

VMCC Warwickshire Section Newsletter

news letter No. 36

September 2022

Another warm and dry month has enabled us to get out more on our favourite bikes. We have attended several events brief reports of which are included further on in this edition. Alan's bikes are still for sale so details are within these pages.

Firstly I am reprinting a letter I read very recently in an old copy of 'Motor Cycle' dated May 1966. When I read it I thought of copying it then when I saw the senders name I definitely decided to do so...without any comment:

"In his letter (April 14) John Ebbrell falls into a common error. The Vintage Club is not altering the dateline; all we have done is to make provision for another class of machine, the post – vintage, a Cinderella class which is in danger of extinction.

Thousands of them have already been scrapped and the club is largely to blame because its arbitrary rule has cast them into the outer darkness regardless of their intrinsic worth.

Certainly there were cheap – jack machines in the post-vintage era just as there were in the vintage period, but the real enthusiast can be relied on to sort the good from the bad.

Of one thing I am sure, in years to come another generation of enthusiasts will bless us for having the foresight to ensure that motor-cycle history is preserved in continuity instead of being chopped off artificially at the end of 1930.

Ibstock, Leics.

C. E. Allen

Charles Edmund 'Titch' Allen O.B.E., B.E.M. was the founder of the V.M.C.C. in 1946.

Good and Bad

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foresight to ensure that motor-cycle history is preserved in continuity instead of being chopped off artificially at the end of 1930.
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Chairman's Chat.

Three in a row..

Unbelievably, we have held 3 "bring a bike" nights in a row at our Club nights in Kenilworth, and one of these was of course, our popular Fish and Chip supper version. The good weather also played a big part in this run of motorcycle themed evenings in Kenilworth, and you have to grasp the moment while it lasts to make the best of the weather. At the last Club night gathering, we had a fine collection of member's machines on Parade including Brenda on her new Yellow Honda Grom...surely a future classic in the making...?

We also had two fine BSA motorcycles soaking up the atmosphere over in BSA corner, while I on the other hand, had decided to give my J.A.P Cotton an evening's run out. After the night's business was concluded, raffle prizes collected and safely stuffed into jackets, it was time to pack away the heavy PA system in my haversack...(don't worry my back is getting better) switch on my front and rear LED bicycle lights and enjoy a gentle ride home, while leaving a waft of Castrol R in my wake (who needs aromatherapy when you have Castrol R?). I eventually swung my machine onto my drive just before it got fully dark, turned off my engine only to be assailed by the smell of Petrol leaking from the carburettor. The lower petrol pipe union had decided to come unscrewed and left an arc of fuel running up the drive, I could almost hear Hodges shouting put that cigarette out!

The offending part of this petrol metering device has now been lock wired in place....phew got away with that ONE! However, this did not stop me having what was a memorable and almost magical ride home via Stoneleigh, Bretford and Brinklow. I also hope you have had some memorable rides home after a recent Club night, we will need these precious Vintage and Classic motorcycling memories to help us cope with the inevitable onset of the shorter days and darker nights.



Stay safe..... David Kendall



Last month I said the Kawasaki Z1000 article was in 2 parts, however the author has informed me that there was a 3rd (and final) part. With apologies to Martyn Roberts for the oversight here is that final chapter:

So what's the big Zed like to live with? In four years and 3500 miles, the only issues I've had apart from the initial carb problem have been a grabby clutch and a loss of rear brake. The clutch fault showed up as the lever was released to pull away from rest; at first nothing would happen, then the clutch would suddenly engage. This would be bad enough on a 20 horsepower British single; on a 1000cc four it made pulling out of T-junctions hilarious and not a little scary.

Initially, I could find nothing amiss with the clutch cable, the lifting mechanism, the pushrod or its oil seal. In fact the nylon worm in the lifting mechanism was suffering from stick-slip as it traversed along its thread. The problem didn't arise when tested by hand, off the bike, only when in situ under the heavier end load from the clutch pushrod. I only found it by trial and error, and cured it through ample greasing.

The rear brake problem appeared after a winter lay up. Paddling the bike out of the garage, when I applied the rear brake the pedal action felt soft and the bike hardly slowed down. I rebuilt the rear master cylinder with a proprietary repair kit and normal service was resumed. The Kwak's brake system may be heavy, crude and enormous in size but it is delightful to work on, requiring none of the 'keyhole surgery' needed on later generation systems.

