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Newsletter No. 17

VMCC Warwickshire Section Newsletter

Seasonal greetings to you all. We have a few interesting items in this edition, but always need more for future editions. First of all a few words from our chairman:

Chairman's chat

Sometime in mid-October, a parcel was delivered to the Kendall residence - the package in question was about the size of two house bricks and felt just as heavy. Was this a Vintage component being delivered...possibly a magneto? Not this time, because within all the associated packaging was our Winter/covid survival kit.....our very own box set of Downton Abbey had finally arrived!

I know what you're thinking? Everyone on earth has seen that series...but we haven't even watched a single episode before, and this coming winter could be the perfect opportunity! Downton just seemed to pass us both by, so no spoilers please, we are only at series two and the first world war...or should I say 'the Kaiser war or great war!'

Surely I'm not the only one who sometimes reaches for a historic comfort blanket when modern life gets too much? I am sure many of us secretly revert to character, when going for a spin on their chosen machine of a certain historic era – especially as we are blessed with some delightful country lanes on our doorstep, that still enable us to ride our Vintage or Classic motorcycles in the tyre tracks of our forebears.

We may have to live in modern times with its wall to wall short lived celebrity culture, but in our heads and hearts while aboard our chosen motorcycles, we are still pre-Beeching, pre-decimalisation, non digital man or woman.

When the chance arises, I may be wafting along in a delightful cloud of Downton Abbey nostalgia aboard my Rover motorcycle...and at the end of the lane I can see the Lady Dowager (Maggie Smith) who shows her disapproval by coughing and covering her nose with a hanky. Stay safe.. David Kendall

This next item is the first half of an article by one of our members: John Mills

NORTHERN ADVENTURE

Over the past three or four years my pal Martin and I have enjoyed motorcycle holidays travelling from the Midlands to various parts of the UK including Exmoor, Anglesey and Northumberland.

The latter event in 2016 ended in disaster for me as my 1970 Triumph Trophy failed near Middleton in Teesdale after blowing the spark plug and stripping the thread. Martin completed the adventure travelling on his 1968 Norton Atlas as far north as Alston, our most northerly destination.

Our latest trip in September 2018 was a little more adventurous but was done on more modern machinery. Martins bike was a 1992 Honda VFR 750 and mine a 2017 CCM GP450.

We always travel on minor roads wherever possible and seldom use motorways. Briefly the plan was to travel up to the Scottish border country and then on the second day spend some time exploring the Kielder Forest before returning home via Skipton and the Peak District, a likely mileage of 650. Quite ambitious for two gents well past their prime and certainly not accounting for the extreme weather conditions, particularly on the third day.

A 9am start saw us heading along the A515 in dry but dull weather to Ashbourne and then across to Bakewell for the start of more interesting roads across the moors after the Ladybower reservoir and down into Holmfirth. Keighley and Halifax were negotiated quite easily but Huddersfield is a larger town and as usual proved more time consuming, particularly as it was now lunchtime.

Once past Huddersfield our pace increased and we were soon past Skipton and heading for Kendal on the A65. The plan was to use the A6 from Kendal to Penrith in order to reach Alston our destination for the first night quickly. Our preferred route via Malham, Hawes, Brough and Middleton in Teesdale would probably mean a late arrival at our accommodation in Alston. However, as it turned out we suffered a considerable delay anyway.

On reaching Kendal (a town which has changed immensely to what it was like when I was last there in the early 1960's) it started to rain. Soon we were travelling north over Shap in pretty dark conditions. However, conditions improved as we headed north east from Penrith along the A686 and we started to look forward to a meal and a few pints in Alston.

All went well until we reached Melmerby where completely out of the blue we were faced with road ahead closure signs. Another 15 miles and we would have been in Alston so an additional 45 miles when were tired and had already travelled over 200 miles from the Midlands was not much fun.

However, once we had checked into our B&B and then walked into Alston and had some food the world seemed a better place!

Next day after a good nights sleep and a hearty breakfast we headed north towards Brampton as we were planning to explore the Scottish border



country just north of the Kielder Forest. The route

took us along the B6318 and then along minor

roads through Blackpool Gate and then onto the B6357 at Newcastleton. Heading north up Liddesdale we spent an interesting hour at Hermitage Castle, once the home of the mighty Earl of Bothwell.

The weather had turned wet and windy so our thoughts turned to food so we headed towards Hawick passing the legendary Whitrope summit (to railway enthusiasts anyway!). at 1006 ft above sea level the highest point on the legendary Waverley line from Carlisle to Edinburgh which closed in 1969. Part of the route from Edinburgh has now reopened.

As we neared Hawick the weather took a turn for the better and by the time we arrived it was bright and sunny. After we had had a snack I took this picture of the local SNP office to prove we had been there!

