

THE

VVC VIEW

email: editor@vvc.co.za • **website:** www.vvc.co.za





EXCEPTIONAL CARS OFFERED FOR SALE



1935 Austin 10 Colwyn Cabrio



BMW Isetta



1974 Citroen DS21



1928 Rolls Royce 20HP



1938 Chevrolet Roadster



AlfaDuetto



BMW 518



1954 Jaguar XK120 Drophead



1963 Austin Cooper

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Steffan Liebenberg

EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

April brings with it the unmistakable charm of autumn—the perfect backdrop for vintage motoring. There's something about the changing leaves and cooler air that makes a Sunday drive in a classic all the more special. As the season shifts, so too does our calendar, with a few updates and exciting announcements to share.

Firstly, please note that Angela's picnic, a much-loved feature on the social calendar, has been postponed to later in the year.

While it's a disappointment for now, we look forward to an even more vibrant and well-attended event once a new date is set.

Looking ahead, don't forget the Potchefstroom Classic Car Show taking place on Wednesday, 1st of May.

This event is always a standout for our community — a celebration of craftsmanship, character, and the shared love of timeless machines. Whether you're entering your car or just attending, it's a fantastic opportunity to connect with fellow enthusiasts from across the region.

On a very positive note, we're thrilled to welcome a new member to our editorial team: Weslee Lauder. Weslee joins us with a strong background in marketing and a distinct eye for design. His creativity and flair will no doubt bring fresh energy to our newsletter, and we look forward to the exciting new directions his contributions will take us.

As always, thank you to all our members for your continued passion, support, and fellowship. Whether you're under the hood or behind the wheel, it's the shared stories and friendships that make this club truly special.

Until next time, keep those engines purring and the heritage alive.

Warm motoring regards,

Steffan



Last years' visit to the North-West Motor Show was well worth the effort. Good roads and a few good friends made for a great day out.



Brian Noik

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

What do members really want? Why are some club days better attended than others?

These are questions I often ask myself on our Club Sundays.

One trend I've noticed is that attendance can dip on our themed days. A common comment is, "It's red car day and I don't have a red car, so I'm not coming." Just to clarify — themed Sundays are not exclusive! All members and cars are always welcome. The themed vehicles simply take prominence, adding variety and colour to our gatherings.

We also occasionally invite associated clubs to visit. The logic is simple — we welcome them, they enjoy our vibe, and hopefully they're inspired to join the V.V.C while still being part of their original clubs. It's a way to grow our community, build relationships, and strengthen the V.V.C.

That said, regular visitors who attend more than three club Sundays and enjoy our facilities are encouraged to join the club. It's only fair — and helps sustain what makes our Sundays so special.

The Kitchen Crew

A huge shoutout to our legendary Monday Club — the kitchen team behind those delicious teas and famous scones. I recently peeked into the kitchen and was amazed to see a well-oiled machine in action — a true military-style operation, with every hand contributing. We're deeply grateful for their effort and care.

Housekeeping

A few gentle reminders to help things run smoothly:

- Club-eligible cars: Outside the clubhouse and in the lower paddock
- No parking at the kitchen door — reserved for the kitchen team and disabled access
- Motorcycles: Park on the concrete area outside the hall
- Modern cars: Please use the furthest paddock and avoid blocking exits

For Sale Table:

- Members are welcome to leave clearly labeled club-related items (with a price and contact number)
- Items without a label will be considered free
- Unsold items must be removed after three months
- There's currently a large pile of motoring magazines up for grabs — help yourself!

Club Etiquette:

- The club is a family-friendly space — please watch your P's and Q's, and no smoking
- Dogs are welcome, but must be kept on a leash

BAR System Update

We're in the process of rolling out a digital bar system. This upgrade will take a few months to complete. During the transition, both the old and new systems will run concurrently. Members will receive a digital tap card, which will also double as your membership card. You'll be able to load it with any amount for purchases at the bar.

Thank you for your patience as we make this shift — it's all part of improving the member experience.

BAR System Update

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What Do Members Want?

Now back to the big question: What kinds of events would you like to see? Do you enjoy themed days, guest speakers, road runs, technical talks, swap meets? Let us know — we want Sundays to be something you look forward to.

A Personal Note

I'm still working on getting my 1930 Model A Ford back on the road. A recent parts order from the USA — exhaust gaskets and a carburettor jet — should help get her running. Fingers crossed she'll be back in action at an upcoming Club Sunday.

That's all for now.

See you on Sunday!

Brian



Karen Kaiser

NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS FOR THE MAY 2025 NEWSLETTER

This month I have quite a few new members to welcome to the Club: Nicky Savvides, Sunward Park, and his 2 sons: Brett and Judy Savvides from Edenvale, Andrew and Linsey Savvides from Roodepoort. Jannie and Mavis van Rooyen, Krugersdorp, Rob and Vee Pinker from Parkmore, Richard and Storme McDonald, Atholl, Mike and Vicky Venables from Juskei Park.

The subscription for the year 1st of July 2025 to 30th of June 2026 is due on the 1st of July 2025.

It has been decided to increase the fee for ordinary membership with e-mailed newsletter to R525, for country member with e-mailed newsletter to R350. If you are one of the few left who receive the printed Newsletter the fee for the year will be R710 for ordinary membership and R550 for country membership. Our banking details are Nedbank, the Vintage and Veteran Club, Benmore Branch, Branch code 197-305, Account number 1973038617. Please use your name or membership number as reference. The most costeffective way to pay for both you and the club is doing an EFT, but you can also make payment when at the club.

Thank you to the members who have already made payment for the next club year.

