



# RoverNews

**Natal Rover Owners' Association**

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## Greetings folks

It has been a very sad time for our club over the past few months. Three of our members have passed away: Mervyn Payne, Aisne Rascher and Karen Kaiser. (See Pg 2&3) Our thoughts continue to be with their families as they grieve their loss.

On a happier note, I had a wonderful and happy time with my daughter and granddaughter in Antibes, on the Côte d'Azur, South of France. I was so happy to see them settled and enjoying their new home. Whilst there we visited Cannes, Nice, Monaco, Menton and went across the Italian border to San Remo. Although only a very short visit, I came back refreshed and rested. Clyde seems to have been okay at the care home while I was away, but was very happy to see me when I fetched him!

John would like us to join him, and the Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal, at their show on 25<sup>th</sup> October. (See the flyer on Pg 19). Please contact him for any further information if you are planning to go.

Let's have a good turnout of members for our last get-together of the year on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, where we will meet for lunch at a venue still to be confirmed.

Regards,  
Rose



*1950s concept car – the Road Rover – forerunner of the Range Rover*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October:

Visit to Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal's Vintage Motorcycle Exhibition. (See flyer Pg 19)

### Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November:

Last outing for the year - venue to be confirmed. Please diarise

### Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Annual General Meeting** – venue to be confirmed. Please diarise.

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## SICK BAY

None that I'm aware of.

## NEW MEMBER

Welcome to **Chris Cardwell**, who has now joined the club after being an invited guest at many of our get-togethers. We hope to see some of his classic cars at future outings.

## FOR SALE / WANTED / SOLD

Let me know if you would like anything listed here

# OBITUARIES



Our long-standing club member Mervyn Payne sadly passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> July after a long and brave struggle with cancer.

Mervyn was an accomplished organist, playing for services at his church most Sundays, which is why we didn't see him as often as we would have liked, as most of our outings were on Sundays. We once, as a club, went to Kearsney College where he gave us a wonderful recital on their organ, before we all had a picnic in the college grounds.

Mervyn had a collection of British classic cars, including a Rover P6, an MGB and a Jaguar 420G, all of which he maintained himself. He was always happy to impart his extensive mechanical knowledge.

He leaves behind his wife Rosemary and our thoughts are with her at this sad and difficult time.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August Fred Rascher's wife Aisne passed away, after suffering ill health for many months.

Aisne retired a few years ago from her position as Chief Radiologist for KwaZulu Natal. She practiced under her maiden name, Dr Stoker. Sadly she hadn't been retired for very long when her health deteriorated.

Aisne always loved cars. She and Fred drove many kilometres attending rallies in various parts of the country, often in their Rover P4 90. Aisne often drove whilst Fred did the navigating.

Fred cared for Aisne devotedly during the last few months and seldom left the house. We hope that we will see more of him at our future outings.

Our sympathies to Fred and all his family on their loss.



On 26<sup>th</sup> July, whilst enjoying a wonderful holiday and meeting up with all their extended family in Europe, the Kaiser family were struck by tragedy. Guido's wife Karen was struck in a hit and run accident and was killed instantly. She and her daughter were walking together when the vehicle hit into them, driven by a person who was under the influence, who had recently been released from prison, and was driving an unroadworthy vehicle. Fortunately the daughter was able to be released from hospital after a couple of days, but one can only imagine the psychological trauma she suffered.

Karen was a lovely person – wife, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter. We got to know her and Guido when they travelled down a couple of times to KZN from Gauteng for Rover Club outings and stayed over with us. Our hearts go out to Guido and all his family as they come to terms with this tragic loss.



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## SWIVEL YOUR PINS

I read with interest your article on the 'Auntie Rovers', as I own a 1955 Rover 60.

I have just read your December issue, and a fellow Rover owner, a Mr Wellbourne, complained in Intro 1 of the swivel-pin lubrication method on the P4 models. I have overcome this problem on my car by removing the oil filler pins and replacing them with longer studs drilled down the centre. I then coupled small-bore plastic tubing from them to a T-piece on a one-pint

reservoir under the bonnet, so now I simply top up the reservoir with gear oil, when needed, which then runs down the tubing into the swivel pins.

The effort was worth it, as the swivel pins are permanently oiled, and the steering is much smoother and easier to operate.

I hope you will find this interesting enough to publish, as I am sure it would be of help to other Rover owners.