Talking of brakes, I think the z1000 was Kawasaki's first rear disc application and they were obviously still learning their craft. The back wheel can be withdrawn rearwards complete with its spindle to save removing the exhaust (like on a Honda four). The only trouble is, the brake caliper comes with it so you have to disconnect the hydraulic hose first, which of course means bleeding the system. Great.

In every other respect, the bike has provided as much convenience and reliability as a modern one: it always fires up instantly on the button; all the electrics work faultlessly and despite its weight it rolls easily onto the main stand because the tread plate provides lots of leverage. Fuel consumption is consistently 48mpg. My most memorable rides have been the longest ones: a 200 mile day touring the Peak District in 2017 and 260 miles visiting 7 checkpoints during the 2018 VMCC Relay Rally.

The greatest compliment I can pay the z1000 is that whenever I've been riding another bike then return to the big zed I realise how brilliant it is. Because it's the shiniest of my old relics, I mothball it through the worst of the winter weather and every spring, after recommissioning, on the first ride I find myself thinking 'Wow. Is this bike really from the 1970s? How can it be this good?' This is not the rose-tinted lens effect; I also ride a new Honda NC750 with dual clutch transmission. While the Honda's handling and braking is in a different league, the z1000 has a more comfy seat, more compliant suspension and a smoother gear shift, to say nothing of the superior performance. Plus, it is of course much prettier.



You might reasonably argue that any big Jap four could provide the same combination of virtues as the z1000, but most competitors date from the 1980s onwards so lack the freedom from road tax and MoT that comes with a bike over 40 years old. This leaves the earlier Z1 and z900 as the most obvious challengers but whereas prices, for Z1s in particular, have gone into orbit, the z1000 remains relatively affordable, on a par with a new twin from Royal Enfield or Triumph. That's a lot of bang for the buck.

Events since the last news letter

August 7th Coventry Parade,

Our premier event has been held at Coombe Abbey Park for a number of years and has been known to attract well over 50 entrants. This year, for various reasons, the number was in the 20's. However the quality of some of the bikes (and trikes) was excellent. Here is the list of award winners:

Oldest	1900 De Dion-Bouton Mike Wills
Best Veteran	1912 Triumph Hub Clutch Model, David Payne
Best Vintage	1926 HRD Super 90, Ian Alexander
Best Post Vintage	1939 Velocette MAC 350cc, Andy Smith
Best Post War	1956 Triumph Tiger Cub 199cc, Ian Marsay
Best Machine under 251cc	1957 MV Augusta 175cc, Stuart Bush
Most Desirable (By vote)	1926 HRD Super 90, Ian Alexander
Best Coventry Built	1915 Rover, David Kendall
Best post 1971	1975 Fantic TX134 Chopper, Richard Woodcock

Guest of honour was Lady Radbrooke, distant relation of Siegfried Bettman.



The agenda for the day was: assembling at the park, signing on, following a long or short scenic route supplied by the organisers, Geoff and Robert, meeting back at the park for lunch – picnic or park cafe, presentation of awards.

The event went well with no major problems with the bikes and excellent weather.



August 14th Pop up at Hilltop Farm

This was our first pop up at this venue and it proved to be popular, not only with our club but with the Lotus Owners Club as well! About 2 dozen bikes arrived in sunshine and enjoyed admiring the view over the Warwickshire countryside. A few lucky members were able to sit in the shade whilst the rest of us baked in the open. It was a place we will visit again.



August 28th Steam Event at Pailton

Our first event at Fairfield Lake and Smite Brook Steam Railway was considered a success by all who attended. The approximately 40 visitors enjoyed magical cruises on a steam boat around the scenic 'home-made' lake as well as steam and electric train rides along the one mile of track that wound its way amongst the forest of trees in the extensive grounds.

