



TRIUMPH SPORTS CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA  
JOHANNESBURG CENTRE  
**NEWSLETTER**



PO Box 1102,  
Southdale 2135

**ISSUE NO. 06/19**

**Please note that all contributions to the newsletter should be directed to John Crowther, e-mail [johncr@hotmail.co.za](mailto:johncr@hotmail.co.za) by 25<sup>th</sup> of each month**



**Woodcote, Reading, UK  
August 2004**

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## Chairman's Chat

Mayday, Dambusters run, well organized by the Sunbeam club, was an excellent event where Hannelize and I together with some Triumph members from Pretoria and other clubs (48 classic cars), enjoyed the sunny drive where the Quiz took us out past Magalies to a countryside dairy farm (Bos Paradys) and then to lunch and prize giving at Kenjara Lodge. Our KZN members are busy planning our 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September run to the Green Lantern. They require a response from members who would be attending this event.....to date only a few responses have been received....need more responses for the 40 years of establishing the club.

The Pretoria regional concourse dates have been changed to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2019.....they need feedback from members who will be attending.....I have sent out an email, but very little response has been forthcoming????

Our June run will be to the "Cars & Coffee on the dam" at Modderfontein on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June....together with the Alfa Club.....an email has been sent out on this event.

The Rotary Club of Hartbeespoort is holding their Classic Car Meander on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2019....something different and worth a run. Emails details have been circulated.

Your committee has commenced the planning for the Nationals from 01<sup>st</sup> May to 05<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at the Golden Gate.....more updates will follow.

Cheers,  
Norman

## Events Calendar

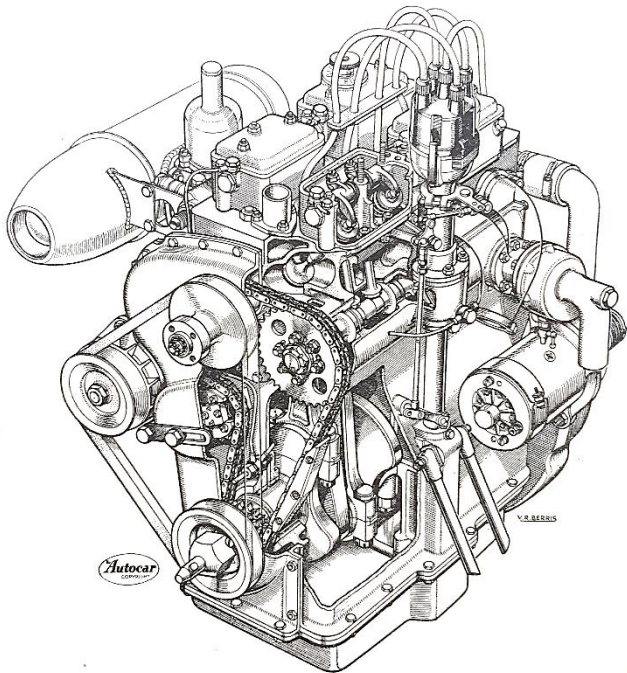
MONTH	DAY/DATE	EVENT	HOST	STATUS
January	Tue 15	Noggin		
	Sun 20	Glenburn Lodge	Jhb	official
February	Sun 17	Valentine run-Uncle Tim's	Jhb	official
	Tue 19	Noggin		
March	Sun 17	Piston Ring Swop Meeting		optional
	Tue 19	Noggin		
	Sun 24	Michelotti Centenary run	Pta	official
April	Fri 05-Mon 08	Stars of Sandstone		optional
	Sun 7	Angela's Picnic	SAMCA	official
	Tue 16	Noggin		
May	Tue 01	Dambusters	Sunbeam Club	official
	Tue 21	Noggin		
	Sat 26	Just Wheels	Muriel Brandt	optional
	Sun 26	Cars in Park-Pietermaritzburg		optional
	Sun 26	Cars on the Roof	Pta/POMC	optional
	Sun 26	Classic car show, Kenjara Lodge	Jack Hewetts	optional
June	Tue 18	Noggin		
	Sun 30	"Cars & Coffee on the dam" at Modderfontein	Jhb	
July	Tue 16	Noggin		
	Sun 14	Scottburgh Classic Car Show		optional
	Sun 28	Rotary Hartbeespoort Classic Meander	Rotary..Brits	official
August	Sun 4	Cars in Park-Zwartkops	POMC	optional
	Tue 20	Noggin		
	Sun 25	Pta/Jhb combined Concourse	Pta	official
	Sat/Sun????	Graham Cheetam anniversary	KZN	official
September	Sun 01	Wheels at the Vaal		optional
	Sun 08	4th Ave -Parkhurst Show	VVC	optional
	Sun 15	Piston Ring Swop Meeting		
	Tue 17	Noggin		
	Sun 29	TBA		
October	Tue 15	Noggin/AGM		official
	Sun 20 or 27	Jacaranda Run....Pta	MG club	optional
	Sun 27	TBA		
November	Tue 19	Noggin		
	Sun 24	TBA		
December	Sun 08	Year-end Function	Pta	official

