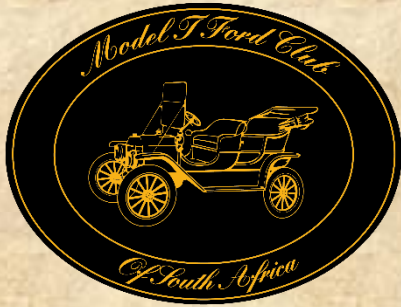


T-Time / T-Tyd



Official newsletter of the Model T Ford Club of South Africa

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Model T Ford Club of South Africa

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Model T Ford Club of South Africa member subscriptions are due annually at the end of December. Fees are R250-00 per family (includes children up to 18 years). If you have not yet paid, please do so by using the bank details below:

**Account name: Model T Ford Club of SA; Bank – Standard Bank, Port Elizabeth
Branch code: 051001; Account no. 10110852735 - use your name & surname as reference**

Website: www.modelt.co.za

Notice: The opinions expressed in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the committee, the editor, club members and officers of SAVVA or advertisers in this newsletter.

Cover Photo: A line-up of the later, so-called “black radiator” Model T Fords at the George Old Car Show.

From the Driving Seat

As I write my first quarterly report for 2026, I can hardly believe that the first quarter will already have passed by the time this edition of *T-Time* is published.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who placed their confidence in me by electing me as President of the Model T Ford Club of South Africa. I will do my utmost to uphold the standards established by my predecessors. These are indeed big shoes to fill, but I believe and trust that, with the support of a very capable committee, we will not disappoint. I

would also like to take this opportunity to thank Tertius du Preez for his dedicated service to the club during his term as President. Thank you, Tertius—your contribution is sincerely appreciated, and we wish you every success and prosperity in your future endeavours.

My sincere thanks also go to the other committee members who, together with me, are responsible for guiding the affairs of the club. Their experience is a valuable asset. A warm welcome as well to the four members who have been co-opted onto the committee, and thank you for your willingness to serve the club in leadership roles: Philip Kuschke as Secretary, Cassie Lourens as Regional Representative for KwaZulu-Natal, Stef-Steyn Walters as Regional Representative for Gauteng, and Mike Alexander as coordinator of the Technical Evenings. Hennie Marx remains part of the management team and can now devote his full attention, as chairperson of the organising committee, to the planning of the 2026 tour. A special word of thanks to Phillip Rosser for keeping me informed and for assisting with matters beyond the scope of your portfolio.

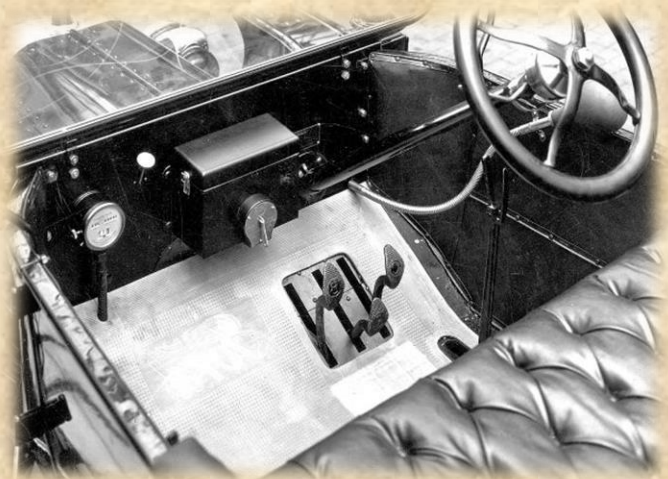
Daar word baie hard agter die skerm gewerk en beplan en dit natuurlik aan ons klub se tienjarige vieringstoer wat van 4-8 November 2026 gehou sal word. Baie dankie Hennie en Corne Marx asook die res van die komitee wat hard werk om hierdie 'n topgehalte toer te maak.

We have also received our calendars at the George Old Motor Show, and for this we would like to thank Emil Kuschke, who managed the project. Once again, this is something of which we can be very proud.

Our club was also well represented at the Vettoer organised by the Southern Cape Old Car Club and coordinated by Philip Kuschke. Once again, it was an exceptionally well-organised tour, and I would like to congratulate Philip and Rosita on a job well done. This was the 20th Vettoer organised by Philip and it attracted a record number of entries, with a remarkable variety of vehicles and model years represented. Several club members gathered in George on Thursday, 12 February, and travelled together to Prince Albert, where other tour participants joined them. On Friday the group returned to George, and on Saturday everyone attended the George Old Car Show. It was truly a most enjoyable tour.

Ek wil 'n beroep doen op ons lede om betrokke te raak by die klub in die besonder met jul streeksvertegenwoordigers. Help of kom met voorstelle om in streeksverband dinge te doen om ons klub en die Model T-Ford bekend te stel. Jy kan selfs betrokke raak deur ons meer te vertel van jou voertuig/voertuie of selfs projekte waarmee jy besig is. Die Tegniiese-aande is die ideale platform hiervoor. Ons kuier ook lekker saam en leer mekaar beter ken na die aanbiedings.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone of our ten-year celebration tour in November in Bethlehem. Please start making arrangements for leave etc. in advance. It is a beautiful part of our country where



we will be touring, and considerable effort is being made to ensure that this will be a truly memorable event.

