



WHALE TALES

THE CAPE TOWN TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Can you believe that we are already in the second half of the year? Before we know it, it will be the end of the year and hopefully, next year will be a better one with regards to the pandemic and we can return to a new sort of normal.

There is no better time than now to do all the little things you always wanted to do on your car. How to do it? Make a list of all the things you still need to do and want to do, then prioritize them and sort of group the items that go together. Also try to put an estimated timeframe of doing something, for example, replace rear taillight, 20 minutes and when you have time, do it. You do not need a day to work on your car, couple of minutes here and there and you will be amazed at what can be achieved this way.

We recently talked about the garage noggins that we had years ago and reminiscent about how we got together at one person's house on a Saturday and worked or helped or just chatted to the ones that did the work. Even passing the spanners or a cloth or cleaning something was fun, and I am looking forward to those times again.

We must enjoy our TRIUMPHS and friends we made through this hobby, and it is again like anything else, you get out of it as much as you are prepared to put in, so let us have fun together, once we are allowed to do it again.

Be safe and look after yourself.

Triumphant Regards,

Gerhard

THE EDITOR'S DESK

We really seem to be in a case of déjà vu, we were slowly getting back to some sort of normality when all of a sudden we are back at square one again!

I had decided that a few more general articles would be of interest anyway as there generally are fewer event at this time of year, thank goodness I did! One of the articles is very much Triumph related, about the designer Giovanni Michelotti who really came to the rescue of Standard Triumph and produced some outstanding designs, in my view, including the TR4 and the Stag plus cars such as the Herald and Spitfire.

One of the other articles, which may be somewhat more contentious, is by Eric Fletcher, who older members may remember as the editor of Sabrina for a number of years. Eric is by profession a mining engineer, having studied at the mecca of hard rock mining, the Camborne School of Mines. He takes a good look at the implications of the current trend to electric vehicles, which potentially if the current debate continues, could lead to the loss of classic cars. As an engineer specialising in materials engineering and development, I would agree with many of his comments, particularly with regard to the elements that are being used and in relative short supply. Please read the article and give me some feedback as Eric has promised me a follow up article to explain some of his viewpoints if there is sufficient interest.

Also for next month's edition, is the continuing saga of the restoration of Tim Kent's TR4, Tim has had a writers' pause and will continue in the August edition!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Well, as of last night, there are no forthcoming events!!

The committee met by Zoom during last week and decided that in view of the increasing pandemic the June noggin was cancelled and there would be no activities until August. We would review the situation on an on going basis and decide on a course of action.

Events have overtaken us and we are really not sure where the level 4 lockdown is going to lead to. We will continue to communicate news via the newsletter and Whatsapp channels until we know what is happening. The editor has a big plea for articles that will keep everyone's interest!!

REPORT BACKS

OPENING OF THE UPGRADED MULTI MOTOR CLUB, 5TH JUNE

I wasn't able to get to the opening but luckily Allan Harris was there with his phone and sent a couple of pics. Those members who have seen the upgraded club house speak very highly of the improvements that have been done, a special vote of thanks to those members of the Multi Motor club who negotiated a lease extension to allow the upgrade to take place, and to those who supervised the alterations. A big thank you, sad we shall have to wait longer to see the fruits of their labours.



BREAKFAST RUN TO MONKEY VALLEY, SUNDAY 13TH JUNE

What a wonderful event, organised but Eddie and his son in law, Paul Baines, to the Monkey Valley resort in Noordhoek. The main party met at Constantia Village but the Simon's Town contingent only went as far as Silvermine Road. We were amazed at the number of cars that decided to turn into the road and were concerned as to where everyone was going to park. Not a problem, Paul had everything sorted out and although it took a while, we were all parked with an eclectic range of cars in the somewhat confined car park. After a really good natter as to what was what, we went through the rather windy entrance to the resort to find our tables had been laid out in the open on the very attractive deck area, those having coffee had a wonderful view of Noordhoek beach!

Service was somewhat slow, in fact our meal only arrived after the time Paul was told we had to leave by, but in some ways it only added to the occasion as everyone had lots of time to natter and catch up with events!





REGALIA

Eddie Hughes still has a few items of regalia that he would like to bring to your attention. These are attractively priced, new items will be considerably more expensive!

