

Shoptorque

Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal

Founded February 1981

October 2024

Chairman's Chatter

Spring has Sprung and now is the time to enjoy the lighter Days ahead.

Activity wise we have been to:

Baynsfield Estate, Impala Ridge, Old North Karibu and for Heritage Month chased Wesley the Steam Train to Inchanga Station.

We welcome new Members : Bradley Richter & Craig Patterson.

Our Monthly displays have seen some good & poor turnouts. Regular to our Meetings and taking the Concourse in July was the 1953 Ariel Square 4 of Terry Chesterton.

August - Post Classics saw the 2011 Harley-Davidson 883 Sportster of Reg Venter. Reg regularly rides this Machine on our Outings.

September - European / Continental. This is a carry over to November due to only 2 Bikes in the line up.

October - Racing & Classic Off Road, was well supported with the 1970 Harley-Davidson 250cc Aeromachi of Mac Mckenzie & the 1976 Suzuki 250 of Stephen Knight each taking home Trophy.

As we look towards the end of the Year, we still have a few more Outings to look forward to.

Before we know it, the AGM will be upon us. Time to look at " what we can do for the Club", by being active.

Lets keep the Wheels of our Classic Motorcycle Movement going.

Till next time.

Yours on two and sometimes three Wheels.

Derek Pirie

Chairman



We lost one of the greats in our club. Mike Mathews, long serving committee member and club house manager for many years will be sorely missed.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Club House: 137 Tara Road Bluff Durban

Email: <u>info@ncmc.org.za</u>
Website: www.ncmc.org.za

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Your Committee

Position	Name	Email address	Cell
Patron	Alan Young	alan.june.young@gmail.com	082 465 8273
Chairman	Derek Pirie	derekp985@gmail.com	082 673 1335
Vice Chairman	Jayson Anderson	jayson@thesolutiongroup.co.za	073 708 9989
Clubhouse Manager	TBA	n/a	n/a
Treasurer	Doug Watson	dugwatson@gmail.com	083 519 5326
Secretary	Marcia Hinks	marciabrodowicz@gmail.com	082 777 3878
Dating Officer	Rod Thomas	rodthomas@telkomsa.net	073 365 6494
Spares Manager	Alain Beltram	abl@iafrica.com	083 993-0772
Regalia Officer	Danielle Beltran	dbeltran@wirelessza.co.za	083 333 4538
Website	John Booth	beltecsa@gmail.com	073 341 8211
Librarian	Dave Stone	dstonealex@gmail.com	073 663 4094
Fundraising	Deena Naidoo	dena@xsinet.co.za	072 387 7710
SAVVA Delegate	Derek Pirie	derekp985@gmail.com	082 673 1335
Editor	John Booth	beltecsa@gmail.com	073 708 9989
Outings & Breakfast Runs	Derek Pirie	derekp985@gmail.com	082 673 1335
Rally Coordinator	Derek Pirie	derekp985@gmail.com	082 673 1335
Bikes on Show	Deena Naidoo	dena@xsinet.co.za	072 387 7710

Banking Details:

Banking Details: Standard Bank Bluff

Banking Code: 051001 Account No 05-155-629-4

New Members:

We welcome new members: Bradley Richter and Craig Patterson. We trust you will have an enjoyable and long association with the Club.

Those Sick, Those We Remember:

We note the passing of Mike Mathews, Don King, Bev Pullon, Derek Graham, Frans Vera our condolences to the family.

Bike of the Month Competition Categories

January:	Best of British including best AJS / Matchless
February:	Golden Oldies (Dec 1936) & Golden Years (1937-1945)
	Trophy
March:	Day of the Rising Sun
April:	BMW – Dave Turnbull Trophy
May:	Tiddlers & Scooters
June:	Classic Bikes (1946 – 1995)
July:	Concourse Competition
August:	Post-Classic (1996 – 2010)
September:	European – including Spain, Holland, France, Belgium, Germany
	(excl BMW), Italy, Czechoslovakia and Russia
October:	Racing Bike & Classic Off Road
November:	North / South American & Modern (2011 – present day)
December:	AGM – No Competition

Bike of the Month Competition Guidelines:

Members are reminded that to qualify for the competitions they must be fully paid up members; the bike entered in the competition must be owned by them; it must comply with the category entered and it must be a runner. If the bike is a non-runner it will be accepted for display, but will not considered as a competitor.

Many thanks and regards,

Alan.