After eating it was time to continue our journey to our next destination and overnight accommodation at Greenhaugh, a small village back in England located to the east of Kielder Water. The plan was to take the A6088 out of Hawick and after about 10 miles take the B6357 due south at Bonchester Bridge. This would eventually take us to a minor road through the forest and along the southern shore of Kielder Water and eventually Greenhaugh.

Again roadworks intervened. At Bonchester Bridge road signs indicated that the B6357 was closed ahead. However, we decided to give it a try and for about 5 miles we enjoyed a peaceful ride through some outstanding scenery. Unfortunately we eventually came to the works which prevented us from going further and we had to retrace our steps and return to Bonchester Bridge.....to be continued.

In last months newsletter David Kendall reported on a pre 1965 trial that some members rode to. Here a few photos that he took of a couple of entries:



Saga of my tank

The petrol tank for my Bridgestone has caused me hours of 'fun'. I am not in favour of spending hundreds of pounds on the tank when the whole project is only worth several hundred pounds more...besides I like the challenge of doing things for myself. When I bought the pile of bits which would end up as a bike, the tank was in primer but dented quite badly. For a reason lost in the midst of time, but probably to pull a dent out, I used my mig welder and blew a hole in it! This was repaired along with a



whoops!

other bits couple of smaller rust holes underneath. I sprayed it properly – I have sprayed cars for 40 years.

However after a few months the paint bubbled up in a couple of places. As the bike was not yet on the road it remained bubbled for a couple of years.

I then got round to having a look at it and pressure tested it. There were a couple of pin holes where the ethanol petrol and fumes escaped. These areas were covered with solder and tested again. No leaks. So on a warm summers day this year I painted it again. It took a long time but looked great. In September I finally got the bike road legal but once again the paint bubbled a bit. I tried to overlook this but it got worse.

I thought about it and decided to do what I should have done originally i.e. sealed the inside. The main reason why I had not done so went back to when I rebuilt my Suzuki about 12 years ago. I was recommended to seal the tank by a bike workshop. I did so but soon after bits started blocking the carburettor jet. Every ride meant stripping the carb. and blowing bits out of it. In the end I removed all traces of the sealant and ran it for several years without a problem.

So, after some research, I bought POR15 and sloshed it around the inside of the tank per the instructions and left it for a week to cure. It was then thoroughly pressure tested in a tank of water. No bubbles were seen.

Having sprayed it twice myself and with the weather turning colder and wetter I decided to give the job to my friends son who repairs bodywork and is an experienced sprayer. The result looks excellent. I have only had it back a couple of days but I'm hopeful that this time it will stay that way.



Looking better – 3rd time

During the period of respite between lock downs you will know that we organised a few Sunday morning 'meet-ups' here is a short report from our chairman of one of these meetings.

A Sunday morning ride-in to the Farmers Fayre.

On a Sunday morning, on 18th October, we welcomed 16 Vintage and Classic motorcycle enthusiasts to the Farmers Fayre restaurant situated in the Stoneleigh show ground. Many people may have been familiar with this establishment before, while attending previous VMCC events. Therefore, you'll be pleased to know that the business now has larger premises, and the food and service are still excellent. There is also plenty of parking space to accommodate the bikes and good seating with space outside. A varied range of machines being ridden on this particular morning ranged from a BSA Blue Star to a Velocette LE, and not forgetting the faithful 350 Triumph of Barry Heath having just recently returned from a John O Groats to Lands' End charity ride.



A little Tiger and the Coventry Parade **by Geoff Booth**

Part 2: “Clutch, throttle, gears, gears, gears!”

In the 1970's Father, Peter, organised the section Coventry Parade along with Denis Buxcey and Bob Cain.

In those days, (as it currently is!) the event was held at Coombe Country Park, but on the field located to the very far right of the main drive as you head in.

This field was also served by an “out only” roadway which was quite separate from the main access drive. Nowadays, this is still present but is no longer in use.

As one of the main organisers of the annual Coventry Parade, Dad would get to the park very early on event day. If my memory serves me right, I was eleven years old at the time and Dad said that we would get there extra early and provided I was careful,

I could ride the little Tiger up and down the “out” drive; all I had to do was to keep out of the way of any other vehicles and stop when “out” traffic started to become more prolific.

I was so excited at this prospect that I struggled get to sleep in the weeks leading up to event day; I also spent hours in the garage sat aboard the machine, imagining and “practising”- wearing out the clutch cable and stretching the respective brake and throttle bowden’s!

The big day (eventually!) came – it dawned wet and dismal but we arrived early doors as planned and Dad gave me the “key”, (one of those awful Lucas flat pressed steel affairs), told me to be careful and then wandered off to get on with his event organiser duties.

I pulled the plunger to switch the fuel on – I can remember this clear as day – I was slightly trembling with anticipation, and then started the engine, paused (briefly!) then selected first gear and let the clutch out – I was finally away! Clutch and throttle control was well practised but changing gear, at least for real, wasn’t; could I manage second gear? Let the revs build, clutch in whilst closing the throttle, snick the pedal up, clutch back out and open the throttle – all went well, let the revs build again and do the same; into third – that went well too! In fact, so did top gear and everything else!