*John Jackson,  
Basteley, Warks.*

## Visit to Wynnifred's Café, Camperdown

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August**

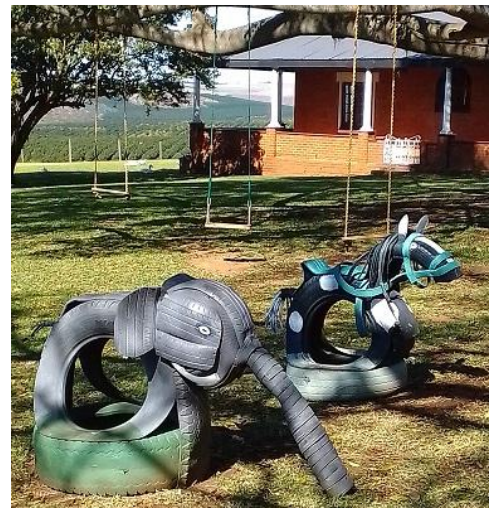
A small group of us met up at Wynnifred's Café, which is in a very rural area near Camperdown, between Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Unfortunately the directions I had given were not as clear as they could have been, resulting in Dave & Margrit Miller getting a bit lost. But a phonecall and some instructions from John Booth soon had them joining us. Thank goodness for cellphones!!

Once again, Clyde & I were given a lift by Niel & Eileen Rasmussen, which we greatly appreciated. John & Dawn Booth were also there and we were very happy that Rosemary Payne joined us, especially considering her recent bereavement. Chris Cardwell came as an invited guest and happily he has now joined the club as a full member!



*Seated around the table, left to right:  
Myself, Niel, Eileen, Dawn, Dave,  
Margrit, Rosemary, Chris, John, Clyde*

When we arrived we were seated at a big table under a tree and enjoyed viewing the peaceful countryside scene, with huge Natal fig trees and a big flock of ducks wandering on the lawns.



However, there was a very chilly wind blowing and so we managed to get the staff to move us inside, where a lovely fire was burning, and that's where we had our lunch.



As always, much chatter ensued, with some lively discussions!



*John & Niel in deep discussion around some technical aspect of John's latest project*

Always good to get together, and we look forward to the next outing.

\* \* \* \* \*



*This article kindly sent to us by Roger Houghton*

## **MOTOR COMPANY MODEL CODES OFTEN HARD TO UNDERSTAND**

Motor enthusiasts and particularly those interested in classic cars, are often able to quote manufacturers' model codes when talking about specific car models, such as W124, E30 and 911. However, these codes are often difficult to understand, according to a recent article in Intercooler a British digital publication for enthusiasts.

The German manufacturers are probably the easiest to understand. Mercedes-Benz has used W (Wagen) for passenger cars since the 1920's. They also use S for estates and C for coupes, while V codes with three digits are allocated to long wheelbase limousines. The Porsche 911 has a multitude of internal codes, including 964, 993, 996, 997, 991, and 992.

BMW's system only began in 1960 when each project code started with an E (for "entwicklung" or development) followed by two digits. This continued until 2007 when it ended with the E93 for a 3 Series convertible. BMW then moved to F and G codes as the scope of its ranges grew. Years ago, Fiat used an X followed by a numeral, with X0 for engines, X1 for cars and X2 for commercials. Strangely it then came up with X1/9 for a small, mid-engine sports car when it seemed they could not think of a name for it.

Jaguar had a similar system, using XJ for Experimental Jaguar followed by numerals, for each new project. XJ1 was a V12 engine for racing, while XJ4 was the code for a saloon car. When they got to XJ6 they used that to reflect the number of cylinders when the car went public. The XJ nomenclature was used until the 1990s when Jaguar switched to X and three numerals.

BMC, BMH, BL, Austin Rover, and the Rover Group were confusing enough as basically one company changed itself over the years, but the code names they used for their cars were just as confusing. The Amalgamated Drawing Office, formed with the merger of Austin and Morris to form BMC in 1952, used the obvious acronym, ADO, as its code.

However, it is strange that the 1961 Mini Cooper was ADO 50 while the 1971 Morris Marina was only ADO 28 after generally successive projects had climbed the numeral ladder, culminating in ADO 88 and ADO 99, where the numbers reflected the wheelbases of the Mini Metro and Maestro, respectively.

The large Rover of the mid-1970's that was popular with the British police, was codenamed SD1 to mark the first project from the Specialist Division, the internal name for the Rover and Triumph part of the British Leyland business. No other SD model made it into production. BL then used LC for Leyland Cars and AM for Austin Morris, a system later abandoned in favour of LM for Light Medium cars.

When Rover formed a partnership with Honda in the mid 1980's it gave the codename XX to the Rover 800 programme which was linked to the Honda Legend. The XX was followed by YY for the Rover 200 of 1989 which had links to the Honda Concerto. This latter project was later renamed AR8 and then just R8 to reflect the ever-changing name of the holding company.

Then there is the oddball codename SK1 for the Civic-based Rover 600. The code-name came from the surnames of the Rover and Honda bosses who signed the deal, being George Simpson and Nobuhiko Kawamoto. Next up was the Rover 400, based on the Civic. It began as SK4 and changed to HH-R to include the Honda initial.

Now let's look at some other developments in the Rover Group of the 1990's. The MG F sports car, second generation Range Rover and Land Rover Freelander projects were known as PR3, 38A and CB40.