We set up HQ – our gazebo – in the shade of one of the large trees on the grassy side of the lake and set back a few yards from the larger ones along the lakes bank. Even before we could finish setting up bikes started rolling in. These were parked alongside the committee members several machines. More rolled in for the next hour

or two joined by a lovely very early Vauxhall car from about 1914 and a very smart Riley, a few years more modern. Richard Woodcock came in his wonderful 1939 Morgan 3 wheeler. The bikes ranged in age from Mike Wills Bradbury to a late 1990's Honda Valkyrie.

In return for getting the use of the grounds we promised to raise funds for the Air Ambulance. A 'ball park' figure of £200 was mentioned. We actually handed over £215 from our generous attendees, plus what ever was put into the collecting vessels at various locations. We also ran a raffle for our own funds and made £47 plus a few pounds in book sales.

The BBQ was fired up and the aroma of sizzling sausages and burgers wafted across the area. a hot drink making facility was provided by the generous owner – in return for a small donation – as were the tubs of ice cream in the freezer.

To round off the day our 'guest judge' the very experienced former club chairman and past national club president Harry Wiles presented rosettes to a few vehicles that caught his eye. We would like to thank everyone who attended and helped to make the event a great day out in a lovely, tranquil setting. As the event wound down the committee agreed to hold a similar event next year. After receiving our donation, the owner Peter Stevenson said we were very welcome to come back again.



Sunday September 4th Pop up at Hillmorton Locks

As the weather started off damp and threatened more precipitation, the attendance was down on recent pop ups. Never the less, the 16 that did turn up enjoyed a warm, dry morning. There was plenty of activity on the water to see with narrow boats going both ways through the locks and giving us friendly waves.

I arranged a ride in from Dunchurch mainly for those members who had not been before and were not sure of how to get there. As it happened the only 2 members that met me there— Steve and Colin- knew the area better than me! When we arrived at the locks, no other bikes were there!

However within the hour a dozen more arrived in ones and twos.



Tuesday September 6th. BBQ and bike collection at Arthur farrow's home.

The day started off a bit showery and didn't look like it would be a dry evening but after consulting Arthur we decided to proceed "he who dares".

So we arrived in sunshine, in ones and twos to Arthurs lovely home. His bikes are housed in buildings better than some homes! A very interesting collection and great workshop area at the back of one of the buildings. We were not at all envious.

After time for a good look round we adjourned to the rear patio where our host had donned his best apron and fired up the gas BBQ. Good chat, a beer, and a burger on a sunny evening, very nice. Thanks Arthur.



Do you know this person?

A couple of months ago I published the following message asking for information. I did not receive any. The sender has asked me to repeat his plea. Please, if you can supply any relevant information then get in touch with me. (he is not a relation of mine!) Thanks.

“My name is Neville Miller and I am a member of the VMCC living in Ottawa, Canada. I have an interest in pre-war single cylinder Triumphs (2H 3H T70 T80). About 10 years ago I visited a gentleman in your area called Fred Heath who lived in Hampton Magna, who had a similar interest. I know that Fred has now passed away, but I was wondering if you knew him or, indeed, may have been related to him? My reason for contacting you is because Fred had quite a collection of spares for these machines and I was wondering what happened to them and whether or not they were available in any way?”

Ariel VNH update Pt2

You may remember earlier in the year I published the first part of Tony Harris' account of building a vee twin Ariel motor. Here is his latest update:

Last time I reminded you about where the original V twin bones came from and what happened to them. This time a little more up to date.

Last year 2018 after many years sitting under the bench while I built other bikes and got on with other mechanical projects, I decided it was time to finally do a few updates to the VNH motor. Some of these I learnt while building my Norton V twin motor, (I mentioned this engine in Part 1 and the Norton V was built after the VNH Ariel motor).others things I wanted to do because of small problems which were unknowingly built into the original Ariel engine.

When the engine was first started it was quite oily and smoked quite bad on start up. Although, when it had been running a short while the smoke did die down. One of the original things I did was to have external oil pipes in the sump to return the oil to the tank via the oil pump.

The other problem was the pistons had no oil ring grooves.

I believe the pistons I had were ex WD (I could be wrong, again) and naively thought if they ran ok in that engine, why not in mine (the fool). I picked up some oil control rings and turned grooves in the pistons to suit and rebuilt the top of the motor.

