

THE MAGNUM SAVVA NATIONAL VINTAGE AND CLASSIC RALLY 2016 by Pat Whelan

Maggie and I had entered our normal trusty steed – 280SL Merc – for this year's Magnum Rally and together with Trevor and Shirley Hatherell left for Hazyview a day early. Trevor had entered his "new" 500SL which unfortunately was not ready in time. Although they knew they would be excluded from the overall results, decided to participate in their modern SLK. They would have actually finished in 3rd place in score group D.

We stopped at Dullstroom for lunch and visited the Whisky Bar which has in excess of 1000 different types of whisky for tasters. Discretion overtook valour and we restricted ourselves to an Irish draft beer.

On arrival at Hotel Numbi we booked into our allocated rooms with much hilarity. We were told that Trevor and Larina Hatherell were in one room and Stewart and Shirley Macgregor were in another. The management rectified the mistake but asked if this really was a rally weekend.

The next day the four of us spent a very enjoyable time in the Kruger Park returning to the hotel to meet all our fellow competitors and complete documentation and scrutineering.

We started Thursday at 09:47 in score group D as last vehicle on the road. The route took us north out of Hazyview with a tea and snacks stop at Mariepskop View Chalets. They have a fantastic classic car and motor bike museum but we only had 30 minutes to view and drink tea etc. We know of at least two teams that forgot that they had an exact time of departure and then had to do a rather rapid time make up.

The route took us to Blyderivierspoort restaurant for lunch and from where we returned back to Hotel Numbi to swap stories and quench our thirsts whilst standing in the que to hand in our loggers and receive our day scores within about 2 minutes. The loggers have replaced the old manned marshal points and, besides cutting down on costs to the organisers, have removed most queries and time waste.

Friday started for us at the same 09:47 and proceeded through White River towards Karino onto the N4. We turned right to Mara onto the Boulders road. The lunch break was in Barberton at Jathira Service Station. Then through Nelspruit traffic on a Friday afternoon back to Hazyview. We queued, quenched and duly received our day scores before enjoying a superb braai supper.

Day 3 took us on the Sabie road with a left to Kiepersol. Maggie told me to turn left when we were 200 meters past the intersection. U turn and make up lost time on a road with potholes at the bottom of which I could see Adelaide. Fortunately the logger marshal point was 5km's away and we had recovered the lost time. Back to Hazyview, past the hotel, and on the road to Graskop for a refuel. On the mountain pass road through the Strydom Tunnel we caught a logging truck travelling at about 15kph. With 5 cars between us and the truck the late clock was ticking and the tension was mounting. I saw a gap, floored the accelerator and overtook the lot. We had lost quite a lot of time and I think Maggie lost a few years with me having fun on the mountain pass recovering the time. Again, fortunately, the logger marshal point was further down the road but we still took a 10 second late penalty. We then stopped at Lisbon Falls for a 20 minute viewing before proceeding to God's Window for a 14 minute viewing. Back through Graskop to return to Hazyview where the rally finished with lunch at Topilino's Restaurant – highly recommended! We again queued, quenched and received our day scores. I cannot speak more highly of these loggers that have removed the long wait for results.

The prize giving function at Hotel Numbi followed with the normal thank you's and speeches to which we must add ours. The organization was superb – congratulations to Leo plus his whole team of very willing helpers. The hotel and all their staff exceeded our expectations and resolved every problem or query. I never heard any complaints about the hotel or the event – congrats again to Leo.

Everybody who competed on the event has received the results but they can be viewed on the POMC website. Take a bow VVC we had 8 official club entries with a number of others who entered under another club.

After three days of rallying Neil Stander on a 1958 BMW 600 won speed group A with a penalty of 425. Gavin Walton on a 1965 AJS 500 won speed group B with 348. Brian Askew and Syd Brett in Syd's E-Type Jag bagged speed group C with 606. Although they entered under the Jag Club banner they are both VVC members. Maggie and I were first in score group D with a penalty of 101 with Gary and Elize Berndt second on 139 in their BMW 325i. The four speed group winners were each presented with a two day bed and breakfast voucher courtesy Hotel Numbi. Maggie and I decided to use ours immediately and stayed on to return home on Tuesday morning.

Speed group D is open odo and instruments and is therefore an event in which more of the VVC and SARRA members can compete or tour. Come on guys this was not an expensive, over the top weekend and was very enjoyable for everybody concerned – competitors, tourers and organizers but needs more entries.

Thanx again Leo and see you all next year.

Pat Whelan