

# Riley Rendezvous V - South Africa 2017

Ralph Thomas

Who would have thought that in 2004 when the first gathering of this workmanlike marque took place, that there would be a continuation of events for more than a decade? The events now cover most of South Africa.

- Riley Rendezvous - Southern Cape - Knysna, Oudtshoorn and surrounds
- Riley Rendezvous II (RRv2) - The Battlefields of Natal - Isaldwana, Rouke's Drift and the Champagne Valley
- Riley Rendezvous III - (RRv3) - The Eastern Cape Addo Elephant Park, Mountain Zebra Park, Graaff-Renielt
- Riley Rendezvous IV - (RRv4) - Rileys on Safari - The "Eastern Transvaal" and Kruger Park
- Riley Rendezvous V - (RRv5) - The Western Cape West Coast, Little Karoo, Cape Agulhas.

A rather eclectic bunch invaded the Crankhandle Club clubhouse for the normal Wednesday evening gathering. Five Aussie couples, four Pommie couples, one Irish, one Swede and the rest Japies form the Cape, Gauteng, Free State and Natal giving a traveling party of 44 strong.

The cars varied from a 1924 side valve "Redwinger" from Adelaide (Phil "Odd-Sock" Evans), to a local 1968 "One-Point-Five" with pre-war cars being six 9hp (2 Monacos, 2 Gamecocks and 2 Lynx) and a Lynx 12/4. At various stages of the route we had 2 RBMs, a two-point-six and 3 one-point-fives. Four MG-Bs of various descriptions also made their way around with the Rileys as well as two "back-up" moderns. The hard luck story must be Paul Bae, driving his Breadvan 9hp from Sydney to Adelaide (1400km) and then breaking the crankshaft on the way to the start (6km).

The route took us from the photo opportunity in Blouberg with the iconic shot of Table Mountain in the background via the West Coast National Park to Saldanha Bay. The next day we saw the West Coast fishing villages and then the top of the Piekensklouf Pass. Driving on mostly the R-roads (Regional) as opposed to the N-roads (National) we managed the Nuweklouf, Mitchell's and Theronberg passes, through Tulbagh, Ceres and to Karoo1. What followed was the descent of the Rooihooft and Burgers Passes to Montagu and then the Op-de-Tradouw and the Tradouw Passes from Barrydale to Swellendam.

The R&R day comprised a short

hop and a boat trip on the Breede River at Viljoensdrift. These four days were undertaken in typical South African sunshine with great "top-down" motoring. On our way to the southernmost tip of Africa at Cape Agulhas, the rain started and set in whilst we visited this lighthouse as well as the Danger Point lighthouse, famous for the wreck of the Birkenhead, which coined the phrase and practice of "woman & children first". As usual the whales in Walker Bay (Hermanus) displayed themselves for our guests. Then on to the Shaw's Mountain and Franschoek passes to the Motor Museum (FMM) on L'Ormarins wine farm for another photo opportunity. The desolateness of the Theewaterskloof Dam was a stark reminder of the water issues of Cape Town and surrounds.

The Helshoogte pass took us into Stellenbosch and our final dinner.



*The 1924 side valve "Redwinger" from Adelaide*



*Dave Alexander, organisers Ralph Thomas and John Ryall and Murray Bamfield-Duggan trusty back up.*

The next day saw a choice of long route and short route.

For the quicker (post war?) cars the duToitskloof and Bainskloof passes were stunning. For the slower cars (side-valve and 9hp?) a shorter route took us to the Killarney track.

To book-end the RRv5, we concluded at the end of month Natter and Bring & Braai hosted

by the Crankhandle Club at Timour Hall.

We are happy to report that RRv6 is in the planning with the Sinks (Ken & Barbara) of Margate, Natal and the Irvins (Ian & Tina) of the UK/ZA stepping up for a Sea-to Sani and Sani-to-Sea experience as the next event were the South African Riley enthusiasts can again host other Riley-ists. 🚗



*Precision parking at FMM*



*Rileys in Bloubergstrand*