

ISSUE 02 | FEB/MAR 2026

# THE VVC VIEW

email: [editor@vvc.co.za](mailto:editor@vvc.co.za) | website: [www.vvc.co.za](http://www.vvc.co.za)



**THE SUNPACER PROJECT**

**THE ORANGE-FISH TUNNEL**

**GRAND PRIX IN SOUTH AFRICA  
PT 2**

CLUBHOUSE: 3 ATHOL OAKLANDS ROAD, OAKLANDS, JOHANNESBURG.



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**1938 Chevrolet Roadster**



**1954 Jaguar XK120 Drophead**



**Chevy Firenza "CanAm"**



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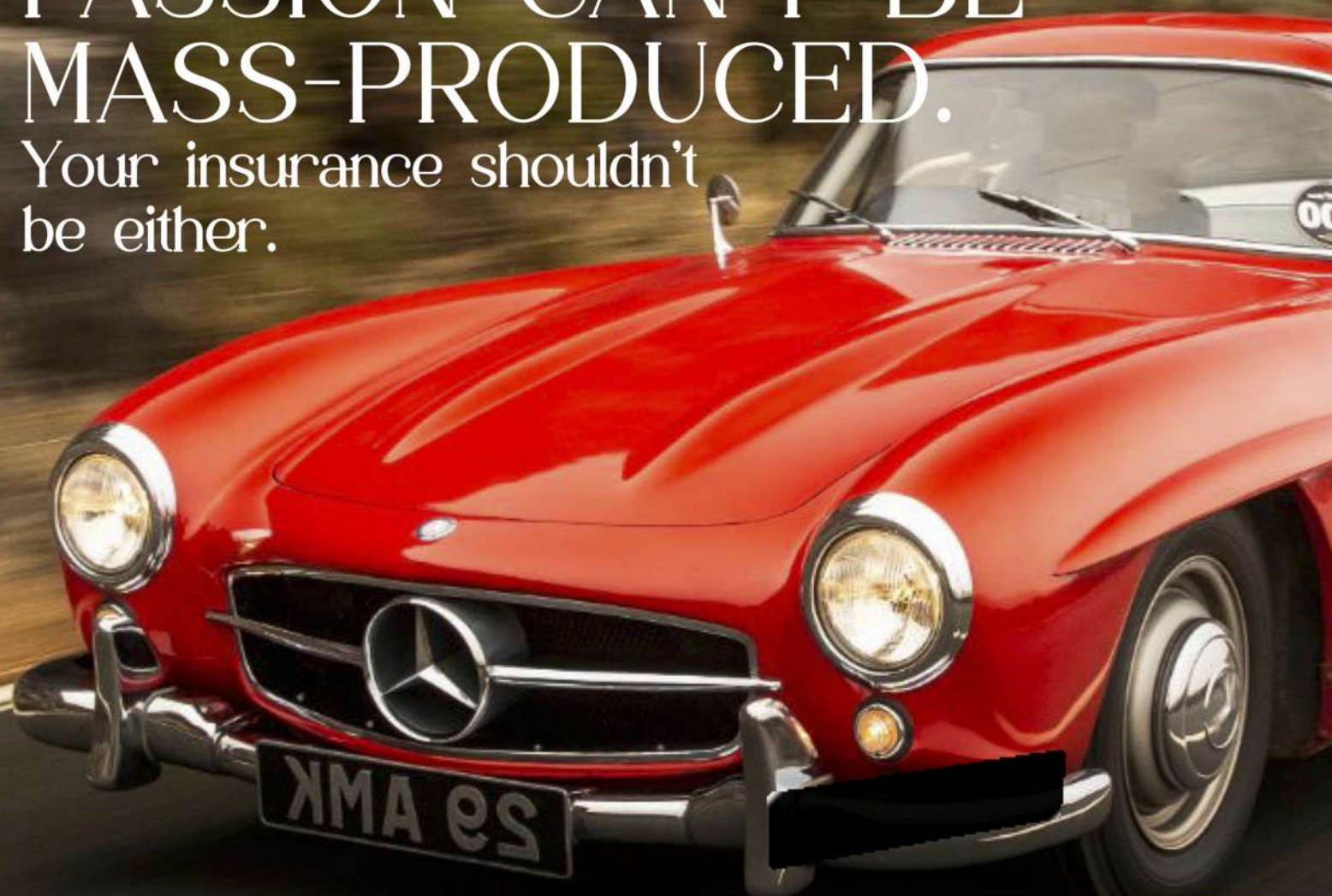
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# FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Steffan Liebenberg



Dear Reader,

As we roll into another busy stretch on the VVC calendar, I just wanted to share a few thoughts from the editor's desk of The View.

First up, a very special thank you to Terry Marshall and Brian Askew for a truly enjoyable quiz night. What a fantastic evening! The laughter, the friendly rivalry, and the head-scratching moments made it one of those club nights that reminds you why we belong to this great community. Here's hoping it becomes a quarterly institution at the clubhouse — I think we'd all agree it's something worth making a regular fixture.

On that note, a sincere word of appreciation to Brian Noik and the committee. So much of what happens at the club happens quietly behind the scenes — the effort that goes into keeping the clubhouse looking presentable, managing the administration, and dealing with all the unforeseen eventualities that crop up is no small task. It's easy to enjoy the smooth running of things without always realising the work that makes it possible. Thank you for keeping the wheels turning so seamlessly.

On the motoring front, I must confess to a touch of jealousy — and regret — at having missed this year's George Motor Show. Every time I see the social media coverage, I feel that familiar pang of "I should have been there!" It looks like it was a spectacular event once again.

That said, we are incredibly fortunate to have some truly amazing motorcars and bikes right here among our VVC members. I can't wait to see what beauties make their way to this Sunday's club meeting. There's always something special about seeing our own members' pride and joy lined up on the grass — and having the owners right there to share the stories behind them.

Looking forward to seeing you all on Sunday.

Kind regards,

*Steffan*

# CHAIRMANS CHATTER

Brian Noik

I am relieved to say that after a long road, we are finally getting on top of our accounting and administration, and the end is in sight.

Following a full membership audit, we are now working through the books and financials. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of information and invoices were missing, so it has taken time to reconstruct and verify records. I am hopeful that Paul will be in a position to audit and sign off within the next week or two.

The confusion surrounding the club's legal entity has largely been resolved, and formal communication in this regard will follow in the coming weeks.

## Quiz Night Success

Our recent Quiz Night was a wonderful evening. Thank you to Terry Marshall and Brian Askew for serving as quiz masters, and to Jeff and Belinda Morrow for generously providing hotdogs to fuel some very hungry brains!

The next Quiz Night will be Car Club vs Car Club — let's put our motoring friends to the test!

## D-J Rally – 14 & 15 March

The D-J takes place on the 14th and 15th of March. Martin Kaiser reports that everything is under control, with approximately 65 entries this year.

The V.V.C. takes this opportunity to wish all riders Godspeed and a safe event.

## In Memoriam

Although not a club member, we pass on the sad news of the passing of Terry Allan, widely regarded as South Africa's Morgan man. Terry had many friends within the V.V.C., and he will be missed.



We have also lost one of our elderly stalwarts, Richard (Dick) Harris. Our sincere condolences to Pat and the Harris family and friends. Dick rode in the D-J alongside Cyril Richmond, Harry Schutler, Ron Scott, Ricky Lewis, Peter Aneck-Hahn and others — long before GPS loggers — while Pat marshalled faithfully with the other wives. A remarkable generation.

## In The Garage

I am currently busy with the cylinder head on my 1927 Rolls-Royce 20HP. What initially seemed an impossibility — removing bolts corroded into the block for 99 years — was resolved in an hour or two thanks to a modern handheld induction heater.

These clever flameless tools generate localized heat through magnetic fields, allowing one to free rusted bolts without the fire risks of oxy-acetylene — particularly reassuring near fuel lines.

Modern technology: 1. Ninety-nine years of corrosion: 0.

I am documenting the rebuild and have promised myself an article will follow.

The 1913 Buick continues to progress — albeit slowly. And just to punish myself, I have acquired a Morris Minor Traveller. Apparently I did not have enough wooden cars in the garage.

Wooden you know... it needs work.

I hope everyone is enjoying their cars as much as I am.

**Brian Noik**

Chairman – V.V.C.

*Thank you!*

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO LIAM MURPHY FROM  
IRELAND FOR HIS VISIT AND THE WONDERFUL  
DONATION OF THE VEHICLE BADGES.