Dates and events subject to change

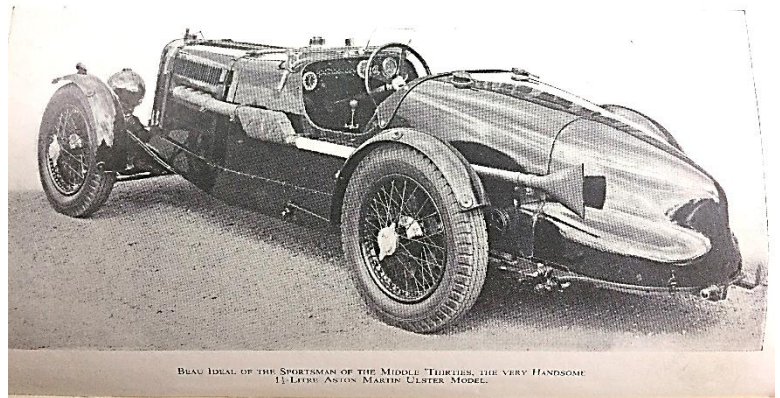


# Some pictures from my British Sports Car volume – 1947

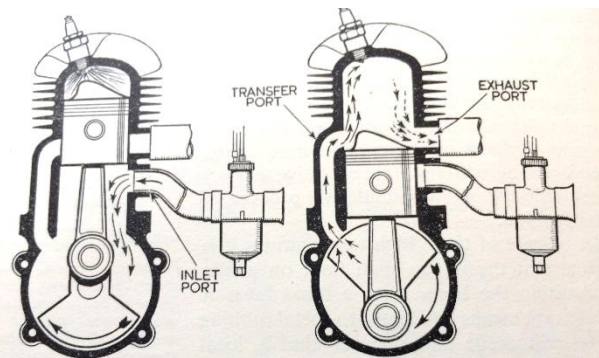
from John Crowther  
(more next month)



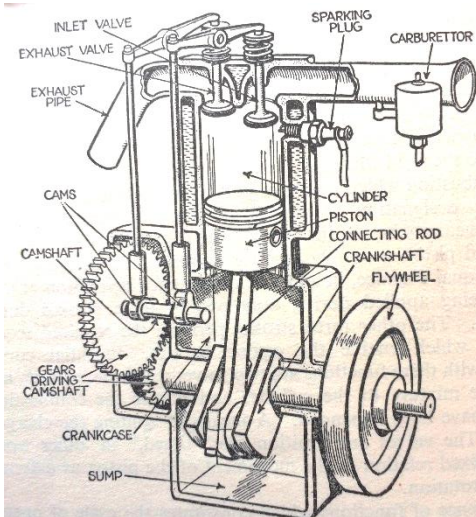
A British, high-performance, four-cylinder, 1.75-litre engine with 90° valves actuated from twin chain-driven camshafts



BEAU IDEAL OF THE SPORTSMAN OF THE MIDDLE THIRTIES, THE VERY HANDSOME 11 LITRE ASTON MARTIN ULSTER MODEL.

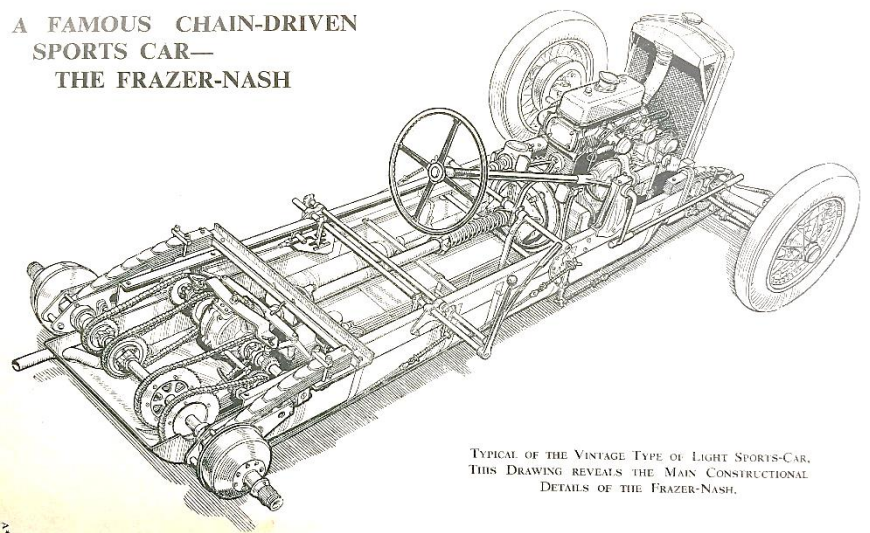


In the two-stroke engine, mixture is sucked into the crankcase as the piston rises and transferred to the cylinder head as it descends. Exhaust coincides with the transfer period and is assisted by the "loop scavenge" effect of the fresh charge



Four-stroke overhead-valve internal combustion engine in simple single-cylinder form. The reciprocating piston is connected to the crankshaft which carries the flywheel. Valve actuation is from a camshaft driven at half engine speed by 2 to 1 gearing

## A FAMOUS CHAIN-DRIVEN SPORTS CAR—THE FRAZER-NASH



TYPICAL OF THE VINTAGE TYPE OF LIGHT SPORTS-CAR, THIS DRAWING REVEALS THE MAIN CONSTRUCTIONAL DETAILS OF THE FRAZER-NASH.

