

Petrolheads in Paradise

NEWSLETTER NO.8 DECEMBER 2011



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Since our last quarterly Torque we have had two important annual Club events - firstly, the AGM at Lake Brenton, which went off well. A good turnout on a lovely day and an enjoyable braai after the meeting. Probably the most significant thing to come out of the meeting was the appointment of no less than 5 new members to the Committee. Once again I'd like to welcome Alistair Gibb, Mike Griffiths, Geof Mangan, Duncan Miller and Peter Pretorius, each of whom, I have no doubt, will serve the Club exceptionally well. Their various functions will appear on the newsletter's masthead in due course.

The second major event was the GRMC Christmas Dinner, held for the first time at the Knysna Golf Club's beautiful new clubhouse. 64 members (20 more than last year) enjoyed the festive atmosphere, traditional fare and delightful company. In my speech I paid tribute to the Club's wives (and sweethearts) for putting up with their often crotchety men folks' obsession with their often equally cantankerous old cars, which can be cold and wet in winter and sweltering in summer. Some of them also mark their territory on driveway bricks. Despite all these (to we men) minor irritations,

they enter into the spirit of our various events with great gusto, for which all the men present showed their appreciation by giving them a well-deserved and enthusiastic round of applause, which may have earned them a few brownie points to drawn down on in 2012!

I understand from Jim that we raised R 4 500- at the Christmas dinner - R 1 000- from the Club (instead of crackers) and R 3 500- collected in the donations box, all for Loeriehof. This generosity, coupled with what was raised at the Show, makes a total of R 25 500- which your Club will have handed over to 4 deserving charities in 2011. Well done to all concerned.

I also told a little story at the dinner, which poked a spot of light-hearted fun at Ricky Cooper, whom I did not realise, when I prepared my speech, would not be at the dinner due to his participation in the MG Midget run to Namibia. Notwithstanding this, I proceeded with the story knowing full well that Ricky would have taken it in his usual, good-natured way. It was my intention after the joke, to pay special and long overdue tribute to Ricky, without whom many of we Garden Route petrol heads would be in big trouble! However, as he was not present it would have been inopportune to sing his praises, so I shall do so now. Ricky was a founder member of both the local car clubs. He is wonderfully generous of his time, knowledge, facilities and above all, his friendship. I would venture to say that if there was such a thing as a GRMC Lifetime Achievement Oscar for services to the classic car community on the Garden Route, Ricky would surely be the first recipient. We salute you Ricky and look forward to many more years of tyre kicking at KMS. (Ricky denies the rumour that he can sometimes be heard singing a little tune in his workshop when he thinks he's alone. Something along the lines:

*"Ashes to ashes,
dust to dust.
If it weren't for MGs,
all my tools would rust!"*

Finally Jan joins me in wishing you and your families a very merry Christmas. May 2012 bring you good health, prosperity and happy days in your classics. Drive safely over the holiday festivities and, should sobriety be in any doubt, please do what I did after the Christmas dinner. Benny's Taxi Service is brilliant and reasonable!

Bunny

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Well, here we are less than 2 weeks away from Christmas. I hope you have all got your Christmas shopping done, not like me who as usual, has left it all for the last moment. So will have to brave the crowds and just go and do it.

This month's Torque is filled with many different articles – from cars to trains to motorcycles. Many thanks to all those who submitted articles to me. If they have not been used in this issue of Torque be assured they will be used in the future.

We wish Hugh Cordel a speedy recovery after his motorbike accident a while ago. Hugh I hope you are on the mend. Bunny tells me that you have decided that maybe at the age of nearly 80, riding bikes is not such a good idea after all.



This is the last Torque until February 2012 so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a good 2012. At this time of the year many of us will be spending time with our families and friends – enjoy this time together.

Till the next time...happy and safe motoring.