# V.V.C. MONTHLY BREAKFAST

Sunday 9:00Am – 8th February 2026

## VVC Monthly Breakfast – February Report

Judging by the feedback on the Sunday breakfast, the food and service were really good. Andrea our host for the morning put a lot of personal effort into making the breakfast memorable.

I had informed the Andrea of Guilt & Co of 18 or so patrons and with the exception of Brain & Co all turned up and so we ended up being 21.

The line up of 7 cars included a Moon, a Citroen DS, a Ford Ranchero & a Model A, a Rolls, five MG's ( 4 x B's and a TC) and last but not least a Mercedes 500 SL.

There were people reminiscing, thanks to all who ventured out to enjoy another perfect day of SA weather that welcomed us that Sunday morning.

We look forward to welcoming you, new members and guests to our next outing on the 9th of March, you'll be reminded at our next clubhouse meeting as well as during the preceeding week on our Whatsapp group. I hear it is a venue close to the close to the VVC Club,

Kind regards,

Wulf



# MEMBER MATTERS

## NEW MEMBERS

This month, we extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

**ANDREW HORNE, STUART GRANT**

## MEMBERS NAME BADGES

New member name badges — as well as replacement badges ordered by current members — have been placed on the badge board at the front of the clubhouse.

## CLUB FEES

A reminder that outstanding membership fees are now due. For members who have not yet paid, this will be your final newsletter until subscriptions are settled.

**Please make your payment to ensure uninterrupted membership.**

There are still several unallocated payments on our statement. If you have paid but have not seen your subscription updated, kindly send us your proof of payment. Unfortunately, payments labelled only as “SUBS” cannot be allocated.

## PAYMENTS

We have acquired an additional credit card machine, which will help reduce the Sunday bottleneck. The Club will be gradually moving away from cash to improve security, reduce costs, and streamline efficiency—in line with the growing preference for digital payments.

**You can also make secure  
online payments at:**

**[pay.yoco.com/vvc](https://pay.yoco.com/vvc)**

## BAR CARDS AND BAR CREDIT

If you would like to make use of a bar card, please speak to the barman on duty or any committee member, who will be happy to explain how the system works.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| Month     | Date      | Event                                                                 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| February  | 8th       | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 12th–13th | Vetour SCCOC Prince Albert                                            |
|           | 14th      | George Old Car Show SCCOC George                                      |
|           | 15th–18th | Escape Tour/Rally SCCOC George/Addo Elephant                          |
|           | 22nd      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting – Motorcycle day and Pre 1937 D-J Motorcycles |
| March     | 8th       | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 13th–14th | VVC D-J Motorcycle Rally                                              |
|           | 29th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting – Veteran and Vintage cars                    |
| April     | 12th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 26th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting - American car day                            |
| May       | 8th       | Car Club vs Car Club Quiz Night                                       |
|           | 10th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 21st–23rd | Natal Classic Rally – Car + Motorcycle rally – Drakensville CMCN      |
|           | 31st      | 50th Cars in the Park – VSCC Pietermaritzburg                         |
|           | 31st      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting – Italian cars                                |
| June      | 14th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 28th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting and BOOT SALE                                 |
| July      | 12th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 26th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting – French Day                                  |
| August    | 2nd       | Cars in the Park – POMC – Zwartkops Raceway                           |
|           | 9th       | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 30th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting – Annual General Meeting                      |
| September | 13th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 27th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting British Day                                   |
| October   | 3rd       | Welkom Cars in the Park WOCC – Welkom                                 |
|           | 4th       | VVC Veteran Run                                                       |
|           | 11th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                                    |
|           | 25th      | VVC Sunday Club Meeting, Oktoberfest, German car day                  |

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

|          |          |                                                    |
|----------|----------|----------------------------------------------------|
| November | 6th-7th  | Houw Hoek Rally – CHC – Houw Hoek                  |
|          | 8th      | VVC Club Breakfast                                 |
|          | 8th-10th | Fairest Cape Tour – CVMC – Worcester               |
|          | 29th     | VVC Sunday Club Meeting + Year End Christmas Lunch |
| December | 27th     | V.V.C Sunday Club Meeting - casual                 |

***(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**



**SCAN  
FOR V.V.C MEMBERSHIP FORM**



# FRIDAY NIGHTS

AT THE



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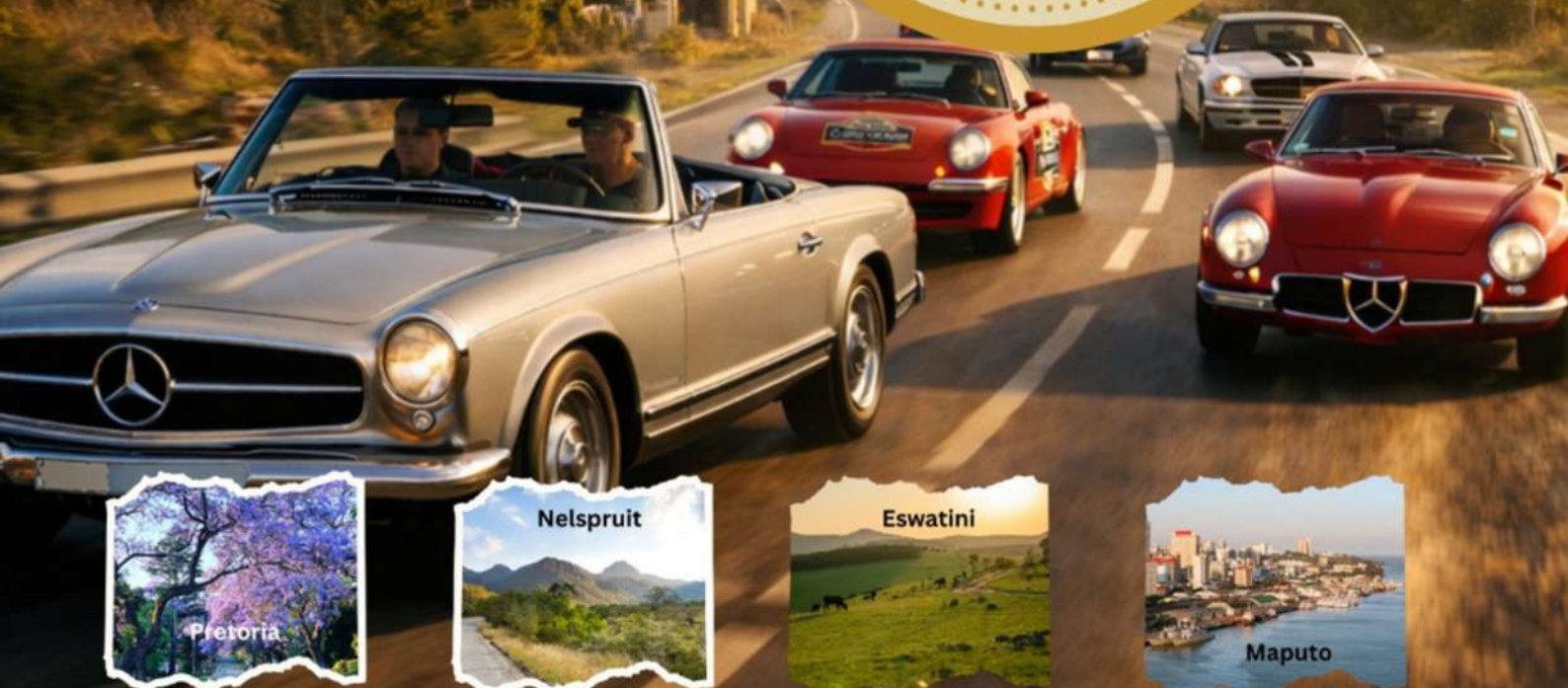
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Photographs by James Atwell

Sandstone is on the R26 route between Ficksburg  
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**CAR CLUB**

**CAR CLUB**

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- ✓ **Friendly Rivalry**  
Between Clubs
- ✓ **Prizes for Top Teams**
- ✓ **Complimentary Snacks & Cash Bar**
- ✓ **Social Evening & Great Fun!**



**DATE: 8TH OF MAY**

**TIME: 6:00 FOR 6:30 PM**

**VENUE: V.V.C. Clubhouse**



**RSVP** [Chairman@vvc.co.za](mailto:Chairman@vvc.co.za)

★ **SAVE THE DATE!** ★

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**Tractors & Agri Equipment**



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- ✓ **Tractors**
- ✓ **Motorcycles**
- ✓ **Stationary Engines**

*★ Public Voting in Select Categories!*

## **FATHER'S DAY OUTING!**

**Sunday, 21 June 2026**

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**Event Address:**  
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**ENQUIRIES: MIKE LEISEGANG • [midlandsmotorshow@gmail.com](mailto:midlandsmotorshow@gmail.com)**

# DJ Update by Martin Kaiser

The 2026 DJ is upon us !