Tuesday, 24 January 2012

from Gary Booyens

## MOTOR ASSEMBLIES LIMITED

### A small South African Assembly Plant that became a major Manufacturer

Part 5 of 7



*Turin Motors was an important supplier to Motor Assemblies for Fiat and Rambler engines and Toyota blocks and heads so it was important for the TMC engineers to visit them. On the left is Mr Y Iida from Toyota Motor Sales in Japan who played a major role in coordinating the initial assembly and local content plans. Sixth from the left is Bruno Savioli, the Technical Director of Turin Motors.*

The paint quality was consistently bad, so much so that on one particular day only nine bodies out of a daily flow of 250 were accepted by the inspection crew. Drastic action was required and the new direct connection to TMC was called into play. Help was requested and three specialists from the Takaoka plant for Corolla production were sent to resolve this problem and to undertake visits to major suppliers to reassure TMC on that front as well. They were shocked by the unscientific manner in which paint tests were conducted and by the generally amateurish style of operation. Although this helped to spur the development of a proper paint test laboratory they were unable to solve the basic problem. Eventually it was discovered that the plant operators were relieving themselves by peeing into the tank, perhaps due to inadequate or inconvenient provision of toilet facilities. The resulting bacteria bred quickly in the environs of the dip tank and caused the poor paint quality. The addition of a biocide to the paint cured the problem.

This problem was to have major implications since production output was way below the expected level and this faced Sully with a dilemma. It would have made terrible reading on the monthly production reports sent to Dr Wessels so the issue was fudged, but after some months the truth could be concealed no longer. When the Chairman realised how badly he had been misled he took steps to appoint his own man inside the company who would report directly to him, and advertisements were placed for such a position. Not surprisingly Sully could not accept such an arrangement and he resigned. Wessels appointed Tucker Lochhead as acting General Manager while he reviewed things. He engaged head hunters to find a new Managing Director and ended up appointing Geoff Graves from Ford who, since he had reached



their retiring age of 55 and could no longer hope to obtain the top job there which, in any case, had always been given to be an American. This prompted the return to VW a few months later of Lochhead where he became Technical Director, a loss criticised by TMC personnel.

Sully's interventionist style had led to a group of managers who were not accustomed to taking full responsibility for making independent decisions. The result had been a growing slackness in operations and seriously short-term attitudes, added to their amateurish approach and lack of systems. The time was ripe for a shake-up. Graves proceeded to recruit various people from Ford, the most important being Ralph Broadley who effectively became Graves' understudy and later replaced him as MD when he retired. In time more and more Ford people joined the organisation and a more professional regime ensued. One appointment was that of Ray Long charged with setting up a supplier quality assurance system which would have MA staff located at major centres to conduct quality checks and audits. Initially it supplemented the existing inspection approach but later replaced it.

However there were problems as these people knew only the Ford way of doing things and tried to "bolt on" Ford systems, procedures and terminology. Although they engineered a significant number of distinct improvements in various parts of the operation, they lacked the skills to assess independently and maybe to appreciate, the merits of doing things in other ways. These attitudes caused serious problems of "indigestion" which led to the departure of some of the staff e.g. Tim Gallwey, and Bob Patterson of Supplies, in 1973. It also meant that later on, when needs and techniques had changed, they no longer had Ford to provide them with the requisite new skills and knowledge. The previous lack of personnel development within MA came back to haunt them.

There was also a group of long term senior employees who were left behind by the new systems. These included Dave Martin (truck plant), Charles Cull (assembly plant), Stan Dickens (Supplies), all of whom had yet to reach retirement age. The problem was how best to use their skills and experience. Mostly they were allocated to "special assignments" whereby they could be used in trouble-shooting type rôles. But it represented a significant loss of status and esteem and was another failure of the new management to endear itself to the existing employees. However it was obvious that major changes had taken place which had been badly needed and the new people laid the foundations for the next leaps forward.



*Rowen (SA) made a variety of pressed parts so the TMC engineers wished to see the operation. From left: Naoto Takahashi (TMC), Tim Gallwey, TMC engineer, Tucker Lochhead, Tony Roberts (Rowen), Koizumi (TMC), MD Rowen, TMC engineer.*

## Later Developments

In 1984 a 2000 ton plastic bumper moulding machine was introduced. Then in 1985 Toyota SA took over the Rowen press plant in Mobeni, renamed as Toyota Stamping Division. With increased investment it was run 24 hours per day on a three shift basis to meet market demand. Colin Downie established a closed test track at Eston in 1985 on 180 hectares for testing in secret and safety. It had a tarred fast track with banked looped ends for high speed testing, a rough road durability track, and numerous special surfaces in line with TMC's test facilities. Paint technology was enhanced in 1988 by installing a reciprocating electrostatic colour spray system, the first in the SA motor industry. In 1989 a tool and die making facility was built at a cost of R50 million with a full CAD/CAM capability, to make car body dies and also run

on a three shift system. Its competence was illustrated when in 2001 it received a tooling order from a major German company for one of its new models to be launched in Europe. In 1990 a Product Engineering Centre was opened at a cost of R5 million to bring together all engineering staff for the first time on one site with 104 engineers and 77 technicians, a far cry from Mike Compton on his own!. In late 1991 a new R80 million flexible component machining facility was commissioned.

On 23rd March 2001 the 1½ millionth Toyota built in SA came off the line. MA was then Durban's largest employer with 7,800 employees on its books, up from 3,500 in 1972. Its capacity by then was 470 units per day i.e. one vehicle per minute. Also in 2001 the first robots were installed for spot welding and the application of body sealers. The company bought Metlink in September 2001 for the supply of exhausts, fuel tanks, chassis, box bodies, seat springs, and other metal fabrications, with premises in Jacobs and Prospecton.

