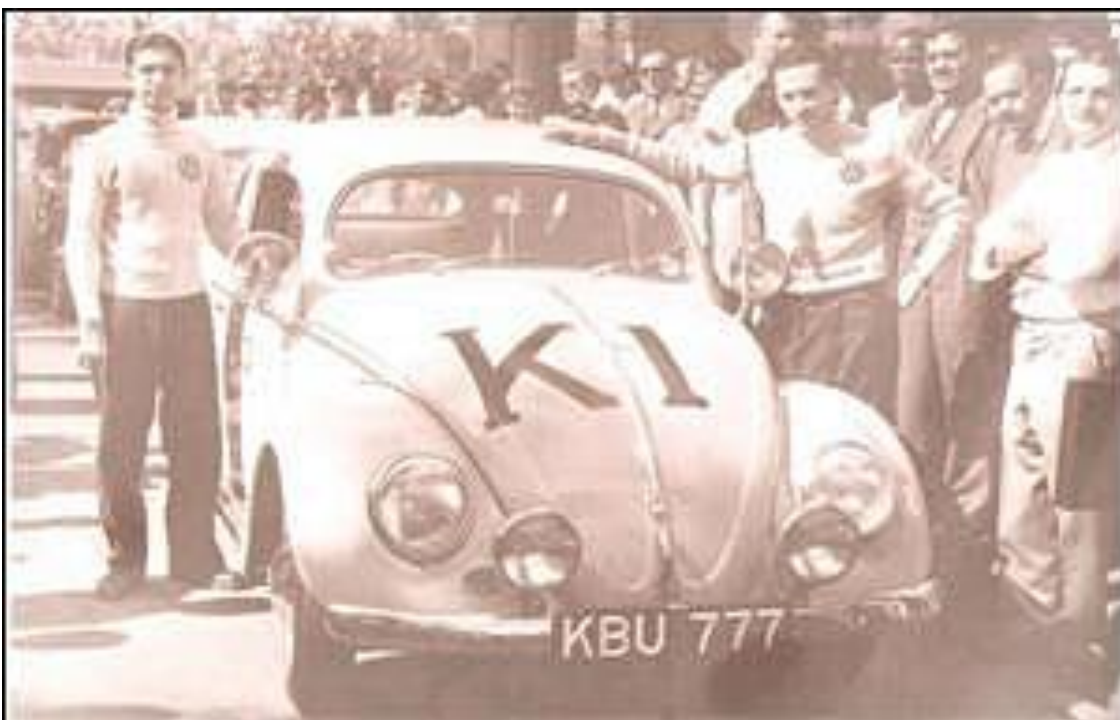


Recollections from the earliest East African Safari Rally



Vic Preston (and little son Jnr) in the first ever EA Rally in 1953. First Rally seen here with driver D P Marwaha.

Conditions for entry: All the cars were to be in showroom condition – that is nothing could be added to the specification to improve their performance. Entries were to be divided into four classes based on the showroom price of the car. Each class would have its own target time for the event, no overall winner was to be declared, entry fee for this historic event was 100 Shillings (£5). The event was timed to finish at the same time the Queen was being crowned in Westminster Abbey. The event ran from 27th May – 1st June 1953. The winning group car is a Tatra T-600



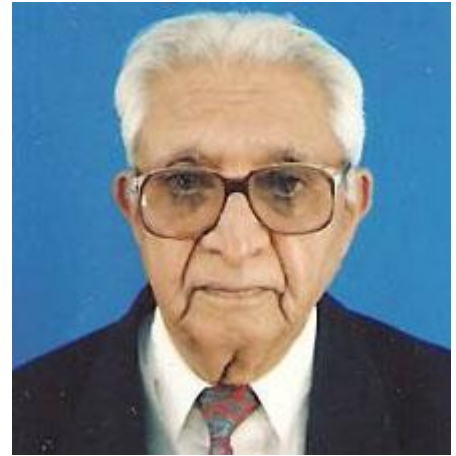
Same combination again the following year as outright winners in 1954 in a VW Beetle

“ In the first ever Coronation Safari Rally started in 1953 I am glad and very proud that along with my co-driver Late Vic Preston Senior we were winners 1st in Class "C" on this event driving a Tatra T-600 car. No overall winner was declared in 1953 and there were three class winners only.

In the next two years we were overall winners of the Coronation Safari Rallies in year 1954 when we drove a Volkswagen Beetle and in 1955 Ford Zephyr Mark-I, again with my co-driver the Late Vic Preston Senior. Never had African motor sport seen such dominance by one team of driver and co-driver with three successive victories.

This event was started to commemorate the occasion of crowning ceremony of Her Majesty the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth-II in the year 1953 by personalities such as Eric Cecil, L.F. Menton, Ian Craigie all officials of the Royal East African Automobile

Association who took the decision to hold a marathon event to be known as Coronation Safari Rally in Kenya, Uganda and then Tanganyika in May 1953.”



Mr D P Marwaha an East African Safari Rally Pioneer in 2009



Is this Vic Preston Snr? Clip taken from the 1972 EA Rally?



Great mates together Mbiraru and Kurari in 1972 watching Hannu Mikola and Gunar Palmin a Ford Escort fly past (1972) and wishing “kaa-ba-k te Narob” (I will meet you in Nairobi)

And Guys as if you knew what a Tatra was.....?

The **Tatra 600** was a large car from the Czech manufacturer Tatra.

After World War II, Tatra continued its pre-war business of building passenger cars in addition to commercial (and military) vehicles. The Tatra 600 Tatraplan was designed in 1946-47 by Josef Chalupa, Vladimír Popelář, František Kardaš and Hans Ledwinka. (Next time you want to design something like a peeping Tom, take a course from these guys). The name of the car celebrated the new Communist planned economy (big deal) but also referred to aeroplane inspiration 'éroplan' means aeroplane in colloquial Czech. (Even if you added ten jet engines to this car, it wouldn't have flown)

After two prototypes "Ambrož" (December 1946) and "Josef" (March 1947), the 600 went into mass production in 1948. In 1951, the state planning department decided that the Tatra should henceforth be built at the Skoda Auto (another inspirational name for many decades) plant in Mladá Boleslav, leaving Tatra to concentrate on truck assembly. (Well, thank God ever so much for that). This was quite unpopular with the workforce (typical Bolsheviks – can't tell the difference between a woman and a cow anyway) at both plants: as a result Skoda built Tatra for one year only before the model was discontinued in 1952 (A great sigh of relief).

The Tatra had a monocoque (you would need to a monocle to appreciate that, yeah go on....) streamlined six-seater saloon body with a drag coefficient (Cd) of just 0.32 (Now that is pretty nifty for 1950's but why does it still look like a brick?). It was powered by an air-cooled flat-4-cylinder 1,952 cc rear-mounted engine. 6,342 were made, 2,100 of them in Mladá Boleslav. In 2010, in the UK, Tatra had been selected by public vote in the 'Classic Car of the Year' competition as the winner of the 1940s category. (Oh really, it must be my vertigo playing up my brains again)



The sexy looking Tatra-600 from the back. No wonder why Marwaha went for it!! EA Safari Rally had an uncanny habit of pitching some funny names. Another one was Mr & Mrs Choda.