Thank you to Ruth and Joh Maio who have replaced the broken fridge in the bar.

Roger Pearce has still got a couple of places left for the Weekend Wander to Val to be held from the 6th to the 8th of June 2025. If you are interested please get in contact with Roger on e-mail address roger@afriod.co.za.

The Sunday Breakfasts held on the 2nd Sunday of every month is arranged by John Meiring and is always a wonderful event. Interesting restaurants are visited across Johannesburg.

The Friday "Milkbar" continues to be open every Friday evening from around 17.30 till the last member decides to go home or the bell is rung.

HAPPY *Birthday*

MAY 2025

FRANCOIS OOSTHUIZEN (1)

MIKLOS HEGYI (1)

MARY BRODIE (3)

LEON HOFFMAN (4)

ABRIE NORTJE (6)

GAVIN PIKE (7)

MARCIN WERTZ (8)

DORON SAFFER (8)

NICHOLAS LACKINGER (8)

CECIL WHITE (11)

PETER WALDBURGER (13)

GUIDO KAISER (15)

RUSSELL HASELAU (15)

JULIAN WILLS (20)

TRISH VAN ZYL (20)

LENNARD SKEAD (21)

CHRISTIAN MEYER (23)

ERIC KAEFLEIN (23)

WULF KRAHMANN (26)

ABILIO DA SILVEIRA (29)

RANDALL EVERSON (31)

CORRECTION

2025 Durban to Johannesburg Results

We would like to apologise for the oversight in our previously published results of the Durban to Johannesburg run.

The youngest rider was, in fact, Martin Kaiser. Our sincere congratulations to Martin, and our apologies for the earlier error.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025

MAY

TBA

1st

1st

1st

11th

12th

22nd to 24th

25th

31st

Platinum Jubilee SAVVA Tour - hosted by the (VCC National event)

Workers' Day

The "Dam Busters 13th Mission" Classic Car Fun Run

Northwest Motor Show

V.V.C Club breakfast

Mothers' day

Natal Classic (CMC Natal)

V.V.C Sunday Club Meeting Post-45 cars and motorbikes

DLSHCC HIGHLAND Championship Gathering

JUNE

8th

15th

16th

16th

TBA

29th

V.V.C Club breakfast

Wilde Olyf Fees

Fathers' Day/Youth Day

Father's Day at Prison Break Market

Mampoer Regularity rally (POMC) **V.V.C**

Club Meeting

JULY

13th

TBA

27th

V.V.C Club breakfast

Parkhurst day, TBA

V.V.C Club Meeting French Cars, Bastille Day

EVENTS: MAY



WILDE OLYF FEES

Classic CAR SHOW

Father's Day 2025
SUNDAY 15 June
8:30 AM - 16:00 PM

VENDOR REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



Wilde Olyf Padstal | Farmstal,
R30 (Derby / Rustenburg road), Rustenburg

082 590 6591

May Day! May Day! May Day!



Get your classic out, rally the forces and come and join the Sunbeam Sports Car Club in a fascinating and fun day out checking out the high spots, the villains and the heroes of Jozi! The "dam" may be smaller but it's not bust!



On 1st May 2025

A Multi-Club Event



13th MISSION of the

DAM BUSTERS FUN RUN

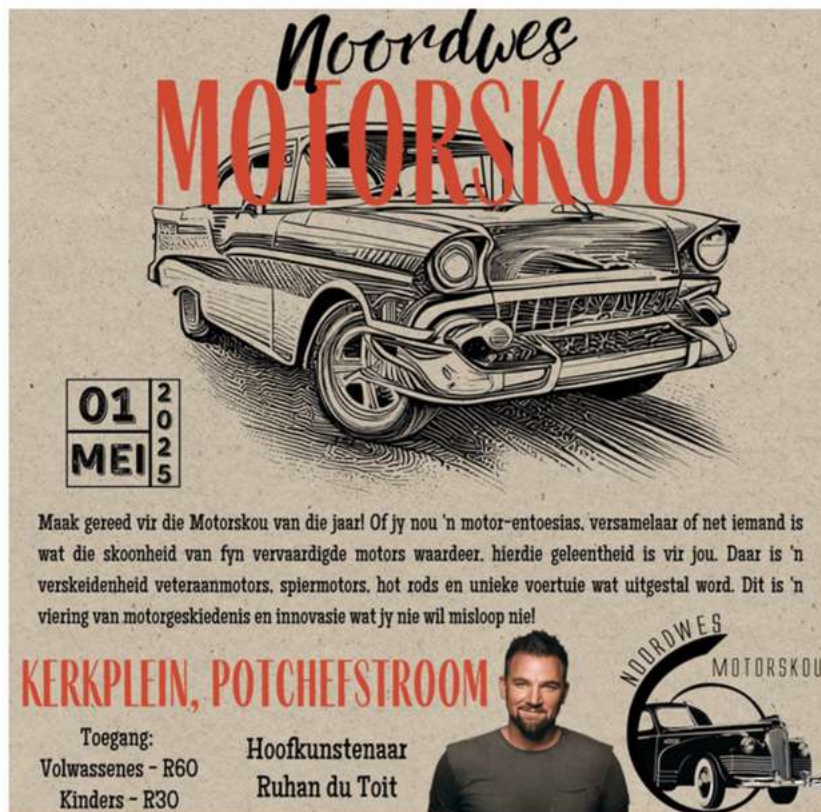
ENTRY FEE R150.00 per car + Lunch R175pp

Starts & ends at Zoo Lake Bowls Club - Princess of Wales Terrace
Parkview, Johannesburg

Meeting from 08:30 for Registration for 09:30 start

ENTRIES & ENQUIRIES TO

Andrew 083-442-5388 OR Godfrey 082-924-1662,
secretary@sunbeamclub.co.za



Noordwes MOTORSKOU

01 MEI 2025

Maak gereed vir die Motorskou van die jaar! Of jy nou 'n motor-entoesias, versamelaar of net iemand is wat die skoonheid van fyn vervaardigde motors waardeer, hierdie geleentheid is vir jou. Daar is 'n verskeidenheid veteraanmotors, spiermotors, hot rods en unieke voertuie wat uitgestal word. Dit is 'n viering van motorgeskiedenis en innovasie wat jy nie wil misloop nie!