The MG F project was originally named ADO 21, but it was then changed to PR3 which was derived from the Rover Group's plan to revive the MG brand. The plan was called Phoenix Rising. Three different layouts were considered for the new sports car: front-engined FWD (PR1), front-engined RWD (PR2) and mid-engined (PR3). The last option won, and it was signed off as Phoenix Rising 3 or PR3 for short.

The second generation Range Rover was originally referred to as Project Pegasus but was renamed after the building in Solihull where the company executives were based. That was Block 38A. The Freelander's project name was similarly derived. It referred to the project team first met and this was Canley Building, Room 40, hence the codename for the model was CB40.

However, the team working on the updated Discovery II decided it should not be named after a building but was rather called Project Tempest. The Rover Group then used several names starting with T. These included Tex, Tomcat, Topaz, Tracer, and Troy, with the relevant models being Rover 400 Tourer, Rover 200 Coupe, Rover 100 Cabriolet, Rover 200 Cabriolet and Mini Cabriolet, respectively.

Ford of Britain and Europe used interesting names for its projects for many years. Most of them were women's named, but there was an interesting development in the early 1960s. Ford of Britain had got wind of a new small sedan being developed by Ford of Germany and Ford in Detroit, under the codename Cardinal, and was miffed. The British retaliated by naming its Cortina project Archbishop to outrank the Cardinal!

This was followed by Diana for a Mk2 version of the Capri, Brenda (Mk2 Escort), Linda (abandoned plan for a new Cortina), Eva (Mk2 Granada), Carla (Mk3 Capri), Teresa (updated 1980 Cortina), Erika (Mk3 Escort), Gloria (Mk2 Granada facelift), and Toni (Sierra).

The naming culture then changed to the heavens and models became Orion (facelift that changed Mk1 Fiesta into Mk2), Libra (Mk3 Fiesta), and Scorpio (Granada), which later became a model name and not just a codename.

In recent times Ford of Europe has adopted much more rational codenames, with them now referring to the car size and where they will be sold. For instance, the Mk3 Fiesta changed from Libra to BE-13, which stands for a B-segment car to be sold in Europe and the 13th project under this naming system. The first Mondeo was CDW-27 because it straddled C-and D-segments, was a World car and the 27<sup>th</sup> project under this naming system.

What makes this whole story of codenames interesting is that few of them make rational sense!

*Many thanks to Roger Houghton again for the following two articles*

## **ONE ASPECT OF BRITISH LEYLAND THAT MADE IT INTO THE BIG TIME**

**By Roger Houghton**

The British motor industry has been a melting pot of different brands for most of its existence. There are more than 80 motor companies and hundreds of models that have gone defunct over the years.

At one stage, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a big effort made to put this house into some kind of order. This was the founding of the British Motor Corporation (BMC) in 1952. At this stage Britain was the second biggest vehicle manufacturing country in the world, after the United States, and the biggest exporter.



Initially BMC consisted of Austin, Morris, MG, Riley and Wolseley cars and a range of Austin and Morris commercial vehicles. It soon expanded to include Austin Healey and the ultra-luxury Princess brand. Jaguar was added to the list of brand offerings in 1965 and, what was already a huge range, expanded exponentially, causing massive complexity in manufacturing and marketing.

The company changed its name to British Motor Holdings (BMH) soon after Jaguar became part of the behemoth. Of course, there was also a growing range of commercial vehicles on offer, including Nuffield tractors, which added to the complexity.

The next step came in 1968 when government pressure resulted in BMH merging with the Leyland Motor Company which consisted of Leyland trucks and buses as well as Land Rover and the up-market Rover and Triumph car brands. The new company became British Leyland. Then, in 1988, there was another major restructuring, and the company was first renamed the Austin Rover Group (ARG) and subsequently just the Rover Group, with a much slimmed down model range.

It was still not a success in terms of being a sustainable business and BMC was eventually sold to BMW with only the Mini brand name surviving the final collapse of what had once been a powerhouse in the British and global automotive world.

However, in all this turmoil there was one item of equipment that survived and that was the neat, electric adjuster for the exterior mirrors designed and developed by a team at the Austin Rover Group (ARG). First introduced when the Austin Montego arrived in 1984, it was destined for installation in several cars far above the status of the humble Montego.

The adjuster was so compact and dependable that it soon found its way into other BMC cars, such as the Austin Maestro, Land Rover Discovery, Range Rover Classic, Rover 200, Rover 25 and the MG F and MG TF sports cars which used this adjuster until the model was run out in 2011.

Importantly, the adjuster ended up on foreign shores too, being fitted to the Ferrari Testarossa, Maserati BiTurbo, and Ghibli II. It was even standard fitment on the dashboard of Jaguar's series of Group C racing sports cars in the 1980's.

## MEDIA RELEASE

*July /August 2025*

### Why tyre evolution still matters today

**PART ONE** – TEPA provides a fascinating insight into the path the humble tyre has travelled, from rickety horse-drawn carriages of the 1800s to modern-day high performance super cars. This is Part One of a three-part series on the evolution of tyres.