Eventually Toyota SA was the top seller in every segment of the SA vehicle market and MA was the biggest plant in SA. No one could have foreseen this development when Motor Assemblies first started in the 1940s. Furthermore its history has so many unique features that it makes a remarkable story of industrial development.

## EPILOGUE

After the completion of this story in 2009 we realised that there was at least one missing element – that of the full production figures for the Jacobs plant from 1948 to 1970 covering both cars and commercials. We had access to the car production figures that had been rescued by Colin Downie but without the figures for commercial vehicles we could not show the whole picture. An inquiry to NAAMSA led us to understand that their sales figures no longer existed from the pre-computerisation age and other potential sources drew a blank. A chance meeting between Colin Downie and Ryno Verster (author of “Thanks for the Mini Memories, A South African Mini Story”) changed this. Ryno had spent many days at NAAMSA scanning all their records and could supply our missing figures. We have now added this data with the various makes and model produced together with the volumes as well as the relative production time periods. It has to be admitted that changes in reporting methods has meant that some of the figures have had to be adjusted but what we now have is a very reliable “best estimate” covering no less than 166 000 passenger cars and 144 000 commercial vehicles. These figures have been added as Appendix B.

The original text has received changes to add, clarify or make minor corrections and we have taken the opportunity to add further pictures.

28<sup>th</sup> September 2011

*Part 6 next month*

## From New Zealand

Click [HERE](#) to view the newsletter as a 2.7 mb PDF, or click on the Yumpu link below to view it as a flip-book

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/62675943/radiator-cap-june-2019-compressed-1>



## The Radiator Cap



June 2019 Newsletter

## South Africa's First Car

### A Benz Voiturette, forerunner to the Mercedes Benz.

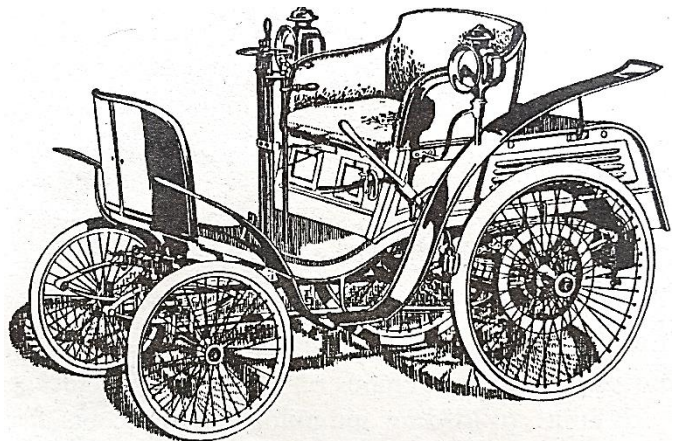
The first motor car to be brought to this country at the end of 1896 was a single cylinder 1½ h p Benz Voiturette known as a “Velo”; a two seater with a top speed of 20 kph owned by a Pretoria businessman, John Percy Hess. It made its first public appearance on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1897 thus being the first motor car to appear in the southern hemisphere. The guest of honour was President Paul Kruger who declined an offer for the next ride, saying *that the dogs might bark and cause the car to bolt.*

This was some two decades after two of the major pioneers in the automotive industry, Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz had produced their first motor cars. Although they lived in Germany within 100kms of each other they probably never met, yet their product grew to become the Mercedes Benz, one of the greatest names in motoring history.

It's interesting how the name came about. For Karl Benz it was a simple choice, his name was enclosed in a cogwheel that exemplified the solidness of his engineering works at Mannheim. This later became a laurel wreath.

Gottlieb Daimler's choice of a name has a more complicated background. In 1897, an Austrian businessman, Emil Jellinek, travelled from his house in Nice to purchase a car from the Daimler factory in Cannstatt. On his return to the French Riviera, his sporting car caused quite a sensation.

So much so, that he decided to enter his 23hp car into a local touring competition under the pseudonym of “Mercedes” (the Spanish women's name for “mercy”) being the name of his 10-year-old favourite daughter. So impressed with this “sporty” vehicle and realising the great potential market for this new model, he not only placed an order for 36 of these new cars but also secured the franchise for selling the cars in several countries. Daimler agreed to this as well as calling the cars *Mercedes*.



*A 11/2 hp Benz Voiturette of 1893.*

The trade name was registered after Daimler's death in 1900 and the three-pointed star became the trade mark. This emblem he had once drawn on a postcard he had sent to his wife, and the star symbolised the growth of his business and each point represented his company's supremacy in transport on land, sea and air.

After the First World War, in a depressed Germany, the two firms worked closer together, generally advertising on the same posters, but it was only in 1926 that they finally amalgamated to form the Daimler-Benz AG. It was then that a new badge was created, combining the three-pointed star with the laurel wreath, which, over the years has been simplified into today's world famous trade mark.