KERKPLEIN, POTCHEFSTROOM

Toegang:
Volwassenes - R60
Kinders - R30

Hoofkunstenaar
Ruhan du Toit

NOORDWES MOTORSKOU

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025

AUGUST

3rd	Cars in the Park (POMC)
9th	National Women's Day
10th	Weekend away To be advised
10th	V.V.C Club breakfast
20th to 24th	Vintage and Veteran Run (Ford Model T Club)
31st	V.V.C Club Meeting, Annual General Meeting & bring your favourite car

SEPTEMBER

14th	V.V.C Club Breakfast
24th	Heritage Day
28th	V.V.C Sunday Club Meeting

OCTOBER

5th	V.V.C Club Fun Run
10th to 12th	Rendezvous Tour (OFS)
12th	V.V.C Club Breakfast
26th	V.V.C Club Meeting, Motorbike Day with VMC and CMC

NOVEMBER

9th to 11th	Fairest Cape (CVMC)
9th	V.V.C Club Breakfast
11th	Armistice Day event (TBA)
30th	V.V.C Club Meeting, Sports Cars and Porsche Day

DECEMBER

14th	V.V.C Club Breakfast
16th	Day of Reconciliation
25th	Christmas Day
26th	Day of Goodwill
28th	V.V.C Club Meeting (Casual meeting)

(Subject to amendment – See Magazine, Website, and noticeboard for current information)

1st Sunday of the Month: JHMT and CMC Meet
 1st Saturday of the Month: MG car club (at V.V.C club house)
 2nd Sunday of the Month: Alfa Romeo Club (at V.V.C club house) HTA, Centenary & POMC
 3rd Saturday of the Month: Triumph club (at V.V.C club house)
 3rd Sunday of the Month: Piston Ring Meet
 4th Saturday of the Month: VMC Meet (at V.V.C club house)
Last Sunday of the Month: The Vintage and Veteran club Meet

Every Friday night , drinks at V.V.C Clubhouse



6-7 June 2025



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- Drive your classic vehicle in the heart of the beautiful Drakensberg and surrounding Eastern Free State.
- Experience beautiful, tranquil surroundings on carefully chosen roads where traffic is at a minimum and road conditions reasonable.
- Drive from a resort where major attractions are easily within reach.
- Bring family or friends along to enjoy a resort that has activities for all.
- Enjoy the company of fellow classic vehicle enthusiasts participating in the 38th annual event.

PRIZES FOR ALL

With generous support from our sponsors, there will be benefits for all competitors at this special event.

INTERESTED?

Book a place now on the Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal's annual rally
Entries close 30 April 2025

6 - 7 JUNE 2025

Drakensville Resort
www.atkvresorts.co.za

CONTACT COBUS:

Cell: 082 553 6137

Email: cobus.grobbelaar@telkomsa.net





**2025
MAGNUM**
Vintage and Classic
Regularity Rally & Tour



Distance : 750 km
Regularity rally
&
Tour
Registration : 13 August
Rally: 13 to 17 August
Prize giving dinner:
17 August
Return home: 18 August
after breakfast

Info:
rallymagnum@gmail.com
083 677 2334 Leo
083 391 6226 Tom

Accommodation provided by:
Hotel Numbi & Garden Suites





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BLOEMFONTEIN



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ARTS AND CRAFTS | KIDDIES ENTERTAINMENT

1 May 2025
09:00 – 14:30

Scholars
R20

TOY FAIR



Adults
R50

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VVC MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The Tavern - Norscot Manor

We enjoyed an end of Summer Breakfast with our VVC members in The Tavern at Norscot Manor in Fourways.

The restaurant is situated in Randburg/Honeydew, near the Dome. Certainly worth a visit.

The venue is set on what is a 'Blue Plaque' National Heritage Site. The grounds, originally owned by Mr. Ernst Eriksen (of Eriksen Ford fame), built in 1930's and certainly worth a visit. -- Nor = Norway – where Ernst was from & scot = Scotland – Ethel Eriksen's home.



Ernst earned his initial wealth in the sugar industry in Natal (now KZN) & then Eriksen Ford - before he built Norscot Manor.

You are encouraged to visit & enjoy the venue before it falls into further bad repair & neglect -- it is a shame how so much of our history has been (wake-up Sandton Municipality!!!) BUT that is for another discussion on another occasion.



This month's venue, as have been many of our previous VVC Monthly Breakfast venues, been chosen for its 'difference'. We will continue to search for unique, different & boutique venues. As has been the case on occasions, the venues may be small, slow in serving due to small kitchens. Fewer staff & facilities than expected BUT hopefully memorable fun to be in. There is also the benefit of an introduction to VVC members for their own respective cozy, romantic or just fun private or family meals. WHILE offering business opportunities to the chosen venues.





The above is certainly not an apology, rather an explanation to the few disgruntled VVC members who unfortunately endured slow service this month.