Christine

GRMC EVENTS 2012

November 2011 Version 3.0

Date	Event and Venue	Details
January		
Jan 21st Saturday	Opening drive to Roadside Deli for lunch	Leave Knysna Quays at 11h00 or meet there. Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and <u>MGCC</u> .
Jan 29 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Café Francois (Sedgefield)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
February		
Feb 11 th Saturday	George Car Show P W Botha College grounds, York street.	Leave Knysna Quays at 08h00 or meet there. <u>GRMC</u> will park as a club at the event.
Feb 19 th Sunday	Gymkhana and Braai at Buffalo Bay Caravan Park	Leave Knysna Quays at 10h00 or meet there. Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and <u>MGCC</u> .
Feb 26 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Old Nick's. (Plettenberg Bay)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
March		
		Human Rights Day – 21 st March
Mar 5 th to 9th Mon – Fri	Annual Tour	TBA Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
Mar 25 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Café Francois (Sedgefield)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
April		
		Easter – 6 th to 8 th April / Family Day – 9 th Freedom Day – 27 th April Austin-Healey Nationals – 18 th to 23 rd April
April 1 st Sunday	Plettenberg Bay Car Show	Non-club event 10h00 to 14h30 at Country Crescent Hotel
April 12 th Thursday	Pensioners lunch run to Pomodoro restaurant (Wilderness)	Leave Knysna Quays at 11h00 or meet there. Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and <u>MGCC</u> .
Apr 29 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Old Nick's. (Plettenberg Bay)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
May		



		<p>Workers Day – 1st May</p> <p>Knysna Festival of Speed – 12th to 20th</p> <p>Milligan Rally</p> <p>Triumph Car Club visit Knysna</p>
May 13 th Sun	GRMC car show	Knysna High School grounds 09h00 Organised by <u>GRMC</u> assisted by MGCC Members to be parked by 09h00
May 19 th 20 th Sat/Sun	Overnight event to P.E. to see the Last Night of the Proms. (In classics if possible)	Drive to PE on Saturday afternoon, attend show, dinner and stay over (Victoria B&B). Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and MGCC.
May 27 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Café Francois (Sedgefield)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
<u>June</u>		
		Youth Day – 16 th June
June 12 th Tuesday	Quiz Night at Belvidere Manor	TBA Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
June 24 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Old Nick's (Plettenberg Bay)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
<u>July</u>		
		London Olympics – 27 th July to 12 th August Goodwood Festival of Speed - 29 June-1 July
July 14 th Saturday	Christmas in July Dinner at Scirocco Restaurant Knysna	Arrive at 18h30. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
July 21 st Saturday	Pensioner's run to the Elephant Park for brunch	Leave Knysna Quays at 10h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
July 29 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Café Francois (Sedgefield)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
<u>August</u>		
		National Women's day - 9 th August
August 21 st Tuesday	GRMC "Groggin" (possibly in Sedgefield)	TBA Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and MGCC.
Aug 26 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Old Nick's (Plettenberg Bay)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
<u>September</u>		
		Goodwood Revival – 14 th to 16 th Whales & Wheels Hermanus MG National Indaba in Clarens 21 st to 23 rd Heritage day – 24 th September
Sept 11 th Tuesday	Bingo evening	Meet at Brenton Hill guest house at 18h30 sharp. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .



Sept 22nd Saturday	Run to Oudtshoorn for the National Model Airshow.	Leave Knysna Quays at 08h30 Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and MGCC.
Sept 30 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Café Francois (Sedgefield)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
<u>October</u>		
Oct 14th Sunday	Economy run/Time trial and Braai at Glentana caravan park.	Leave Knysna Quays at 11h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
Oct 21st Sunday	GRMC – AGM at Lake Pleasant Resort (Sedgefield)	Leave Knysna Quays at 11h30 or meet there. <u>GRMC</u> members only
Oct 28 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Old Nick’s (Plettenberg Bay)	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
<u>November</u>		
Nov 18th Sunday	Bonnets-Up at Knysna Quays	TBA Open to members of <u>GRMC</u> and MGCC.
Nov 25 th Sunday	Breakfast Run to Café Francois	Leave Knysna Quays at 09h00 or meet there. Open to members of GRMC and <u>MGCC</u> .
Nov 30 th Friday	GRMC Christmas Dinner	<u>GRMC</u> members only
<u>December</u>		
		Day of Reconciliation – 16 th /17 th December