Model T greetings from house to house.

Kobus Botha

From the Editor

The new year has kicked off with some new blood leading the club! Congratulations to the new committee members that have been co-opted. Please familiarise yourself with your Regional Representative and get involved. Contact details of the committee are on the first page of the *T-Time*.

It is great to see that our club is showing a steady growth. Five new member families have joined in the last six months!

Paul Hoogendoorn has submitted a very interesting article on the roots of Ford in Port Elizabeth. The research on the subject must have taken an enormous amount of time, thanks Paul. Philip Kuschke het ook 'n artikel oor die 20^{ste} VETTOER geskryf. Stuur asb. julle bydraes vir plasing in die *T-Time*. Daar word ook gevra vir maandelike bydraes vir Tegnieke aande. Sien besonderhede op bl.7.

Remember to bookmark the dates of 4 to 8 November. Our club turns 10 years old on 5 November. With the fuel price increase it is advised to start saving now for the tour already. It's a tour that cannot be missed. See information on pg. 7.

Please ensure that your club subs are up to date. There are still several people that have outstanding subs which are due in January each year.

Let's keep driving our cars and showcase them to the public.

Phillip Rosser
Editor

Club subscriptions

The club's financial year now runs from January to December (previously March to February). This means that subs are due on 01 January 2025. Subscriptions remain unchanged at R250-00 per family per year.

Banking details are

Account name: Model T Ford Club of SA; Bank – Standard Bank, Port Elizabeth

Branch code: 051001; Account no. 10110852735 - use your name & surname as reference.

Birthdays

A happy birthday to our members during the next quarter.

If we have missed your birthday, please advise Phillip Rosser so that we can ensure that the database is up to date.

Sharon Schröder	02 April	Stefan Walters	04 June
Leon Oelofse	07 April	Morne Janse V Rensburg	09 June
Paul Koski	09 April	Wilma Malherbe	13 June
Rod Crookes	13 April	Sandra Alves	18 June
Stef-Steyn Walters	14 April	Koos Naude (Father)	22 June
Johan Slump	15 April	Beth James	23 June
Piet de Wet	15 April	Riana Swanepoel	25 June
Jozua v d Merwe	24 April	Bill Lance	26 June
Corne Marx	24 April	Barry Pieterse	01 July
Juliana Lance	24 April	Tertius Du Preez	03 July
Pat Biddulph	28 April	Andre Wessels	08 July
Clive Barnard	01 May	Eduan Naude (Son)	09 July
Hennie Marx	03 May	Greg Bjorkman	12 July
Tim Riddell	08 May	Sevrin Hansen	13 July
Johann Maritz	14 May	Emil Kuschke	14 July
Brian James	17 May	Warwick Perks	14 July
Henna Durow	20 May	Jorge Alves	16 July
Susan Alexander	23 May	Arthur Duvenage	21 July
Janette Hansen	23 May	Candice Slump	22 July
Neville Koch	24 May	Johann van den Heever	25 July
Carla Maritz	24 May	Keith Schröder	25 July
Anneke Steyn	26 May	Mike Alexander	27 July
Dalene Oelofse	31 May	Adrian Arnold	27 July
Adrian Denness	04 June	Elanie Stroebel	29 July

New Members

A special welcome to the new members that joined the club during the last quarter. We look forward to meeting you at our next virtual meeting.

Adrian Arnold from Heidelberg Gauteng.
Sevrin and Janette Hansen from Umtentweni KZN.
Keith and Sharon Schröder from Krugersdorp
Garreth Staveley from Roodepoort

Forthcoming Events

Below is the club's events calendar which includes other clubs' events as well. The calendar is set up so that chapters can organise an event even if it coincides with another club's event. Please remember that all events are covered by a SAVVA certificate/permit. Dates can be changed but Peter Bolze, the SAVVA Motorsport portfolio holder (082 648 6972 or motorsport@savva.co.za) must be informed at least 3 days before a change.

MONTH	DATE	MTFCSA EVENT	SAVVA CALENDAR EVENT	DAY	PUBLIC HOLIDAY
Apr	3			Friday	Good Friday
	6			Monday	Family Day
	9	TECHNICAL EVENING		Thursday	
	27	PROPOSED CLUB EVENT		Monday	Freedom Day
May	1			Friday	Workers Day
	8		OFS Club car show in Bloem	Friday	
	8 - 10		Queenstown Wheels & More Show	Fri - Sun	
	14	TECHNICAL EVENING			
	16	PROPOSED CLUB EVENT		Saturday	
	21-23		Fragram Natal Classic Motorcycle Rally (CMC)	Thurs - Sat	
	31		Cars In the Park - Pietermaritzburg	Sunday	
Jun	11	TECHNICAL EVENING		Thursday	Youth Day
	16	PROPOSED CLUB EVENT		Tuesday	
Jul	5	PROPOSED CLUB EVENT		Sunday	
	9	TECHNICAL EVENING		Thursday	

TECHNICAL EVENINGS

Coordinator: Mike Alexander

At the Technical Evening on 12 March 2026 Emil gave a very interesting talk on “**How to Start and Drive a Model T Ford**”. This subject is crucial to all Model T owners. He discussed various issues that can enhance the “Model T Experience” and make it more pleasurable. Battling to start your car is always very distressing! We all have our habits regarding starting and driving our cars, but Emil gave some good hints on how to improve matters.