We look forward to our next VVC monthly Breakfast on 11th. May – venue to be advised closer to the time BUT please diarise to ensure you're able to join us.

NEXT VVC MONTHLY BREAKFAST - 11TH MAY



GALLERY

APRIL

2025









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Did You Know?

Agatha Christie enjoying tea on the balcony of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, Baghdad, during the 1950s.

Christie's second husband, Sir Max Mallowan, was a renowned archaeologist, and she often accompanied him on expeditions, uncovering ancient Mesopotamian artifacts.

Their paths first crossed when Christie, newly divorced after 14 years of marriage, set out on a solo world adventure. Her journey began with a trip to Baghdad on the Orient Express, where she eventually visited the ruins of Ur and met Mallowan. The two married in 1930, and from then on, archaeology became a major part of her life.



Christie's time in the Middle East deeply influenced her writing. Her famous novel *Murder on the Orient Express* was inspired in part by a journey back from one of her husband's excavations when her train was stranded for 24 hours due to bad weather. The region also served as the backdrop for books like *Murder in Mesopotamia* and *They Came to Baghdad*, blending real-life experience with mystery and intrigue.



David Bowie - 1965

Pictured in April 1965 a hard up young songwriter by the name of David Robert Jones (later known as David Bowie) funded his burgeoning music career working on the Mini production line at Cowley, though this wasn't to last as two years after this photo was taken he signed his first record deal and released his debut LP in June 1967.

He never forgot his roots though and he often went back to the factory to see his old workmates, sang some of his glam rock hits over the Tannoy and signed autographs. By the early 70s platform boots and glittery capes were a trip hazard around the factory floor and sadly due to health and safety concerns his annual visits were curtailed after an unfortunate incident on the factory's rolling road! Bowie later wrote the song 'Wild Is The Wind' about the excess flatulence he witnessed on the shop floor and the songs 'Under Pressure', 'It Ain't Easy' and 'Breaking Glass' all about his golden years fitting the windscreens into our beloved little Minis at the Cowley plant, to think that the screens in your early Mini could well have been fitted by Ziggy himself!

Did You Know?

Mick Jagger - 1966 Aston Martin DB6.

In 1966 Jagger was in his early 20s and doing very well, he bought a new DB6 for approx £5k. He hadn't had it long when it was involved in a collision with a Ford Anglia belonging to the Countess of Carlisle in central London, near Jagger's Marylebone

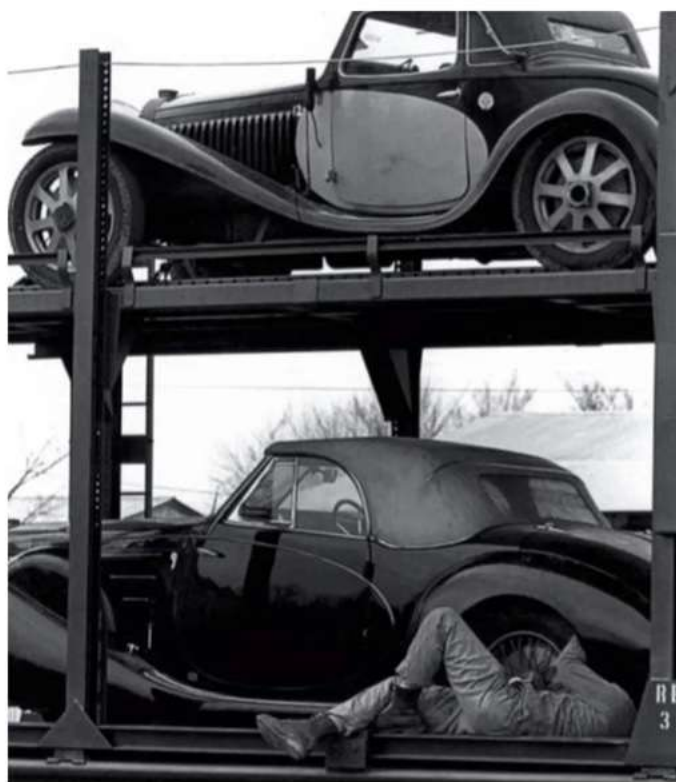




Did You Know?

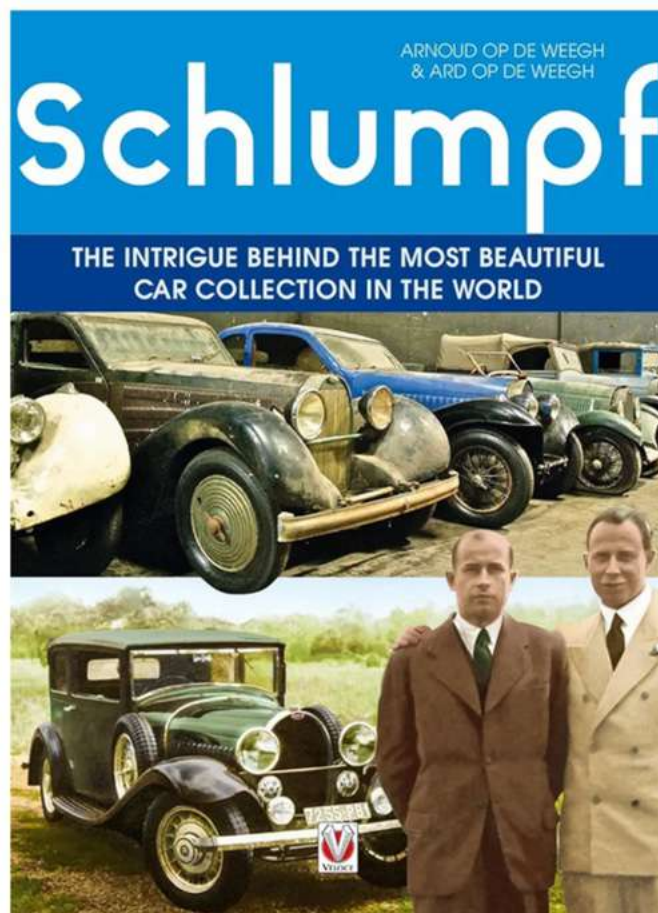
The Schlumpf Affair

This fabulous collection of cars was brought together by two French brothers, Hans & Fritz Schlumpf, and consists of hundreds of the most beautiful cars ever produced.