The tyres on your vehicle are far more than just inflated rubber; they're a rolling testament to human ingenuity. Knowing their story is the first step in ensuring they keep you safe on the road, says the Tyre, Equipment and Parts Association (TEPA), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI).

“In essence, tyre technology has gone from simple rubber bands to highly complex, multi-layered, chemically engineered marvels,” says Dylan Petzer, national vice chairman of TEPA. “Understanding the evolution of tyres matters for many reasons, one of the most important being it can help you to make informed decisions about the many different types of tyres available today.”

While John Boyd Dunlop, a Scottish veterinarian, is widely credited with inventing the first pneumatic (air-filled) tyre in 1888 for his son's tricycle, the first pneumatic tyre was actually patented 43 years earlier by another Scot, Robert William Thomson. In 1845, Thompson secured patents for his "aerial wheels" that consisted of a hollow belt of vulcanised India-rubber inflated with air, encased in a strong outer casing of leather or canvas which was bolted to the wheel. This created a "cushion of air" between the wheel and the ground, drastically reducing noise and improving comfort. He even demonstrated his "aerial wheels" in London's Regent Park in 1847 on horse-drawn carriages that ran for over 1 200 miles without issue!

Despite his ingenuity, Thomson's invention was ahead of its time. The high cost of manufacturing rubber inner tubes then, combined with the lack of demand (the motor car hadn't been invented and bicycles were only just starting to gain traction), meant his pneumatic tyre wasn't commercially viable. It was too expensive; a mere curiosity. Dunlop's patent was granted in 1888, but two years later declared invalid because Thomson's earlier patent came to light. However, Dunlop's timing was impeccable. The popularity of the bicycle and the imminent arrival of the automobile created the perfect market for his version of the pneumatic tyre, leading to its widespread adoption and the eventual establishment of the famous Dunlop Rubber Company. The big game-changer for rubber was the discovery of vulcanisation by Charles Goodyear in 1839 (patented in 1844). Vulcanisation is the chemical magic that transformed raw, sticky and unstable natural rubber into a durable, elastic and heat-resistant material.

Without vulcanisation, early tyres would have melted into a sticky mess on a hot South African summer's day and cracked like pottery in winter. It truly was the bedrock for modern tyre development, allowing rubber to be used reliably in industrial applications, including, eventually, the robust tyres we know. The radial tyre effectively modernised driving, making it safer, more comfortable and more economical. It wasn't an instant takeover – some car manufacturers were initially reluctant to re-tool for the different characteristics of radial tyres, but by the 1970s they had largely replaced bias-ply tyres in passenger vehicles globally.

Today, a modern tyre is a complex cocktail of materials, meticulously engineered for performance, safety, and longevity.

These include:

- Natural and synthetic rubber
- Carbon black and silica
- Steel and textile cords
- An array of other chemicals and additives

Petzer explains why knowing the history of tyres matters, “Tyres are your only contact with the road: Your tyres – the patches of rubber, each roughly the size of your hand - are literally the foundation of your vehicle's safety, performance, and stability.

Safety first: Proper tyre maintenance isn't just a suggestion, but a life-saving habit. All the incredible engineering mentioned only works if you check your tyre pressure, ensure adequate tread depth and have them rotated.

Specialised compounds: The constant evolution of rubber chemistry allowed for the creation of specific compounds - soft, high-grip compounds for performance cars, hard, durable compounds for long-haul trucks and temperature-sensitive compounds for winter tyres. The introduction of silica in the 1990s was a game-changer for balancing wet grip and low rolling resistance.

Performance demands: As cars gained sophisticated suspensions, powerful braking systems and advanced stability controls, tyres had to keep pace. They became the crucial link, translating electronic commands into physical action (low-profile tyres, reinforced sidewalls, asymmetric and directional tread patterns, the pursuit of efficiency and integration with vehicle electronics).

“Each evolutionary step has been a direct response to the ever-increasing demands of speed, weight, safety, performance, and efficiency placed upon them by the vehicles and driving conditions of their era. It's a continuous journey and, frankly, a miracle these four round bits of rubber do what they do! Take good care of your tyres and they will take good care of you – well into the next century!” Petzer concludes.

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## **Tyres: Rethink Before You Rethread**

**PART TWO** – In Part Two of TEPA's three-part series on tyres we look at the ins and outs of choosing the right tyre and how a responsible choice helps the environment.

If you think buying tyres is a maze of technical jargon and expertise above your pay grade, relax. There are some basics that will go a long way in helping you 'crack the tyre code' and we've got just the expert to guide you.

Dylan Petzer, national vice chairman of TEPA (Tyre, Equipment and Parts Association), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), says buying tyres is about safety and performance not about aesthetics or bargain deals.

