



WHALE TALES

THE CAPE TOWN TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Where has the time gone?? I cannot believe that it is already the end of January already!!! Worst of it all is that we have not even had one TRIUMPH get together this year yet. In past years we would have had a start of year run, to sort of get is in the right spirit for what is to come, Timour Hall classic car show and a noggin. Next week Saturday would have been the Passion for Speed classic races at Killarney and also the George Motor show. Who could have predicted that we would not be able to participate in these event due to the state of the world currently??

The TSCC National gathering has also been postponed again and the plan is to arrange it for 2022. Let's be in a positive frame of mind and spirit and hope that things will return to normal soon and we will again be able to enjoy our hobbies and cars together.

I am happy to report that our club is going strong and we are getting requests for more membership application forms. I am sure that more and more past members and people with TRIUMPH cars are looking forward to getting out and together with like-minded people.

It is actually also a good time to work on your cars and to fix the little things that need fixing as the time is best used in the garage with your car and also keeps your mind occupied with other things instead of the current state of the nation.

Let's be in a positive frame of mind and spirit and hope that things will return to normal soon and we will again be able to enjoy our hobbies and cars together.

Be safe and look after yourself!

Triumphant Regards,

Gerhard

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Well it is a bit like the old Jaws movie - just when you thought it was safe to go back into the water ...!! Unlike the first lockdown where you sort of knew someone that had had Covid, this time it has come very close to home and we certainly know of lots of people who have had the virus. Fortunately there were no really serious cases, but several friends have spent time in hospital, and a lot of them report they are taking a long time to fully recover - so we are taking no chances.

Many people are spending time sorting out their cars which leads me to ask the members a serious question. Whilst some are very happy with supplier's services, several are distinctly unhappy with the results. I would appreciate if members would be happy with some sort of referral service accessible only to members, probably via the webpage, where they could look at a review of who gives good (and bad) service. What would your thoughts be to this?

I also appreciate it could be a problem if suppliers disagreed with member's opinions, hence I am putting it out there for both positive and negative feedback, from members.

Another big ask is for articles that have relevance to the Triumph marque. I have to say a big thank you to Tim Kent for his excellent "Whales Tales". Apart from that, very few people have put anything on paper which makes putting this newsletter together very difficult. I've had lots of phone calls asking for advice on a number of subjects, but I would appreciate feedback on how these issues were resolved.

I am looking forward to getting a flood of articles for future newsletters ... it is better to travel in hope.....!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DRIVE YOUR TRIUMPH DAY, WEDNESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY

This idea started in the USA but has been taken up in South Africa by Rene de Villiers of the Jo'burg centre. We would love you to drive your Triumph and then please send a picture to me and I will post it in the newsletter and send it on to the Drive a Triumph website.

NATIONAL GATHERING APRIL 21

We have had word from Norman Bull from Johannesburg centre that the gathering has had to be postponed yet again due to the current pandemic. This was due to be at the Golden Gate National Park near Bethlehem, but all bookings will be advanced and it is contemplated it will take place in April 2022. Given that we all thought life would return to normal mid 2020, this is further proof, if it was needed, that life is going to take a long time to get back to even nearly normal

BRITISH SPORTS CAR TOUR APRIL 11TH

At this stage the tour is still on. With Covid numbers dropping we are hopeful that we will be at a level where we can go ahead with the tour, even if we are restricted in numbers. Fortunately with modern communications we can make a decision shortly before the date as to whether we go or postpone yet again.

REPORT BACKS

Regrettably not a lot to report on!

A WHALE OF A TALE PART 15 BY TIM KENT

Welcome back to this epic story of my “affairs” with the Triumph TR4. The picture is the body shell which had been imported from California, was wrapped in hay bales and laid to rest on a mezzanine floor in a barn on a farm just north of Edinburgh, Scotland. You will notice, if you look carefully, that it has no wings, no windscreen surround, no boot lid, no bumpers, but it was crying out to be re-united with a chassis, running gear and someone mad enough to fulfil its long lost hope of returning to the open road.



My contract with the fake Sheik (the owner of Harrods) had run its course and I was really looking forward to returning home to South Africa. I paid Chic, (which I think is Scottish for Charles) an obscene amount of money for this partial shell and this included the shipping cost to Southampton. Where it would meet the Volvo (below) and loaded into a 40 foot container for shipment to SA.

Whilst all this was going on I saw an advertisement in TRaction (the monthly publication of the parent TR Register) for dozens of parts for a TR4/4A. The advertiser lived somewhere south of London. I phoned him and expressed interest in all he had to offer. He asked me how much further north of York was Kildary, Rosshire. I said York was about half way, why? Well, he said that he must come up to York for his sister's birthday and that he had never been to Scotland so he would drive up the next day with a small van full of parts for a TR4.



And so he did. I met him and his new bride, (considerably more senior than he) at a petrol station near where I lived. After tea he unloaded his wares and my now long healed broken jaw fell open as wide as it was possible. He had door cards, door handles, inner and outer, metal dashboard, carpets, front and rear lights, radiator grille, heater, hoses, bumpers with over-riders, windscreen surround, door rubbers, and too much else to mention without losing your attention. I paid him his asking price and we went out for an Angus steak. They had a good night's sleep and left early the next morning.