In this years event we have nine first time riders and three very brave lady riders, We are sporting a field of 68 entrants and this year is going to be a competitive event with the likes of Gavin Walton 7x previous winner, Mike Ward 2x previous winner, Alan Cunningham 1x previous winner and last but not least Adrian Hollis who has technically won it with his father (Gerald) although not awarded it is recognised !

Gavin will have to keep the likes of Adrian, Allan, Mike, Neville Nicolau, JC Van Rooyen, Ryan Duncan, Mike Venables, Ryan Van Heerden and his own brother Kevin Walton at bay.

We will start off with a cocktail party at the VCC in Kloof on Wednesday night the 11th of March this is always a well-supported evening

Thursday the 12th of march will be the documentation and scrutineering at Hillcrest corner shopping centre for those members based in KZN this will be the best place to view the bikes and catch up with friends.

There will be a riders briefing at the sports club in the late afternoon Rally day, this is where things get interesting we will leave HC at 06:01 on Friday the 13th of March and slowly make our way to Newcastle with fuel stops in PMB, Mooi river and Ladysmith. Lunch on day 1 will be at the old church in Estcourt and the finish of day 1 will be at Majuba Lodge Newcastle bikes to arrive from 15:30.

Denzil will provide hotdogs and cold refreshments for the competitors, Larina and James will be hard at work making sure the scores get out and the discussions will begin!

Day two Saturday the 14th of March will start from The Newcastle Inn and the riders will slowly make their way to Benoni Northens sports grounds . First bike off at 06:01, fuel stops at Volksrust, Standerton and Balfour. Lunch will be at the church in Balfour where the CMC will ride to join the guys. Bikes to start arriving at Benoni Northens from 14:00 there will be snacks and refreshments available.

Prizegiving will take place at the CCJ Auckland park on the 15th of March.

We look forward to an enjoyable event and we wish every competitor good luck !!!

See you in Hillcrest

Kind regards,  
Martin Kaiser

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# THE SUNPACER PROJECT

By Pierre Joubert



The Sunpacer car was designed by Pierre Joubert in the late 1980's as a proposed BEE job creation project. The concept was influenced to a large degree by General Motors South Africa's popular late managing director of the 1970's, Bob Price, who had a vision of the Chev Nomad becoming a Black Empowered Project. Chief Engineer under Bob was Embree Kennedy who had been involved in a number of low tooling cost Basic Transportation Vehicle projects at other General Motors factories. Embree had an eye for unusual vehicle designs and took a keen interest in the Sunpacer car. He provided a lot of guidance and later became a shareholder in the Sunpacer Project

Bob Price is well remembered as one who took up the challenges of Apartheid in the workplace. With his Affirmative Action Program he wanted to stay ahead of the government, and the rising trade unions, who were fairly toothless at the time, by giving whatever benefits he could, up to the edges of the Apartheid laws. For his initiatives in housing Bob Price Street in Hillside was named after him, a small honour.

When GM disinvested in 1986 and Delta Motor Corporation was formed, Bob gave up a more senior job in the GM Corporation, and came back to join Delta. His mission was "what can I do to help", meaning help break down apartheid, where his weapon would be subtle pressures from the corporate world.

Sadly Bob died before the New South Africa became fact, he never saw his dream come to reality



The Sunpacer car was designed to be built by hand operations on low cost tooling. The main structure is a monocoque steel shell clad on the outside with fibreglass panels



The monocoque shell was made from brake press formed parts using inexpensive tooling and hand operations. To achieve this the complex shapes of the parent design were resolved into straight lines suitable for hand bending and brake press fabrication, all medium level skills



About half the body panels of the 50 Sunpacer cars that were built were made by this lady, Ms Patricia Mboniswa, mother of 5. Fibreglass laminating is medium level skill highly suited for female workers, and widely practiced.

The Sunpacer car project can provide training and many job opportunities in the medium skill categories of steel fabrication and fibreglass laminating



It is an ideal opportunity for creating a Black Empowered Enterprise without a ceiling

It had some unique properties, a non rusting body using a hot dip galvanized steel monocoque shell and fibreglass outer panels.

It was designed around Volkswagen City Golf mechanical components and 55 units were built as kit cars. The project was moth balled because the formal community considered it high risk and did not support it. See nice letter from VW's Peter Searle which like others did not lead to anything. Thirty years later these non rusting cars are still on the road, having demonstrated exceptional long term durability. The tooling is still available and if the community really wants to create jobs, here is an opportunity to start something to stir the economy and the imagination

The pick-up version of the Sunpacer car was a tough non rusting utility vehicle. Perfect replacement for the Golf Caddy bakkie



And it was great for recreation



It could go a lot of places including some 4x4 tracks. In this case near Graaff Reinet it showed the Hummer where to go



It gave the Hummer a run for it's money, note body lean, left front off the ground and pressure bulge on right front, on a bend as Jenny and Duane were in hot pursuit of the Sunpacer, while action photos were being taken by Kirsten Nel (17)



The monocoque steel shell was made from brake press formed templates. Mounting points were provided so that City Golf parts like engine, suspension, steering, brakes, controls, etc, could bolt straight in. Mounting points were so accurate that even wheel alignment did not have to be reset if it was within specs on the donor vehicle



Fibreglass body panels were added after a running chassis had been completed with all mechanical parts assembled. Here is the pick-up version of the Sunpacer car



# GRAND PRIX MOTOR RACING IN SOUTH AFRICA

*CONTINUED..*  
*By Chris Cardwell.*

Grand Prix had shown at its first essay that it was the biggest 'draw' in South African sport. Naturally, East London set about consolidating itself as the birthplace and home of the craze.

Firmly Established Primarily, it was decided that the Prince George Circuit must be altered. Firstly, it was too long at 15 miles, competitors being out of sight for long periods and, secondly, it was dangerous having a section running through the main street of the populous West Bank township.

Knowing the pitfalls of the first race, it was far easier for my organisation to contemplate an improved event for the second of the series. The second South African Grand Prix was planned on a larger scale all round.

I had been careful to ensure that one of the first men invited to join my road race committee should be Roy W. Potter, Highways Engineer to the East London Divisional Council and builder of the Prince George Circuit. With his help, a new deviation running from the top inland 'leg' of the course down to the coast road, which had been contemplated, was hurried forward. This £7000 alteration cut the track down to 11 miles 57 yards and made it practically ideal.

The next big stroke of luck for South African motor racing was when Lord Howe, President of the British Racing Drivers Club, began to take an interest in it. Lord Howe entered for the second South African Grand Prix and helped us to interest other overseas drivers.

A remarkable collection of overseas aces was bagged for the second race: Lord Howe (3.3 Bugatti), Pat Fairfield (1100cc E.R.A.), Eileen Ellison (1500cc Bugatti), Arthur Dobson (1500cc Riley), Austin Dobson (2.9 Maserati), Jean Pierre Wimille (3.3 Bugatti), C. Tapper (2.6 Alfa Romeo), R.O. Shuttleworth (2.9 Alfa Romeo). Here were eight top drivers with the latest supercharged car. The race was mounting in importance!

Apart from their driving skill, the competition from England in the second South African Grand Prix were a picturesque company.

Lord Howe, aged 52 years, was by far the oldest and most experienced class driver of the day. Eileen Ellison was the first woman racing driver to be seen in this country and her earnestness and charming appearance added a keen edge to the race. Pat Fairfield, of South African parents, educated at Grahamstown, already a name in overseas racing, naturally held special interest. Wimille, champion driver of France, was a pale, quiet fellow but an absolute hurricane in his Bugatti.

The Dobson's' were entertaining men and bustling, tough drivers. Shuttleworth was known as 'Mad Jack' at Brooklands and had a high reputation.

As far as the South Africans were concerned "Mario" of Cape Town had bobbed up and formed the first racing team in the Union – the Eagle Racing Stable. He had imported a 2.3 Bugatti and other racing cars of somewhat ancient vintage. He was no novice as a driver, having a good record in Continental races himself. Other well-known South African racing drivers now to appear on the Grand Prix scene for the first time were: H.F. Wiggill (Ford), Jack McNicol (M.G.), F. Chiappini (Riley), H.W. Bruce (Terraplane), M.E. Bothner (Bugatti), Gaston Bielliet (Ford), Roy Evans (Auburn). In all, 23 entries were accepted for the second South African Grand Prix, taking place over the Prince George Circuit. on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1936.