4 Khaki Caps R60ea.

4 Trucker Caps R55ea.

1 Cap Classically British R50ea.

6 Triumph sew on badges R15

4 Hartenbos Badges R20

1 Coloured Golf shirt R100

1 Large Navy Body Warmer R390

1 Extra Large Navy Body Warmer R435

1 Large Navy Fleece Jacket R320

The prices include a 10% mark up for the club.

GIOVANI MICHELOTTI, STYLING GENIUS

The background for this article came from a wonderful tribute written by Graham Robson in the May edition of the TRAction, the magazine of the TR Register published in the UK. It is now 60 years since the TR4 was first produced, the person behind the styling was Giovanni Michelotti, but his contribution to the overall styling for the next decade at Triumph was massive.



To take a few steps backwards first, the designer for the Standard Motor Company was Walter Belgrove who was the man behind the sidescreen cars, TR2, 3 and 3A plus cars such as the Standard 8 and 10. The design was contemporary for its time but not really eye catching. Belgrove left Standard after a massive row with the then Technical Director, Ted Grinham. The directors, including the new technical man, Harry Webster, then had a massive problem as the company needed to get new cars onto the market but had no one to design the bodywork.

A meeting between the then MD, Martin Tustin, and Raymond Flower, who was one of a pair of brothers who wanted to buy parts from Standard for a car they planned

to make in Egypt, threw up the name of someone who could design their car in double quick time living in Italy. They were given the go ahead to contact the designer and ask him for a “dream” car based on the sidescreen chassis. Drawings were sent back about 10 days later, a price was quoted which was cheap by British standards, GBP 3 000, and Webster was despatched to Italy to discover the designer was Michelotti. Michelotti was signed almost on the spot, his first assignment was for the revamped Standard Vanguard followed by the small car

project, Zobo, which became the Triumph Herald. The first design was for the Coupe version, followed by a saloon and an estate car.



Herald Coupe



Herald Saloon

Michelotti was born in Turin, the centre of the Italian motor industry and left school at the age of 16 to work for Stabilimenti Farina (of Austin A40 fame) in their design office doing all the odd jobs and eventually learning all the skills needed to become a fully fledged designer. He had an uneventful war period in the mountain brigade but decided that producing shapes for someone else to call their own wasn't his thing and set up his own operation, Carrozzeria Michelotti in 1949. He quickly gained a clientele and did a lot of work with Alfredo Vignale as well as the other major styling houses, Bertone, Allemano and Ghia, names most of you will recognise. His work with Vignale saw bodies developed for Ferrari, Fiat and Lancia and although Vignale got the credit, it was Michelotti who did most of the design work. His genius only came to be recognised in the late 1950's initially by Standard Triumph and also BMW for whom he designed the 700 saloon and later the 1500/1800/2000 saloons that became the backbone of BMW's resurgence.

Harry Webster was in Italy with his wife and daughter and dropped into the Turin studio to show Michelotti the plans for the small car project (Zobo). Michelotti immediately sprang into action and sketched what was to become the Herald with Webster, working well after midnight. Webster returned to his car to find both his wife and daughter fast asleep but within 24 hours he was given a set of drawings to give to the board for approval which was given immediately. The original meeting was in September, a prototype was sent to England just before Christmas which was the coupe, and all 3 prototypes a saloon, coupe and an estate cost Triumph GBP 10 000 which was an absolute bargain! If you see any resemblance between a Herald and the BMW saloons, now you know why! Harry Webster and Giovanni Michelotti developed a very special relationship which was very surprising as Michelotti spoke no English and Webster spoke no Italian, but the two of them communicated in French because both were fluent in that language!

He was also doing work for Vignale and designed a body for the TR3 chassis which later became the Triumph Italia. He was incredibly productive and at this time Triumph were trying to come up with a successor to the sidescreen and had series of body shapes to play with. The second design, the Zoom, had a wider wheelbase and became the shape of the Le Mans cars for the 1960 and 61 race whilst the 3rd shape, Zest, became what we know as the TR4. All this was done in a very short



space of time. Michelotti was a real workaholic and very happy to design anything from sports cars, saloons and truck cabs (the Leyland cab mid 60's). He became busier and busier and soon had to turn work away but he produced some beautiful cars for Triumph during this period such as the later Triumph 2000s, the Stag, the

Zest prototype, you can see the TR4 resemblance



Triumph Dolomite



Triumph Stag

Dolomite range from the Toledo up to the Dolomite Sprint which shared a common cut off rear end and nose so the Triumph cars of this era had a very distinctive feature in common



Spitfire Mark 1



Spitfire Mark 4

He also designed the Bomb prototype which came to be known as the Spitfire, this range also gave rise to the attractive GT6 shape and the later versions also had the distinctive tail finish. The TR4 gained an independent rear suspension to become the 4A, which then had a 6 cylinder engine upgrade to become the TR5 before this was replaced by the TR6. Michelotti did concept designs for the 6 but was so busy that the final design was given to Karmann in Germany as they could get the car into production quicker. It is of interest that the internal panels of the TR6 are identical to the panels of the 4 through to 5, it was only the external panels that changed!

Brilliant as he was for making bodies, he wasn't great at designing interiors and photographs of the early Spitfire and Stag dashboards do not do him justice.

His method was to produce a wooden egg box structure to the overall shape of the car from his initial drawings, and then add details such as door, boot lids and bonnets using clay and later plaster of Paris to produce a final shape for approval by the client. He would then get his craftsmen to build a wooden mock up of the car, but very often he would go directly to a final metal shape as he felt this was far better to show off the highlights than wood. He also believed that if his guys could do the prototype shape in a short time, then producing thousands in production wouldn't be a problem!

He was at his creative best in the late 60's, early 70's but with the changes happening to Triumph with the formation of the then British Leyland his influence began to wane and he ended up having to make silk purses out of sows ears with projects based on cars such as the Triumph 1300 or the redesign for the boot of the Austin Apache produced here and Australia. He was asked to submit proposals for cars such as the TR7, Rover SD1 and SD2 but they were rejected, as was the darling of BMC, Pininfarina! There is certainly no doubt that the lines of Triumph cars in that period contributed to their sales success, but when you look at some of the designs of the British Leyland empire like the Morris Marina, Austin Allegro and the Austin 1800 one wonders what the directors of British Leyland were thinking.

Over the course of his career he designed some wonderful shapes, his last major design was that of the Reliant Scimitar. The prototype design was a winner but sadly the production car had a redesign and lost out in the looks department as well as being very poorly made. At the same time his company was being defrauded by a member of staff leading to major financial problems. Unfortunately Michelotti's health was beginning to fail due to complications arising from him working with so much with plaster of Paris, this lead eventually to lung cancer and he died in 1980. His son continued with the business after his death but eventually the company closed down in the early 90's

SHUSH IT'S ELECTRIC BY ERIC FLETCHER

We are consistently told that our petrol driven cars are destroying the environment and contributing enormously to Global Warming. They are to be phased out and replaced with electric propelled vehicles.

The advantages and benefits of such are, we being told, are huge but no one speaks about any caveats. This maybe because of ignorance, error or perhaps design. So what are the possible flaws in the case for Electric cars? Let's start with the batteries.

Lithium batteries have many advantages over lead batteries but some of these advantages can cause problems. Firstly lithium is not a widely sourced metal being found only in Chile, Bolivia, China, Australia and the USA, Chile and Bolivia being the largest producers. There is a probability that lithium can be extracted from the old abandoned Cornish tin mines and it is also present in sea water, the possible extraction tend to need lots of electrical power however.

One major problem is that it is extremely toxic and is reclaimed by dissolving in water forming a brine solution. This process requires large quantities of water resulting in dangerous depletion of the ground water (below surface) water, particularly in the semi desert regions of Chile. Another significant problem is that the waste water renders soils infertile.

The Lithium is then shipped to battery manufactures in the USA or China, with the resulting product being shipped around the world to the car manufacturer. These batteries are classed as "Hazardous Material "and must be shipped according to stringent international laws. That is of course is very costly.

One major hazard being results from one of their great advantages over lead batteries. Consider your household torch, as its battery loses its charge the bulb dims. A lithium battery maintains its charge at almost 100% until the end of its life. Consequently an almost dead battery can produce sparks resulting in fire and even an explosion if not correctly handled. They cannot easily be disposed of and they are normally covered in grease before doing so recycling is also not common and requires specialised equipment.

The positive is that they can be charged to a higher capacity and more quickly than a lead acid battery but where do they obtain the electricity required from?

Our current supply from coal fired Power Stations is considered to be a NO NO, and we are told that we must use alternative energy sources such as Solar and Wind.

Solar panels utilise many rare earth elements, so called as they are rare, most of them that many of us have never heard of. As their name suggests they are neither easily found, nor mined. It is estimated that demand will soon exceed supply indeed it is stated that their average price has risen by over 700% in recent years.

A solar panel farm capable of producing 300Mw (a small coal fired municipal power station produces around 200Mw) will require roughly 1,000 hectares of land. Such land is therefore removed from any crop production unless it is sited in desert areas and when we consider that many of the current Eskom stations produce around 4,000 Mw of power this means a potential loss almost 14,000 Ha of land

Again we have the current problem of waste disposal of the panels containing rare earths and shortage of recycling capability. What is not mentioned is the loss of the land to fauna and flora particularly its effects on the insect population. The other significant problem with solar energy is what to do in the night time. This leads to a complicated problem of using molten salt baths to produce steam to power turbines to produce electricity when the sun isn't shining!

Ah well, there is also wind to produce electricity and here again there are un-discussed problem areas. There seems to be no simple documentation relating to the mass of material required for say a 5 Mw tower and its blades since here does not seem to be a standard reporting system. The following is very much speculation but it would appear that a 5 Mw system can require up to 500t of steel in its production. Thus a 3,000 Mw system will use some 300,000 t of steel. The blades currently up to 50m in diameter while being lightened by on going design can weigh

another 25t and be made of a large variety of scarce materials. The rotor housing, another 25t, contains a very sophisticated electricity generator that uses high grade copper and in some cases Boron.

While the killing of birds is perhaps overplayed, the high speed of the blade tips does endanger insect life. Noise is another factor and there is the case in France of a hilltop wind farm successfully powering a nearby village. However, a village on the other side of the hill is vigorously protesting at Government level about the continuous noise, caused by the blades. Also French fishermen, off Brittany, are protesting their loss of fishing resulting from an offshore wind farm.

There are other potential Electricity production methods such as hydro, sea waves and hydrothermal that do not seem to be currently considered. Iceland is powered by a 100% hydro thermal system but this relies on the considerable volcanic activity in this area as it is a junction on tectonic plates. New Zealand also has hydro thermal power stations but is also situated in an earthquake sensitive area. The 1980's Mohole project in Cornwall found sufficient hydro thermal energy to power a small power station but in those days alternative power was not the then flavour of the month and the project died.

We now have charge our electric cars batteries, and there are two methods. At ones home that could take hours and therefore would potentially be done overnight. This is the time when most power stations have reduced load generation and of course solar won't necessarily be available. It is proposed that current petrol stations will be fitted with fast chargers allowing cars to recharge in minutes. The UK has already estimated that this will require an additional 3 power stations.

The University of Grenoble has been conducting a study of such units across Paris and reports that the necessary feed cabling will run into several thousand kilometres. Of course these may be copper or aluminium cables that will mean many thousands of tonnes of these metals. All of the above will require the finding, mining and processing of both rare earth metals, iron ore and copper. So all is not the bed of roses that we are being told.

In case any of you are saying that I don't believe in global warming, you are wrong. I do not believe warming is caused by the air above us but by the earth below us.

THE "GREEN THING"

Checking out at the store, the young cashier suggested to the much older lady that she should bring her own grocery bags, because plastic bags are not good for the environment,.

The woman apologized to the young girl and explained, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young clerk responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations."

The older lady said that she was right our generation didn't have the "green thing" in its day. The older lady went on to explain: Back then, we returned milk bottles, soda

bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.

But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day. Grocery stores bagged our groceries in brown paper bags that we reused for numerous things. Most memorable besides household garbage bags was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our schoolbooks. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school) was not defaced by our scribbles. Then we were able to personalize our books on the brown paper bags.

But, too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then. We walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks. But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then we washed the baby's diapers because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then we had one TV, or radio, in the house -- not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of the state of Montana.

In the kitchen we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blade in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's R 1million SUV or van, which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing."

We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest burger joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just

because we didn't have the "green thing" back then? Please forward this on to another selfish old person who needs a lesson in conservation from a smart ass young person.

We don't like being old in the first place, so it doesn't take much to piss us off... Especially from a tattooed, multiple pierced smart ass who can't make change without the cash register telling them how much.

TAIL PIECE

Tim Kent went off to Basdick Engineering in town to check on progress on his engine rebuild. He spied this connecting rod and decided it was a bit big for a TR4 engine!!

It actually comes from a super tanker in the bay!