I rode that little bike up and down and up and down, and up and down, and up and down (!) that drive until there was virtually a groove in the tarmacadam- I was truly in seventh heaven! People who do not ride a motorcycle do not understand but the feeling of freedom and being at one was overwhelming; you club readers’ will understand where I am coming from. It was a truly wonderful experience – I would go so far to say that it was life-changing; my first “proper” ride on a powered machine- are motorcycles not just fabulous things!

It did not matter a jot that it was raining, in fact, I would say it added to my exciting experience!

The little Cub continued to serve well; although considered a modern machine in the household; it was Dad’s faithful “hack” for well over forty years and, because of its light-weight and diminutive stature, it became increasingly important to him toward the end of his life as he became a bit more frail. He rode it with great verve and spirit right through the years – right to the last, somehow extracting performance from it that belied its minimal capacity.

I am now the custodian of the little Tiger – I rode it to the 2018 “on yer bike” fish and chip club night- think back and you will remember that rain was descending like stair-rods. Upon arrival, it stood next to a solitary other machine that had been ridden to the venue by Chairman, David Kendall. It was a thoroughly enjoyable ride, the very heavy rain impacting against my helmet visor sounded just the same as it did on that very first ride all those years ago. It is nice to know that in this world of continual change that at least some things stay the same.



Dad riding in 2017 Coventry Parade, me on p.a.

Secretaries Shorts

The year is nearly over and what a year! I am sure that most people sincerely hope that next year will see a big improvement in our way of life. Getting back to our normal activities and, for us motorcyclists, being able to come and go as we please and meet friends, attend gatherings both organised and informal – e.g. Hoar Park, Kineton, Cassington etc.

One of the few benefits of the lock downs is that those of us with the inclination have been able to get those jobs done that we have put off in favour of going out.

Talking of jobs done, here is a brief update on my small collection of bikes:

T90: Since my trip I have changed one of the ‘daytime running’ lamps, removed the side panel which meant moving the ignition switch and the light switch out of the way, and changed the rear lamp following losing most of it on the A46!

I then had 2 attempts at riding it. Both times it lasted about half a mile before the fuse blew and I had to walk home. After the first ride I suspected the wiring in the headlamp bowl but after checking and a bit of tidying it blew again. The main switches were checked for shorts but were fine so the genuine new old stock rear lamp circuit is favourite. I have checked it all several times but every time I fit a fuse and press the brake it blows. I’m sure I will find the short very soon. And yes, I have tried a different bulb.

Bridgestone 100 TMX: Following the spray job on the tank, I refitted it, poured in a drop of petrol....and watched it pour out again! - The 2 sides of the tank are linked underneath by a thin pipe which I had forgotten to refit! With the link pipe on and fuel in without leaking, the engine was started but was still reluctant to ‘pick up’ instantly when required. By the time you read this it should hopefully be running better.

Tina: with the awful weather, domestic duties, and ‘messaging about’ with the other 2 bikes, I have not had a lot of time to touch it. Hopefully I will soon get it running.

Save the Children: I make no apologies for publicising the link to a Justgiving page to raise funds for this charity in connection with the JOGLE ride which should have taken place in May but which was cancelled for a couple of reasons. However I decided to do the run by my self and raise funds. So far my total stands at around £900. As my page has been closed by Justgiving any further donations can be made to this page. The cash and cheques I receive will be paid into this page in a couple of weeks when I wind up my fundraising.

http://www.justgiving.com/Glyn-BucklerE2E?utm_id=26

Sad goodbyes. 2 long serving stalwarts of the Allen House staff are leaving after a combined 31 years of service: Vicky Frost, based in the library and Pam Goodfellow in the general office. We wish them both all the best for the future in what ever they choose to do next. Below is a message from Pam which has been ‘borrowed’ from the Hereford Section newsletter:

“after 15 wonderful years working for the VMCC I am handing over the reins to Sara. What I can not pass on is 15 years experience, that is an impossible task. I would like to thank you all for making my working life a pleasure. There are not many people who can say that and I know how lucky I have been. You are the club and without you I wouldn’t haven’t experienced such a good working relationship with many many people. I can’t thank you enough. Here’s to the next chapter in my working life. I don’t think anything will beat working for the VMCC but time will tell.”

We have sent Pam a card signed by a dozen members local to me, but news of Vicky’s leaving was a surprise to me until I read it in the latest V&C journal. I will not be able to get a card signed by others so I will send one on behalf of the section.

For sale and wanted

I have 2 pre unit BSA gearboxes in parts. I’ve been told that 1 is late 40’s the other mid 50’s. They owe me £50 each. If you are interested please contact me.

I am interested in buying a hydraulic bike lift. If you know of one for sale please let me know.

If you have any items for sale or wanted please email me and I will try to include them in the next edition. Private items only please – no trade.

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