Also, the technique of how to tow your car correctly is essential to prevent any damage to your engine. He also discussed the very critical issue of how to secure your car on your trailer to prevent and damage.

These technical evenings happen at 7pm every second Thursday of the month, so please join us and learn some new tips, hear report back of recent events or just discuss any relevant or interesting Model T topics.

Please contact me (mikealex@telkomsa.net) if you know of anything interesting that we can include. Also remember that we have a "Panel of Experts" to answer any relevant questions that you may have. Please direct these to philipe.kuschke@gmail.com and the answers will be found for you. How exciting, and much better than AI !!

See you soon

Mike Alexander

Technical Evenings take place on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Following each presentation is a short social discussion on members' projects etc. Below are the dates of the next few Technical Evenings. Phillip Rosser will send out a ZOOM link a few days before. If you are unfamiliar with ZOOM or are having trouble joining a presentation, please call Phillip Rosser on 082 410 5490 and he will gladly assist.

9 April 2026 – Feedback on the 2026 VetTour and George Old Car Show.

14 May 2026 - Topic will be communicated

11 June 2026 - Topic will be communicated

9 July 2026 - Topic will be communicated

All the Technical Evening presentations are available on YouTube. The links are available on the website at: www.modelt.co.za.

Exciting News!!!

Time to Let the T's Roll – 10 Years of Fun on Wheels!

Can you believe it – our beloved Model T Ford Club of South Africa is turning **10 years old!** That's a full decade of petrol fumes, gears that occasionally have their own opinions, and friendships stronger than a Model T's steel chassis.

And how do you celebrate a milestone like that? Certainly not with a quiet cup of tea and rusks! No, we hit the road. The open road. The beautiful road. The Eastern Free State road!

From **4 to 8 November 2026**, the wheels will be turning for our **10-year anniversary tour**, and this time we're heading for the breathtaking landscapes of the Eastern Free State – where the mountains fade blue into the distance, sandstone cliffs glow golden in the late afternoon sun, and the air is so fresh even a Model T seems to run better!

We'll be based at the charming **Lavender Hill Country Estate**, where the grass looks greener, the coffee tastes stronger, and the evening stories grow longer. From there, we'll enjoy three days of scenic circular routes through the gems of the region – **Clarens, Fouriesburg, Kestell**, and

Ficksburg. These are roads made for a T: winding, unhurried... and with plenty of opportunities to stop (once or twice... or five times) to cool down both engines and drivers!

One of the highlights along our routes will be a visit to the **Golden Gate National Park**, where the iconic sandstone cliffs shine in shades of gold and ochre in the sunlight. It's the kind of place where you almost expect to see a 1926 Model T appear around the next bend – so timeless and spectacular is the scenery!

But wait, there's more – because what's a celebration without a grand highlight? We'll be visiting the renowned **Sandstone Heritage Estate**, where we won't just admire history – we'll experience it! Here we'll ride on an authentic **steam train**, and yes – we'll capture that unforgettable photograph: Model T's and steam locomotives together, like old friends reunited.

And of course – there will be great food, plenty of laughter, and even better company. Stories will grow (as they always do), new friendships will be formed, and old ones strengthened. That's what makes our club so special.

This promises to be **the biggest gathering of Model T's yet**. If you've ever wondered what it looks like when a convoy of T's heads off toward the horizon – this is your chance!

So, dust off your T, make sure the coils are awake, the tyres properly inflated, and the driver's sense of humour is in good working order. Because this is not just a tour... it's a **celebration of machines, people, and memories**.

Don't miss it – the Eastern Free State is calling, and your Model T is ready to answer!

Hennie Marx – Tour Coordinator

Feedback

Regional Feedback

Eastern Cape – Paul Hoogendoorn

With only two club members in my region of which one owns a Model T there was again very little activity so far this year. The EPVVC in Gqeberha held their 'All Clubs Day' event on 1 March and I took Lizzie there for an outing. She was one of four oldies, the others were a 1923 Model T Tourer and two 1928 Chevis.



The other activity, albeit unrelated to Model T Fords was my attendance at the 2026 SAVTEC AGM held in Hopetown, Northern Cape. SAVTEC stands for South African Vintage Tractor and Engine Club, my friend Johan Sieberhagen, Eastern Cape SAVTEC representative invited me along as guest. SAVTEC is the equivalent of SAVVA in the vintage tractor world and the meeting was attended by all the regional club representatives. It was interesting as well as refreshing to listen to the ideas and topics for discussion and it became clear to me that we all share the same goals and concerns for our clubs. I also discovered that several of our MTFCSA members are also members of SAVTEC affiliated clubs.

In talking and mingling with the delegates it also became quite apparent that we all suffer from a strange disease for which no cure has been discovered as yet!

The SAVTEC Chairman sent his regards to all members of the MTFCSA.

Gauteng Region

Stef-Steyn Walters is the new Champion for the Gauteng Region. He is distributing the club calendars to members in his region and also presented the Vintage and Veteran Club with a calendar.



Stef-Steyn Walters presenting a MTFCSA calendar to the chairman of the VVC, Brian Noik.

Southern Cape – Phillip Rosser

Other than some of us participating in the annual VetTour and attending the George Old Car Show, we only had one other event.