Our sincere thanks to Paul Ward of Startline for his very generous sponsorship of prize money.

<u>The Opinions expressed in Shop Torque are not necessarily those of the Chairman, Editor, The Committee or other contributors</u>

Editorial

Greetings Everyone

If reports in various publications are led to be believed then storm clouds are indeed looming for the vintage vehicle movement as a whole. Banning of decorative chrome, banning of the internal combustion engine and removing any vehicles off the road older than 10 to 15 years to name but a few. If the Soothsayers have it right then we are indeed facing the abyss.

However let's look at the merits of each of these potential bans. The reason for banning of chromium is the toxicity of the process to the worker. So we may be able to get around this by spray paint, wrapping the item, stainless steel or getting it done in another country. Not that much of an issue in the greater scale of things, but let us not ignore worker safety.

The outright ban of the internal combustion engine could be a bit more problematic. Would we be able to exchange our engine for whatever is the flavour of the day? Possibly an electric or hydrogen engine and in doing so still keep the rest of the motorcycle intact. Imagine burning it up to JHB on our 1932 BSA fully equipped with an electric motor and a sack full of batteries. What would the DJ organisers say about that?

Then the removal of all vehicles older than 10 to 15 years. Bye-bye the vintage car and motorcycle movement, vintage motorcycle gets moved into the lounge... permanently. However we are missing one crucial factor here... money. This movement is worth serious money and a lot of influential people enjoy this hobby. Banning of older vehicles is probably one of the more ludicrous ideas being punted around. Simply because to replace that 10 year old vehicle which yes might be burning a little more oil than it did when new, might just cause more pollution to the environment than just letting it run to the end of its life.

So whereas these issues are of concern I don't think they will happen overnight and if it did I am sure there will be other solutions to keep these old motorcycles on the road. So I suggest we sleep easy at night and forget about dreaming of that shiny new electric or hydrogen engine for our vintage AJS.

On a slightly different note. I see in general motorcycle sales are down, however amongst the classic buyers, Japanese motorcycle sales are still robust while British makes appear to be down with a few exceptions. I guess we need to understand that the population amongst some countries is on the decline. Italy and Japan are in critical mode where deaths far exceed births. So as time goes on the collectors pool will also diminish. Perhaps in terms of British bikes supply is now equal to demand with demand possibly getting smaller. In other words there are enough restored BSA Bantams to go around without having to restore any more. In addition it might be uneconomical to restore these bikes from a financial point of view. Interesting Sidecars are showing robust sales.

John Booth Editor Keeping the wheels turning.

This is your story

I would like to run a Who's Who in the club under the title: "This is your story". We have some interesting people in our club and I feel these stories need to be told. Personal stories can give us an insight of what life was like decades ago and we need these accounts written down before they are lost in time. You may not think you have much to share but everyone has a story worth telling. I would like this to be a regular feature in the club newsletter. Ed

The criteria to use when writing your story:

Where were you born and raised?
Where were you educated? What were you trained in? Your career path?
When did you join the club and what vehicles do you own?
Any other interesting facts.
And Photos please.

Mike Mathews: This is your story as sent in by Alan Young

Michael Peter Mathews.

Born 24/10/1944, passed away,12/7/2024. He would have reached his 80th year in October 2024 which would have entitled him to a reduction in subscriptions.

Mike was born when the family lived in Greenwood Park, Durban.

At age 8 the Mathews family emigrated to Rhodesia and this was where Mike spent his formative years. He was enrolled in the Courtney Selous school in Salisbury and on completion of his primary education he joined Churchill High School where he completed his schooling and was then cast into the search for employment. At age 18 he was signed on by the Rhodesian Air Force as an Airframe Fitter.

At some stage Mike was transferred to Gwelo and he and colleagues would regularly commute the 275km on weekends to enjoy the social activities that Salisbury had to offer. And this was when romance came into his life! At a party, on one of these trips to Salisbury he met Liz Renwick. Although he was over imbibed he had piqued Liz's interest who agreed to another meeting. Love blossomed and lead eventually to marriage on 1st Feb 1969. This union lead to the birth of Lisa followed by Simon and Simon's spouse blessed Mike and Liz with grandson Joshua.

In 1980 the Mathews emigrated to Durban where Mike took up employment with Industrial Maintenance Services. Mikes father and brothers were avid motorcyclists so inevitably Mike joined the CMCN which at that time was using the Mayville Hotel as their base while the clubhouse in Tara Road was under construction.