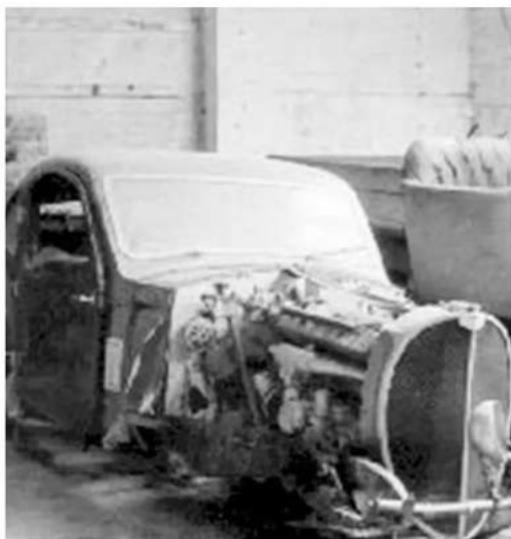
The 'Schlumpf affair' is perhaps one of the most famous stories in the car collectors world, covered extensively by the media in the mid-1970s when the collection was seized by the trade unions and later by the French government.

The Schlumpf brothers were accused of fraudulent actions to obtain their collection - but following extensive research by the authors of this book, the true story behind the collection is revealed. Ard and Arnoud op Weegh spent many years investigating the Schlumpf affair, and discovered many previously unpublished documents which prove that the Schlumpf brothers have been wrongly accused over the years. This book is written to tell the true story behind the collection, and also to rehabilitate the Schlumpf family.



The book is beautifully illustrated with some rare photographs, and features many of the beautiful cars that make up the Schlumpf collection.









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1969 Mercedes-Benz 280SL

Manual W113. Finished in Papyrus White with Cognac leather interior and chocolate brown soft top. A matching number car in superb condition.



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89000 miles. A superb example.



1989 Mercedes-Benz 500SL
the last and most desirable version of the R107. 115k kms with FSH.



1991 Mercedes-Benz 300CE in immaculate condition.
A concours winning example of the C124 coupé.



1997 Mercedes-Benz SL500
R129. Finished in Astral Silver with grey interior. Lots of optional extras including a Panoramic Hardtop. 182k kms with FSH.



1965 Mercedes-Benz 220SE Coupe LHD
Multiple concours winner. Finished in seafoam white with navy blue interior and straight grain walnut accents. Equipped with power steering, auto transmission and air conditioning.



1997 Mercedes-Benz S420 sedan
This is a time warp example of the W140 series with just 41k kms and FSH. Must be seen to be appreciated.

We specialise in parts, restoration, maintenance and sales of classic Mercedes-Benz vehicles.

A HARROWING EXPERIENCE

Syd Biddulph



On Friday the 23rd August, at 11:20 am, I was travelling in a northerly direction on Jan Smuts Ave. When I approached the side junction at Cotswold Drive, an intersection we often use going either to the club or to visit my children, a white Golf came speeding down Cotswold and crossed the oncoming lane in Jan Smuts and pulled in in front of me and continued driving in a northerly direction.

To show my disapproval I flicked my lights at him. I was stationary at that stage. Although he had a clear lane in front of him, he suddenly stopped. The passenger on the left got out of the car, lifted a huge rifle and fired a single shot in my direction.

Unbeknown to me at the time, there was a cash-in-transit heist in progress, and this was a getaway car being pursued by two security vehicles. So, I am not sure whether they were annoyed with me or whether they were shooting at the pursuing vehicles with me caught up in the crossfire.

Anyway, the gunshot sounded like a canon and was very frightening. I did not realise that my car had been hit. Had the trajectory of the bullet been 20 centimetres higher and to the right, I would have snuffed it and I would have had no time to arrange for my vintage hearse.

The shooter then got back into the vehicle, and they raced off, being chased by the security vehicles. They went through several red lights in the process. When they saw there were police at the intersection of Bolton with Jan Smuts, they turned left into Chester, with the two security vehicles in hot pursuit.



We later heard that the getaway car was abandoned in Randburg and the occupants had escaped in a taxi.

The way an individual could fire a deadly firearm indiscriminately in public reflects the aggressive nature of the society in which we live

The way an individual could fire a deadly firearm indiscriminately in public reflects the aggressive nature of the society in which we live

During 1960, John Calhoun studied the effects of overcrowding amongst rats. These animals were placed in a fixed encampment and provided with as much food and water as required. The space was kept constant. Eventually over-population occurred. After living peacefully together, they suddenly became aggressive, attacking each other to the point of extinction.

This is what is happening to us. With the unbridled population explosion and uncontrolled immigration there is such a fight for survival that inhabitants don't care about their fellow human beings. This of course, affects black and whites equally.