## The Triumph Car Story- part 3

### Chapter 2

#### MALLORY AND THE THIRTIES.

John Paul Black in his newly equipped Director's office in 1933, the year he met Joan. There has always been a fascination with the Thirties Era. For some it must have been an enchanting time but for others, of course, a time of turmoil with low birth survival rates and high poverty. In reality it is not an easy period to define as it accordingly must have meant different things for different people. But as a Decade it stands out unique with its individual style and even culture. Life, it appears, was not in any way governed by the Media, things were much more on a local level, people were generally considered to be important and there was a style somehow that has never quite been captured or repeated since. Oh yes, every family has a story to tell about their forbears living interesting lives but it is particularly that age and that era that I find so intriguing. 18 The Duke of Gloucester (2nd from left) collecting his Standard Ensign 16 on the occasion of the opening of the Standard Social Club in 1932 with Capt. John Black (3rd from the left). Photo courtesy Nigel Maudslay. The Standard Managers in the early 30's with John Black in the middle, Leslie Dexter on right 19 Perhaps life was, as they say, still in black and white but there's something rather comforting about that. Anyone who experienced the Colourful Sixties, by comparison, would have found the more basically down-to-earth and even sedate life back then far more endearing, if not refreshing. Historically of course the Thirties were a time of Depression, despite being coloured in part by the film and literature world. What would we have done without Agatha Christie, P.G. Wodehouse or possibly Noel Coward, who I once saw above Montreux in Switzerland, gazing out over Lake Geneva from some vantage point, wearing a salmon pink dinner jacket? However it does also appear as a time when people could sacrifice themselves on a far deeper level for something they believed in. Furthermore they were, it seems, fundamentally more aware of personal accomplishment. There was definitely an object to the exercise coupled in with such a thing as the 'Law of Cause and Effect' which was somehow embedded in the Nation's consciousness. By working hard to achieve your objective or goal you could in turn produce the results you required, giving the future a clarity which in recent times has been sadly lacking in focus. We had the B.B.C., Whitehall and something called 'The Establishment', whatever that was. And if those curiously enduring symbols did in some way stand for some form of stability, they must have meant something to the general populace back then. Yes Nostalgia is a powerful force in our lives and sometimes the Past is a more comfortable place —but only in hindsight! We never really learn from history. We can observe it, acknowledge it, respect it and then move on. Combined with all of that there was obviously the decadence, despair and degradation that accompany any generation and every society yet Morality was not a forgotten word. Lacking the so-called Welfare State the emphasis was far more on personal responsibility and achievement. Apart from the obvious technological advances we all benefit from today I certainly do question the substance and even significance of this Modern Age of ours! It was at Mallory Court near Leamington Spa that all the main dramas of my father's life would unfold. He actually bought this Country Home in 1936 for £11,000 and lived there for the next 14 years until 1950, 3 years of which with Daisy, 4 on his own, followed by 7 years with my mother Joan. Built in 1916 Mallory typifies the romantic revival period with its gables, stone dressings, mullioned windows and gothic-style fireplaces. Also the delightful balconies and wood-panelled dining-room are a joy to behold. These days it is a magnificent Country Hotel, having been extended with tastefully designed additions to accommodate the 30 sumptuous rooms now on offer. In the thirties the Black household were living there in some style. The Electoral Roll, for instance, of the 1938-39 year gives a list of those inhabitants including, naturally, John Paul Black, Margaret Verena Black and their daughter Rosalind. 1 See 'The Quest for Rosalind' in the Appendix pages 96-99. 20 1939 - Mallory Court with John Black bowling, Rosalind on the left and an unknown couple. Occupying the House also were Matilda Clarke, Laura Griffith (nanny), Doris Selvy as well as Gustavus and Florence Dyer living in The Gardeners Cottage. So a good team of staff were on hand at that time. Regrettably I have only one photo taken at Mallory then, showing my father playing bowls on the lawn, his daughter Rosalind looking pensive on the left while an unknown, more mature couple to the right, stand together waiting for their shot. If the photo was taken in 1939, which somehow fits the time frame, then Daisy, who probably took it, would have been 51, my father 44 and Rosalind a mere 17 years. Significantly an issue of Auto-car magazine of 1939 made reference to Captain John Black buying his daughter a Flying Standard 8 Coupe for her 17th birthday. Now this is where things started to get interesting. I had made various efforts over the years to find out exactly what happened to this half-sister of mine, who of course I had never met, but she proved to be extremely elusive. Firstly, an enquiry on the internet brought forth the suggestion that she had died a long time ago somewhere in America yet that proved