He believes the first step in becoming tyre savvy is finding out more about your vehicle's tyres by consulting:

1. Your vehicle owner's manual: This is your tyre bible. It will specify the manufacturer's recommended tyre size, load index and speed rating for your specific make and model. Stick to these recommendations as closely as possible, as they are engineered for your vehicle's weight, performance and safety systems.
2. The tyre placard (usually on the driver's side door jamb, glove compartment or fuel flap): This sticker provides the same essential information as your owner's manual, often along with recommended tyre pressures for both front and rear tyres.

“Once you have these numbers, you can consider factors like the typical road conditions you encounter, your type of driving and your budget,” Petzer says. He emphasises the role of TEPA accredited tyre fitment centres as absolutely crucial when it comes to buying tyres, especially due to the bumpy-to-smooth-to-anything-in-between road conditions motorists are confronted with in South Africa.

“Technicians at TEPA accredited fitment centres are your tyre ‘guardians’; your pit crew and ultimate resource for everything related to the four patches of rubber connecting you to the road. They are extensively trained and understand exactly what your vehicle’s tyre needs are and will offer tailored recommendations based on driving habits, typical road conditions and budget,” says Petzer.

“There’s also the state-of-the-art equipment they use. Modern tyres, especially low-profile or run-flats, require specific machinery and techniques for mounting and demounting to avoid damage to the tyre bead or wheel rim. Certified centres have this equipment.”

Couple this with adherence to strict safety protocols, SABS standards, precise wheel balancing, wheel alignment using advanced 3D systems, puncture assessments and safe repairs, rotation services to promote even wear and you’re truly in the best hands at a TEPA certified fitment centre. Petzer also highlights the importance of after-sales support and being responsible about tyre disposal.

“Buying from a TEPA certified centre usually means you get a warranty on the tyres and the fitment service, giving you peace of mind. They also take environmental responsibility seriously through participating in schemes for the responsible disposal of end-of-life tyres.

“A TEPA certified tyre fitment centre is a critical partner in ensuring your road safety, maximising your tyre investment and maintaining your vehicle's performance. Don't risk it by going to uncertified ‘backyard’ operations – your life is literally riding on it!”

On the subject of that ‘bargain’ tyre, Petzer warns second-hand (used) tyres come with a lot of costly red flags, such as:

- Unknown history: You have no idea where that tyre has been or what it's been through. A "repaired" tyre might have been poorly fixed or suffered damage that compromises its structural integrity that can lead to a blow-out.
- Age degradation: Rubber degrades over time, even if the tyre hasn't been used much. Sun, heat and general atmospheric exposure cause the rubber compounds to harden and become brittle, leading to cracking and reduced grip. A tyre that looks fine externally might be internally compromised. The general recommendation is to replace tyres that are six years old or older, regardless of tread depth. With second-hand tyres, you often don't know the true age or storage conditions.
- Mismatched pairs: Second-hand tyres rarely come in perfectly matched sets with even wear.

Mixing tyre types compromises handling and braking and can, potentially, damage your vehicle's drivetrain.

- Reduced tread depth: Second-hand tyres will have significantly less tread than new ones, which means reduced performance.
- Illegal sales: Reputable tyre dealers don't sell second-hand passenger tyres. If you're buying from an unverified source, you run the risk of buying illegally imported or salvaged tyres that don't meet South African safety standards.

Rethreaded (recapped) tyres, Petzer explains, involve applying a new layer of tread to a worn tyre casing. While common for commercial vehicles, like trucks and buses, where the casing is designed for multiple lives, rethreads are not recommended - and often illegal - for passenger cars due to safety concerns.

"The cost of second-hand or rethreaded tyres may seem appealing but the costs in terms of safety, vehicle damage and fines far outweigh any savings.

"Always invest in quality, new tyres that are appropriate for your vehicle and driving conditions and let the experts fit them. Your life and the lives of others depend on it."

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## **Your tyres – when to replace, how to maintain, and why it matters**

**PART THREE** - In the final part of TEPA's three-part tyre series, we bring it all together: how long tyres should last, what signs to watch for, and why regular maintenance can mean the difference between a safe journey and a serious incident on South Africa's often unpredictable roads.

### **Your tyre's lifespan: more than just kilometres**

A good-quality tyre can last anywhere from 40,000 to 80,000 kilometres – but that's far from a guarantee. Aggressive driving, poor roads, incorrect inflation, and neglecting basic maintenance like rotation, balancing, and alignment all shorten a tyre's life. Even if unused, tyres that are six to ten years old can become brittle and unsafe. Innovations like carbon black (discussed in Part 1) and radial construction have shown to drastically extend tyre life, but at the end of the day your care is key!

"Many consumers are surprised to learn that their tyres may need replacement not because of wear, but simply due to age or undetected damage," says Dylan Petzer, Vice Chairman of the Tyre Equipment Parts Association (TEPA) a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation. "We always recommend you have your tyres checked regularly by a TEPA-accredited fitment centre. Prevention is not only safer, it's more cost-effective."