School Holidays

March 24 to April 9

June 23 to July 15

September 29 to October 7

PAST EVENTS

A SPECTACULAR & HISTORIC DAY 8TH NOVEMBER, 2011

Fourteen cars met at the Quays, we picked up another 8 in Sedgefield & a few guys came directly from George – so altogether we had about 30 cars & a wonderful gathering of approximately 45 girls & guys. Mostly MG’s, but a good selection of GRMC cars.

Rudy & Sharon’s new home is in a prime position at Wilderness, with 5 double wooden garage doors – the sight of his magnificent collection is fantastic. The garage is paved in an off-white ceramic tile, with posters, banners, and memorabilia.... and then there are the cars.

Pride of place, a Hispano Suiza – the only 1 in Southern hemisphere, Lagonda, Rolls Royce’s, 2 x W.O. Bentleys, Alvis, Packard, Aston, Jag, Alfa, Porsche & so on. The collection includes the ex-Sir Malcolm Campbell’s Bentley coupe - in pristine condition. Some 20 cars, all in excellent condition.



Well done Rudolph – a long to be remembered experience, thanks to you and Sharon for inviting us to your home.

On to Lew & Heather Bakers lovely home in Heatherland's George - marvellous setting.

Parked in the garden we had 4 x TC's, alongside one another, flanked by Bunny's TD & Don's Morgan - to the side. What a spectacle!!





Many congratulations to Lionel, Ricky, Tony and Dennis on their cars – a truly historic occasion.

Lew's workshop is a great talking point, filled with nostalgic, historic & modern motoring "bits" - all of which Lew can rattle off book chapter and verse, in his inimitable way! His machine shop and facility is envious - I think most of us felt our garages paled into insignificance. (Lots of oohs & aahs and... look at that!

Lew's personal cars are eye catching, complemented by a reworked AC Aceca about 1955 vintage, with a Bristol 2litre 6cylinder engine and an Aston Martin. The ex Doug Serrurier racing early Lotus and an old Austin 7 special hillclimb racer - looking a bit forlorn, await attention. Lew is busy with his single seater sports racer with offset 1,5l motor, the quality of build & workmanship is apparent.

In a separate section is a refurbished 1934 Aston Martin chassis. Lots of engine blocks, wheels & bits, adorn the rest of the garage, which has a room dedicated to a milling machine, lathe, grinders etc; a well-used work place.

Thanks to our hosts Lew and Heather + Helpers, for an enjoyable braai, in a lovely garden setting.

Without doubt, enjoyed by all & will be long remembered. An enthusiastic gathering, with lots of smiles & cheer!!

With acknowledgement to MGCC (Southern Cape), Ray Mackay, Tony Lyons-Lewis and Fred Mullany.

REPORT ON THE CAPE CLASSIC CAR SHOW 2011 BY ROGER DAVIS

Two years ago, I had the pleasure of driving my red Lotus Esprit Turbo down to Parow for the bi annual classic car show that turned out to be the largest collection of Classic Cars at a show in South Africa topping 1500 cars, so once again I made preparations for the trip in the same car. My emergency roadside kit was put in the boot and a spare wheel from the green Esprit was taken as a precaution. In addition, I loaded my adjustable towing frame with a Chevron board into the wife's Mercedes should I have the misfortune of a breakdown. I work on the basis that if you take every precaution you can, you will not need it. This also goes for carrying 2 litres of water in all my cars for the last 10 years, just in case, but I have never needed to use them.