Where the high-powered bullet stop inside the engine compartment

I enjoyed my lunch date and proceeded to the Rosebank police station to report the incident. This was where my real frustration set in. Firstly, they insisted that I took them in my own car to inspect the crime scene, having to dodge several lanes of cars to cross from one side of the road to the other.

I continued with my itinerary for the day. At my stop at Builders Warehouse parking lot in Jan Smuts, I noticed for the first time the bullet hole in the bonnet of my car and realised that I had been hit. On opening the engine bay, I noticed the bullet had struck the huge pod supporting the upper end of the coil spring and shock absorber and had disintegrated. The car handled absolutely normally.

They did not bother to look for any shell casings.

The bumbling at the SAP was unreal and I pursued the matter only for insurance purposes. To get a case number took almost four hours. During this time there was a constant string of what appeared to be prostitutes laying various charges. Quite an experience.

The bumbling at the SAP was unreal and I pursued the matter only for insurance purposes. To get a case number took almost four hours. During this time there was a constant string of what appeared to be prostitutes laying various charges. Quite an experience.

After the weekend I had to present my car for inspection by the insurance company.

They decided that the whole bonnet needed to be replaced. A small piece of lead shrapnel had damaged the coil spring and they said the vehicle was now unsafe to be driven. It was uplifted and taken to the panel beater.

So I now sit without a car and have to get a rental vehicle. I dread finding out the quality of repair.

My take home message is as follows.

How to drive to stay alive:

Do not travel unless you need to.

Always drive defensively.

Do not flick your lights at anybody.

Don't annoy anyone.

The gap between you and the car in front of you costs nothing. If someone cuts in, just make another one.

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- Value appreciation
- Depreciation settlement*
- Dedicated claims response
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*We will pay you the difference in value from the original agreed value to the new depreciated value following an accident and restoration.



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THE ROTOR ROUTE

By Sivan Goren
Images from Etienne Fouche



Regular readers would remember our story about the first sportscar to use the German Wankel-designed rotary engine – the Japanese Mazda Cosmo. But there was another car, far closer to home for Herr Wankel, that was not only the first mass-production saloon to use this engine but also won Car of the Year soon after it was launched. Think that's incredible? Well it's not nearly as astonishing as the fact that the revolutionary NSU Ro80 was the cause of its manufacturer's eventual demise.

NSU actually began in 1873 as – of all things – a manufacturer of sewing and knitting machines, NSU being an acronym for Neckarsulm Strickmaschinen Union (Neckarsulm Sewing Machine Co). Twenty years later the stitching machines had been replaced with bicycles and by 1901, the operation began building motorcycles. In 1905, NSU began to produce motor cars, followed shortly thereafter by trucks.



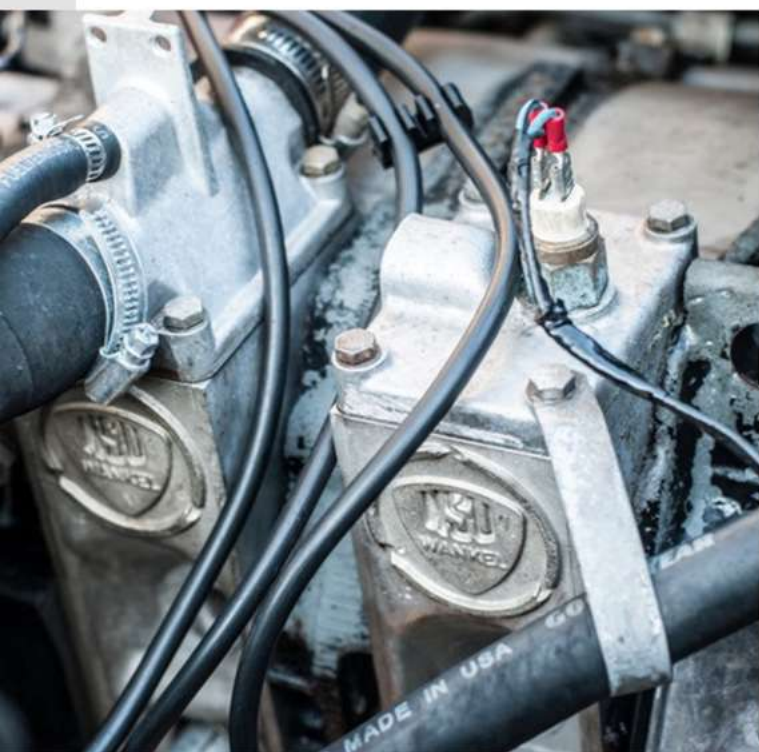
Sadly, though, NSU's timing was not ideal. Although the company produced some successful cars in the 1920s, the onset of The Great Depression forced NSU to sell the automotive side of its business to Fiat in 1932, and the start of WWII meant it had to focus exclusively on motorbike production in order to survive. By 1955, NSU had become the biggest motorcycle producer in the world.

But the magic of four wheels could not be resisted for long: in the mid-1950s NSU once again tried its hand at motor cars, introducing the NSU Prinz in 1957. While NSU had offered 4- and 6-cylinder cars back in the 1920s, the Prinz was a rear-engined mini car powered by an air-cooled, 2-cylinder engine. Although well made (if somewhat noisy), the Prinz did not even put a dent in the VW Beetle's total market domination of the time.



Over the next few years, the post-war German economy continued to improve and buyers were gradually moving away from two wheels and mini cars to larger and more luxurious saloons. Although NSU introduced its first 4-cylinder post-war car, the Prinz 1000, at the 1964 Frankfurt auto show, NSU managing director Gerd Stieler von Heydekampf realised that with NSU's market share being already only modest, it was time to evolve – or the future would be bleak.