Wimille lapped at more than 100 miles an hour average several times in practise and he was fancied for the race on his set average of 96. Pat Fairfield also performed well in practise and was considered to have a bright chance on his handicap of 14 minutes. Lord Howe was required to average 94 in the race.

The experienced visitors had not, however, reckoned on finding a driver in far-away South Africa as 'slippy' as themselves. 'Mario' drove 18 laps of the shortened course of 11 miles in brilliant style in his old 2.3 Bugatti to win at an average of 87 miles an hour. Wimille stormed in second at an average of 94 and Fairfield was third. The handicapping was remarkable, all the first three men home finishing the 18 laps within a decimal of the set schedule demanded of them.

'Mario's' run had been the most extraordinary ever made in an international race. As early as the first lap the second and third ratios in the gearbox of his Bugatti had stripped and the South African Italian had been forced to keep going on top gear all the time. Spectators grouped near corners had been amazed at his "wild driving", not realising that the corners had to be rushed to conserve 'revs' to get up subsequent hills at all! Personally, I think the mishap to the gearbox was a fortunate thing for 'Mario'.

He is a tempestuous driver and the car was old. Had he had second and third gears to accelerate in, the car might have blown up. As it was he had to nurse it!

Wimille drove a magnificent race and had it not been that a shower of rain fell in the 11<sup>th</sup> lap making the track slippery, when the French star's terrific averages dropped considerably, it is feasible that he would have won the second South African Grand Prix.

This second race of the national series had transcended all our hopes in regard to attendance and general success. Seventy-two thousand people were in present and the Hon. O. Pirow, Minister of Defence, who presented the prizes for the second time, said he had never seen such a huge assembly before in South Africa.

As an event, this race was perhaps the most enjoyable we have ever staged in the Union. Pat Fairfield said before he left for England: "Organisers and competitors have been like one great family."

## **Big Money**

Motor racing in South Africa got a bit out of hand in 1936.

East London's staggering success had made rival Union centres sit up and take notice. In fact, the huge crowds attracted by the Grand Prix had shown it to be a form of sport that could hardly be overlooked.

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Early in that year an announcement was made from Cape Town that Mr. A.O. Edward's organisation intended on building a paved track at Pollsmoor, an historic farm site at the foot of the Steenberg mountains. Work was started on a most ambitious undertaking. A circuit of 4 and five eighths miles long, 31 feet wide, was designed by Mr. Dave McKnight, the well-known Cape roads engineer

ngineer and huge grandstands and ramps were built for spectators. It is reported that £70 000 was spent on the Grosvenor Grand Prix track. Everything was done on a huge scale.

Later in 1936, my friend James Clarke of Johannesburg, who had competed in both races at East London and had seen the tremendous crowds attracted, persuaded business associates of his to put up capital for a motor racing company on the Rand. I was seduced from my newspaper job at East London to take charge of the Johannesburg company and we built the Lord Howe circuit of 2.4 miles adjoining the Pretoria road, eleven miles from Johannesburg. My company also aimed high and our grounds and buildings cost £40 000.

Thus, the scene had changed with a vengeance. Instead of a country offering one Grand Prix race run over public roads, South Africa, at one stroke, became the home of three international events with a total prize list of more than £4 000.

The sequence decided on for the races in the forthcoming South African motor racing season was:

- Third South African Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1937;
- First Grosvenor Grand Prix, Cape Town, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1937;
- First Rand Grand Prix, Johannesburg, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1937.

The highlight of the 1937 races in South African was the appearances of the Auto Unions. The fastest and most fantastic looking road racing machines ever built. These cars were of the highest flight of Grand Prix machines and it was almost too much to hope that we would see them perform out here. Fortunately, Baron von Oertzen, a man of vision was resident-director in Johannesburg for the Auto Union organisation at that time. I was soon able to make him see the publicity value of bringing these wonderful cars.

Other overseas entries were: Mrs. Kay Petre (Riley), Pat Fairfield (E.R.A.), Cyril Paul (Riley), Lord Howe (Bugatti), Richard Seaman (Delage), P. Taruffi (Maserati), Hans Revsch (Alfa Romeo). The Auto Union drivers were Berndt Rosemeyer and Ernst von Delius.

South Africans assembled for this series were: Mario (Maserati), E.R. Nesbitt (M.G.), H.F. Wiggill (Ford), D.R. Woodhead (M.G.), W.L.C. Miller (M.G.), T. Schekter (Riley), F. Chiappini (Riley), W.B. Meyer (Riley), J.H. Case (Ford), Lionel Meyer (Bugatti), H.F. Hooper (Talbot), J.T. Clarke (Riley), Roy Hesketh (M.G.), M.E. Bothner (Bugatti), W.H. Roderick (Alfa Romeo). As may be seen from this list, for every new series, the South African resistance became stronger and more impressive.

But one has to hand it to the Germans for showmanship. When all these competitors gathered at East London for the third S.A. Grand Prix, "Auto Union" was on everyone's lips from the first day of practise. The brilliant Rosemeyer was lapping at 105 as soon as he had tried the Prince George Circuit. Those six litre German Grand Prix cars were the most remarkable examples of engineering I have ever seen. Built, regardless of cost, as propaganda cars, they were powered by 16-cylinder engines (two banks of eight) housed behind the driver in the machine's streamlined tail. Developing 580 brake horse power, these cars weighed no more than an 8 h.p. 'Baby' sedan! Suspension was independent, by torsion bar, both front and rear. The driver sat in a cockpit, only a foot behind the front wheels. Such a position needed a particular technique in driving these juggernauts at the phenomenal speeds of which they were capable. The driver sat so snugly in the Auto Union cockpit that the steering wheel had to be detached before he could enter and clipped on again when he was seated.

To see Rosemeyer snaking down the three-mile-long Orange Grove straight of the East London track, with the independently sprung wheels flapping and smoke spiriting from the 16 exhaust pipes like a pre-historic dragon, was a sight for the gods. The greatest combination of car and man we had seen.

The Auto Union pit team were a show in itself, drilled like soldiers. I timed them to change all four wheels and refuel one of their cars in 38 seconds! Their record for such a feat is 31 seconds!

The next entry to draw the most attention was Richard Seaman in his 10 years old Delage. This amazing supercharged chassis had been re-built and was the most successful 1500 c.c. racing car of 1936 in Europe. Seaman was now the leading driver in that category and his driving was a joy to watch. This big British boy is so neat and unobtrusive on corners, going around as if on rails, that he does not appear to be doing much – until you see his lap times. That year Seaman took the old Delage around the Prince George Circuit at an average of 104. That it was not until 1939 that a modern “1500” touched that figure again.

Once more, Pat Fairfield compelled attention. Third the year before, his 1100 c.c. E.R.A. had a new engine and he was driving better than ever. On handicap he was set an average of 86. In practice he had several laps at nearly 90. Baron von Oertzen, in charge of the Auto Union team shook his head and said, before the race, that his rear engine monsters would never catch Fairfield or Seaman. Auto Unions were set to average 108 for the 200 miles!

And so, it proved. Fairfield was too good for the handicapper on this occasion and brought his 1100 c.c. car in at the wonderful average of 89 – three miles an hour better than his set figure. South Africans did well this time by coming in second and third: these being Buller Meyer and Chiappini, both in Rileys.

Revsch, the Swiss driver, brought his roaring scarlet Alfa Romeo into fourth place. With a breathless last burst of speed, Rosemeyer claimed fifth place after averaging 108.56 for the race – a stupendous performance, after three pit stops for tyres and making at least 150 passing movements.

## **The Two New Races**

The eyes of South African motor racing enthusiasts were now turned on Cape Town, which centre was feverishly preparing to present the first Grand Prix race over the Polls moor track on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

Practically the same field of drivers was engaged for the first Grosvenor Grand Prix. The rumour ran at first that Auto Union had had enough and were going home. After all, one could not blame the Germans for feeling disappointed. The East London race had been the first time that their propaganda cars had ever been risked in a handicap event. They had exceeded their required average and yet had been able to do no better than fifth place. But the practises for the Cape race showed that the Germans were getting nearer to their set average than any of the other competitors and they ended up red hot favourites for the race.

In a blinding sandstorm the big Auto Union cars had it all their own way in the first Grosvenor Grand Prix. Von Delius took the lead from Lord Howe five laps from the finish. Rosemeyer came into second place on the penultimate lap. Lord Howe in his 1500 c.c. E.R.A. was the strongest challenger to the Germans. Up to a late stage it looked as though he might hold them but a pitstop for plugs towards the end lost him his advantage.