Both Mike and myself joined the club when it's base was the Mayville. I don't recall any interaction with Mike at the time which only occurred when we took occupation of these premises as tenants of the municipality at extremely favourable monthly rental. Mike quickly established himself as a member who was prepared to work in the interest of the club and it was not long before he was appointed to the committee with the portfolio of clubhouse manager. At one of the early meetings Mike rebuked me for my dress code but despite this perceived animosity we became good friends probably due to our mutual interest in golf and subsequently spent many pleasant hours on the 18 hole mashie course on the other side of the canal. Mikes skill as a fitter and mechanic was an asset to the club. He could repair and maintain most of the clubhouse facilities and I recall how meticulous he was in every task he undertook. This also applied to the motorcycles he restored and rode. He participated in the classic racing on a Bultaco which he acquired and restored. In his small workshop at home he manufactured parts for the bikes he worked on including BSA Bantams and various BMW models. He was always willing to assist other members with their restorations making parts or lending a hand.

When a ride-on mower and brush cutter were donated to the club Mike carefully restored both to working condition then spent many hours using both machines to cut and trim the grass in the club grounds until sadly illness compelled him to hand over to a younger member. But, he continued to serve our club by recording payment of subs by members and working closely with our financial controllers right up until he was admitted to a care home shortly before his passing.

Our sincere condolences go to Liz and her family who have expressed the wish to disperse Mikes ashes in the club grounds. Mike will be remembered with respect and affection. Rest in Peace.

<u>Please note I do not have any 'This is your story' for the next newsletter. So please get writing and I will publish when and if I get any in. Ed</u>



Congratulations to Stephen Knight winner of the raffle held by the Lions International Durban South. Our sincere thanks to the ladies of the Lions Club who do such a sterling job of providing our club meals. Giving up their own free time and effort of good causes. Thank you and well done ladies!!

Monthly Competition

Bike of the month must be a runner if entered into the competition (concourse is a judged section and must be a runner). If the bike is a non-runner it will be accepted for display only and will not be considered as a competitor. For others, a member is welcome to put on their projects, barn finds as in the appropriate category for members to see.

Concourse Competition

1st 1953 Ariel Square 4 Terry Chesterton



2nd 1970 BMW R50/5 Billy Thomas



3nd 1977 BMC R75/5 Doug Watson



Post Classic 1997 to 2017

^{1st} 2011 Harley Davidson 883 Sportster Reg Venter



2nd 2017 Triumph 900 Street Twin Paul Ward



3rd 2013 Triumph Tiger 800XC Doug Watson



Classic Racing Bikes

1st 1970 Harley Davidson AeroMachi Mac Mckenzie



2nd 1972 BSA Rocket 3 Tommy Shoeman



3rd Krindler Van Veen 50cc Don Bristol



Classic Off Road Racing Bikes

1st 1976 Suzuki 250cc Steven Knight



2nd 1980 Suzuki PE250 Trevor Davids



3rd 1954 Matchless G80CS Jason Anderson



SAVVA Indemnity Forms and Cards:

Indemnity Forms and Indemnity Cards

The form is available for download on the SAVVA website under Forms.

Indemnity forms are legal documents. Both sides of the forms must be completed, signed and witnessed, and after the number of the indemnity card issued has been recorded on the form, the original forms should be posted to the SAVVA Secretary, or brought to the SAVVA AGM each year. Clubs are encouraged to keep copies of the forms.

SAVVA Indemnity applies to all events, socials, fun runs, displays, nothing excluded, organised and promoted by a club affiliated to SAVVA.

The onus rests upon the Club to ensure persons listed in Section 5 of the Handbook complete the forms.

Indemnity Cards It is suggested that when a new member joins a club that an indemnity card be issued to him/her and spouse immediately.

Every single person involved with a SAVVA competitive event where a permit has been issued shall have in their possession an Indemnity Card issued by the Club on behalf of SAVVA, that is all drivers, navigators, passengers of participating vehicles, all officials, marshals and their assistants, including drivers and passengers of tender vehicles and in modern vehicles who are part of the event, and persons representing sponsors, the press, SAVVA or the host club who will be present on the event or who may travel in competing vehicles.

Thus, as Club Members wishing to participate in any Club organised event, please ensure that you have a SAVVA indemnity card, which is issued when you join, and that your Bike is SAVVA dated. Rod Thomas can assist in this regard, as he's the Club Dating Officer.