After considering a variety of possible names, NSU finally settled on the straightforward Ro80, 'Ro' for Rotary and '80' for the type number. The Ro80 was an all-new design that shared very little with NSU's other models and was considerably more sophisticated, featuring power-assisted ZF rack-and-pinion steering and fully independent suspension. Its chassis was superb and the combination of a wide track, low centre of gravity, and fine steering made for excellent handling. Its ATE Dunlop disc brakes all around (mounted inboard at the front) made for a smooth ride, due to its low unsprung weight. Despite the engine's inherent lightness, power steering was standard.



While the 2-rotor engine used in the Ro80 was considerably more powerful than the Typ 80's original specification, the car's weight had also increased by more than 50%, which raised questions about what transmission should be used. NSU finally chose the 3-speed Saxomat, a semi-automatic transmission made by Fitchel & Sachs. There was no clutch pedal; touching the gear lever knob operated an internal electric switch that operated a vacuum system which disengaged the clutch, and the gear lever itself could then be moved through a standard 'H-pattern' gate. A two-pedal car which allowed you to choose when to shift gears... a case of the best of both worlds?

Production began in August 1967 but by then NSU's back was well and truly against the wall. Although its existing cars were selling reasonably well, the company was no longer in the motorbike business and had invested nearly all of its available resources in the Ro80 and the follow-on Typ 70 (a smaller piston-engined car intended as NSU's answer to the BMW 1600/1602). Von Heydekampf openly admitted to the press that NSU had everything riding on the Ro80 and the company simply couldn't afford to wait any longer for launch. The Ro80 made its public debut at the Frankfurt show in September 1967 and it went on sale shortly afterward with a hefty price tag – substantially more than a Mercedes 230.



The price was high but there were far greater problems ahead for NSU. The rotary engine proved to be highly problematic. It was not only very thirsty but also had a voracious appetite for oil and spark plugs (specific plugs which were at least 10 times more expensive than standard ones), which made the car costly to maintain. Despite all this, and possibly because the world had never seen such an original and novel car since the Citroën DS, the new model won the European Car of the Year. And despite its high price, initial 1967-68 sales totalled around 6 400 units.

But soon an inherent design flaw began to rear its ugly head. The designers of the car had misunderstood their target market in one fatal way: they had assumed that the car would be used on the open road and on autobahns.

But instead, these cars were bought for wives who drove them only to the shop and back. Stop-and-go driving not only fouled the plugs, but also wreaked havoc with the engine's 3-piece, self-adjusting apex seals, particularly with frequent use of the manual choke. To add to NSU's monumental headache, drivers of this car also seemed to have a penchant for dangerously over-revving the engine because it was so smooth that it would exceed its redline without much complaint. (As an aside, cars produced after 1971 came with an 'acoustical signal' that warned the driver when the engine was rotating too fast.)

You can guess what happened next, right? Engine failures – and lots of them – many at less than 40 000km. In a misguided attempt to do right by their buyers, NSU generally opted to replace the engines rather than repair or rebuild them – and sometimes more than once – even beyond the 32 000km factory warranty. This, understandably, wound up costing the company hugely not only financially but also because, despite being a noble attempt to placate irate customers, it actually did more damage to the company's reputation.



Following the merger, NSU continued developing the Wankel engine and working to fix the Ro80's issues. The changes made the Ro80 much more reliable but already the car had developed an unfortunate reputation and had become a bit of a laughing stock in the German media, with editorial cartoons in magazines cruelly depicting NSU drivers greeting each other with hand signals to indicate how many engines their car had gone through. In addition, sales for 1970 were down and in 1971 sales fell a further 50%. Although things improved somewhat in 1972 and 1973, the fuel crisis hit the Ro80 hard. Production dropped sharply in '74 and '75 helped along by the car's constant price escalation.



At this point it seemed the only way the Ro80 would survive is if it could evolve. There had been rumours of a second-generation Ro80 in the press for several years, with plans for a larger, more powerful 1500cc engine aimed at 6-cylinder piston-engined rivals. But the truth was that while there was some support within the company, technical director Ferdinand Piëch was increasingly sceptical about the rotary engine's viability in the European market. He believed that diesel was a better way forward than the rotary, which still suffered from relatively poor

thermal efficiency and heavy fuel consumption. Piëch eventually succeeded in ending Wankel development and the Ro80 successor project was canned.

And so the NSU Ro80 finally spluttered to a stop in April 1977. It was the last NSU production car, although NSU remained part of the corporate name until the mid-1980s and the marque is still owned by Volkswagen AG. Exact production figures differ depending on who you ask, but most sources agree it was around 37 400 units. Although the Ro80 could be considered a huge failure for NSU, it made quite an impression in its short life. In the end it was a huge risk that just did not pay off – maybe if timing had been different or the planets had been aligned the story might have turned out differently? Either way, it sure did make for one hell of an interesting car – not to mention the start of a certain four-ringed powerhouse manufacturer...

