



Newsletter

June 2008

Yet another busy month for us all. Starting with the Celebration of Peter's Life where it was announced that Christine had agreed to be our Honorary President. As can be seen in Peter's article on Chris and his Rallying career with the Appia her involvement with Lancias has been as long and as enthusiastic as Peter's. The Garage Meeting was hosted by Phil whilst I was overseas. Reports are that there was much discussion over the future of the club. These included proposals for reinstating subs so that we can fund a Club House, keep a stock of spares, and become part of the Lancia Club of SA. Fortunately Phil has created an Internet forum for the club which will be ideal for discussions of this kind and will enable all members to participate including those that are unable to attend meetings.

We managed to slip in another Garage Meeting to take stock of all Peter's spares. Phil has made a list of what is available and done a rough costing of everything. Hopefully the fate of the spares will be finalized in the next week or two.

I managed to visit Peter Gerrish whilst I was in England so have given a report on the happenings in his Garage.

Jim

LAST EVENTS

Celebration of Peter's Life – Sunday 25th May

Fortunately after a few days of storms and rain the sun came out to celebrate with us. We were also very honoured to have Peter Gerrish join us from England, Tony Seiler from Johannesburg and Tony Jarvis from P.E. Tony Jarvis had just clinched the deal to purchase the Aurelia B20 so it was great to hear that it is staying in the Greater Cape area. The good crowd of long term regulars were joined by new members JP and Riaan.



Once the braai, mostly prepared as usual by Julian on David's specially reinforced drum, was devoured, Peter's life was toasted after a moving tribute by Peter Gerrish. This was followed by the announcement at

Christine had very graciously accepted to take over as our Honorary President. The event was suitably wound up by further toasts to finish up Peter's last brew of Van Der Hum.



Garage Meeting – Saturday 7th June

The recent garage meeting at Phil's Garage was very well attended, with many new members present despite the clash with the SA vs Wales Rugby. A freezing day was passed mostly in the garage with all having plenty of fun inspecting the refurbished parts and **rusted** parts of Phil and Sheldon's Series I Fulvia. New members marveled at the small but extensive spares collection and Inspector Chris spent most of his time looking at the detail of the rebuilt front assembly, motor and gearbox. Some spares did change hands in an effort to get some other Fulvia's back on the road sooner rather than later. The cold eventually forced everyone inside to sit around a blazing fire, drink soup and beer and discuss the way forward for the club in regards to the spares which had become available.



Phil

Garage Meeting – Sunday 7th June

Fortunately ten enthusiastic members turned up and thanks to Phil's organizational skills the job was finished in under two hours. They also managed to devour vast quantities of Sausage Rolls and Mince Pies that were very generously baked by Jenny.

Jim



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Chairmans Braai – 12 noon Sunday 13th June – 166 Athens Road, Table View

This will be a bring 'n braai. The Braai is inside so the event will go ahead whatever the weather. Please confirm attendance before beforehand so that suitable arrangements can be made and get directions if required.

Rallying with an Appia – By Peter Immelman

My whole interest in Lancias started with being asked to join a team of three Appia saloons on the Amatola Rally, 800 miles away in the Eastern Cape, in 1959. My mate Tommy and I had been rallying successfully in his Plymouth Special for some time, so we were expected to do reasonably well — but it was a disaster! All three cars succumbed, our second series to an oil filter which hit a rock, resulting in a blown engine, the third series had the filter tucked up higher, no doubt someone else had damaged theirs!

Despite this the bug had bitten —never had I driven a car which could squeal its Michelin tyres on hard gravel roads, and which had such a willing, tiny sewing machine for an engine. Nor could much bigger machinery catch it on any sort of winding or downhill road — gravel or tar.

Later that year we got married, and pooled our savings to buy our first Lancia, a brand new Appia third series saloon, for the huge sum of £960! We licensed it on temporary plates until the end of the year, so it would be recorded as a 1960 model. Our friends thought we were crazy — you could buy a new Fiat Millecento for two thirds of this sum!