Items for Sale/Wanted:

Times are hard. Therefore there are no motorcycles for sale and no one wants to buy anything either.

DATING OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Many of our Members are not taking the opportunity to have their Vehicles Dated. Dating of a Vehicle serves two things.

The First is so that you can Enter the Vehicle in a SAVVA Sanctioned Event like, the D-J; Natal Classic; Magnum; Fairest Cape, to name a few.

Many enter an Event "PENDING DATING" and never do have the Vehicle Dated. Vehicle Dating is a requirement.

Secondly a Dated Vehicle adds Authentication to a Vehicle when being sold.

Dating Forms can be downloaded from the SAVVA website.

It is up to the Person applying for the Dating of a Vehicle to furnish all the necessary Information required, not the Club Dating Officer or SAVVA.

Information on you Vehicle can be found on the Web or from s Mark Specialist for your Vehicle

ROD Thomas is our Club's Dating Officer and he can be contacted by Message on.

Cell: +27 73 365 6494

Articles from the past

A Colonial rider Relates How - He put a Lion to Flight

A Motor Cycle That Daunted a Lion Out in the African Bush by J. W. Soper

t the time when this little adventure occurred I had just become the very proud owner of a 7-9 Indian, and I gloried in the sheen of its red enamel and the glitter of the plated handlebars. Although it was rather heavy, I bought it chiefly because of the oversize tyres fitted, which were better for riding over the heavy sand of which my home-made road consists. It was brand new and, at the time, I thought more of it than anything else - you will know the feeling, all you motorcyclists. I would like to make it clear that I had had no mechanical training, and thus, realising my ignorance, I used to take the book of instructions almost literally to heart. I proceeded to use the machine to ride out from the Victoria Falls to my cattle ranch and back again, a distance of 25 miles each way.

One afternoon, at about five o'clock, I was on the road when I saw in front of me at a distance of about 200 yards what I first took to be either baboons or pigs.



Perhaps I ought to explain that my road was cut through very thick bush, and although not very wide I could see along it for a long way in some places where it was quite straight. I was only about seven miles from the Victoria Falls and civilisation, but was really just as much alone as if I had been in the heart of the Sahara

There was nobody to help one in an emergency of a minor nature, a fact which I more fully realised when I got close

enough to see that what I had thought us be pigs or baboons were really lions. At this stage I did not feel afraid, not because of any inherent boldness, but because I knew that in the vast majority of cases all wild animals will get out of the way of man not to say nothing of my new Indian! However, I got closer and closer, and finally I declutched and came to a halt. keeping the engine gently ticking over. I was now about twenty-five yards from a huge lion, who sat on his haunches right in the middle of my path, looking interestedly at me and the machine. I kept my eyes on him as much as possible, but out of the corners I could see several other lions and lionesses playing; but it was comforting to note that they did not appear to take any notice of me at all.

It was a lion and his family, and although they did not look at all truculent the one in the path had got his eye most persistently upon me. I did not like it at all and cast around in my mind as to what I should do. The path was too narrow to turn round such a big machine in the loose sand without taking too much of my attention from the lion, and, besides, I was too close. I thought of climbing a tree, but if I did this I would have to drop the machine, which would probably bend the nice new handles.

All the time the engine was ticking over very nicely on its two cylinders - pompom-pom-pom - without a falter. This seemed to interest the lion, who no doubt wondered what strange kind of animal it had come across. He was sitting right bang in the middle of the track, or I would have made an attempt to rush by; but had I attempted this I should most likely have bumped him, and he, in all probability would have bumped me off-in more senses than one! All the same, something had to be done.

The lion appeared to be quite content and sat on his haunches, licking his face like some great cat when he did not pause to have a good look at me. These pauses to look at me were becoming longer, and I was not too happy over it. So far all had gone well, but how long would it last? It was up to me to do something - but what? The idea then occurred to me to pump a lot of oil into the engine to make a

and then suddenly to race the engine to startle him.

I now thought of the effect on the machine and what the book of words said. I distinctly remembered it said that too much oil was very much better than not enough, but -and this made me pause- it also said, "In NO circumstances must the engine be raced when not under load". However, I waived this latter as I felt that the makers of the machine probably had not been faced with my dilemma.