END



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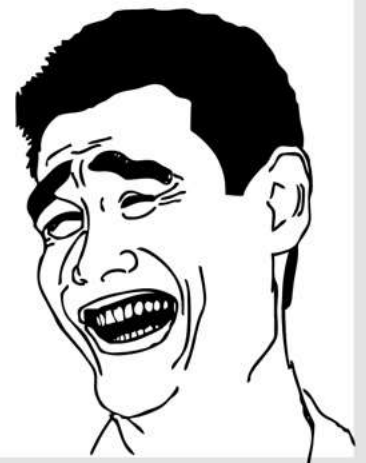
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- **Car** - 1968 to 2003 This is the familiar magazine which is currently still available.
- **Technicar** - 1969 to 1975 This magazine was launched by Car, and after some years, was consolidated into Car. The title is self-explanatory
- **Motoring Mirror** - 1968 to 1978 Similar format to the Car magazine. Changed it's name sometime in the 70's, hence the two names.
- **Motor Sport (UK)** - 1971 to 1986 William Boddy, or WB as he was known, was editor from 1936 to 1991. He first contributed to the magazine in 1930, was editor from 1936 to 1991. After retirement he continued to contribute to the magazine until his death in 2011. He is considered a driving force behind the creation of the vintage car movement, each edition of Motor Sport providing unique coverage of vintage cars and events.

For years the magazines have been boxed chronologically, with moth balls, and are in very good condition.

Like a dog which is being given away, they deserve a good home.

Would the VVC be interested in acquiring them? Giving them a home would be a more suitable description. There is no cost. However, if one of your members has a MGA, and I happen to be in your area, I would appreciate being taken for a short ride, but not to drive. That was my first car, which I bought in May 1968 with the money I had saved during my military service. Would like to call back my carefree days.

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All correspondence to the club should also be addressed to: **info@vvc.co.za**

PLEASE NOTE: Deadlines for the articles for the next issue is the 7th of the previous month Please do keep your articles coming in. Your contributions are appreciated! When submitting photographs please ensure that they are high resolution, to do justice to the pictures, particularly in the printed version.

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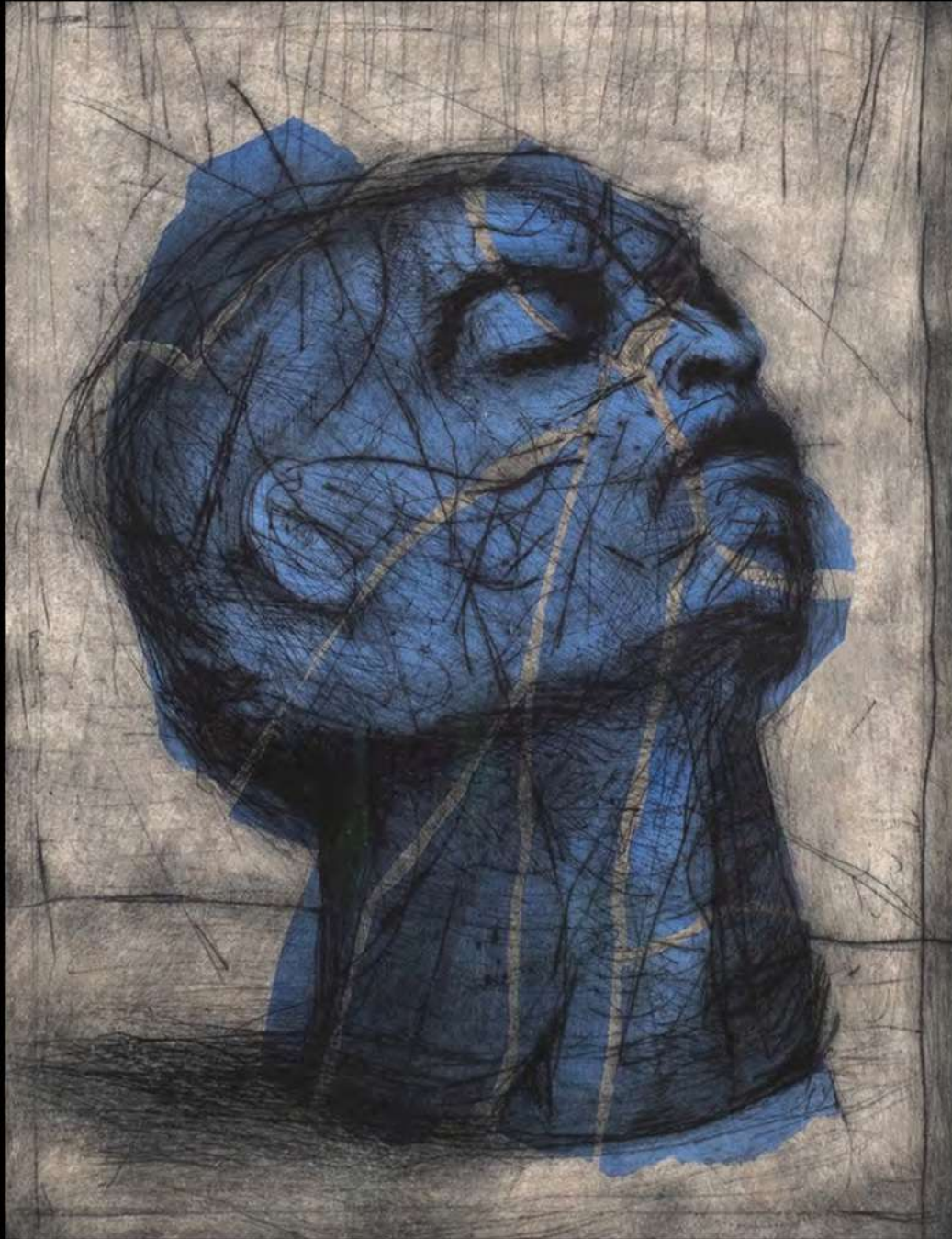
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The events are published in the newsletter every month and will also be announced at the Sunday Club meeting held on the last Sunday of every month.

FACEBOOK

Note that you can also join the club's Facebook: The Vintage and Veteran Club VVC. It is a closed group. If you join, Paul will accept you as a member. There is a lot of other interesting content posted from around the world.

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