The Germans having gained their one, two victory they were accustomed to and having no tyres left, sailed for home. This left Revsch's 3.8 Alfa Romeo the biggest car for the first Rand Grand Prix over the Lord Howe Circuit on January 31<sup>st</sup>, at Johannesburg.

Thirteen cars were left for the first race over this sinuous, difficult track, which had been built in a terrific rush in four months and was really scarcely ready to race on.

Once more, Pat Fairfield obviously had a big chance in his E.R.A. He was driving beautifully that season and his car's performance was far beyond what could be expected from so small an engine.

That first Rand Grand Prix was a killer for drivers. It was 75 laps of 2.3 miles – 172 miles which sounds harmless enough. But that incorporated some really vicious curves in the Lord Howe Circuit and the competitors had to work the whole time.

Fairfield drove a methodical and clever race to win from Lord Howe. McNicol was the most dangerous South African challenger and was not passed until late in the race. Revsch should have beaten him for third place but miscounted his laps and made a fatal stop on the 74<sup>th</sup>!

“Victor Ludorum” of the season was Pat Fairfield, who had won the S.A. and Rand Grand Prix and £1 450 in prize money. He won £750 at East London, £500 in Johannesburg and £200 at Cape Town.

### **The 1937 1938 Season**

The Union was now well established as a motor racing country and there was no difficulty about obtaining plenty of drivers for the 1937 – 1938 races, the rotation which were:

- Second Rand Grand Prix, Johannesburg, December 16th, 1937;
- Fourth South African Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938;
- Second Grosvenor Grand Prix, Cape Town, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1938.

The overseas field for this series was: Count Lurani (Maserati), Norman Wilson (E.R.A.), L. Villorosi (Maserati), P. Taruffi (Maserati), Lord Howe (E.R.A.), Mario (Maserati), W.G. Everitt (Maserati), Raymond Mays (E.R.A.), E. Siena (Maserati), L. Hartman (Maserati).

Several of the South African entrants had a better chance this year because of having better cars. A.S. du Toit of Johannesburg was entrusted with a second Maserati, which Hartman had brought out. F. Chiapinni of Cape Town had imported a 2500 c.c. Maserati and ‘Mario’ still had his 3.7 litre model of the same make. Buller Meyer had brought out a fine 150 c.c. Riley with off-set chassis; W.H. Roderick had brought the 32.6 litre Alfa Romeo from the Eagle Racing Stable. Roy Hesketh had got hold of a “R” type supercharged M.G. with torsion bar suspension, a complicated machine but fast if tuned correctly.

The Second Rand Grand Prix on Dingaan's Day, 1937 was a hectic affair. Through a system of group handicapping, 10 cars left the line together in the scratch class. This was the first mass start seen in Grand Prix racing out here and was certainly rousing.

The larger cars set to average 66 had a stiff task on this difficult circuit and before long it could be seen that the scratch men were not driving fast enough to make sufficient impression on the small limit men in front. This race produced the first South African born winner, Doug van Riet of Cape Town drove superbly to elude all pursuit. He and Hesketh, off the same mark at the start, had a battle royal, the Maritzburg boy coming second. None of the cracks ever looked like doing much in this race. “Mario’ put up the best performance from the scratch mark. There were 23 cars in this race and on such a small track the scene was one of constant action.

Twenty cars were on the line for the Fourth S.A. Grand Prix at East London on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938. A sensation was the withdrawal of “Mario’, the scratch man, at the very last minute. A crack was detected in the chassis of the Maserati.

In the practises before the race, Buller Meyer of East London had shown that the handicappers had underestimated his fast Riley. He was set to average 86 in the race and had several practise laps at over 90. A clever driver and an enthusiast he knew the track minutely. Raymond Mays, Villoresi and Siena all had practise laps around the 100 mark.

Meyer confirmed the confidence shown in him by duly winning in faultless style, his car never missing a beat. But he was soundly chased by the Italian professional, Siena, who was second and came in less than two minutes later. The novice South African driver, Richardson came in third in a Riley. Meyer averaged 86.15 in his un-supercharged car – a redoubtable performance.

For the Cape's second international race, the second Grosvenor Grand Prix on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1938, it looked as though Raymond Mays, the number one E.R.A. driver, might at last come into his own. His car was going terrifically fast in practise and he actually registered a lap of 3 minutes 26 seconds – seven seconds below the average required of him in the race.

Mays at the start of the race itself left the Maseratis' as though they were not going at all. He had 100 yards lead after 4 laps but then his E.R.A. had to retire with engine trouble. This race was a triumph for experience. With Mays and Wilson out of the race, Lord Howe was left as the solitary representative for E.R.A. against five Maserati's. He drove with rare judgement and won from Taruffi by a margin of 20 seconds. A wonderful finish. Villoresi was third.

That was the last race of the 1937 – 1938 season and the sequence ended with South African drivers winning two of the three events.

### **Walk-over for Factory Team**

In 1939 the international motor race list in South Africa had dwindled to two. The Rand organisation had ceased to operate and there was no Grand Prix scheduled for the Lord Howe Circuit.

The races for that year were:

- Fifth S.A. Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939;
- Third Grosvenor Grand Prix, Cape Town, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1939;

For the first time the two remaining organisations had decided to try the experiment of scratch races for the 1500 c.c. supercharged type of car.

With the European situation uneasy it was not so simple to make a selection of overseas drivers and finally a squad of Maserati's were again imported. The Maserati factory entered L. Villoresi. F. Cortese and P. Taruffi as an official team driving the latest six-cylinder supercharged 1500 c.c. cars. Other "independent: Maserati's were entered by Armand Hug, the Swiss champion, Louis Gerard, a French driver and P. Pietsch, a German entry. One of these cars were also sent out for 'Mario'. Against the Italian cars, Lord Howe brought his 1500 c.c. E.R.A. and the Hon. P. Aitken and P. Whitehead of Australia, entered similar machines.

The adoption of a scratch race of course practically ruled out the South African driver, Buller Meyer and F. Chiappini bought 1500 c.c. Maserati's and Hesketh a 1500 c.c. E.R.A. These only, with 'Mario', were eligible to enter. This meant that at the line up for the fifth S.A. Grand Prix at East London, nine Maserati's opposed four E.R.A. cars and a Riley, entered at the last moment by Freddie Dixon and driven by Miss Fay Taylour – 14 cars in all.

This run was something of a tour for the Maserati factory team. Villoresi, in the fastest car on the track, jumped into an immediate lead from the start and was never headed again, being paced by Cortese, the second string, for the whole of the race. They finished in that order. 'Mario' was third, putting in the fastest lap at 104. He might have been higher up on the list but for a pit stop for clutch trouble at the end of the first lap. Villoresi won at an average of 99.6.

Hesketh was the real hero of the fifth S.A. Grand Prix. In a car at least 15 m.p.h. slower on the straights, he chased the Italians every inch of the way. To gain a few seconds, Hesketh had to take risks on every corner. The Italians, knowing they would draw away again on the next straight, were able to coast through on the bends straining neither themselves nor their cars. Hesketh, who came fourth, at an average of 96.3, made the bravest show ever put up by a South African driver in any race of this international series.

These circumstances were repeated in the third Grosvenor Grand Prix at Cape Town, a fortnight later. Villoresi again cracked away ahead of the field, setting a pace calculated to break up the rest. Everyone except his team mate, Cortese, tried to keep up with Villoresi. The result was that before the race was one-third over, seven out of the twelve competitors had retired. With his job done, Villoresi himself blew up in the 26<sup>th</sup> lap. Cortese then came through to carry on and win as he liked. His average was 77.6.

Thus, South Africa's record in international motor racing is, so far, to ten events, five at East London, three at Cape Town and two at Johannesburg. The winners of these were:

- First South African Grand Prix, East London, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1934, Whitney Straight at an average of 95.43 m.p.h.
- Second South African Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1936, 'Mario' (Dr. Massacuratti), at an average of 87 m.p.h.
- Third South African Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1937, Pat Fairfield, at an average of 89 m.p.h.
- First Grosvenor Grand Prix, Cape Town, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Ernst von Delius, at an average speed of 76 m.p.h.
- First Rand Grand Prix, Johannesburg, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1937, Pat Fairfield, at an average of 57 m.p.h.
- Second Rand Grand Prix, Johannesburg, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Doug van Riet, at an average of 61 m.p.h.