In the first place I felt for the auxiliary pump situated between my knees. I did not dare take my eyes off the lion, and I fumbled about quite a lot until I finally found the pump. Steadily I pumped five good pumpfuls with no air bubbles, watching the lion as intently as he was watching me. At the finish of the fifth pumpful he suddenly stopped licking his face and raised his head. His line of vision was where he would be bound to see the cloud of smoke, and I now felt sure that the moment was propitious to race the engine.

This I did in no half-hearted manner. I twisted the grip right over as far as it would go, and the engine immediately responded with what must have seemed to the lion to be a terrific roar. It had the

desired effect, the lion made a sudden spring with all four feet to the left, and stood looking at me with a very different expression on his face. He no longer looked docile; on the contrary, he was snarling and his tail twitched. The other animals also ceased to play and were looking at me in a different way, although they did not look so truculent as the lion with whom I was more intimately concerned. But, more important, I could see that my road was now clear, although the lions were only just off of it.

At this juncture I made my first mistake—I forgot that the throttle was wide open when I let in the clutch. The machine bounded forward right off the road and—my horror- straight for the lion! I can best explain what happened by saying that the machine sprang at the lion with the from wheel in the air, but I just managed to hang on and to close the throttle a bit.

The lion bolted, apparently dismayed by the bold front I had put up -or, I should say- the bold front the machine had put up! The last I saw of him was as he was taking a long jump over a partly faller tree. I manoeuvred the machine on to the path again, and there was soon a long streak of smoke as I "hit it up" for home and safety.

Have Bio - Will Travel

Bill Mellor - CMC of Natal

Back in the 30's my late father had just disposed of his two businesses, a Bakery/General Dealer in Richmond and a Trading Store in Ixopo, and was casting about for something to invest in to keep him busy. So, being a showman at heart, he finally decided to settle for a travelling bioscope.

Being out of work at the time I was a cert to be his right hand man and handle the operating and maintenance side of the venture, and with the idea having now taken root we had to decide what towns and villages we would show at and how often.

Ixopo was, of course, our first choice being just too far (remember there were no tarred roads in those days - only dirt which turned to mud when it rained) from Pietermaritzburg and was tailor made for a show every Saturday. We negotiated with the management of the local Agricultural Hall and they agreed to us booking the hall permanently for Saturday nights.

Then we looked around for other useful venues and arranged with the various towns, such as Richmond, Umzimkulu, Howick and Mooi River for permanent bookings.

It was then off to Johannesburg to sign up contracts for film hire with African Consolidated Films and the purchase of the necessary equipment which had to be portable and also able to fit comfortably into our Dodge sedan. The only modification to the car was the addition of an extra blade to each of the rear springs. We also had to remove the rear seat and leaner to accommodate all the paraphernalia required.

Back home it was practice, practice and more practice to perfect the offloading of the equipment and setting it up in our lounge, then breaking it all down and re-packing the car. Between times we showed our first film "Showboat", starring Paul Robeson, which we had brought back with us from Jo'burg. We ran this film through over and over again for all our friends and relations who cared to watch. This was mainly to practise threading the film, etc. Eventually we had a very "slick" operation which met with Father's approval. As I said, he was a showman and demanded a very high standard.

Then came the naming of the Company. Many titles were bandied about. Personally I thought "MELLOR'S MOBILE MOVIES" would be appropriate but Dad would have none of that. We eventually settled for "PROVINCIAL TALKIE TOURS".

One of the big problems we had in most places was the electrics and Ixopo was no different. No Escom here in those days. The local garage owner, a certain Les Johnstone operated a power station to supply the village, from 4pm till midnight, with enough power for lights and electric kettle only. There was a small generator set for start up plus two large sets for when the demand increased. This gave only DC current and we needed AC for our equipment and so we had, with his permission, installed a rotary DC-AC converter to cater for our needs.

At our first trial run in the Agricultural Hall we found the fuses couldn't cope with the load of our motor, so we increased the fuse strength steadily and eventually we had a thick fuse made of twisted strands of wire from the top of champagne bottles. To my knowledge

those fuses stayed there till the hall was demolished many years ago.

Another big problem was due to the curved configuration of the ceiling which caused the sound to echo and boom something terrible. So off to the local drapers to purchase many yards of heavy, coarse cloth, commonly referred to by a name which we may no longer use, but is now known as "double thick". This we hung on the iron tresses supporting the roof and ceiling and the baffle effect cured the echoes. Unfortunately we had to remove these strips after every show for there were nimble fingered gentry, even in those days.