On 17 March we visited the biggest privately owned Hops Farm in the Southern Hemisphere. The farm is situated in Waboomskraal, just over the Outeniqua Pass and three Model T Fords and one Model A Ford participated. Mike Alexander, Emil & Hannie Kuschke; Philip & Rosita Kuschke and Phillip & Amanda Rosser made up the group seven people. It was interesting to see the process of the hops cones being separated from the rest of the plant material and binned for transport to the breweries. The process from time of harvesting to delivery at the breweries for drying must take place within 4 hours!



Above: Three Model T's and an A tackled miserable weather over the Outeniqua Pass to visit the Hops farm.



Above: The hops processing plant where the cones are separated from the rest of the plant material.



Above: The hops is fed into the machines by hand to remove the cones.

20^{ste} VETTOER 2026 – Prins Albert na George Oumotorskou

Deur Philip Kuschke

Die 20ste VETTOER, trots geborg deur die Scribs Benzeum in George, het vanjaar behoorlik soos baie motors, “gekook”. ‘n Rekord inskrywing van 41 voertuie (waarvan sewe voor-1936 motorfietse was), het vanaf Prins Albert die afstand van 170 km na George afgelê. Die 2026 VETTOER het beslis die indrukwekkendste voertuie nog ooit gehad. Waar het jy al ooit in Suid-Afrika 5 voertuie wat vóór 1910 vervaardig is, saam op pad gesien? Wel, tydens die 2026 VETTOER het die volgende voertuie die toeskouers in Prins Albert se strate verstom: 1896 Benz, 1901 Benz (Kaapstad), 1904 De Dion Bouton (Oos-London), 1906 Stanley Steamer (Krugersdorp), en ‘n 1907 Nordenfeldt (Botrivier). Soos een van die toeskouers tereg opgemerk het: *“Ek voel of ek in ‘n tyd kapsule teruggevoer word ... mens sien nie*

eers meer hierdie voertuie in 'n museum nie, en hier sien ek hulle nou met met my eie oë in Prins Albert se strate ry.”



Bo: Die vyf oudste voertuie wat deelgeneem het.

Die indrukwekkende inskrywingslys het nie by die vyf oudste voertuie geëindig nie. Daar was nie minder nie as 11 Model T Fords, met die oudste twee Model T Fords, die 1910 van Jan Enslin en die 1911 van Delvin Allan (Port Shepstone) en die “nuutste” die 1926 van Gerhard Breytenbach (Pietersburg). Uitsonderlike motors wat deelgeneem het, was die 1913 Belsize van Charles Berg (George), die 1913 Benz van René Scribante (George), die 1912 Rover Boattail Colonial van Feliciano

Maartins (Kaapstad), die 1923 Talbot Daraq van Viv James (Kaapstad), en die 1926 Falcon Knight van Richard Middelman van Botrivier. Die allemans motors van doerie-tyd, was beslis ook verteenwoordig deur die 1916 Dodge Brothers van Brian James (Kaapstad), die 1923 Dodge Brothers van Gerhard Hoepfner en dan die span Austins van sover as Kaapstad en Johannesburg. Dan was daar ook die pragtige Model A Ford van Neville Koch wat van Grahamstown gekom het om deel te neem. Ons was werklik bevoorreg om hierdie groot verskeidenheid baie besondere oumotors van reg oor die land in die Suid-Kaap te kon verwelkom. Ons het ook 'n besoeker uit Duitsland as passasier saam op die VETTOER gehad!

Die 2026 VETTOER sal verseker ook onthou word vir die sewe D-J motorfietse wat deelgeneem het – beslis ook 'n rekord aantal! Was dit nie heerlik om hierdie motorfietse met hul bestuurders te sien toe hulle deur Meiringspoort gery het nie! Dit was nie net vir die manlike geslag nie – Bev Jacobs het die dames trots gemaak met haar teenwoordigheid op haar 1935 Triumph. Die Rocher pa-en-seun span, onderskeidelik op hul 1926 BSA en 1928 BSA, was die oudste motorfietse op toer.

Die afwagting was groot op Donderdag 12 Februarie 2026 toe die deelnemers mekaar ontmoet het by die Irish Bush Pub in Prins Albert. Ou vriende gesels weer saam, nuwe vriende word ingetrek en gemotiveer om die “langpad” van Prins Albert deur die pragtige Meiringspoort, deur die volstruisveerhoofstad oor die 800 m hoë Outeniqua-pas na George aan te durf.

Die 87 deelnemers aan die VETTOER het Donderdagaand by die Irish Bush Pub geëet en tot laat aand gekuier. Vrydagoggend het dit behoorlik in die hoofstraat van Prins Albert gegons tydens die “amptelike” begin van die toer. Oumotors en oumotorfietse het heen-en-weer voor die Royal Hotel verbygery – party op pad na George en die ander om brandstof te gaan volmaak – wat 'n pragtige gesig was dit nie!



Bo en heelbo: Deelnemers neem Prins Albert se hoofstraat oor.



Bo: 'n Pragtige gesig in Prins Albert se hoofstraat.

Elke deelnemer met sy eie roetekaart – nou op pad na George ... wat 'n ervaring was dit nie gewees om al hierdie antieke voertuie met hul kenmerkende dreuning te hoor eggo as hulle deur Meiringspoort ry nie. Hoeveel van julle was al bevoorreg om dit self te ervaar? Wat 'n voorreg is dit nie om een van hierdie voertuie te mag besit nie!