After the interesting Economy run organised by our club, I decided to use this run down to Cape Town to see just how economical the car could be on a higher speed run (on the GRMC economy run I managed 36 mpg) and keeping my speed to a maximum of 100 kph, I set off on the Saturday morning with all day to get to my stay over at Strand. 495 kilometres later I arrived at a Caltex garage at the Strand and filled the car, which took 40 litres giving an economy of 12.5 kilometres per litre (8 litres per 100 kms) or 33 mpg in old money.

The following morning I set off down the N2, R300 and N1 to Parow and when I arrived at the gate that was staffed by Lion's club members who had no idea where any cars were to be parked so I spent the next 20 minutes driving around the three fields looking for other Lotus cars eventually finding two others who had just parked in a vacant area. After greeting the other Lotus Esprit owners I went back to the gate to find the card to display on my car giving its description, but again, no one knew about these or the usual goody bags for participants.

When the gates opened to the public at 9 a.m., loud inane music was being pumped over the speaker system making it virtually impossible to talk to people about what the show is all about. "CARS". Fortunately some other people must have complained about the noise as the volume of the music was lowered and later in the morning someone arrived with the card for me to display on my car, but no goody bag! There was no public address system in operation that we could hear, where they could have interviewed owners of interesting classics about the history of their cars.

Once again, after walking around the show later there was only one car that I wanted to take home and the keys for it were still in my pocket.

Other Garden Route people I met at the show were Graham and Sylvia in their MGB and Myron Wood from George with Nito from Sedgfield Classics who had travelled down in a plastic.

The show was huge, as before, even though many of the "One Marque" car clubs were conspicuous by their absence, including the Ferrari Club and the Cape Citroen Car Club. The day itself was wonderful and even though the departure of Classics started around 3 p.m. whilst we, at the Lotus stand, 3 x Esprit Turbos, 1 x Excel, 1 x Europa and 1 x Lotus 23, remained until 5 p.m. and even then we were reluctant to say our goodbyes to one another for another two years.

The next day I set off at 9 a.m. for the return leg and again I set my top speed at 100 kph.. After another uneventful but very pleasurable drive back to Plettenberg Bay I checked my economy to find it was identical to the trip down. In fairness at 100 kph the engine is approximately at 2400 rpm in 5th gear and over the entire journey the Turbo did not come online once. It is only when looking for extreme performance with wide open throttle and using the Turbo that the car uses copious quantities of fuel to get the exhilaration that the car offers with its available 260 BHP if required.

TECHNICAL TIP 55 – HEAD LIGHT REFLECTORS

Michael Nell was kind enough to share the details of a person who can refurbish head light reflectors. This appears to be an inexpensive solution to a common problem.





The cost is R275 per reflector and the registered postage was R40 either way.

Metglo can be contacted on 021 981 9802 or email info@metglo.com

SAVVA TECHNICAL TIP – 56 IMPORTING PARTS

Finding parts for early cars is becoming increasingly difficult. Over the years we have relied on flea markets and the one or two specialist shops that were still around and catered for our needs.

Unfortunately, the shops have virtually disappeared and most of the flea markets have turned into glorified shops for disposing of cheap Chinese wares. I was reminded of this problem when looking for a simple item like a petrol cap for a 1935 Buick. In theory, this should be easily solved, as it is a standard type of cap used by most cars from the 1930's right up into the 1950's – but it wasn't that easily solved. Over the last 10 years I've bought how many caps at stores and flea markets but none of them fitted properly and they have all leaked when I filled the tank. To make matters worse, the leaking petrol poured over the exhaust pipe.

Fortunately, in our modern days, there is another solution to finding parts and that is via the Internet. I'm a bit of an ignoramus when it comes to these things but I decided to give it a go. I went into eBay USA, vintage cars parts, Buick and walla – there they were. A choice of high quality vented stainless steel reproduction caps, both locking and unlocking from \$10.00 to \$20.00. I chose the cheapest, the one without a lock. It arrived a couple of weeks later, fits perfectly, is ventilated, and doesn't leak when the tank is full.