### **Silent signs your tyres are ready for replacement**

Even with visible tread, your tyres could be unsafe. Warning signs include:

- Age degradation (Dry rot or cracking on the sidewall). Look for small cracks on the sidewall or between tread blocks. This means the rubber is losing elasticity and becoming brittle.
- Bulges or blisters, indicating internal damage and placing you at risk of a blow out.
- Vibrations or noise, beyond standard balancing issues discussed in Part 2, this can signal internal damage or tread separation.
- Uneven wear (e.g. cupping or feathering), often a suspension or alignment red flag

- Unrepairable punctures- unfortunately not all punctures are fixable and any damage, particularly to the sidewall, is generally a sign that it is time to buy a new tyre.

## **The silent assassins: Why alignment and suspension matter**

Incorrect alignment and worn suspension components accelerate tyre wear dramatically. Tyres with uneven pressure points develop dangerous patterns and deteriorate faster, compromising handling and increasing the risk of blowouts. Regular 3D alignment and suspension checks are essential.

## **Tread depth: your legal and safety lifeline**

In South Africa, the legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm. Driving below this is dangerous and illegal. While 1.6mm is the minimum, performance, especially in the wet, drops significantly below 3mm. Remember how tread patterns discussed in Part 1, channel water? Less tread means more aquaplaning risk.

How to Check:

- Tread Wear Indicators (TWIs): Small raised bars in the main grooves. If your tread is level with them, replace the tyre.
- Tread Depth Gauge: An inexpensive, accurate tool.
- The "5 Rand Coin Test": Insert a 5 Rand coin into the tread. If the silver border is visible, your tread is likely too low.

Petzer says always check multiple spots and if in doubt, visit a TEPA centre.

## **Driving style and common tyre-killers**

Driving habits have a significant impact on tyre lifespan. Fast cornering, sudden braking, pothole impacts, and overloading are tyre enemies. Over- or under-inflation is another major contributor to early tyre failure. Always consult your vehicle placard for the correct pressure and check at least once a month.

Petzer adds, "Tyres are the only part of your car that touch the road. A well-maintained tyre directly supports your car's braking and safety systems. It's a small component with an enormous responsibility."

## **Tyre maintenance: not a luxury, but a necessity**

Neglecting tyre maintenance leads to longer braking distances; loss of grip and control, especially in the wet; higher blowout risk; increased wear on vehicle safety systems and reduced fuel efficiency and wasted money in new tyres ahead of time.

TEPA encourages all motorists to take tyre maintenance seriously. Visit a TEPA-accredited fitment centre for expert guidance, and make tyre care a non-negotiable part of your vehicle routine. "Just as you wouldn't drive with faulty brakes, don't drive with neglected tyres. Regular checks, correct inflation, rotation, balancing, and alignment are small efforts that yield immense safety and performance dividends," concludes Petzer.

*Compiled on behalf of TEPA by Cathy Findley PR, for media queries contact [Jacqui@findleypr.co.za](mailto:Jacqui@findleypr.co.za) / 0717648233*

*Thanks again to Geoff Arthur for another of his articles published in Take Five magazine,  
and to Martin Robins for sending it on to us*



## Geoff's Jottings

**Government interference has affected car manufacturers since their very beginning in the late 19th century and continues to do so to this day, our very own P5 model only came into existence due to this.**

Rover had very sensibly decided in the early 1950s that their future lay in developing a high volume, mass produced car, they could see this was the only viable long-term direction for the industry to go but they soon hit problems as they lacked sufficient factory space to build such a car due to the runaway success of the Land Rover.

They were refused planning permission to expand their site at Solihull, despite having the land to do so, and rather than build a new factory in an area of high unemployment, which the government had demanded, Project 5 evolved into a bigger car that could be sold at a high price and produced in smaller volumes alongside the P4 and Land Rover.

This delayed the whole idea of the high-volume car for a few years until it was resurrected with Project 6 and the eventual and very successful launch of the Rover 2000 in 1963. Another successful car company that was refused permission to expand was Jaguar at their Browns Lane site and their solution was to buy Daimler in 1960, with no great interest in the company, just the 93,000 square metre factory in Coventry and its skilled workforce.

BSA owned Daimler at that time and were keen to sell it as it was in decline and not part of their forward planning, it was also losing money. Jaguar had initially only wanted to buy the factory but eventually agreed to buy the company for £3.25 million.



The only revised Daimler designed car to emerge after the acquisition was the DR 450, a £4,000 eight-seater Limousine variation of the Majestic Major that had been launched in 1959. Both cars featured a 4.5 Litre V8 engine and were mostly bought by those who were driven around by a chauffeur.

The Daimler Conquest that had a 2.4 Litre 6-cylinder engine was discontinued in 1958 so the company had no volume seller and it might have stayed that way but the large Daimler dealer, Stratstones, wanted something to sell and eventually agreed not to proceed with their Volkswagen franchise and instead concentrate on Jaguar and Daimler, provided a new car was available.