Shortly after we returned from honeymoon, I disappeared for a long weekend on another rally, so my wife Christine decided “if you can't beat them you had better join them” and learned to navigate. The local agent loaned us a LHD demonstrator, and we finished up as unofficial Western Province champion driver and navigator in 1960. At that time all our rallies were run on average speed to the second, early or late, with sealed odometers, so you could not do any calculations, but we had worked out a system to run five or 10mph faster, to make up lost time when stopping for controls, farm gates (which all had to be opened and closed) or at a watersplash. Our formula involved using a 20” slide rule — no calculators in those days!—which was not easy in the front seat of an Appia. Later we managed to reduce it to a graph, with lines all over it, but Chris knew what they meant.

A year later they started fully open speedometers, and an official championship, so we retired on our laurels — besides, we were building a house.

This rally car gave me a lifelong phobia about LHD cars — we had so many near accidents. The rallies invariably were to the East of Cape Town, so we finished driving into the setting sun, on what was then a two lane road with plenty of weekend drivers, returning from the beach. The Appia needed to keep up its revs to get anywhere, and overtaking was a nightmare! On another occasion, we met a lorry in the middle of the road around a blind corner on a mountain pass, and actually put a black line down the offside of the car from the rubber on the edge of his running board — meanwhile I was looking straight down over the edge of the mountain.

One of my memories was returning in our own car from a weekend party on the coast, late on Sunday evening. Sir Lowry's Pass is one of the gaps in the ring of mountains around Cape Town, and on the lower slope of the pass there is a long straight road called Con Rod Straight after all the MGs which blew up testing on this stretch. Chris was driving, and I was asleep next to her, with another couple in the back when in my sleep I heard the revs climbing higher and higher. “For goodness sake, change into top” I muttered - “I am in top” she replied, which woke me very quickly, to find the speedo needle tapping the back of the zero pin! On another occasion, I was slip streaming an overdrive Zephyr back from Paarl when I also hit the back of the pin — probably around 92 mph —although my mate in the Zephyr claimed 120! This over-revving cost a broken top ring, and it was the first time (in Cape Town anyway) that an Appia block was sleeved, thanks to the late Willie Schmidt.





The LHD phobia persisted, and as a consequence all the rest of my 14 Lancias are RHD, even my Integrale (what Barry Waterhouse calls Really Horrible and Dangerous), until a few years ago, I found a 1963 Appia Farina Coupe with only 32,000 miles on the clock, and sometimes use this car on occasional 'post 45' rallies, but with 15" wheels and a huge gap between third and top, it is not the ideal car — we now use the B20! Also, my size 10 shoes do not fit between the brake pedal and the propshaft tunnel. One advantage, though, on the last Total rally we were given petrol vouchers — all classes the same amount — and after four days I was able to give Dave van Schoor several of mine for his Touring Flaminia —he ran out on the second day!

Peter

ON THE WEB

The big news this month is that we have our own Cape Lancia Club Forum where we can discuss all things Lancia. There is an open section that anyone can join in and a closed section for club members only where we can discuss club matters in private. There are already some posts showing peoples thoughts on they way forward for the club so it will be great to get your input as it will help the committee guide the club in the right direction. You will need a password to get into the members section. You can do this by following the Forum link from the website www.lancia.za.org or contact Phil if you need any assistance.

Jim

THE GERRISH GARAGE

I was very lucky to be able visit Peter at his home and Garage. After hearing stories from various sources of the amazing quality and performance of the motors he has built I was expecting a fully equipped machine shop. I was surprised to find that he had a very basic workshop with a Myford Lathe his only machine tool. This gives me hope that I may be able to do the same some day especially as he shared some of his tuning tips with me. If there is enough interest I may be persuaded to pass these on at a Garage Meeting. Below are some of the pictures I took of the tuning goodies plus his Lambda and his landladies Fulvia. This was obtained at a bargain price as the previous owner thought the engine needed rebuilding as it was overheating badly. This was cured instantly once the non-standard grill was removed.



FOR SALE

Check out website for the latest bargains.

TAILPIECE



Mike

CAPE LANCIA CLUB

Club Website: www.lancia.za.org now regularly updated.

2008 Calendar (Provisional)

July 13th – Social Meeting
July 29th – Deadline for Newsletter articles
August 2nd – Garage Meeting
September 15th – Deadline for Newsletter articles
September 21st – Social Meeting
September 29th – Deadline for Newsletter articles
October 4th – Garage Meeting
November 3rd – Deadline for Newsletter articles
November 9th – Social Meeting
December 1st – Deadline for Newsletter articles
December 6th – Garage Meeting

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