Lesson learned, when I need parts in the future I'll start with the Internet.

P.S. I now need a Sunbeam Alpine soft top so I went into eBay and the various Sunbeam shops in the US. There they are available "van die rak af" manufactured by top convertible manufacturers in the highest quality pinpoint material, fully guaranteed for \$297.00 or R2675.00. With postage etc I'll land it for way under R4000.00. That's about half the price for locally manufactured ones.



THE EXHIBITOR

Dear Motoring Enthusiasts,

It is that time of year again! Registration for the Midas George Old Car Show on 11 and 12th February 2012 is now open. Hope to see you there. Please go to

<http://www.scocc.co.za/registration.htm>

JOHAN RADEMAN

Tel : 044 8746140

Email : johan@clickoncars.co.za

POWER ASSISTED STEERING NEWS

The solution for the “experience-aged” Gentlemen or the dainty Misses: How about some retrofitted power steering for your car? Jaguar – MG (from MGA to current models) – Mini - Morgan – Triumph out of UK productions and most other sporty cars, internationally: Ferrari – Porsche – Mercedes – Volvo are all catered for.

It is a modern, electrically operated system, has no hydraulic piping or pumps or belts to fail, the assistance is genuinely speed-related, so the slower you park, the more aid you get. The amount of steering help is adjustable to suit your mood. It is fail-safe in that any defect will revert to normal steering and it can be removed if you want to go back to originality. Of course there is a price to pay! If you're interested, we can chat.

Bernd

QUANTAS AIRLINES: REPAIR DIVISION

After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a 'Gripe Sheet' , which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft.

The mechanics correct the problems; document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the Gripe Sheets before the next flight.

Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humour.

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

P: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.



S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what friction locks are for.

P: IFF inoperative in OFF mode.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny..... (I love this one!)

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

And the best one for last.....

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget.

NOVEMBER = GLYCERINE MONTH

With temperatures rising now and lots of open air driving in the sun, it's time to care for your car's rubber beadings, rubber seals and window frames. So far nothing beats a 50 cc bottle* of glycerine



for a few bob from your favourite Clicks Chemist and a finger to rub it into the rubber surface. Just one wipe won't do: you need to massage it in with a few passes until it stops "beading". Don't be surprised if a lot of dead, black rubber surface gets wiped off. It just shows that your attention was definitely required. I've found that spreading the job over a few days gives the ol' bones a chance to recover in between. *Note: 50 ml is enough for about 4 applications or ~ 4 years!

Bernd

ASTON MARTIN, THE ITALIAN CONNECTION AND ME BY LEW BAKER

ACT 1

Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford got together in 1913 and formed Bamford and Martin Ltd with the purpose of building sporting light cars.

Prior to this Martin had built up a well-earned reputation by modifying humble Singer 10s into reasonably sporting cars and as a result had received requests for replicas, which prompted the two to entertain their venture.

The first car to bear their name was completed in 1914 and was in fact an Isota-Fraschini chassis fitted with a Coventry Simplex engine and clothed in what at the time was described as a "cumbersome body". Sadly, the hostilities of the Great War prevented any further output.

After the Armistice, Bamford who never seemed to have that much enthusiasm for the project sold his shares to Martin.

There was no Mr Aston! The name was taken from an event near Aylesbury called Aston Cinton hill climb where Martin would often compete. It would seem that Martin started a theme for the firm whereby motor sport was far more important than the building and selling of cars.

It is thought that in 1920 only two cars were made!

This attitude begat the never ending financial crisis that has dogged the company since it's inception and it was eventually to go belly up in 1925 after an estimate that only 50 cars had been built in the previous 11 years.

Exit Lionel Martin.

ACT 2

ENTER THE ITALIAN AUGUSTUS CAESARE BERTELLI

The firm had gained a reputation of building well-engineered cars and the remnants were bought by Lord Charnwood whose money in the past had kept Aston afloat.