Daimler were manufacturing two excellent and quite modern V8 engines that had only been introduced in 1959, the 4.5 Litre for the Majestic / DR450 and a 2.5 Litre for their low volume SP250 fibre glass bodied sports car. This was a full eight years before Rover launched its own V8 in the P5B. These Daimler engines had been designed by the famous engineer, Edward Turner, who was also responsible for the well-respected Triumph motorcycle engines that had taken that company to great success in the post-war era.

Elements of the Triumph engines were incorporated into the Daimler V8s such as aluminium alloy, hemispherical cylinder heads. To address the urgent need for a new Daimler car it was decided to use an existing Jaguar body and fit the V8 motor to it and this finally appeared at the October 1962 Motor Show as the V8-250, using the unmistakable Mark 2 Jaguar body shell with Daimler styling variations to the interior, front grill and rear number plate surround, and selling for £1,568, which was more than a Jaguar 3.8 but £323 cheaper than a Rover P5 3 Litre Automatic Saloon and £562 less than the P5 Coupe.

The V8 engine was 50 Kg lighter than the equivalent Jaguar 2.4 Litre, a similar improvement to the 55Kg that the Rover P5 shed when it changed from 3 Litre to 3.5 V8 in 1967. Another similarity to the P5B is that the Daimler was only offered with a Borg Warner 3-speed automatic gearbox although a four-speed manual version did appear in 1967 with optional overdrive. Jaguar did develop the V8 engine to some extent but never invested in increased volume, with a maximum of

just 140 a day being possible, yet it was in most ways a better design than the six-cylinder Jag motor. They tried a 4.5 Litre in the Mark X Jaguar and it worked well but never got taken any further. The Daimler V8 engines were discontinued in 1969 as part of British Leyland rationalisation and well before it was an obsolescent design.

Rover did get to build its new volume car, the 2000 in 1963, and in a new purpose-built factory in Solihull although in order to appease the government of the day, they had to build a new gearbox factory in Wales which was the best compromise they could achieve. The Daimler name was discontinued in 2007.

**In much the same way that Jaguar bought Daimler to obtain extra production facilities, Volkswagen bought Auto Union (Audi) at a time when they could not keep up with demand for their air-cooled vehicles and they had little interest in anything else.**

Auto Union was launched in 1949 in a new location at Ingolstadt following the loss of its original DKW East German factory with the post war division of the country and it manufactured 125cc motorcycles and front wheel drive, two stroke cars and delivery vans. It was fully acquired by Daimler-Benz in 1959 but was not considered profitable, despite a significant investment so in 1964 Volkswagen were sold a 50% holding and by 1966 VW had taken full control and were assembling 60,000 Beetles a year in the now modernised Ingolstadt factory.

The Audi name then replaced Auto Union and the company was permitted to develop its own updated car range under the names 60, 75, 80 and Super 90, all based upon horse power ratings, but VW did not want them to develop anything newer, yet the company ignored this and designed the Audi 100 in secret and Heinz Nordhoff, head of VW, was so impressed with the finished car that he authorised its production and successful 1968 launch, thus saving the brand.



The new Audi 80 followed in 1972 and it was a very good decision to produce this car as it became the basis of the VW Passat that launched a year later, just as the old air-cooled VWs were past their peak and sales were declining fast, especially in their vital USA market. In 1969 NSU had merged with Audi, having come from great success with their motorcycles and small car, the Prinz, to

financial disaster with the advanced but flawed rotary engine Ro80 that racked up massive warranty claims.

Their next, more conventional car, the K70, ended up with a VW badge, thus establishing the idea of a water-cooled engine in a Volkswagen and the NSU brand disappeared. In 1971 Audi head of development, Ludwig Kraus saw there was going to be a shift to small, light and frugal cars such as the Austin Seven Mini, launched in 1959 in the UK, so he started work on what became the Audi 50 which was unveiled in 1974 without design input from any external company. It had four cylinders and four gears and weighed just 685 kg and was bang up to date with rack and pinion steering, split circuit disc brakes, excellent handling, modern suspension and very good safety credentials. The Audi 50 arrived with perfect timing as the 1973 Fuel Crisis was creating huge demand for small and economical cars but it was never seen in the UK as it became the VW Polo in our market and with that badge the car took 80% of overall world-wide sales.



VW had launched the Golf and Scirocco the year before using a great deal of Audi technology and with Giugiaro styling and the move to efficient and modern water-cooled and stylish cars undoubtedly saved the VW group from disaster. At the same time, British Leyland launched the Austin Allegro which did not have the same effect.

