

National Gathering at Maselspoort -2008

Report by Eileen Cruise

The Nationals is well behind us and is fast fading into my memory banks as a very pleasant trip with lots of stops and starts on the way there and back; and great weather on the Highveld which made it all the more enjoyable. Maselspoort was a lovely venue for our event and we filled all the accommodations which meant we had the whole place to ourselves. Some late bookers stayed in a nearby hotel and the locals joined us on camp for the all the on camp events. 5 cars travelled together via the scenic route 62 which was lovely for me 'cos we seldom go off the beaten track when we travel upcountry Gerhard and Suzette Vorster in the TR8, Brian and Sheila Maggs in the TR3A, Dennis Cook and Josephine Chan in his TR6, Tim and I in the GT6 and Jan and Miems Booysen in their plastic. We stayed at De Rust the first night where Gordon and Denise Waring joined us for the night. Denise had organised great accommodations for us and we had a leisurely catch up braai together. We all enjoyed a scrumptious breakfast at a quaint restaurant cum gift shop and then said goodbye to the Warings who had to get back to attend their farm. The next night we stayed at Aliwal North and then hit the road quite early for the last leg to Bloem.

The next day we enjoyed a delicious welcome breakfast in the camp hall after which it was car cleaning day for everyone. Several folk opted to drive into town where Dave Blair had organised for a place to be open that steam cleans engines and undercarriages. I'm sure that took a lot of the backache out of the job.

Concours at the Windmill Casino the next day was a sight to see in the bright sunshine. What a spectacle to survey and appreciate all the hard work the guys and gals had put into polishing and cleaning their respective cars. I had opted not to enter concours this time and merely drove my car to a hand car wash facility on the Sunday. A very practical solution that saved my back and gave Tim the whole day free to help out on Brian's car.

The scenic tour de Bloem was a lovely relaxed day out for us. We were on our own the whole day as everyone left at intervals. We spent almost 2 hours at the first stop, The Oliewenhuis Art Museum which was built in 1941 and was the residence of the Governor General of the Union of SA. It is a beautiful house with several art collections and museum pieces. Outside there were superb sculptures, including a herd of sheep! and a merry-go-round with 16 different African animals as the rides looking so funny and welcoming. There was a lovely bandstand in the gardens and it looks like it would be a nice venue for weddings and fund-raisers. We had cake and coffee in the outdoor restaurant and took our time enjoying the ambience.

Onto the Armour museum where Tim had a field day strolling round the whole camp, while I found a comfortable spot and read my book after doing a brief tour of the old hospital. So, another couple of hours later we found ourselves in the Pretty Gardens which is a veritable treasure trove of plants, décor shops and eateries, beautifully laid out. We enjoyed our lunch stop there and found all the clues we needed for the quiz we were doing. We had to skip the last two stops as we needed to buy motor spares for two cars and had to find a Midas. So we

missed out the Womens Memorial and the Fire Engine Museum and lost out on points, but we really enjoyed our day and didn't mind at all.

That night was the burger and quiz night which was sponsored by TATA and part of the quiz was to feel car parts inside cloth bags and guess what they were. This was a timed process and the bags were being passed around among the most experienced of the club members and proved to be quite hilarious to say the least. We didn't do so well in that section but we came first in the Q & A section :)

The next day was the BGM, and that afternoon was the Driving Skills Test which was great fun and I managed to get quite good times on the two circuits. Tim and Alan Grant showed off a bit with their superior racing driving skills. There were a lot more ladies taking part this time round and we were blessed with good weather and a few hair-raising moments with some chaps collecting several cones under their cars as they tried to better the times of the previous drivers!

At the Awards Dinner that night Cape Town Club got several awards, including a well deserved silver medal for Dennis Cooks TR6 at the concours. Dennis was also awarded the Ian Evans award for outstanding service to the Triumph club.

Needless to say we didn't score top marks for the whole National event, but Gerhard tells me we did come in second. I personally won the Best Female Driver trophy. :) which is nice 'cos this year it's an actual mounted trophy. At last I have a trophy of my own to display. Tim already has a cabinet full of cups etc from his kart racing days.

On the way back we stopped at Matjiesfonten. We finally got there well after ten but were in luck as breakfast is served at the Lord Milner Hotel until 11am, though they were out of bacon by the time we got to the buffet. It was real country cooking and there was a table with over two dozen different jams and marmalades and other fruit preserves that was too tempting for words. We still managed to have a thoroughly good breakfast/brunch. It was well worth the wait. We took several photos in that auspicious hotel as well as a few outside on the street where a London bus was parked up along with several other antique vehicles.

What more can I tell you? I shall never forget our foray into the stark interior along Route 62 through the great Karoo and back again. All the more enjoyable because we had like-minded companions with us for company, enjoying our classic sports cars as only we mad things know how.

I'm very proud of my own little GT 'cos she's the only car from our club that didn't break down; even the plastic, a Mercedes, had a turn ☹

Till next time, Eileen