Bertelli was born in Italy in 1890 so would have been 35 years old at the time he became involved.

His family had moved to Wales when he was four so he must have spoken with an Italian/Welsh accent—some combination.

Bertelli had teamed up with WS Renwick to start a business building engines in Birmingham and had designed a 1500cc OHC four.



They all seemed to have known one another due to their mutual interest in motor racing but I have no idea how or why Bertelli became involved at Aston. Frankly neither do I care, but I am pleased he did.

He had quite considerable experience in the motor industry having worked for Enfield-Allday and FIAT in Italy amongst others. It was while at Fiat as a riding mechanic that he was bitten by the motor racing bug. Under his control he proceeded to lead Aston down the same perilous path that Martin had and eventually to the same sad consequence. However, in the period of his ownership he carried on and indeed enhanced the Aston Martin reputation by building superb quality cars and personally racing them. The successes were many, from Le Mans to the Ulster GP and drivers, from Malcolm Campbell to Prince Bira.

He reigned over the production of three series of cars from 1922 to 1935. The cars of this period are known as Feltham cars, where the factory was situated, or Bertelli Astons. His brother Enrico, also known as "Harry" set up his coach building shop next door. Virtually all Astons of this period were bodied by Harry and he built up as enviable a reputation as his brother for fine quality.

Perhaps needless to say the cost of quality made the cars ridiculously expensive and although a serious effort was made to sell cars, sales were few and far between.

Of the first series of cars built between 1927 and 1932 only 127 were sold. Of the second series, between 1932 to 1933, 129 cars were sold. Clearly, the sales blurb was working and they were selling at the rate of more than one a week. Undoubtedly the reputation of the famous International model helped.

The third series was the last iteration of this original engine and was produced from 1934 to 1935, with production soaring to 162 cars. Bertelli always said that this series, called the Mark 2, was the best car he ever made

All the Bertelli cars, bar two, had the same basic 1500cc single ohc four-cylinder engine and used a dry sump system. As was usual, there were a number of body styles and two chassis lengths in all series to suit prospective purchasers tastes. Down the years the cars were obviously improved as a result of racing experience. This culminated in the famous Ulster model that was primarily used for motor racing. This car sported a different body; aluminium brake drums and magnesium back plates as well as special Rotax switch gear and an obviously more powerful engine. As said before, the high cost of quality production, low sales and the costly drug of motor racing put paid to "Gus" Bertelli's dreams and once more Aston went belly up, but like a phoenix it always rose from the ashes under the Sutherland's curatorship.

Bertelli can be proud that he was the man who put Aston on the map. He lived to a ripe old age and was the revered guest at many Aston functions.

So from 1914 to 1935 only 468 cars had been made. Twenty-one years at an average of only two cars per month.

ACT 3

ENTER THE COLONIAL



I have always enjoyed riding motorcycles and have never actually derived any pleasure from driving cars (race cars excluded!).

Some years ago whilst following the Durban-Jhb motorcycle rally on a BMW RS100, with Heather on the pillion, I managed to throw her down the road in one direction and the motorcycle in another. She Who Must Be Obeyed was not amused and spat her dummy out, stating she was never again going to get onto a bike with a dodderly old fool such as me.

Now here was a dilemma. We often used to go away for weekends etc on a bike and I thoroughly enjoyed it and now after a minor hiccup must all this stop?

Shortly thereafter we were holidaying with our friends the Jolyon Simpsons in the Drakensberg. It was winter and cold and one way to keep warm is to consume vast quantities of the crimson nectar. After imbibing a not inconsiderable amount we got round to discussing my sad situation and Jolyon's suggestion was that I should consider a prewar car. His theory was that they were really not much more than a four wheeled motorcycle anyway.

That seemed like a wonderful idea and even after sobriety set in, it still sounded as though it had merit.