inconclusive. I'd also found out that 1939 was the year that my father and Daisy were divorced so the whole jigsaw puzzle was now beginning to take shape at last. All that my mother ever said on the subject was that "Daisy went off with the chauffeur while Rosalind took up with a Garage Man" (keeping it in the family business, as it were). My father never mentioned anything about his previous marriage or his daughter and we never thought to ask. 21 But then I learnt of the tragedy. An elderly lady with Hillman and Triumph connections, who remembered Rosalind from many years ago, informed me through her son, that she had actually died comparatively young in an accident through falling downstairs. And that to me brought great remorse, as not only had I been bereft of a half-sister in a tragic accident but it also seemed that the search was now over with nothing else to ascertain. Furthermore, attempts to find either a marriage or death certificate in the U.K. proved fruitless while nothing became evident in the U.S.A. either, with very little in the way of actual proof of her ever having moved out there in the first place. It was now literally a dead-end. So my father and Daisy's married life had been blighted with tragedy once again. Where Rosalind died remained a mystery at that time until much later when I discovered, through a chance conversation on the phone, that indeed Rosalind had teamed up after the War with a certain William Barnett, an engineer by trade. For some reason her father Captain Black disapproved of their relationship, severing contact soon afterwards. William would become the proverbial 'garage man' after moving to Devon where he ran a garage on a property near Exeter, while also keeping a small farm. They had two children, Jimmy and Dawn, before Rosalind eventually died in 1975 after an ill-fated accident on the stairs at her mother's house near Torbay in Devon. And something of intrigue did come to light concerning Daisy Hillman too. A few enquiries had been circulating among contacts in the Hillman family when it was divulged that Daisy had indeed eloped with a man named Blanchard who ended up running a Car Dealership at Pembroke Dock in South Wales, selling Standard and Triumph cars, which seemed appropriate somehow. According to the Census Records, Louis Blanchard lived at Elsdon's Service Garage, 40/42, Bush Street, Pembroke Dock from 1946-1969. It also transpired, from another source entirely, that in 1939 Captain Black did indeed have a chauffeur by the name of Blanchard. So evidently this incidental piece of information about the chauffeur, communicated to me through my mother, was in fact correct. A drama was beginning to unfold and I felt it was now time to start writing it all down before it became completely lost in obscurity. Whether it was the need for a Bolt-hole, in lieu of his failing marriage, or perhaps, more realistically, a growing passion for the sea and personal privacy, but something continued to kindle in 'The Captain' an increasing enthusiasm for accomplishing his love of sailing and boating. So in 1938 he built a Sailing Haven he named Mallory-y-Mor (Mallory by the sea) in North Wales situated between Harlech and Barmouth at Pensarn. Extremely isolated and completely lacking any road access whatsoever 'The Bungalow', as it came to be known, was located right on the edge of an estuary. Effectively it became a secluded retreat but one that many would appreciate in the years to come. 22 Louis Blanchard and Daisy at Barmouth in North Wales. They married in 1949. Having had it designed and prefabricated down at the Standard Works in Coventry it was then transported up by train. Apparently the plans, according to my father's specifications, were drawn up professionally by Messrs. T.R.J. Meakin and Son and then left to 'Jock the Hut', who later worked on the manufacture of Mosquito aircraft, to put it all together with his team back at the Canley factory. I found out a while ago that a special Mini-Rail had been implemented, leading off the main train-track opposite the site at Pensarn to make it easier to unload the enormous quantity of timber and materials used in its construction. It was really a ship-like structure with six cabins, two of which were double rooms, four of double bunks, a spacious saloon, a decent-sized bathroom and a compact kitchen gracing a Bell-Board on the wall for when service was required by visiting guests. Around the square perimeter of this nautical boxlike edifice ran a 5ft. Deck made of teak completing the maritime theme. The whole structure was supported on cast iron stilts elevating it off the ground to the height of about 7ft. Positioned by the estuary, which usually flooded in winter, it would then be left only approachable by boat from the other side where there was a boat yard. It was even possible to walk over the railway bridge which spanned this estuary, preferably when a train wasn't crossing at the same time, but it was never advisable. A rambling footpath from the Llanbedr road about a mile away presented the only other access to this remote hideaway. Generally, however, it was the landing stage on the estuary right opposite the main approach to the property that provided the most suitable mooring used in normal weather conditions. 23 The Bungalow on stilts "Mallory-Y-Mor" built at Pensarn in 1938 and still there today. Conveniently in 1939 a military airfield was built in the vicinity just near the idyllic Mochras Island, or Shell Island as it was known in English. This would prove invaluable in the future for more urgent accessibility. He must have spent much time up there towards the end of that 30's decade which had brought him so much drama, while this important episode in his life was now drawing to a close. The production lines at the Canley plant in Coventry were bustling with activity nonetheless. During 1935 the factories were completely re-

organized to handle increasing demand by utilizing conveyor systems and also electric trams. At the end of that year 144 cars a day were being manufactured. The first Shadow Factory known as Fletch South was built in 1936 on the site of the old Company Golf Course when the Government realized the stage in Europe was now changing and that Britain had to prepare itself for greater air power. Also those graceful Flying Standards were being produced between 1935 and 1939. Decisive times no doubt, but in those critical days his romance with my mother must have spurred him on by giving him some of that dynamic momentum and general impetus he became so famous for. Their courtship would last ten years encompassing an era that could well be described as romantic. Various attempts were made by her parents to prevent this controversial relationship. They just did not approve of their daughter marrying a divorced man, notwithstanding his being seventeen years her senior! Out of desperation she was eventually sent to Nassau to forget him but to no avail. He wrote to her every day during that year and even sent flowers! Elegant publicity photos of Standards from the 1930's. Saxon Mill, Warwickshire. Photos courtesy Phil Homer of Standard Motor Club Captain John Black's Secretary Edna Taylor, who later married Drummond Phillips in 1937 (also of Standard) , was used in this publicity photo along with Doug Gardiner son of Charles Gardiner, Chief Buyer at Standard in the 1930's.