Bo: Dit bly altyd 'n belewenis om met 'n oop voertuig of motorfiets deur Meiringspoort te ry.

Alle sportsoorte het hul uitdagings en risiko's en so het ons sport ook sy unieke uitdagings. Heelwat deelnemers se hande was vol olie, vele liters water is in verkoelers ingegooi, baie was moeg omdat hulle mede-deelnemers moes stoot om die voertuig aan die gang te kry, naels is gekou om te help om die voertuie oor die Outeniqua-pas te kry, dames se hare wat deurmekaar waai, en dan die Outeniqua-pas af ... Vir sommige deelnemers was hierdie baie angswekkend, aangesien daar 'n skielike opeenhoping van voertuie om 'n draai was – 'n ongeluk in die pas! Die ouvoertuie se remme is tot die uiterste beproef en met genade van Bo, is almal veilig deur hierdie hindernis. Jammer Jan-Frederik, dat jou 1915 Model T Speedster se rem-sisteem seergekry het!

In George aangekom, het die deelnemers heerlik by Deacon House koffie en tee geniet en verder gekuier. Die toer is op gebruikelike wyse met 'n spog-ete by Waldo Scribante se huis afgesluit.



Bo: Van die deelnemers in Deacon House se parkeerarea tydens die teestop.

Besef ons werklik die waarde van toere en byeenkomste soos die VETTOER?

Twee interessante verhaaltjies uit die geskiedenis van die VETTOER:

In 2006 tydens die eerste VETTOER, sit twee oumotor entoesiaste wat van Durban ingevlieg het vir die George Oumotorskou, die Vrydagmiddag in George op die stoep van hul B&B en siedaar, daar kom 'n string Model T Fords verby – deelnemers aan die eerste VETTOER. Opgewonde sê die een entoesias vir die ander: *“Ek wil nog eendag so 'n T Ford besit!”* Vandag 20 jaar later, het Delvin Allan aan die 2026 VETTOER met sy eie 1911 Model T Ford deelgeneem, en sy vriend Sevrin Hansen, ook een van die stoepsitters, is nou besig met sy eie Model T Ford Speedster. Beide is nou ook lid van die Model T Ford Klub van Suid-Afrika.

Met trots kan ons noem dat 13 lede van die Model T Ford klub van Suid-Afrika deelgeneem het aan die 2026 VETTOER.

Een van die deelnemers (van Johannesburg) aan die 2026 VETTOER met sy 750 cc Austin 7, werk aan die Austin se ratkas tydens die toer, terwyl die een na die ander Model T Ford statig verbyry ...Die deelnemer se vrou maak die opmerking: *“Jy moet vir jou ook een van hierdie houtspeekwiel karre kry. Kyk hoe maklik ry hulle.”* Nodeloos om te sê dat Keith Schröder nou sy eie 1926 Model T Ford besit en dat hy verder beplan om aan die 2026 Feestoer van die Model T Ford Klub in die Oos-Vrystaat deel te neem. Intussen, het Keith ook by die Model T Ford Klub van Suid-Afrika aangesluit.

Lank lewe die statige voertuie waarmee ons speel en waarvan ons slegs die **tydelike** opsigtors is. Deel jou entoesiasme met ander – hierdie voertuie sal nog vir generasies hier wees, al is ons nie meer hier nie.

Down Memory Lane

The Ford Roots in Port Elizabeth

'I have often walked down this street before.....'

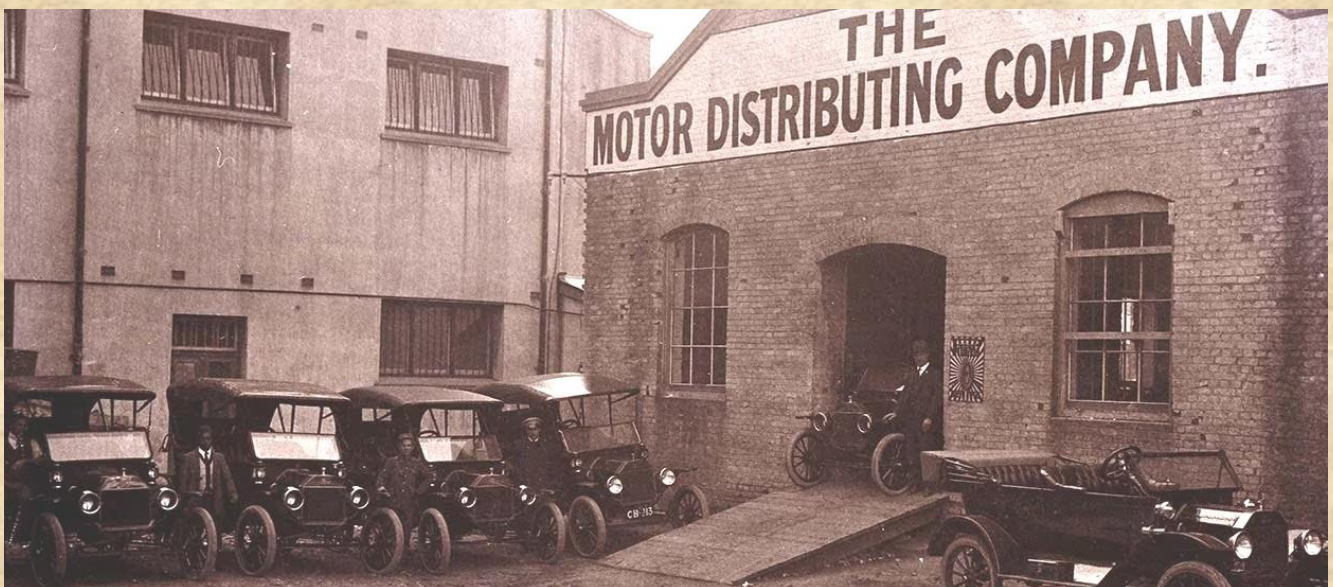
Remember this tune? A line from one of my favourite songs from the musical, My Fair Lady. Having relocated to Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) some eight years ago I have finally got myself to "walk the streets" and hopefully discover more about the early days of The Ford Motor Company in Port Elizabeth, and visit and also photograph some of the early assembly facilities. Luckily, all three of the early Ford plants, including the original wool store, are still standing today albeit repurposed and sold to new owners over the years. Sadly, it appears that Ford themselves have not kept a detailed history of their operations in South Africa.