At Ixopo, when we were busy setting up, it was my practice to leave the hall light switches on so that when the generator was started I would know and start the DC/AC converter. We had an arrangement with the power house attendant that on Saturdays he would start one of the main generators to cater for the current needed to our equipment. On this particular day he happened to be away and a stand-in was doing his job. This chap was not aware of our arrangement and started the small set. The lights came on and I switched on the converter. This in turn almost stopped the set. The attendant immediately started a big set, switched into the system and the surge of current came through and "blew" our lamp and amplifier. Disaster! We were showing to 2 houses that night, the film being "Elizabeth the Great", and we expected 2 full houses. So off to find the local radio fundi, a certain Jack Gordon, who came and attempted to get our amplifier working and failed. The projector worked, a new lamp did the trick, but still no sound.

A couple of hours later and the patrons were arriving for the early show. Eventually when we realised that the amplifier was not repairable we had a council of war and came up with the following solution. Dad went out onto the verandah and, standing on a chair, announced our predicament to the crowd. But, he told them, if they wished, come in and take their seats and we would run the film through silent and he, being the showman he was, would stand on the stage and relate the story for them. We filled the hall! Remember we had seen that picture so often we knew it almost word for word.

That amplifier gave us another fright at Mooi River when one of our "helpers" ran the cable to the front of the hall for the speaker, jerked on the cable and pulled the amplifier through the window of the operating box where it landed with the crash of broken glass on the floor.

I shouted to Dad to carry on setting up. I would immediately take the amplifier to Pietermaritzburg to have it repaired. He would phone Reid's Radio to tell them I was on my way. Did that Dodge go! I arrived back at the hall with patrons already seated, plugged in and started the show almost on time. We never, ever, "Did not show".

Many friends we made over that period. There was always the odd character coming up to us before the show and during interval to have a look at the projector's insides. One bloke asked me every time "Just how do you get a square picture out of a round hole?" Having only one machine entailed stopping to change the reels every 20 minutes. By dint of much practice we cut the change over period time to 27 seconds, which we considered "pretty good".

Mondays were always maintenance days when all the equipment was examined, car and all. The old film would have to be stripped, packed and

"Griffin's Hill in dry weather, red dust, in wet weather, red mud"

Did I tell you about the mud? Along the old main road between Estcourt and Mooi River was the notorious Griffin's Hill, in dry weather red dust, in wet weather, red mud. In those good old days if one wanted to be sure of arriving, then skid chains had to carried. Many was the time we donned those chains on the rear wheels for without them there was no way of getting up, or for that matter, down Griffin's. Many was the car we saw stranded in a gutter with no hope of getting out under their own power. If it happened to rain in winter, which it did, and we were showing in Mooi River, then 10 to 1, we would have to scrape ice from the windscreen after the show. Many a night I stood behind the projector holding my gloved hands over the lamphouse so that I would be able to thread the film.

It was shortly after we had started this business that we took over the Estcourt Bioscope and moved our home lock, stock and barrel to that town. That show operated in the Town Hall and many is the story that could be told about that as well.

That is the reason I got to know Griffin's Hill so well. Everytime we moved from base, there was Griffin's plus, of course, other awful roads such as Umkomass Valley, Town Hill from Pietermaritzburg, Fox Hill outside Richmond. 'Tis hard to believe these days when bowling along the tar and no chains in the boot'. Oh well, I suppose we have progressed somewhat.

forwarded by passenger train to the next show town. A new film would be collected from the station and spliced up for next weeks showing.

For those that might be interested, I list the equipment we used.

The projector was a simplex Semi Portable 35mm with 1000ft reels. The amplifier, an R.C.A. improved sound system, with one fourteen inch distortion free loudspeaker, and make no mistake, that speaker could handle any hall we ever showed in.

In the long run it was rain that killed us, mentally as well as financially. Local inhabitants alone were not, in those small towns, sufficient to make it profitable. We had to have the support of the farming community. All very well in fine weather, but when it rained the farmers stayed at home and watched the mealies grow! Travelling conditions were hazardous and sometimes arduous, particularly in the wet.

Accidents on the road - we saw many not as horrific as some of today's, but then there wasn't as much traffic.

The final straw was when we had 27 consecutive shows and it rained for every one. We could not make it pay under those circumstances and we sold the show. Bringing entertainment to those villages during the thirties was a pleasure and I hope you enjoyed reading about it as much as we enjoyed living it.

Random Photo Gallery













5th August 1972:









