

HISTORICAL SAAB

An extract from Saabs internal magazine VIPS. No.4, 1964, Page 12.

Compiled and translated by Ray Beaufoy, January 2020.

SAAB´S NEW TEST TRACK: DESIGNED FOR TESTING SAABS ON EXTREME ROAD SURFACES AND ADVERSE DRIVING CONDITIONS.



On the 2nd of September 1964, Saabs chief engineer Rolf Melde carefully cut the blue and yellow ribbon to inaugurate the official opening of Saabs new test track.

Ideally positioned close to the development laboratory and production lines it was here that Saabs development cars could be put through their paces driving on some of the most extreme road surfaces.

Prior to test car P93688 being driven towards the new test track, Rolf Melde took time to thank Saabs Director Bertil Severinsson for the company's investment and for all the staff and entrepreneurs involved in designing and building the new test facility.

Rolf Melde explained that the various road surfaces were fully representative to some of the most arduous road conditions a Saab car can be subjected to – even in rallying competitions throughout the world and will prove to be extremely valuable for the development of new products.

The new test track, 572 meters in length, is positioned on the southern side of Trollhättan's Airfield, close to an existing paved road which has been converted to act as an approach road into the new test track area.

It is planned that Saabs production cars will also be tested here.



Photo showing a test car entering the new test track area.

In-car noise level evaluation

This can be checked and measured when the car is driven over a very uneven 30-meter long section of the track. It is here that Saabs suspension and road noise generation into the cabin is most noticeable.

A further 100-meter section of the track, known as the *long-wave section*, has a deeper surface wave form finish – driving over this section permits also evaluation of the car's suspension, in particularly the functionality of the hydraulic shock absorbers etc.

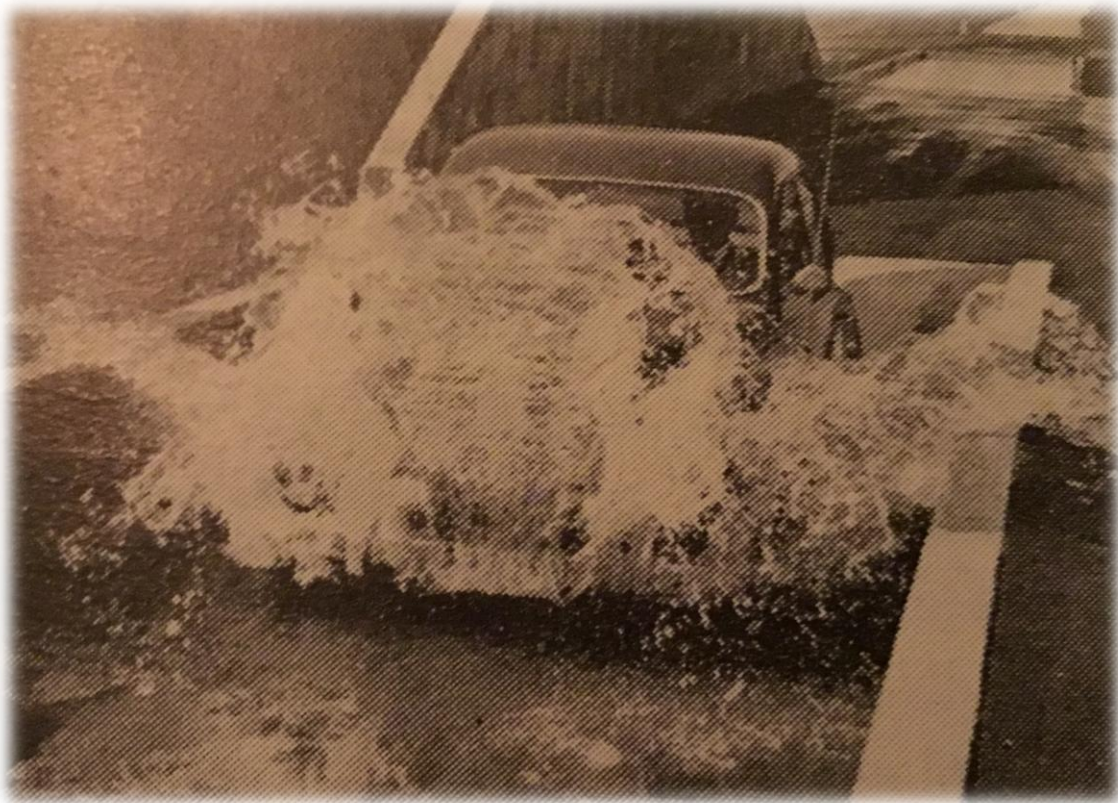
A *diagonal wave* section is also included as a compliment to driving over the long-wave section.

The most rigorous of all surfaces to drive is over is the 100-meter section where the car is driven over stones of different sizes (as photo above) that have been formed into the concrete surface.

This causes the car to shake excessively – a condition which is particularly noticeable for the driver via the cars steering column.

Also, a ruffled / fluted section of track has also been included simulating roads that have been damaged by the tracks of military vehicles etc. This is also combined with a section dedicated to driving over blocks of granite known as the Belgium Pavé.

The track is also equipped with approach and return areas where cars can be parked and prepared prior to a further driving schedule in the opposite direction etc



Water ingress.

A special section dedicated to driving a car into a flooded road has also been included -here a test car can be seen being driven into a 0,3-meter-deep water trough - Here the cars ignition system and water ingress into the cabin can be checked.



Hill gradients

At the end of the track Saabs engineers have also built a steep hill section with a gradient of 1:3-1:5, here clutch and handbrake functions can be evaluated together with the cars ability to start when 5 litres of fuel is added to the fuel tank.

Saabs new test track has been designed and built mainly for development testing although new cars selected directly from production are also randomly selected as part of Saabs for internal Quality demands.

Footnote:

The test track is still visible in some places even today ...albeit a little overgrown here and there.