article reminded me of was how each car seemed to have a tray underneath to catch the oil. In fact the point was that when the boss moved to sell Datsun on the demise of British Leyland, he noticed that there was no need to put trays underneath to protect the floors! Still, I lose big brownie points if I don't put trays under my car to catch the oil so my next job is a mini rebuild to hopefully solve the problem!

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

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

I had almost given up hope of saying this but the clubhouse has now been reopened with social distancing so it is possible to actually give something very definite.

Mike Napoli will give a talk on his Maccau Spitfire, at very long last!! For those of you who don't remember the car, essentially it was a cross between a Spitfire and a GT6 with Triumph 2000 heritage. A wonderful car and I am sure you will enjoy the talk.

Refreshments will be served before the meeting, not sure whether it will be wots rolls or bacon butties but I am sure it will be great whatever!

See you there

## **BRITISH SPORTS CAR TOUR**

This event was due to take place next month. As there is still a lot of doubt as to what the regulations actually are, and as many of the potential participants would be of an age group that would be at risk, we have decided to postpone the run until April

next year, either on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> or the 18<sup>th</sup> of April. The destination will still be the Elgin Country Club but we all felt there was still a high risk this year so please look forward to an event next year.

## **TIMOUR HALL**

There has been a lot of confusion and false news about the long term future of Timour Hall. Part of this was due to the major financial problems arising from the January show being washed out, and obviously the problems with the Covid 19 pandemic seemed to spell the end for this iconic place in Plumstead.

The property is leased by the International Police Association from the department of public works and is used by the Crankhandle Club for their end of month get togethers and noggins. The police association were very concerned about the finances and had plans in place to close down the property which was also being run as a guest house. The Crankhandle Club were very concerned about where they could meet as an alternative venue and set up a fund that could be used as a war chest. At the Crankhandle AGM last Saturday it was announced that there have been major positive developments which will ensure the long term survival of this wonderful venue, and its development into a more user friendly and upmarket place to go.

At this stage it would appear that the show next January will go ahead as usual and hopefully some of the renovations will have happened to make it a more attractive place to be. If there are further developments, which I am sure there will be, I will keep you all posted.

## **A WHALE OF A TALE PART 11 BY TIM KENT**

It's now five years since I parted with the TR4, the Spitfire is still sitting in my garage waiting for an engine over-haul, and I now have two sons, two dogs, two Triumphs and two weeks holiday per annum. I was becoming a bit too complacent, I wanted more. Nurse is head of a Retirement Village because she specialized in Geriatrics. Many times when asked what my wife does I would reply that she is a geriatric nurse. This didn't sound quite right because it sounded like she, herself was of advanced years and might be incontinent. She wasn't too pleased with my description either.

The boys were still small and our greatest joy was the regular Breakfast Runs in the TR4A topless. We would get up at 5am, pack the car and be on the beach by 6am. The boys would dive off the rocks as Nurse and I prepared coffee, scrambled eggs and bacon. Apart from the scenery, the weather and the lovely beach, the car was the star.

It just wouldn't be the same in an Opel Corsa. These "runs" have made memories for the boys and today they are forever nagging me to get the TR4 restoration finished so that their children can have the same experiences before they get too big to fit in the dickie seat

My career with the *iconic* retailer, whoa, just a minute; everything today is “iconic” which is not true and I vowed to myself that I would never use that word out of context. An Icon is an “image, statue, sacred painting or mosaic” a business, no matter how successful is not ‘iconic’ neither are Kellogg’s Corn Flakes, Marmite, Nelson Mandela or potato chips. Ok rant over, let’s move on.

My career, had, I thought reached its zenith, times were changing, Mandela had been released and the Company had to make way for a new and younger generation. Staff of my generation and length of service were being offered “packages” to sail off into the sunset, but “read your restraint of trade agreement carefully”. I was not ready for this so I applied for and was granted a transfer to stores. I was appointed to Stellenbosch store as General Manager. This is leading somewhere, trust me, because it starts the most harrowing experience in the annals of Classic car restoration ever.

At the time I was the proud owner of an Opel Rekord 200 , so I took it to the Opel dealer in Stellenbosch for routine servicing. The Service Manager was a man called Mike Brown, now remember this name because he and I became good friends and stayed friends even though I could not believe, or forgive what he did, in the fullness of time, to the TR4. You may want to find that box of Kleenex, you’ll need it.

At about this time my Father –in-law died from post operative complications. Of course we all flew up for the funeral and I was genuinely very sad at his passing. But whilst we were there, naturally I wanted to see the TR4, which I found at the bottom of his garden, un-covered, filthy, rat infested, sodden, rusted and generally derelict. Kleenex please! I couldn’t say anything so I didn’t. My time would come, because as you will remember, legally the car still belonged to me.

I was moved from Stellenbosch to Paarl to Table View and then I learnt that the Company was moving quickly into franchising and decided that I would have one. My other good friend (this implies that I only had two good friends which may be) was my Accountant and fellow Rotarian and we got together and discussed applying for a franchise. They were very expensive but between us we did the business plan, put up the money 50/50 and about a year later we were awarded , provisionally, a store in Vredenburg, on the West Coast.

During that time my Mother –in-law was asking Nurse to ask me what I thought the TR4 was worth because she wanted to sell it. My immediate reaction was that she should pay me to take it away. I had to tell Nurse that she must gently remind her Mother that she could not sell the car because it was still legally mine. Her response was that if I wanted it back it she wanted R5000 for it. I still could not understand why my father-in-law had abandoned it to such a dreadful fate. There was good reason which I would find out years later. I gave Mother-in-law the money and made plans to go and get it. Mike now had his own Workshop and could lend me a four wheel trailer. I had swopped the Rekord for a bog standard Opel Astra 1.4, because the Rekord was being used by anyone in the Stores to visit off site stockrooms and it was being abused. Mike reckoned that the Astra would tow the trailer and the TR, with no problems. Yeah right!