**After World War One, the Austin company struggled to get back to profitable car manufacturing and was eventually placed in receivership in 1921.**



Herbert Austin was convinced that their survival depended on producing a small and economical car but the company board were not prepared to take that risk so he famously designed the car in his billiard room at home with help from a seventeen-year-old draftsman called Stanley Edge. The board eventually approved the production of the Austin Seven and it went on to save the company, selling close to three hundred thousand by 1939 and being steadily developed during its production run. My first car was a 1935 Austin Seven Ruby and I have owned several over the years, my most recent modern addition is a 2016 VW Polo and the comparison between those two machines could not be greater.

The Polo is no longer a lightweight, having grown to 1,177 kg and it is, give or take a millimetre, the same size as a Mark 2 Golf GTi, which incidentally is the only other water-cooled VW I have ever owned. The Polo has a 1.4 litre, three-cylinder diesel engine, four doors and five gears, although it can be bought with many other configurations. It fulfills its role as clean (Euro 6), economical and fun transport very well, never giving less than 50 MPG and with excellent handling and braking and all the modern kit we have come to expect such as ABS, DAB and air conditioning. It also develops the same amount of torque as a Rover P5 with the 3 Litre engine, such are the improvements in engine design over time. Although it is relatively cheap to run, I did have a recent comparison of relative costs. The bonnet cable on my last P4 seized up and a replacement was bought for £12 plus carriage and it took me about twenty minutes to fit it. The bonnet cable on the Polo recently broke and I mostly ask my local garage to mend my modern cars and when I collected it, the bill came to a staggering £390 as the catch on these cars seizes so it has to be replaced, the cable is in two parts and a considerable amount of dismantling is required.

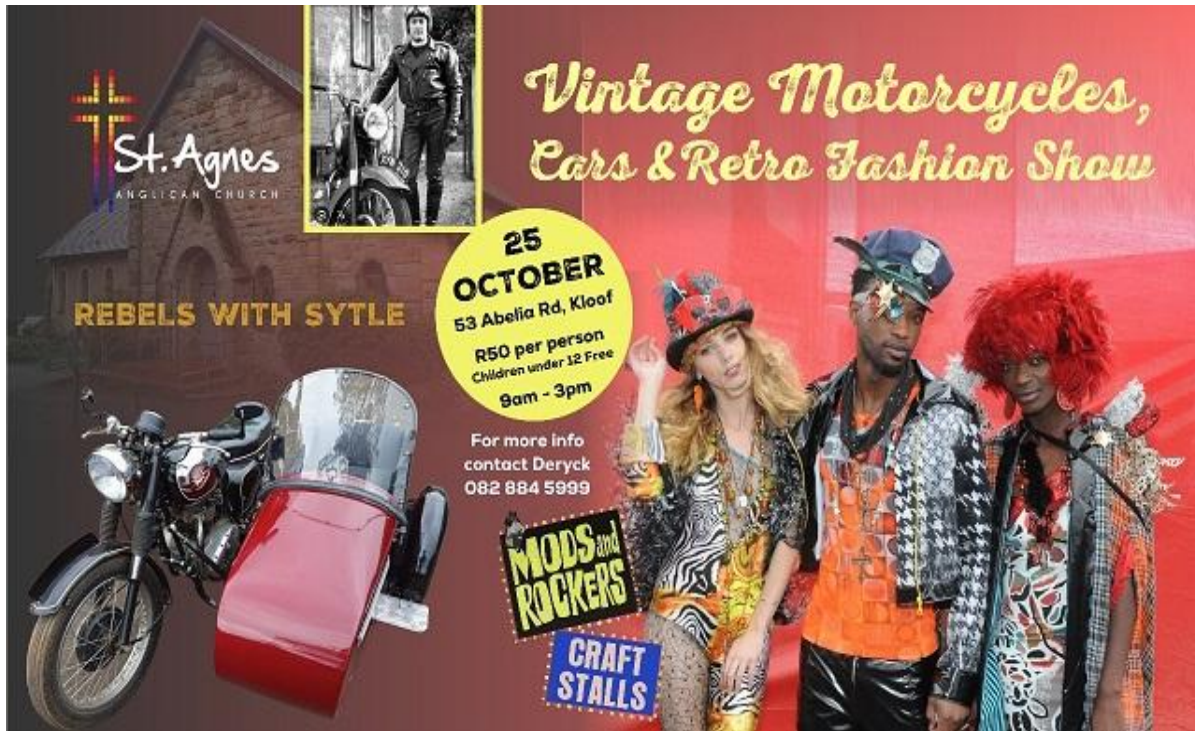
Overall, the running costs are reasonable but with any modern and relatively complex machine, a large repair bill is waiting just around the next corner and it is a long way from the simplicity of economy cars such as the Austin Seven or Audi 50.

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\* \* \* \* \*



Kevin Diedrick, who bought our old two-tone green P4 from Chris Dry, was happy when it was judged Best on Show at Cars in the Cane, Dalton, in July



**For more information about this event  
(organized by the Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal)  
Please contact John Booth**

**The club's banking details:**

Account name: Natal Rover Owners' Association  
 Bank: Capitec  
**Savings Account**  
 Account No: 2337539616

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