



WHALE TALES

THE CAPE TOWN TRIUMPH NEWSLETTER

Editor Jamie Hart

Jamie.hart@kingsley.co.za 084 220 0082

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Spring is in the air, which is exciting times as we can now look forward to longer days and better weather to do open top driving and enjoy the fresh air and smells of the flowers and trees.

We have had a couple of great outings recently with more than 30 people in attendance despite the social distancing and lock down rules in place. Just imagine where we can be if it is free for all so to speak. I surely hope that you have fixed your cars and are ready to join in the fun.

We had some discussions on the Whatsapp chat group about the future of the newsletter and I encourage you to inform us what you suggest we do going forward, keeping in mind that there are and we have now numerous communication channels.

We can also use the Whatsapp chat group to source spares and technical help, as well as reputable suppliers for all sorts of items and parts.

Please stay safe out there and look after yourselves, be safe.

Triumphant regards,

Gerhard Vorster

THE EDITOR'S DESK

This month's offering will be a bit shorter than previously but hopefully still an enjoyable read. My comments last month produced a fair few positive comments about the need for a newsletter, but unfortunately little in the way of articles or snippets to publish. The exception to that has been again Tim Kent who has written a super article on the founder of the Triumph company, Siegfried Bettman. We were having coffee in St James and we decided that between us we would like to give a bit of history of how the Triumph name came about and some of the background to how various models came about. The first part deals with the formation of the company and its successes and problems leading up to the outbreak of the 2nd World War. Thereafter life becomes more interesting and Tim and I will be cooperating to give readers some ideas on the factors that have led to the cars we are driving.

I have also had positive feedback to Eric Fletcher's articles on global warming and electric cars. I know they had absolutely nothing to do with our cars, but my feeling is that if we can get the grey matter working again after the lockdowns then we have achieved something! I am again appealing for all of you out there to write a little something on what you have been up to or an opinion on something you feel would be of interest to the readers. Although I am not claiming my English grammar to be faultless, I am happy to edit where needed to give a good read.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

LUNCH RUN TO SOMERSET WEST 12TH SEPTEMBER

Gerhard has organised a run to the Somerset West area for lunch at the Bridge Inn, a super pub/restaurant near the Lourens river.

Meet at the N2 Engen (that's the road to George!) at 10.30 for an 11.00 departure and a scenic drive in Somerset West before having lunch at the Inn.

Please will you let Eddie Hughes (082 555 0256) know by Thursday 9th if you will be coming. There is ample parking at the venue.

NOGGIN AT THE CLUBHOUSE SATURDAY 25TH AT 10.00

The next noggin will be at the clubhouse on the 25th, hopefully we will be organising our programme by that date for the future.

BRITISH SPORTS CAR TOUR

We had hoped to hold this event in October this year but with the Covid situation still very unclear we are postponing it again to March 2022 to hopefully allow everyone to enjoy the event without the virus hanging over their heads!

The venue will still be the Elgin Country club in Grabouw and starting at the Pot Belly restaurant on the R44 at Klapmuts

REPORT BACKS

BREAKFAST RUN TO SIMON'S TOWN, 15TH AUGUST

After a somewhat less than helpful weather forecast, the day dawned bright and sunny. We met at the Total garage at the end of the Glencairn Expressway and departed along the coast road towards Simon's Town. We then turned up the Red Hill road towards Scarborough and after waiting for the stragglers we then had a great run up the hill. Graham Johnson (double rugged) had used this road in the 1996 National gathering for a hill climb, I can see why!

We didn't stop at the top for a view, mainly due to the crowd already there, before continuing on to the back road between Cape Point and Scarborough. We seemed to spend lots of time dodging cyclists who were out in droves training for the cycle tour, past the entrance to the Cape Point nature reserve before going down Smitswinkel hill to the large parking area at Partridge Point to look at the spectacular scenery and catch up on news. We then continued into Simon's Town before turning into the road leading to False Bay Yacht Club where we were to have breakfast.

Those driving "proper" cars then were allowed into the slipway area and parked on the slip area to give visitors and members a good view of our cars before all of us went into the club to enjoy a well deserved breakfast at the Pier 23 restaurant. I must really thank Karl and his team for pulling out all the stops, everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves and the food.