We set off one morning at 3am, the boys had invited two friends so we were 6 up. As I filtered on to the NI I noticed that one wheel of the trailer was not making contact with the road and it was the same on the other side, they were revolving freely in the wind. I carried on, saying to myself that the weight of the TR would sort it all out. We arrived late afternoon and the next morning managed, with lots of help to get the TR on the trailer. I took it for a test and it became immediately apparent that the Opel had no chance of towing the whole lot back to Cape Town , 40 kilometres an hour in third gear was maximum, but what about the mountains?

Mike had made a huge and expensive mistake and this was not his last. I had to hire a Nissan 4x4 bakkie at huge expense. The next Saturday Mike and his wife came from their home in Grabouw to Plumstead to have a look at this 'wreck' and he asked who was going to restore it. Well, of course I replied that I was. His exact reply was "no you are not, you sell dresses I fix cars "end of discussion".

I was very happy about the car going to his workshop for restoration. I knew Mike's work was of a very high standard. We arranged that he would come the next weekend and we would remove the body so it could be sent to the best panel beater (in Mike's opinion, this is his second mistake) in South Africa, whilst he would attend to the mechanics. He arrived at the appointed time drank 6 Castle lagers and we had the body off before lunch. A flat bed truck arrived and took the body away. Mike took the chassis away, complete with engine and running gear and I was very happy that great progress had been made and that the car was in good hands.

Ignorance is bliss.

I never saw the body again. Please pass the Kleenex,  
No, not one, I need the whole box.

But the franchise in Vredenburg had been awarded and the building of the new Mall was making good progress so it was time to pack up and move there. My Accountant advised that it may be some time before the business could start paying me a salary and did I have enough money to see me through for a couple of months? Oh dear me, I had to say "yes of course I have" but I didn't. We did not sell our house but rented it. Nurse very tactfully suggested that, maybe, just maybe I must sell the TR4A and the Spitfire, and her ridiculous suggestion was like a knife in the chest but she was right. As she always was in difficult times.

This was an opportunity of a lifetime and I could not fail. Oh bugger the Kleenex, I'm going outside with a handkerchief.

I got R28000 for the TR4A and R3400 for the Spitfire. When the buyer of the TR sat at my dining room table and counted, very slowly, R28000 in R100 notes, there was no feeling, just numbness and guilt.

The TR4A had been my friend for 22 years but it was ***"time to say goodbye"***

Goodbye till the next time, Tim.



## DESTRUCTION AND RESURECTION

At some stages of this missive I got a bit (in fact a lot) confused as to what was happening with Tim's restoration of his TR4. The pictures following show how a good TR4 in 1975 was slowly converted to a wreck in 1995 and then worse was to happen. It will be covered in the next episode but the following picture are the guide to how the car used to be and hopefully where it will be once the rebuild is finished.



**A YOUNGER LOOKING TIM WITH THE TR4 IN 1975**



**LOOKING VERY SAD IN 1995**





ON THE TRAILER FOR RESTORATION

## TECHNICAL TRIVIA

I did talk about this a couple of months ago, but with summer arriving sometime in the future and hopefully lockdown will remain at least at level 2, we will start to drive our cars a bit more after their hibernation. In normal times we use our cars through winter but reading a British magazine where they hardly use their cars because of their climate I thought it useful to give a check list of potential problem areas.

### Engine oil

Check oil levels, look at the colour and if darkish grey or black then change. Remember that older cars generally use a normal multigrade such as Castrol rather than the more modern synthetic oils.

### Coolant

If you have been topping the radiator up with water, you will have diluted the ratio of anti freeze to water. It may be time to replace all the coolant to get rid of rust and other nasties that are present.

### Battery

Check the terminals and remove if there is a build up of a whitish substance. Clean the affected areas with a toothbrush using a warm solution of baking soda and water and replace. It is always a good idea on cars that are used infrequently to remove the earth lead after use to prevent draining the battery.

### Electrics

Check the circuits such as lights and horns to make sure there is still good continuity, if needed rub them with fine wet and dry paper and re check.

### Tyres

Look at the condition of each tyre for wear on the tread and/ or signs of misalignment. **REPLACE** if needed! Inflate to correct pressure.

## **Brakes**

Normal brake fluid is hygroscopic, i.e. it picks up water from the atmosphere which will cause it to change colour to a darker brown. Fluid with water in will cause major problems if you use the brakes a lot as it will boil and the brakes stop working! Never be afraid to change the fluid regularly.

## **Lubricate**

Grease dries out slowly so give all the grease nipples a good shot of grease until new grease can be seen.

## **Fuel**

Modern fuels have a much shorter tank life than the traditional petrol of old. The methanol/ethanol that is added to fuel is also hygroscopic so check all fuel lines and make sure the carbs function correctly

## **Underbody**

Check that all is secure and nothing is about to fall off!

## **Test drive**

Pick a sunny day and go for a short drive to check all is working. **ENJOY!**

## **TAIL PIECE**

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY RICKY!!**

I am hoping that I will be spoken to by Margaret again because last month I forgot a very important birthday! I don't normally do birthdays but this was a special one, Ricky, Margaret's Triumph Herald, turned 60!

Margaret entered a raffle and Ricky was first prize and has been owned by Margaret ever since!!