- **Fourth South African Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938, Buller Meyer, at an average of 86 m.p.h.**
- **Second Grosvenor Grand Prix, Cape Town, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1938, Lord Howe, at an average speed of 74 m.p.h.**
- **Fifth South African Grand Prix, East London, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, L. Villoresi, at an average of 99.6 m.p.h.**
- **Third Grosvenor Grand Prix, Cape Town, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1939, F. Cortese, at an average speed of 74 m.p.h.**

## **Penalty of Daring**

**It is not generally realised what an amazing array of driving talent has visited this country for Grand Prix racing in the four years under review. Twenty-seven world-famous drivers have come all the way from Europe to compete. Their names are:**

- 1. Bernd Rosemeyer**
- 2. J.P. Wimille**
- 3. Whitney Straight**
- 4. Lord Howe (twice)**
- 5. R.J.B. Seaman (twice)**
- 6. P.G. Fairfield (twice)**
- 7. A.C. Dobson**
- 8. Austin Dobson**
- 9. C. Tapper**
- 10. R.O. Shuttleworth**
- 11. Eileen Ellison**
- 12. Ernst von Delius**
- 13. Hans Revsch**
- 14. Cyril Paul**
- 15. Kay Petre**
- 16. Raymond Mats**
- 17. W.G. Everitt**
- 18. P. Taruffi (three times)**
- 19. Count Lurani**
- 20. E. Siena**
- 21. L. Villoresi (twice)**
- 22. L. Hartmann**
- 23. E. Gerard**
- 24. P. Pietsch**
- 25. Armand Hug**
- 26. F. Cortese**
- 27. Fay Tylour**

**The hazards of motor racing are grimly illustrated by the fact that of this group of 27 drivers, six have been killed in races since their appearances in the Union. These are: P.G. Fairfield, both the German drivers Rosemeyer and Delius, Siena, Hartman and Seaman.**

**It was as great a shock to South Africa as Britain when picturesque Pat Fairfield crashed fatally in the 24 Hours Race at Le Mans in France, in 1937, driving off the track to avoid another competitor, who was injured lying in the road. Fairfield was a notably safe and steady driver, but circumstances conspired against him.**

Rosemeyer met his death when attacking world's records on the Frankfort autobahn in 1938. With a six-litre car, Rosemeyer had put up a mile time at the incredible speed of 252 m.p.h.! Carraciola, in a Mercedes, had exceeded this and it was on his second attempt to set an even higher figure that Rosemeyer's Auto Union deviated from the road.

The late Ernst von Delius met his end in 1937 German Grand Prix. He attempted to pass Seaman at 145 m.p.h. on a hump-backed bridge. The two cars touched hubs and instantly snaked off the road in opposite directions. Delius' Auto Union shot right over the heads of the crowd and landed in a subsidiary lower road, below the track, 100 yards away. He was thrown out and killed. Seaman was severely injured.

Eugenia Siena of Italy, and Lazlo Hartmann, Hungarian Champion, were killed in the 1938 Tripoli Grand Prix. Siena is reported to have hit a wall on a corner and Hartmann was involved in a collision with another driver.

R.J.B. Seaman died of his injuries after his car had overturned and caught fire in the Belgian Grand Prix at Pau in July 1939. He was driving a Mercedes and was in the lead when the mishap occurred. He was the finest and most successful British driver of the decade.

Apart from fatal crashes, Lord Howe and Mrs Kay Petre were so gravely injured in track accidents in 1937, that the lives of both were in danger. R.O. Shuttleworth also had a hair-raising accident in the second S.A. Grand Prix in East London in 1936, when he left the road at 145 m.p.h. and is today considered to be the only driver alive to have survived a crash at that speed.

Off-set only by regret at the passing of these six fine drivers, the building up of Grand Prix racing in this country has been a stirring adventure to the organisers, and of great publicity value to South Africa itself.



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# NOTICE BOARD

## **BRAAI**

Braai fires are lit on Club Sundays and members are welcome to bring and braai.

## **EVENTS**

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.

## **INSTAGRAM**

@vintageandveteranclub

## **MEMBERS BADGES**

Check our cabinet by the bar entrance for VVC badges to enhance your classic car and person.

To order replacement badges please ask a member of the committee

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

The club encourages you to make use of the newsletter to move some of the belongings you have accumulated. With so many members sizing down and moving you are welcome to advertise here.



**VVC social and chat group**

WhatsApp group



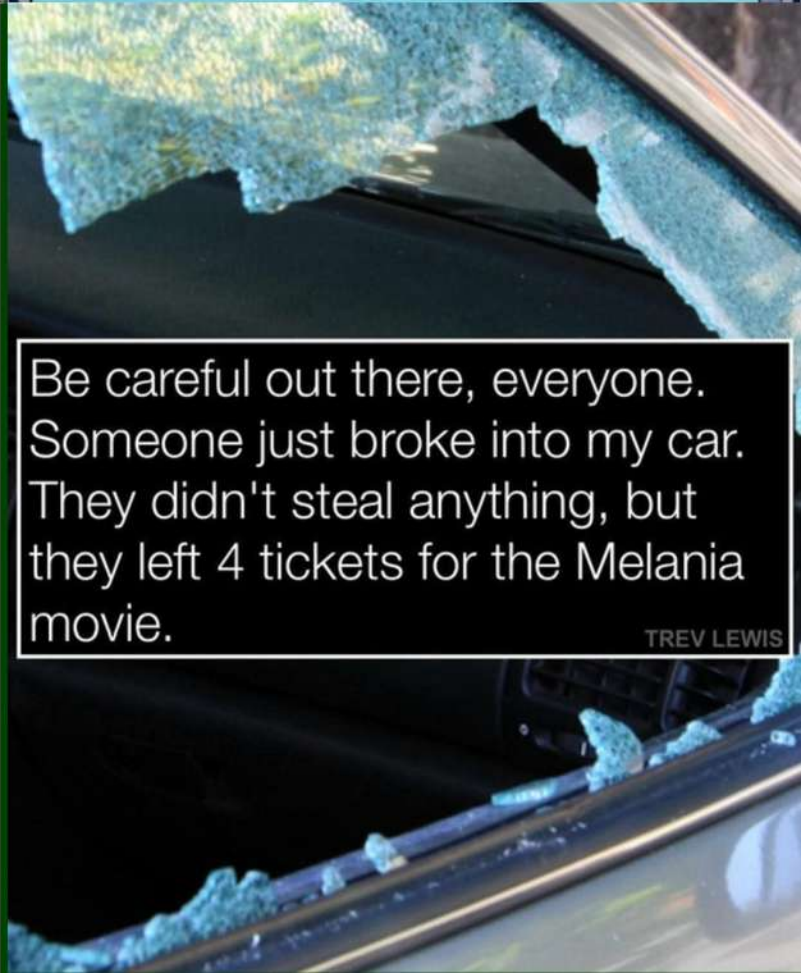
# Always Leave 'em Laughing!



The Simpsons tried to warn us back in 2000.