MONTHLY NOGIN SATURDAY 28th AUGUST AT 10 AM

Unfortunately I wasn't able to be at this noggin but the prizes for concours last year were awarded and I am enclosing the two main manne, Danie and Eddie, getting their prizes from Andre Bredenkamp who was deputizing for Gerhard.



ANDRE WITH EDDIE (L) AND DANIE

SIEGFRIED BETTMAN 1863 –1951 BY TIM KENT

FOUNDER OF THE TRIUMPH MOTOR CAR COMPANY

Siegfried Bettman was born in Nuremburg, Germany in 1863, the son of Mayer Bettman and Sophie Weil. At the age of 20 he moved to Great Britain and settled in Coventry.

On his first night in London, Bettman met a fellow German, Mauritz Johann Schulte and with 250GBP each and additional financing from The Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Company they formed their first Company in 1886. It was known as the Triumph Cycle Company and launched its first motor cycle in 1902.

In 1895 Siegfried married Annie Mayrick and they made a home in the Stoke Park area of Coventry. They were not blessed with any children.

Bettman became a British citizen and was actively involved in Coventry City life, he was president of the Coventry Liberal Association, a Freemason, a founder member

and President of the Coventry Chamber of Commerce, a Justice of the Peace and 1913 he was elected Mayor of Coventry, the first non-British subject ever to do so.

The outbreak of War in 1914 and the anti-German feelings that came with it resulted in some turning against him. He was forced to register with the Home Office as a German born immigrant and within weeks he was forced to resign from the Board of Triumph and from his Masonic Lodge. He appointed English directors to the Board of Triumph – replacing himself and two fellow Germans, and even the Cycle Manufacturers Union, which he had founded tried to expel him. In November 1914 he was obliged to resign as Mayor of Coventry. He was offered the post of deputy Mayor, but after a few days he received a letter from the Town Clerk asking him to withdraw “due to the poisonous agitation of a noisy minority” Ironically it was his “Trusty Triumphs” that were helping the British war effort.

Just two weeks after war was declared Bettman received a phone call from the War Office asking his Company to provide 100 Triumph motorbikes for the British Expeditionary Force which was due to go to France. He was given just 48 hours to deliver, although it was a Saturday and the factory was closed. But the bikes were ready and delivered to Coventry railway station in time to catch the Sunday evening train.

By 1914 Triumph was in a very favourable position to increase production and as a result they won a major Government contract to supply motor cycles and bicycles. Perhaps a touch of irony, here, two Germans making a major contribution to the war against Germany. By the end of the war Triumph was the world's largest manufacturer of motor cycles!

In 1921 Siegfried acquired the assets and premises of the Dawson Car Company and started producing a 1.4 litre car called the Triumph 10/20 designed by Lea Francis followed by the Triumph Super 7 which sold well until 1934. They also had produced cars such as the Dolomite and the Gloria which were highly regarded by the motoring fraternity. The biggest problem was that the cost of production was higher than the selling price so in 1936 the Company was experiencing major financial problems. To solve these the bicycle and motor bike divisions were sold off, the Triumph motorcycle is still in production today. But how the mighty fall, from being the largest motor bike manufacturer in the world by 1918 to insolvent 18 years later! Three years later the Triumph Engineering Company went into liquidation but the assets were bought by T W Ward of Sheffield, ironically they are scrap dealers, and in 1940 the entire factory was destroyed by the Luftwaffe. But this is not the end of Triumphs!

After he retired Siegfried lived with his wife Annie in North Avenue Coventry and together they founded the Annie Bettman Foundation to help young Coventry men

and women, especially ex-servicemen-between the ages of 18 and 40 to start their own business. The fund still exists today and has been extended to include grants for further education. Siegfried also commissioned a memorial to the 66 employees of the Triumph Company who were killed in action during the First World War.

Siegfried Bettman died in 1951 aged 88, but his name and legacy live on and a plaque has been un-veiled in his memory in Cathedral Square, Coventry, in the shadow of the Chapel of Industry where Triumph's sprawling Priory Street Factory once stood.

TECHNICAL TALK

For those of you who can, look up the series of talks that Paul Ireland has been giving on the TR Register website on the use of ethanol in fuels, and modern fuels in general.

It is a really fascinating insight into the major differences in fuels today compared to the fuels used when our cars were built and the necessary modifications to avoid problems with our cars.

TAIL PIECE



THE BEST BRITISH SPORTS CAR NEVER MADE IN BRITAIN!