What is known is that Henry Ford appointed Arkell & Douglas of New York and their branch in Port Elizabeth as official importers and agents in 1905, importing Models N, R and S. By 1908, there was a "Ford Motor Depot" in Rutger Street, Cape Town, while B.J. Penney ran the Ford dealership in Johannesburg. Holmes Ford of Kimberley was appointed official agents in 1912 by Charles Wessinger, MD of Arkell & Douglas. Harold Holmes placed his first order of six Fords that same year -- but had to wait six months for delivery!

Roll on Model T in October 1908!

It would appear that prior to local assembly most Model T's came to South Africa as complete assembled cars but from what I can gather some were sent to dealers as PKD cars, Partially Knocked Down. Basically, in the case of the Model T this entailed that the car arrived with the wheels, mudguards and soft top removed and packed separately, leaving the job of assembly to the dealer to complete prior to the car being displayed on the show room floor. Not that many Model T's made it to the showroom floor, such was the demand for this wonderful machine that a serious shortage existed.

I found a delightful photograph of a dealer 'The Motor Distributing Company' based somewhere in Port Elizabeth, just look at those beauties ready for delivery.



Because of the high demand for Model T's in North America, the factory in Dearborn was running at full capacity, and the task of building right-hand-drive models for export was assigned to the Canadian subsidiary (established 1904) in Walkerville, Ontario. These models were shipped to the Commonwealth countries such as India, Australia, New Zealand, the Rhodesias, and South Africa. Since our country and Canada were both members of the British Commonwealth back then, favourable import concessions made it possible for mister Wessinger to land the Model T's relatively cheaply. He also appointed dealers throughout the Union (even in smaller towns), and once the Model T had proven itself, it became the country's top seller. In fact, Fords became so numerous on SA roads that the term 'Ford' and 'motor car' became virtually synonymous. By 1919 Ford was without a doubt the most well-known automobile brand in SA.

By 1920 the Canadian plant could no longer keep up with the export orders for assembled cars – so in June 1923 Charles Holmes and Axel Stockelbach left for Canada to discuss the possibility of establishing an assembly plant in the Union of South Africa. An agreement was reached and in November 1923 the Ford Motor Company of South Africa (Pty.) Ltd. was founded as a full subsidiary of Ford of Canada Limited. From a collectability point of view, it is important to note that although the local company was established in 1923 there were no Model T's manufactured in South Africa during that calendar year – it would be safe to say that all Model T's with engine numbers lower than C455000 were imported as complete or PKD cars.