The problem was—which prewar car, as I knew absolutely nothing about them. One of the first thoughts was Bentley (don't we all think that?) but having driven one some time ago, that seemed more like an open bus than a motorcycle. Bugatti seemed like a good idea but on my return home a brief visit on the web told me that any one I desired was "unaffordable".

Enter Aston. Hell I already had one for years so why not another?

After some investigation I came to the conclusion I couldn't afford that either. However, during my research I came across a business called Ecurie Bertelli in Olney, a little north of London, who were and still are the doyen of 1500 Astons for restoration and sales. I phoned the owner, Andy Bell, and was once more disheartened to find all the cars that he had were out of my league. This was sad, as I had rather set my heart on one as their reputation was impeccable, the small size suited me and I thought they looked as gorgeous as a motorcycle.

I had to explain to Andy that I was verging on retirement and could simply not afford his cars. He expressed his similar disappointment (he was looking for a victim after all) but as he was about to ring off he mentioned a car he had. It was a 1934 series 3 Mark 2 long chassis. He explained to me that the car was in such poor condition that he could not keep it on his floor, nor openly offer it for sale. Apparently the car had been in the hands of one family for a considerable period and that they had brought it to him for restoration but having received the estimate had decided to sell it. Would I consider this car?

Would I !!! It was right on budget at 45k (Fortunately I had managed to find some victims for my motorcycle collection that included a Vincent Black Shadow and various camshaft Nortons etc)

Now Heather has zero interest in both cars or motorcycles, but I managed to convince her that if I was going to spend her inheritance she had better come with me to look at this rusty scrap I was about to be involved in . So off we went to the UK (steering of course).

She took one look at it and to my shock said, "buy it". This from a woman who has no interest in cars! I did ask for a test drive and that proved rather hectic as it still has a CENTRE accelerator



pedal! Not only that but the seat was loose and the brakes hardly worked but I was hooked.

Andy also showed me that it had an official FIVA passport that confirmed it as extremely original and also showed me the Works job card where it was returned to the factory in 1935. This was for updating the engine to full Ulster specification, including brakes, diff and switchgear etc.. Of all the Mark 2 cars this is the only known example that this was done to (in period of course). As a clincher he told me that the engine had been fitted with a modern steel crank and rods and this alone was worth 10k.

After some haggling (I pride myself on being parsimonious), Andy and I strung a deal together that made us all comfortable and I became the proud keeper of AYM 862. That is its original registration number from 1934 and it still sports the original plates!

It would seem that that 46 long chassis Mark 2s were built. I have no idea how many have survived but I would imagine a good percentage as the cars have always been worth restoring.

The car eventually arrived in Jhb and we have used it extensively, a few Milligans and even for shopping.

I can honestly say that it is the only road going car that I truly enjoy. Perhaps Jolyon is right in saying it is a four-wheeled motorcycle!!

After settling in George and having had it for a few years I felt it deserved a sympathetic rebuild and this I have started. The idea is to restore not replace and so far the only part replaced has been the radiator core.

As a comment on its originality, I found the tyres to be very old and by tracing the numbers verified that the one tyre was from 1943!

As a comment on quality I have noticed that all the bolts and nuts are lathe made from hex stock. There are no head stamps on them indicating mass commercial production. The holes in the chassis for mounting components are not simply drilled, they are reamed to size to suit the bolt; hardly surprising they cost a fortune to produce.

I LOVE this car.

Lew Baker

A RECENT RIDE ON THE KNYSNA RAILWAY LINE

Some time ago Ron Hollis modified a Railway Ganger's Trolley for Dee's family in Graaff-Reinet. Recently it returned to Knysna for Ron to carry out some maintenance and up-grades.

Before it went back to Graaff-Reinet we had to do some testing of the unit, of course, so on Sunday 6th November 9 of us gathered at the old Keyter's Neck halt on the Knysna line.





The Group all aboard at Keyter's Nek



Spectacular views

Rooibok, the trolley, has a 5HP petrol engine fitted in place of the old manual labour as propulsion. We all wrapped up warmly and set off down the track towards Knysna on a beautiful day.