By the way, my affection for TR's has only been matched by my appreciation for Volvo's and this was a 1997 S40 1.8i with 45000 miles on the clock and was in all respects like new. The asking price was way below its value as a motor car. I was completely hooked and became its new owner. This was 2004, and so I have had the car for 16 years without any, repeat any, trouble of a mechanical nature. **Viva Volvo!**

Now, when the TR4 shell arrived in Southampton, it's loading into the container was prohibited by Customs officials because the pallet on which it was mounted was not

made of new wood with the Forestry Commission's stamp, which would confirm that the wood was free from all communicable diseases, I thought only humans caught viruses. And now? Well, it was either a question of paying a customs official a lot of money to turn a blind eye or get someone to make a new pallet in the required wood. I opted for the latter because I could not know if it would be rejected in Durban because the wood was un-acceptable. Little did I know that this would be the least of my woes? The new pallet was made but the container was not allowed to leave, because SA customs would not believe that I was a bone fide SA citizen. The rule says that a returning SA citizen may import one car per family, duty free, provided he can prove ownership of at least 6 months.

Now the really funny part started; or it would be funny if it weren't so imbecilic. The description of the body shell on the pallet included the word 'car' i.e.: "Car body " SA customs officials concluded that I was importing **two** cars and must, therefore pay duty on the more expensive, which was, of course the Volvo. By this time I was back in SA, Mpumalanga, to be precise and the poor girl at Stuttaford's Van Lines admitted that she was unable to convince the officials that the 'shell' was not a car. To no avail. At this stage I was emitting steam from every bodily orifice and nearly decided to call the whole thing off. I asked the Stuttaford's lady if I could phone the Customs officials and try and explain the situation. After three days on the phone (no-one answered it) I finally got through to an Official, who insisted that there were two cars in the container. No matter how artificially polite I tried to be he would not budge. In desperation I suggested that he might like to take the car "on the pallet" for a drive round the dockyard and if he could I would happily pay the duty on the Volvo. Of course he hadn't even seen the container let alone its contents. He undertook to get a senior opinion, which he must have done because the container was finally cleared for shipment, but.....

My ID was rejected as a possible forgery, so too was my SA passport. The container and its contents wasted away on the Southampton docks whilst I argued my case with another incompetent official at SA Customs. The only proof I had of my SA citizenship was a document from the Department of Home Affairs, signed by the relevant Minister which was in a box in the Volvo. So, shipment was authorised provided I produced the Minister's letter at the port of entry, which was Durban. I managed to convince Stuttaford's Van Lines to change the port of entry to Johannesburg, and when the container arrived I would un-pack the whole car to find the Minister's letter which proved that I was a returning South African and could therefore could import the Volvo duty free.

There's more heartache to follow, honest!

Till the next time be Triumphant in whatever you do!!

Tim

HEARD AROUND TOWN

I had an interesting mail from Dave Morris concerning the values of cars here and in UK. Dave bought Istvan Rietoff's (Gerhard's brother in law) TR7 V8 coupe which was a very good V8 conversion. Dave sold the car a couple of years ago and

virtually sold it for a song to a local who would appreciate such a good car. The car was then sold on and at some point exported to the UK where it was sold to an enthusiast who in rand terms paid around 10 times what Dave had got for it a few years previously. South African cars have always sold well in the UK as they are rust free and right hand drive as opposed to ex California cars which are left hand drive. There is a definite following for TR7s and their derivatives in UK which is not shared as yet in this country, time will tell if we follow.

The reason our ANC government banned us from using the beaches was that their technical advisors told them that the Covid 19 virus comes in waves, hence the ban on being on a beach so you couldn't be hit by a wave!

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the introduction of the TR4. Faced with declining sales of the TR3A and the Herald, Standard Triumph faced a major financial crisis due to lack of sales and given the overall British economy were on the brink of bankruptcy. They were bought by Leyland Motors, whose major products were trucks and buses, but wanted to look at getting into the quality motor market. After a boardroom shake up, the director from Leyland, Stanley Markland, and the engineer behind many of the good things at Triumph, Harry Webster, spoke to an Italian designer Giovanni Michelotti to design a new body to effectively fit on a modified sidescreen chassis and the resultant car was the TR4.



The chassis was widened, the steering was changed to rack and pinion, as to why Standard stuck to the old steering box with the sidescreen cars is a mystery. The body had wind up windows and a unique feature called a "surrey top". This was an optional extra which fitted to the rear body shelf which meant one could drive at



THE TR4 CHASSIS HAS MUCH IN COMMON WITH THE EARLIER SIDESCREENS

speed in comfort without wind buffeting, a feature much appreciated by ladies! The feature was discontinued at the introduction of the TR6 due to design changes of the outer body panels, but re-invented by Porsche who called it their Targa top! From personal experience, the TR4 with a surrey top is a pleasure to drive at speed for distances, if only Karmann had found a way of keeping the top when they designed the TR6!

TRIADS

REAR SHOCK ABSORBER KIT FOR TR2 TO 4

This is going for R8600, please contact Tim Kent at 076 715 2383



TAIL PIECE

This month it is 2 for the price of one! The TR5 was the development of the TR4 with independent rear suspension and the 2.5 litre motor from the Triumph 2000. With its Italian good looks and 6 cylinder power, this is the most sought after of all TR models. This example is owned by Barrie Downes who bought it from Neil Cameron and has done a wonderful restoration job on it



And now by the way of a big apology, this lovely TR3A sidescreen is owned by Tim James and not as credited in the December newsletter. Too many Tim's in my life and advancing years I am afraid!