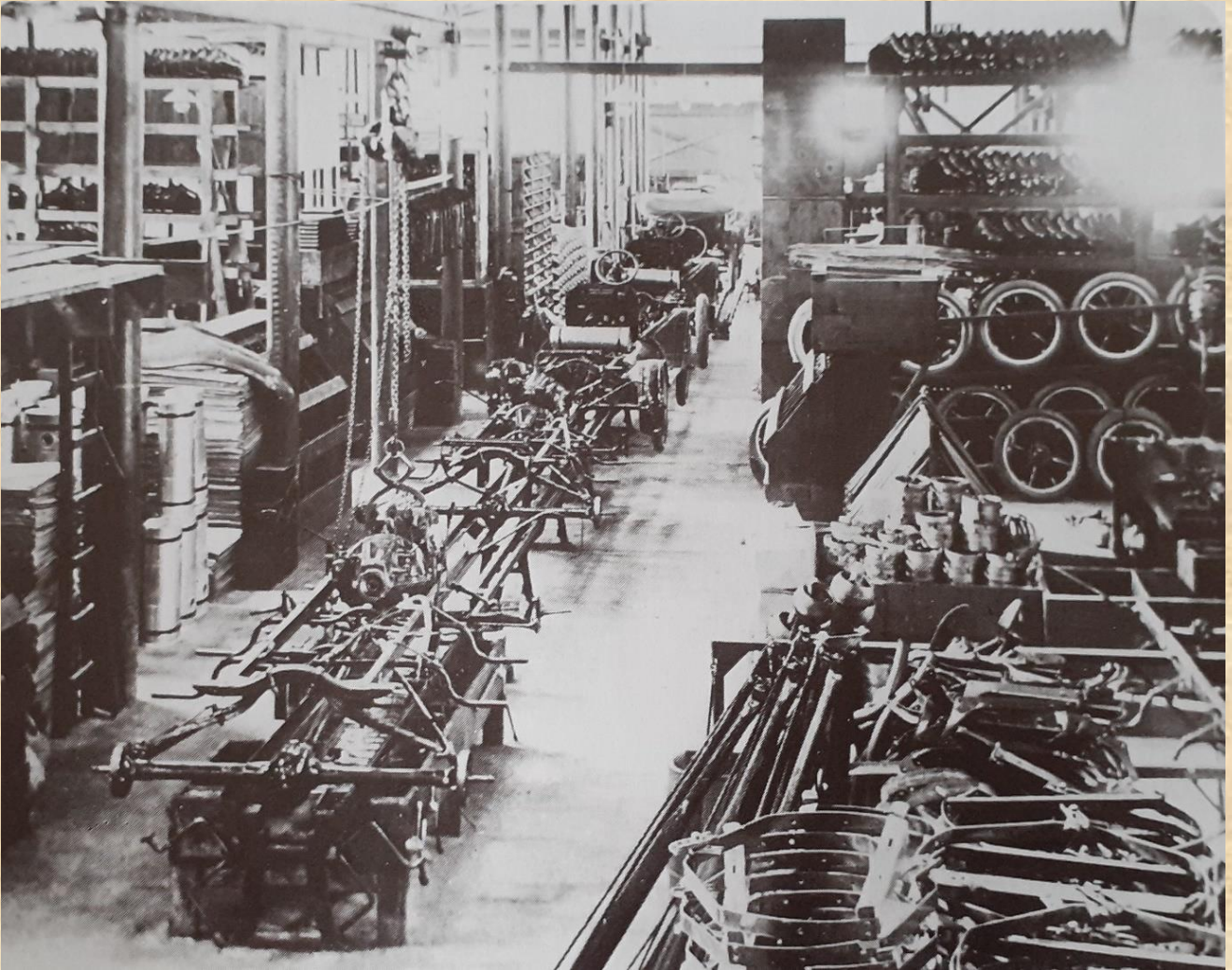
An old disused wool shed situated at number 60 Grahamstown Road, Port Elizabeth, was converted into an assembly plant with assembly operations starting on 19 January 1924 at a planned rate of 10 cars per day and in February 1924 the first South African built T's rolled off the assembly line. The first locally produced models went on sale in March that year. The company had 21 office staff along with 70 people in the assembly plant and it turned out 1 446 vehicles in the first 12 months.



This site was the difficult one to find since the street number has changed to number 111 Grahamstown Road and I only recognised it by the one end-gable still standing. Today it houses Maritime Motors Commercial, local agents for Mercedes Benz and Fuso trucks.



The cars were shipped in wooden crates from Canada as CKD (completely knocked down) units to Port Elizabeth, where they were assembled, painted and upholstered. Initially, twelve Model T's rolled off the assembly line every day, better than forecast.



This first assembly plant in Port Elizabeth in 1924, localizing the assembly of Model T cars was the first of its kind in Africa, and it marked Ford's 16th assembly plant outside of the US. This pioneering move not only made Ford the first global vehicle manufacturer to establish operations in South Africa, but also introduced the continent's first initial assembly line of any kind, and also firmly established the local automotive industry. Credit for this must go to Mr A F H Stockelbach the man indirectly responsible for the decision of the motor industry to locate in Port Elizabeth, thereby rightly earning the title of the "father" of the automotive industry in South Africa.

Unfortunately little information is available on Axel Stockelbach. Having emigrated from Denmark where he appears to have been a boffin on diesel engines, he quickly made name for himself in South Africa and after securing the assembly deal with Ford in Canada he became the first managing director of the newly found company. He remained a prominent figure in the South African automotive industry during the early-to-mid 20th century.

Between 1924 and 1927 business thrived, so much so that when the 'new look' cars arrived in 1926 all dealers were invited to attend their launch in Port Elizabeth. Little did they know that each one of them had to take delivery of one of the new models whether they liked it or not! It was nicknamed 'The Great Drive Away' with the dealers parading down Main Street on their way home!



With the introduction of the Model A the company soon outgrew the old wool store and in October 1930 the company relocated to a new factory between Harrower and York Roads in Kensington, spanning some 76 000 square feet and costing £60,000 at the time.





The architects of this complex were Siemerink and Walker, more of Siemerink later. The street address for the new factory premises was aptly named Stockelbach Street and is still there today. Production kicked off with 90 Model A's per day and over the following years the facility underwent multiple expansions. During the Second World War the majority of South Africa's manufacturing capacity was redirected to support the Allied campaign. The Ford plant played a significant role in this effort, producing almost 60 000 vehicles between 1939 and 1945, with 36 339 vehicles going to the Union Defence Force alone.

Today the Kensington factory houses a mini-factory complex with the front office block occupied by amongst others Bidvest Bank and Waltons Office and Stationery Supplies.