The views afforded along the route are truly amazing and it is little wonder that the steam train rides were so popular and such a tourist attraction.

There is quite a lot of vegetation encroaching on the line and it was interesting to see the wash-aways where the new Belvedere Heights development is taking place. Sand has washed down across the line at each of the new houses there – the damage of our constant striving for more development!

We stopped a number of times along the way for photographs and finally arrived in Knysna station for coffee at the Waterfront Garage.

The return trip afforded further opportunities for the photographers. The event also raised some curious stares from passing motorists and property owners along the way.

Thanks to Ron Hollis and the guys for a really fun outing.

Tony Lyons-Lewis



Vegetation encroachment



The heads from the bridge over the lagoon



TONY AND THE FAIREST CAPE MOTORCYCLE RALLY

The Fairest Cape Rally is organised by the Cape Vintage Motorcycle Club in November every year. It is based in the Goudini Spa resort near Rawsonville and attracts entrants from all over the country - this year even boasting one all the way from Zambia!

Vehicles manufactured before 31 December 1991 are eligible - this is the SAVVA rolling 20 year rule but the event draws mostly motorcycle entrants. A total distance of some 540 kms was set over the two days of rallying, in some of the most picturesque scenery our country has to offer.

Day one took us out along the Slanghoek road heading up the western Cape towards Moreesburg and Malmesbury, through wheat lands and wine lands. There was a stop at Allesverloren wine estate for tea.

Day two headed us out through Worcester and on to Villiersdorp, Theewaterskloof Dam and Franschhoek, over the passes and back home

This event always includes the Cape passes and we did just that! The route included Bain's Kloof, du Toit's Kloof as well as the Franschhoek Pass. These are all truly magnificent roads from a scenery point of view, notwithstanding the fact that Bain's Kloof road surface is good but very bumpy for the old bikes, bearing in mind that the early bikes had no rear suspension, just the springs in the saddle!

There were a total of 23 controls over the two days. The object of the rally is to test the reliability of the machines and the ability of the rider to maintain set speeds, without the use of speedometers. Stop-watches are used and milestones or white lines in the road help to maintain average speeds. Marshals are placed along the road at various distances and the time riders should get there are calculated by the organisers and the rally programme. Each entrant's time is recorded and they earn a penalty point for each second early or late at the control. The overall winner is the entrant with the lowest number of penalty points.



I came second overall, on my 1928 overhead cam Norton and won a number of awards - amongst them best performance by a vintage machine, best performance by an over-60 year old!, oldest bike to complete the course and a few others!

My nephew Andrew and his wife also entered and, along with a friend of mine from Pretoria, we won the Team Award - a set of three beautiful glass trophies presented in memory of my late friend from Belvedere, Alan Birch.

The event was very well organised, Lorna helped with marshalling and scoring and we had a great time - now we need to do some polishing of trophies!!

Tony Lyons-Lewis



INTERESTING WEBSITES

For buying and selling classic cars and spares.

www.classiccars.co.za

www.savva.org.za

www.readmanual.com/cars/

BIRTHDAYS

The following members celebrate their birthdays during December and January. We wish you all a very happy birthday.

DECEMBER

Pierre Cronje, Dennis Dunlop, Mike Griffiths, Bob Hopkin, Lorna Lyons-Lewis, Clare Miller, Jan Mentz, Peter Pope, Sheriden Renfield, Don Steenkamp, Jane Stuart, Charles van Niekerk and George Winter.

JANUARY

Mike Bird, Gillian Dunlop, Paul Falla, Frans Gerber, Lionel Hewitt, Mike Hornby, Ron Hollis, Richie Jute, Sheila le Feuvre, Louise Mc Callum, Ada Mc Currach, Anne Murray and Sue Wragg.

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The deadline for submissions for the February newsletter is the 15th January 2010