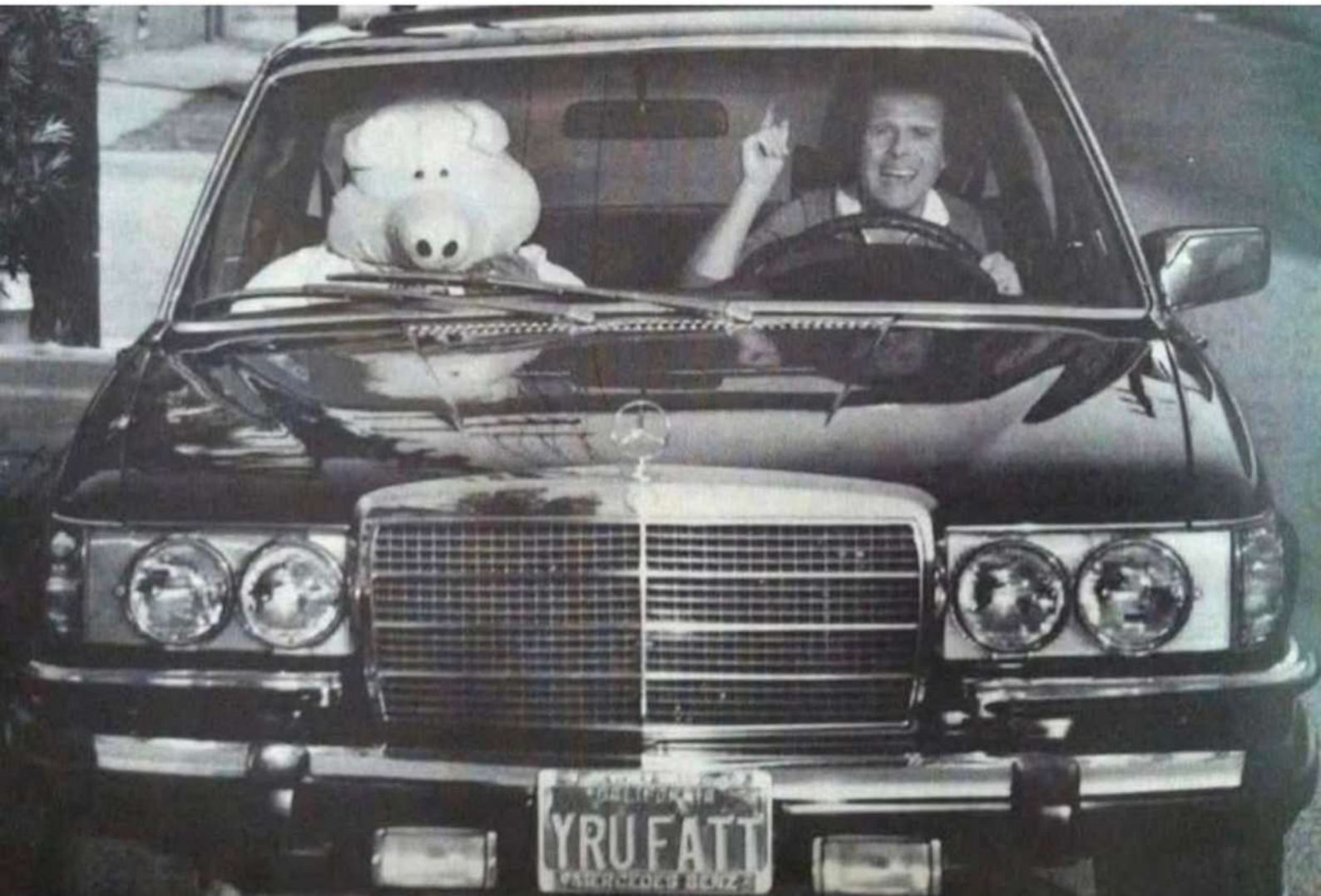
**1980:** "In 2026 we will have flying cars!"  
**2026:**



Be careful out there, everyone. Someone just broke into my car. They didn't steal anything, but they left 4 tickets for the Melania movie.

TREV LEWIS

Fitness coach Richard Simmons in his Mercedes 450 SEL, check the registration plate - c1981



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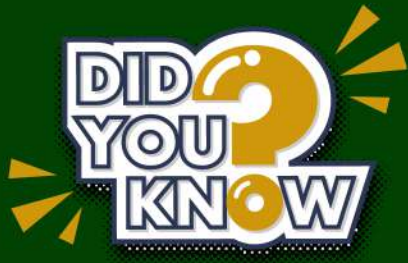
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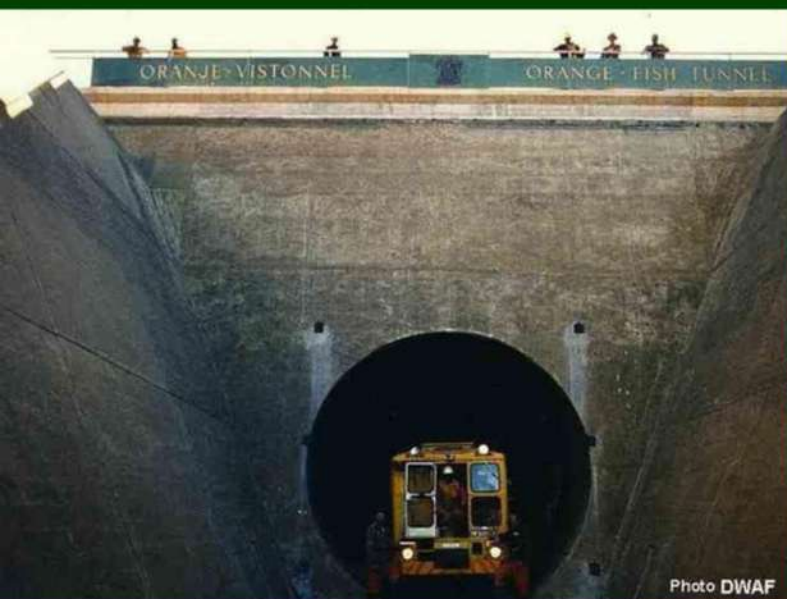
**6 Oscar street, Hughes, Boksburg**



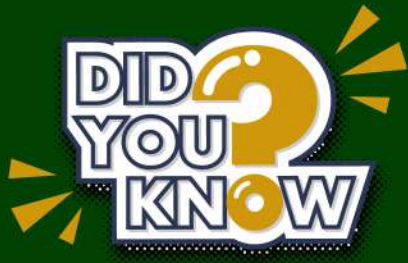
# THE ORANGE-FISH TUNNEL

The Orange-Fish Tunnel was constructed between 1966 and 1975 as part of the Orange-Fish Water Scheme. The project was designed to transfer water from the Orange River to the Great Fish River system in the Eastern Cape. Its purpose was to supply irrigation, domestic, and industrial water to arid areas of the Karoo where rainfall was low and dam capacity had been reduced by siltation. The scheme required both the construction of the Gariep Dam on the Orange River and the driving of a tunnel to carry water across the watershed.

The tunnel extends approximately 82.8 km from the intake at Oviston on the Gariep Reservoir to the outlet near the Teebus Spruit, from where water flows into the Great Fish River system. It was, at completion, the longest continuous enclosed aqueduct in the southern hemisphere. The tunnel has a finished diameter of 5.35 m and is lined with mass concrete. It was excavated using drill and blast methods and constructed on a gradient designed to maintain continuous flow.



Preliminary works began in 1966 and included the construction of access roads, work camps, and three settlements. Oviston at the northern end, a mid shaft settlement on the watershed plateau, and Teebus at the southern end. Power supply infrastructure, workshops, laboratories, and administrative facilities were also established.

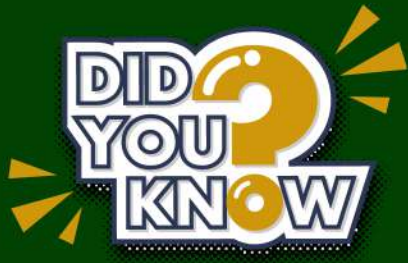


# THE ORANGE-FISH TUNNEL CONT...



Engineering design was undertaken by Sir William Halcrow & Partners in association with Keeve Steyn and Partners for the South African Department of Water Affairs. Construction was divided into three sections. Inlet, Plateau, and Outlet, each approximately 27 km long. International consortia carried out the work. More than 200,000 cubic metres of concrete were used in the lining.

Construction involved significant technical challenges. Water bearing fissures caused flooding in parts of the tunnel, and methane gas ignited in one section, burning for several months. Fatalities occurred during the project, many related to associated railway operations. The tunnel was officially opened in the mid 1970s and enabled large scale irrigation and water supply in the Eastern Cape interior.



# ONE OF THE STRANGEST TRAFFIC INCIDENTS EVER RECORDED



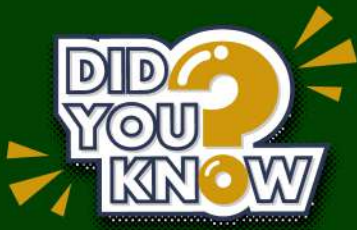
**In 1961, a car actually crashed into a docked submarine in Lysekil, Sweden and it still stands as the only documented case in history of a car colliding with a submarine.**

In the year 1961, the quiet harbor town of Lysekil, Sweden, became the setting for one of the strangest traffic incidents ever recorded.

A local driver accidentally launched his car off the dock and straight onto a 'moored submarine', which was sitting at the pier during a routine stop. The submarine, part of the Swedish Navy, was completely stationary, making the collision even more surreal. No one aboard the vessel was injured, and the driver survived, but the bizarre scene drew immediate attention from locals and the press.

What makes the event legendary is its uniqueness: despite more than a century of automobiles and submarines coexisting, this remains 'the only documented case in history of a car colliding with a submarine'.

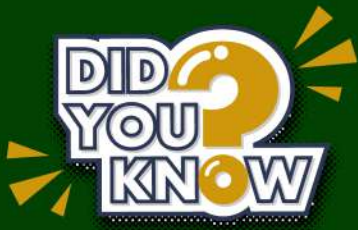
The incident became a quirky piece of maritime and automotive lore, often resurfacing in "strange but true" historical lists. Lysekil residents still recall it as one of the town's most unusual moments, a reminder of how even the most ordinary day can produce a story no one could have predicted.