Well, it was a lot better but it still had a lot of oil inside the combustion chamber on start up. Eventually the smoke cleared in a couple of miles as I previously said. This was very embarrassing. One Saturday morning after a short ride I took the engine out, stripped it down and

replicated the internal oil pickups in the standard Ariel engine. The reason I didn't do this in the first place was it just looked a little too tricky drilling inside the wall of the crankcase to pick up the back of the oil pump and I didn't have time, so did a short cut, silly boy.

It was a long job with a lot of setting up but I managed to get everything lined up and carefully drilled the holes. While I had the engine apart I fitted internal flywheel scrapers to stop oil being thrown about too much by the flywheels. The next day I rebuilt the motor and fitted it into the frame and gave it a try. Yes, you guessed it, still the same, oh well, it was a little better and the motor was a lot tidier without the external pipe work.

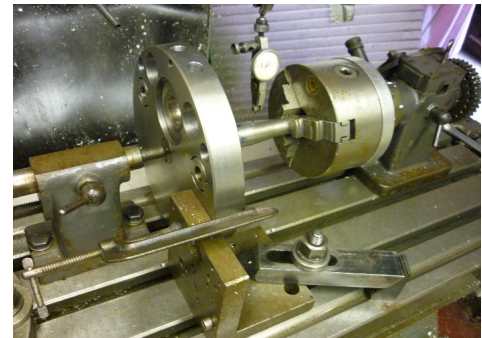
I decided to live with it for the time being (9 years to be precise) as it never oiled a plug and at least it would never seize up.

I later found out talking to folks who knew more than me (there's plenty of them about) that old V twins were prone to over oil the rear cylinder as the flywheels throw oil up the bore unless they had baffle plates in the mouth of the crankcase.

If you look in the top of these old engines with the barrels off you can see the con rod poking through a slot in the casting and the flywheels were shielded by this, only lube to the big end could escape up the bore and consequently no smoky engine.

I do hope you're still awake and keeping up, and understand what I'm on about.

When I originally converted Adries castings into patterns and had the crankcases cast, I was aware of allowing for casting shrinkage. However, looking at the engine last year I decided the flywheels still ran too close to the inside of the crankcases, so, I decided to take about 3/8" (10mm) off the diameter of the flywheels. This meant splitting the flywheels to hold in the lathe. I also wanted to use original Ariel Chain cases and use a cush drive on the end of the crank as the original engine had. The problem was I had machined a taper on the drive side main shaft and fitted a pulley for a belt drive, this ran a Lucas alternator on the end of the crank. All this ran in a Norton



Commando chain case on the original build.

The Ariel chain case did not have room for all this gubbins. As I was now putting the motor into an Ariel frame I wanted it all to look as standard ish as possible.

After turning material off the flywheels I then set the drive side flywheel and main shaft up on the miller and machined a spline on the end of the main shaft to take an early Triumph sprocket carrier, cam and spring. The reason I did this was I had a range of sprockets for these and the sprocket does not run on the main shaft but a hardened carrier on the crank unlike the Ariel.



I also decided to fit two more extra flywheel oil scrapers at the same time. Belt, braces and a bit of string. I'm sure Honda do this all the time with new models. The cam gears I originally fitted were the only pair I had at that time and were worn. When I stripped the engine they hadn't got any

better. Fortunately I acquired a new pair and the crank pinion had three keyways which helped with better cam timing later on.

I also never liked the idea of push in exhaust pipes. They just rattle lose eventually and wear the exhaust port oversize. To sort this out I have done an upgrade on the heads which I will tell you about in another little article later.

This is the problem with development, its always clever to be wise in retrospect. All this work I hope should keep the motors combustion chamber free from oil but still should allow enough to lube the bores etc, time will tell.

A this stage the bottom half of the engine was assembled and the next job was to sort the chassis out. This will be in part three as my wife has just informed me my tea is ready.