By 1947, Ford ramped up its expansion yet again, as construction began on a new assembly plant in the Neave Industrial Township. This new R2 million facility was officially opened by General Jan Smuts on 1 October 1948 and provided employment for 1 100 people. At the time the actual assembly line featured the longest single span building in the Southern Hemisphere. The building complex is situated on the corner of Henry Ford and Bennett Streets in Neave and one can only assume that Bennett Street was naïvely named after Harry Bennett, the shady character who intimidated and manipulated Henry Ford in his old age, trying to wrestle the company from him. Luckily Henry Ford II quickly got rid of him.





Today the Neave Complex houses Hutz, a medical supply company.



Ford in Port Elizabeth should have lived happily forever after but it was not to be, the Ford story of Port Elizabeth ended on a sad note. The 1980's became a very fluid period for the South African automotive industry as more of the overseas source companies came under intense political pressure to withdraw from the country. Sigma, which at that time consisted of Chrysler, Mazda, and Mitsubishi saw this as an opportunity to expand their Silverton facility and added the Peugeot and Citroën brands to its ranks in 1979, as well as, for a brief time, Leykor, British Leyland's South African subsidiary.

Sigma briefly became Amcar in 1984, when Anglo American took full control of the company as several of the brands in the Sigma stable left South Africa (Chrysler, Peugeot, and Citroën) and Leykor returned to its assembly plant in Cape Town.

The next step came only a year later, in 1985, when Amcar merged with the Ford Motor Company of South Africa to form the South African Motor Corporation (Samcor), with Ford holding 42% of the new entity. Thank you Harry Oppenheimer for indirectly saving Ford in this country.

The merger was a busy and sometimes challenging time for all involved with many Ford employees sadly moving from Port Elizabeth, where Ford had been part of the city's fabric since 1923, to Pretoria where its current operations are located. It took quite a few years before Ford officially returned to South Africa, however not to Port Elizabeth. The only Ford presence left in Port Elizabeth is the Struandale engine plant which was opened by Henry Ford II in May 1964 as the first local engine manufacturing plant, producing the legendary Essex V6 motor as its first product.

Axel Stockelbach however made and left his permanent mark on Port Elizabeth. In 1936 he commissioned Gertruida Brinkman (née Siemerink!) – the first woman to qualify as an architect in South Africa – to design his house, named "Ridgewood". This landmark house, popularly known as house Stockelbach, is a notable Art Deco building located at 30 Park Drive in PE, across the road from St Georges Park. It is currently owned by the Gutsche family and has been turned into the GFI Art Gallery, a gallery of note hosting world-class art exhibitions.



1939



By Paul Hoogendoorn March 2026

Authors note: While I have thoroughly enjoyed researching and writing this article, I would appreciate any comments or additional information regarding this topic from you, the reader.

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Note that ProAuto Rubber is now trading as PAR MEGASTORE



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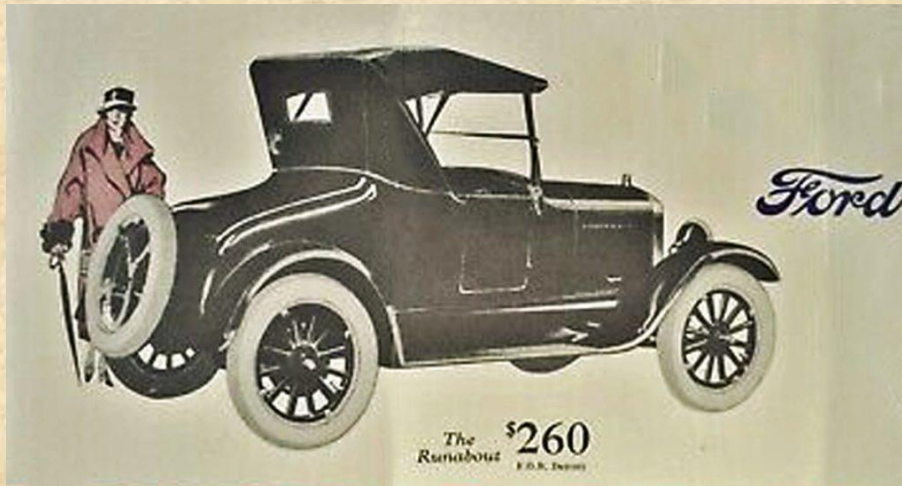
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1930 Ford Model A Roadster. The car is registered, licensed and good runner. Been restored a couple of years ago, not bolt & nut, canvas top in very good condition (side screens still in plastic). Asking R285 000.00. Contact Fred 084 523 0395



1925 Model T Ford advert

Model T Ford Club Regalia

Club regalia is still very limited at this stage. The committee is busy looking at different club shirts and embroidered badges. Watch this space! We would like to encourage the wearing of club shirts and caps to promote the MTFCSA. If anyone wishes to apply the MTFCSA logo to other clothing items such as ladies' scarves or peaks etc., please contact Emil Kuschke on 082 6554 879. It is important that the correct version of the club logo is used at all times.

Club caps are available at a low price of R80-00 each.

Bumper badges are R100-00 each.

Please speak to your regional champion to place your orders.



MTFCSA Social Media

The Club has an active Facebook page (Model T Ford Club of South Africa), Instagram account (modeltfordclubofsouthafrica) and website (www.modelt.co.za). You can follow these pages by scanning the QR codes below or visiting the pages directly.



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