## MERCEDES THE TORCH BEARER

In September 1972, the opening of the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, was planned, which coincided with the launch of the W116 on the market, for which Mercedes-Benz, in coordination with the organizing committee of the games, provided a vehicle from the brand's new catalog for the transport of the Olympic flame.





## SINATRA'S THUNDERBIRD

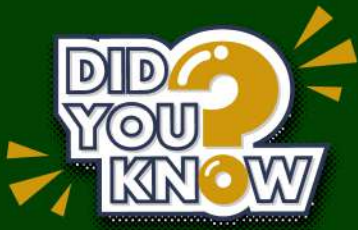
In 1955, Frank Sinatra, enjoying a major career revival, was closely associated with a Raven Black 1955 Ford Thunderbird Convertible with a 292ci V8 engine, which was gifted to him by Capitol Records to match his newfound, "swingin'" style.

Frequently photographed in the car, it symbolized his success, 1950s cool, and love for luxury.

Sinatra was also known to purchase similar Thunderbirds for friends, cementing his image as the "Chairman of the Board".

Few artists have left as great an impression on 20th-century popular music as Frank Sinatra. From his humble beginnings in Hoboken, New Jersey, to the bright lights of Manhattan and the Las Vegas Strip, Sinatra became a dominant musical force thanks to his distinctive voice and big band-style jazz-inflected songs that could be loosely categorized as swing.





## JOUBERT PARK, JOHANNESBURG, 1899

Joubert Park, established in 1887, is the oldest public park in Johannesburg. The Volksraad set aside approximately 6.5 hectares of land for public use following a request by the Diggers Committee for a planted garden within the new mining settlement. The park was named after Christiaan Johannes Joubert, Vice-President of the South African Republic and Minister of Mines.

The site, originally swampy ground north of the early town centre, was initially known as Joubert Plein. In June 1892 the City Engineer's Department resolved to develop it formally as a park rather than lease it for sport. A design competition was held that year and won by G.S. Burt Andrews, who oversaw its layout. Planting began in October 1892, with seeds and plants donated locally and from the Royal Botanic Gardens. Although locusts damaged early plantings in 1893, the park was established within a few years.

The design followed late 19th century formal park principles. It included ornamental gates and fencing, symmetrical flower beds, gravel paths, lawns, shade trees, rose gardens, a bandstand, and a central fountain installed in 1895. A conservatory acquired from the Wanderers Club in 1898 was used to cultivate plants for municipal distribution. Electric lighting was introduced in the early 20th century, and in 1904 A.H. Stirrat remodelled the grounds and added a floral clock. The conservatory building completed in 1906 expanded plant production for the city.

Between 1910 and 1915 the Johannesburg Art Gallery was constructed within the park, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens with Robert Howden. Extensions were added in 1940 and 1986.

For much of the 20th century the park was maintained by municipal staff. After 1991 maintenance declined and several historic features were damaged or fenced off. Joubert Park remains a public open space established in the earliest years of Johannesburg's development..



## JOUBERT PARK, JOHANNESBURG, 1899 CONT...



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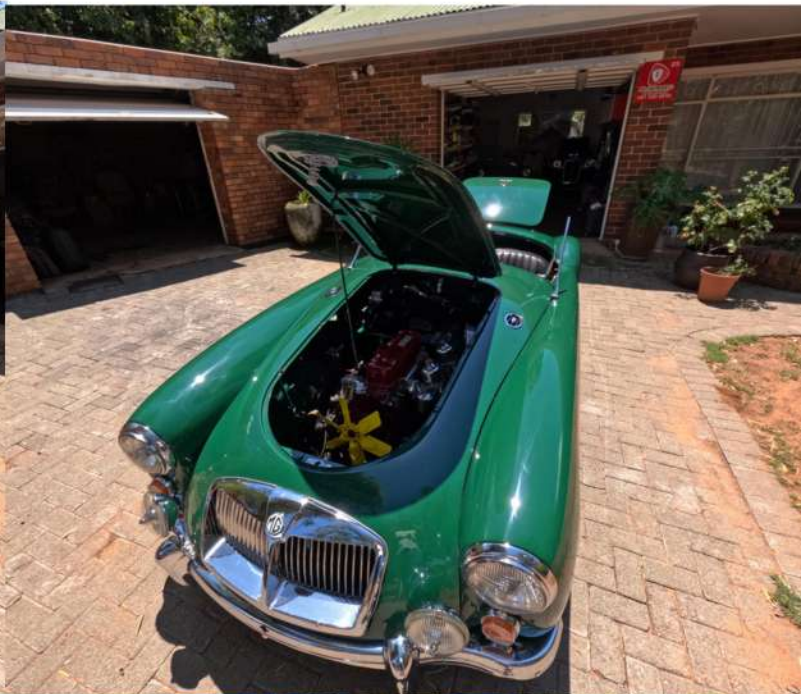


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## CORRESPONDENCE

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**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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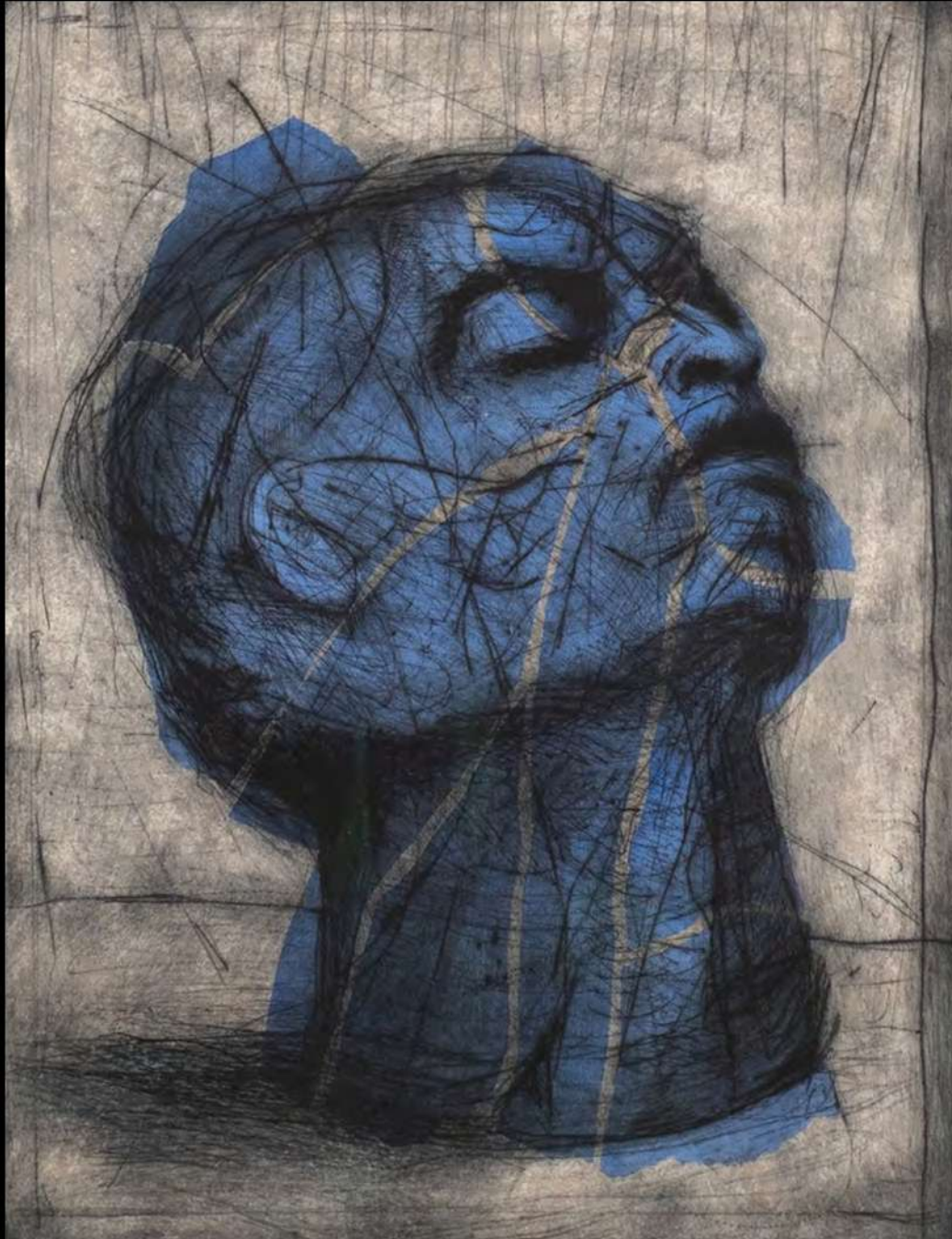
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