### Chapter 3

#### SWITZERLAND - THE BRITISH SKIING TRADITION

My father's skiing exploits were legendary. The two resorts he appears to have frequented most were at Murren, in the Bernese Oberland and Davos, nearer the Austrian border. He started his skiing career fairly early in the late 1920s by joining the Kandahar Ski Club in 1929. He was then on the committee by 1933. Also he was presented with the Gold Kandahar Badge in 1937, a prestigious medal awarded only to experienced skiers of the period who were strong enough to brave the rigorous slopes of that terrain. The Kandahar Ski Club was founded in Murren in 1924 by Sir Arnold Lunn who had promoted Slalom and Downhill skiing in the region since 1911 when he named the Kandahar Race after a certain Lord Roberts of Kandahar who had distinguished himself in Afghanistan and later donated a magnificent trophy. Arnold's father, Sir Henry Lunn, who based his own travel agency in London, had been bringing tourism to the Swiss Alps since 1902, later giving birth to the well-known Lunn Poly brand. During the First World War in 1916 and working through the Red Cross he managed to house a considerable quantity of British prisoners of war in a number of hotels he ran around Switzerland, including Murren. His company incidentally was aptly named Alpine Sports Ltd. Historically the Kandahar Race itself originated in the Tyrol region of Austria at St. Anton where Arnold Lunn had collaborated with Hannes Schneider who introduced the Arlberg style to what was to become the home of Alpine Ski Racing. When Nazi Germany annexed Austria in 1938 Schneider, who was believed to be hostile to the regime, was arrested which prompted Lunn to bring the race back to Murren. Schneider did in fact escape to the United States with his family where he founded a new ski school on the same principles as his Austrian heritage had taught him. There was a strong British tradition of skiers in those days. Resorts like Wengen (where the Downhill Only Club originated), Murren where the Lunn family lived and Davos which had been made popular ever since Arthur Conan Doyle made 'skiing' a very British sport there. Sir Henry Lunn was a good friend of Conan Doyle and as a fellow venturer even suggested, when Sherlock Holmes was beginning to put a strain on his creator that the ominous Reichenbach Falls would be an ideal spot to do away with him! But it would be at Murren in the early thirties that Captain John Black first met up with a fellow skier by the name of Walter Amstutz. He and Arnold Lunn had actually ascended the famous Eiger Mountain (on Skis!) in 1924 along with a couple of other enthusiasts. In 1928 Lunn and Amstutz inaugurated a 10 mile race called 'The Inferno' which is still contested today. He also accompanied King Albert 1 of Belgium on a number of skiing expeditions before his tragic death in a climbing accident in 1934. Captain Black at Murren 1939 Since 1930 Amstutz had been promoting St. Moritz as the healthy ski resort it came to be known for, becoming Director of Tourism there for a number of years. He then teamed up with Walter Herdeg, the famous artist and designer who printed some of the most iconic posters and publicity brochures of that art-deco period. Amstutz found the tourists while Herdeg provided the publicity. (Amstutz & Herdeg was established in Zurich as a publishing company in 1938). So before my father had even met the fellow, Walter Amstutz already had a proven track record on the ski slopes, even sporting the more prestigious Diamond K Badge which was the highest award. He also received the Order of the British Empire for his development of Anglo-Swiss relations. His wife was the English writer Eveline Palmer. The first ski-lift in Switzerland was built in 1934 at Davos. Until that time it was only the really dedicated and adventurous sportsmen who were to be seen on the slopes expending most of their energy clambering up snow-clad