Warwickshire Section Events Calender

- Sept 10/11 * Coventry Motofest. Cov. City Centre. Bikes are on Greyfriars Green.
- Sept. 11 * Atherstone Motor show. A great day for car/bike enthusiasts.
- Sept 14 K.R.C. Club night. Talk by Graeme Davenport (Mellor Motors) on Sidecar racing with British Historic Racing.(B.H.R.) a branch of V.M.C.C.
- Sept. 18 *Hinckley Motor Show. Another great day for car/bike enthusiasts.
Sept 18 *Royal Enfield open day, Bruntingthorpe. **See details further on.**
- Sept. 25 Genteel Run. For smaller, slower bikes. May be a change to this. Watch your emails.**
- Oct. 12 K.R.C. club night Talk by Triumph 'legend' John Young.**
- Oct 15/16 * Classic Bike Show. Staffordshire Show ground.
- Oct. 16 Autumn Run. Details to follow.**
- Oct. 23 Social Meet. Details to follow.**
- Oct 29/30 * National Motorcycle Museum open day. Free entry but Car park £15. Parking is free for bikes.
- Nov. 9 K.R.C. club night details to follow**
- Nov. 11-13 * N.E.C. Classic Vehicle Show.
- Dec. 14 K.R.C. club night details to follow**
- All events are subject to change. Check its still being held before you travel!**
- * denotes non club events but which may be of interest to members.

Alan Bailey, one of our long standing members is selling his bikes due to health reasons. Here are the details:

1928 Model E Ariel.

Owned by him for 23 years.

It has been very well cared for and is in great condition.

It has been used on many occasions during that time.

Eligible for the Banbury Run.

Offers around £13,000.



1992 Suzuki GN 250

Single cylinder, twin port. Electric starter.

This bike has also been well cared for and has a very recent M.O.T.

Offers around £1200



He also has for sale an almost new single bike trailer.

£300 o.v.n.o.

Contact Alan for more details on: 01327 260590

Secretaries Shorts

I have been having fun with some new found functions on my laptop. A bit over the top?

Mystery Photos: In last months news letter I published photos of an old club? Event. I would still like to hear any suggestions as to where, when, what event, they were taken at. Thanks to Geoff for supplying details of some of the bikes.

Business cards: Our old cards were out of date and needed refreshing. This I have done. These are images of the 2 sided card which now has a QR code link to our website. If you would like a few to give to prospective new members then please ask me.

Steam event: we are looking for a better name for this event. A prize for the member who's suggestion is used. (sensible ones only please!)



Upcoming events: This is quite a busy month. You have probably seen the calender on a previous page. Next Wednesday is our club night. I have persuaded a guy I have known a bit for several years to come to the club (he is a member but has never been to a club event) and talk about building and racing historic class sidecar outfits. His brother bravely rides on the chair. It promises to be an interesting talk by an enthusiastic racer. Please support his public speaking debut.

For our October meeting we have managed to get back to the club someone who some of you will have heard of and may have heard speak before. John Young is a collector and enthusiastic rider of Meriden built triples. He has ridden them across America.

His latest project has been to test a 4 cylinder bike based on 2 triple engines and built by George Pooley who was building specials before Alan Millyard had left school!

John has promised to bring the bike. It should be a good evening. We are inviting the Triumph Owners Club to attend so it should be a busy club night.

I will send out emails before every event on the calender, and maybe one or two which are not on it.

Also. Arthur Farrow tells me of **an event at the Royal Enfield Tech. centre at Bruntingthorpe**

."Through my good friend Dean Coxon ("Dean of the Antarctic" who rode an Enfield Himalayan to the South Pole last year) a VMCC member I am happy to extend an invite as follows: -

*Royal Enfield are having an open day at their Tech centre, Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground on Sunday September 18. **Starting at 10am** and there will be free food and drink for all and a guided tour, but do not expect to see top secret stuff!!*

contact Arthur if you wish to attend this event

Telephone : 024 7501 1213 Mobile : 0771 007 8586

Triumph Tina: this week I had it running the best it has ever done! I have just uploaded a clip of it to YouTube so please take a look.

I have had a problem with fuel overflowing from the float chamber. After fitting a viton tipped needle it just about stopped but after draining the fuel tank and refilling with fresh fuel plus 2 stroke oil it has started overflowing again. This is in spite of me washing all components and having 2 filters. Any advice is welcome. By the way the float height seems to be non adjustable – Amal 32.

Triumph Tiger 90: still going quite well although still although still externally lubricating the engine. My article about my Isle of Man trip on it should be in the October edition of V.&C. According to the editor. May have another trip in October.

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