mountains before actually enjoying the downhill journey on skis! In those days skiing was a luxury for the rich with the British typically in the forefront. I knew something of my father's skiing exploits and had heard that he had a vested interest in a ski-lift project. To quote from *Triumph World* magazine of Aug/Sept 2004 in the *Memories of Coventry* series written by Robin Penrice: 1 See Appendix page 100-101 "Walter Amstutz (1902-1997) The Last Pioneer". 28 From the left: Spencer Wilks, Kate Wilks (née Hillman), Oliver Lucas and John Black 1936. Postcard "Spen has wrecked his ankle and won't ski for a few days. They have all been doing too much for beginners. All my love darling, John. It's raining hard" From the left: Eveline Amstutz (née Palmer), John Black, Joan Black and Ski instructor in Murren February 1946 in front of the Jungfrau Hotel. 29 John Black - Murren 1939, note the Kandahar Badge awarded in 1937. 30 "It was also in the 1930's that Black became interested (along with other investors) in the installation of ski-lifts in the Alps and, as an inveterate skier himself, got very involved with the project. Harry Webster tells a lovely story about how he had to tow Black on skis with a long rope behind a Standard saloon around the snow-covered company golf-course". It must have all taken place in that interim period before the War, sometime in the late thirties, and surely involved more than just a matter of self-gratification on the ski slopes by some eccentric Englishman who enjoyed his winter sports. There is, however, one definite reference that historically appears to fit the time frame which relates... "And so the first ski lift in the Bernese Oberland, the Murren Schiltgrat, was constructed in 1937. At that time the masts were built of wood." The Swiss Tourist Board confirmed the authenticity of this scheme. I then found out that it was opened on 24th December 1937 at a cost of 140,000 Swiss Francs, a great amount in those days, mostly sponsored through the food industry. It was constructed by Ernst Gustav Constam, an Engineer from Zurich. Also the steering committee was largely made up of Murren's Hoteliers. Although not well documented, it has been recorded in the history books by the families of those who must have known about the project going on at the time. And that might well have been the end of the matter except for the fact that the Schilthornbahn Tourist Office of Interlaken later contacted me, providing documented evidence of 20 Share Certificates (No. 140-159), of 500 Swiss Francs each, (totalling 10,000 Swiss Francs) which were invested in the Murren Skilift Company, established 15th February 1938. These were worth £500 then, which was enough to buy a semi-detached house in the suburbs of London, and were held in the name of a certain Herr John Black of Mallory Court, England. We now had proof of his financial involvement with the project. Also the document showed that he had withdrawn 200 Swiss Francs (£10) out of one of these share certificates (No. 159) on March 12th 1943. Volksbank of Interlaken made this transaction through the John Black on the Murren Schiltgrat Ski-lift 1939. 31 Chief Foreign Branch of Barclays Bank Ltd. This implied that he also had travelled over to Switzerland during the War and was obviously short of a bit of cash on that occasion. Although Walter Amstutz, whose father incidentally ran a hotel in Murren, did not invest in the Schiltgrat himself due to other commitments, he did later play a part. Herr John Black's shares were transferred on Feb. 27th 1954 to Dr. Walter Amstutz of Mannedorf, Zurich, who had by then become representative for Ferguson Tractors in Switzerland through his firm Service Company Ltd. Dreikonigstrasse 21 Zurich. Herr John Black's share certificates from 1938. The shares were transferred to Dr. Walter Amstutz in 1954 My father, naturally, was instrumental in helping set up that business. There is even a record in the Standard Archives to the effect that Sir John Black returned from Switzerland in March 1954 which was also two months after his 'resignation'. Walter's daughter Yvonne, as a youth, remembered John Black on his many skiing visits to her father's chalet at Murren and also to her parents' house on the Lake of Zurich. She described him as a "tall, elegant, imposing gentleman, somewhat distant", which pretty well sums him up! Having described her own father as a "completely different character, being very communicative and outgoing" she went on to relate that "they seemed to get along very well". Two popular hotels in Murren which were brimming with tourists enjoying their winter sports then were The Palace and The Jungfrau. Many photos in the collection I now have are accompanied by dates and names on the back of them which are useful for identification purposes. Consequently I have often wondered what on earth my father was doing skiing in Switzerland in 1939 when he was on the brink of a divorce and the World was on the brink of war. 32 John and Joan Black, happier times together, captured in Murren, 1946. 33 34 Field Marshall Montgomery and Sir John Black at Murren in 1949 enjoying lunch together. I suppose it was just typical of someone who seemed to be, somehow, always at the right place at the right time. He was largely a man of the moment who appears also to have had the knack of meeting the right people at the opportune time too. Appropriately, on examining the photos, my father looked more at peace with himself on those slopes than at almost any other place. However on one expedition with Walter Amstutz they encountered a massive avalanche which could well have proved disastrous. They were completely buried in a few feet of snow, both believing that the other had died in the onslaught. My heroic father then clawed his way up to the surface until his fingers bled and was greatly

astounded to discover that his skiing companion had survived the ordeal in a similar manner! The only problem now was that he'd only managed to retrieve one of his skis and consequently had to complete the homeward journey accordingly. But that only proved what an adventurous skier he must have been since he made excellent progress on his one remaining ski. If you can survive an ordeal like that you'd probably be equipped to tackle almost anything this world had to offer. And it had plenty to offer! Little is known of my father's Après-Ski activities except the one story I distinctly remember him telling us as children. One night he returned to his hostelry after a session at a local Bar to discover that some trickster had swopped around all the room numbers on the bedroom doors. When he eventually found his own room he was surprised to find a young lady in his bed who was then promptly dispatched back to her own room, if she could have found it, after the initial embarrassment! 35 We do know that he often travelled over to Switzerland by train because of a later memorandum to his colleague and right-hand man John Warren who had booked him on a sleeper car for one of his trips. It was to the effect that: "In the future I would prefer it if my sleeping quarters were positioned to the side of the Bogey wheel and not directly over it", which had obviously caused him much discomfort! Photos I have in my possession include a very classic one of Sir John Black at Murren with Field Marshall Montgomery enjoying lunch together, it appears. On my dad's sweater is the Gold Kandahar Medal or the Gold K as it was known. The year was 1949 which explains why they were both looking quite relaxed having survived the rigours of the Second World War in their very separate roles. It should be noted that Montgomery became a regular visitor to Switzerland during the late 40's after he had fostered a young Swiss lad, even paying for his education. He was well known for his compassion on and off the battlefield although his attitude to life was not always as conventional as some would have it. There's even a photo I saw in a book of my father showing Montgomery round a Standard Vanguard in 1947, so presumably they were more than just passing acquaintances on their Continental Holiday. It is known too that both Montgomery and the Queen of Belgium used the Schiltgrat Ski-lift. Montgomery, to his credit, became the President of the Kandahar Ski Club between the years 1951 and 1959. This Club continues today, preserving much of the British Skiing tradition. John and Joan with Walter Amstutz' daughter Yvonne, Murren, February 1946.

*Part 4 next month*

## Tail End Giggle

### Heteronyms

Homographs are words of like spelling but with more than one meaning.

A homograph that is also pronounced differently is a heteronym.

You think English is easy??

I think this retired English teacher was bored...THIS IS GREAT!

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- 7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 10) I did not object to the object.
- 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- 13) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- 17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
- 18) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 19) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 20) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

Let's face it - English is a crazy language.

There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France.

Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are animal organs.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes,  
we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and  
a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth?

One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend?

If you have a lot of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane.

In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital?

Ship by truck and send cargo by ship?