



Welcome to the July edition of the Notts & Derby Section's Newsletter. As we have started to meet up again, these are intended to be a way of keeping in touch at least until the restrictions end.

In this issue we have the joint run with the Burton Section, more entertaining racing adventures from the Manx Grand Prix and memories of club life in the VMCC.

#### Chairman's latest ride.



The photo above was posted on Facebook by CMC at Clay Cross. It shows our Section Chairman, Gordon, as he picked up his 2021 Yamaha Tracer 900 GT. Happy riding, Gordon!

#### Meeting the Neighbours (A joint run with the Burton and the Notts and Derby Section)

On Saturday June 19<sup>th</sup> members of the Burton and District Section met with fellow VMCC members from the Notts and Derby Section for a joint ride, starting from the Markeaton island at Derby. Led by Mick Leach, 18 riders and a few pillion passengers headed out of Derby through Mickleover and out into the countryside via Findern. The route then meandered through several nice villages in Derbyshire and on into Leicestershire,

eventually reaching Moira where we paused for a break and a chat.

Since it was a lovely afternoon the venue, Moira Furnace, one of Burton Section's waypoints, was quite busy with people enjoying the refreshments and facilities. They were quite pleased to have the added attraction of a classic motorcycle display, and many took photographs and asked questions about the machines.

After a good break, a few members who live near headed home from Moira, while the rest returned to the start point via a few more lovely villages.

Thanks to Mick for a great run and to all for the good company.

*Mick Dughan, Burton Section.*



(The following article was originally published in the Velocette Owners Club magazine, "Fishtail.")

#### Still Practisin' - Manx Grand Prix 1998

".....the jobs promised around the house, but never done." So ended the last article I wrote for Fishtail regarding my first Manx Grand Prix in 1997. (See Fishtails 291/2 for full article). Good Grief, a year has nearly gone by and the jobs are still waiting, but at least the Velo is nearly ready for the 1998 Manx, even if the house isn't.

Proposed modifications for 1998 included a belt drive clutch to eliminate oil leaks and primary chain adjustment. In partnership with John Watson, six complete clutches had been manufactured; we decided to retain the shock absorber, as Richard

Adams had found that the lack of a shock absorber caused gearbox casing/bearing problems.

They had been a long time in the making and although five were successfully in use on racing Velos. I hadn't even tried mine on the bike, so didn't want to risk using it in the Island for initial testing purposes.

My "race" engine was ready, using the crank that had been rebuilt by "Alphas" free of charge, (they never did establish what had caused the seizure), nothing else in the motor had been altered. I'd obtained two new sleeve gear bushes, which Andrew Walker had machined for me, so I hoped that we would not have a repeat of last year's problem of insufficient clearance.

The bike was taken to Mallory to "run in" the big end and sleeve gear and to get used to the riding position, as I hadn't ridden the bike for a year. There I met Brian Shackleford, a BSA fan who was running in a 500 and 350 Goldie for the Manx. They both looked good but he was having a few problems with ignition and carburation.

Dave Wallington accompanied me on the Friday, as we sailed on the "Ben my Cree," pride of the fleet of the Steam Racket Company. The ferry looked like an orange box, and the way we were packed into the "lounge" it was just about as comfortable. Dave was to maintain the Velo during practice and the race, whilst I learnt the course, well that was the plan.

My garage/workshop in Douglas, from 1997 was no longer available but thanks to a chance remark to Geoff Bloor, (East Mids Velo member) I was offered use of a garage. Geoff had been spectating at Sulby the previous year and had fortunately been wearing a Velo Owners Club 'T' shirt, which prompted a conversation with a man about Velos and the subsequent offer of help to himself or any friends. I phoned the man and he offered the use of his garage to a total stranger for the duration of the Manx races. This proved more than useful, as it was at Sulby only four miles from my digs in Ramsey, rather than 14 miles away in Douglas.

On the Saturday morning, we drove over to Sulby and were greeted by the owners of our temporary "race workshop," Vern and Sally Wallis. Some of you may know Vern. For more years than he cared to remember, he worked at Ralph Seymour's and knew all about Velos. He also raced for many years in the Manx and knew his way around the course. I realised that I had previously met Vern briefly when I visited Seymour's some time ago.

They were so hospitable to two strangers, that I could not believe my luck, nor that the garage was so orderly and organised. The workshop was full of Velos, parts, lathe, drills, presses, hydraulic bench, parts washer, airline and other items too numerous to mention. I believe that Honda during TT week could not have had better facilities. The icing on the cake (literally), was that Sally was an expert at Sugarcraft and could bake and decorate cakes that you would not believe. So good in fact that she wins prizes.

However, things didn't go exactly to plan - Saturday evening practice, perfect weather, I completed two laps, 77 and 79 mph respectively. The bike appeared to behave faultlessly. Upon my return I find Dave sitting in the van with his feet up, I thought he looked casual until he informed me that he couldn't walk! Unbeknown to me he'd torn a calf muscle whilst assisting me to bump start the bike for practice. But it's two laps down, four more to go, including one of at least 81 mph to qualify.

Viewing the result sheet for Saturday practice, I saw Brian Shackleford had managed a lap of 82 mph on his Goldie, but his second lap was only 46 mph; clearly, he had problems.

Len Clutterbuck, a Manx regular, Velo Club member and owner was riding his G.50 and put in a lap at 87 mph.

Tim Johnson (Velocette) was competing again and did a lap of 89 mph; however, his second lap was only 56 mph, so Tim also had problems.

I also noted on the result sheet, that there was another Velocette that had lapped at 69 mph, owned by a David Brasier, a name I did not know.

Sunday – Pauline, our "landlady" takes Dave to Ramsey Cottage Hospital for examination of his "injury". I drive over to Sulby to check the bike over and discover that the sleeve gear bush had become a very sloppy fit on the mainshaft! What is it with this gearbox?

Fortunately, Vern had a spare bush, which we press in, and machine. I prefer to use this particular gear rather than my spare as it runs the truer of the two. He makes a beautiful job and we rebuild the box and clutch, paying particular attention to making the chaincase oil tight - a very difficult job as everybody knows a Velo chaincase is really a series of holes connected by sheet metal. Vern also suggests a modification to enable us to adjust the clutch without having to remove its cover, so we brutalise it the cover by cutting a three-inch hole in its centre to facilitate speedy access.

I return to Pauline's for dinner at 8.30pm and Dave is sitting on the settee with his feet up having watched the F1 Grand Prix all afternoon whilst I've been slaving away. So much for planning. Never mind, food and drink mellow me and we just hope Dave makes a speedy recovery.

Monday morning and the sun is shining. Vern, Sally, Dave and I drive to Jurby airfield to test the bike and ensure all is right with the clutch and gearbox. It runs a treat and we are satisfied with a job well done. We put the bike in the van and watch the other riders testing various bikes up and down the runway. Jurby is used exclusively for bike testing during the Manx, with no flying allowed to take place, for obvious safety reasons.

Brian Shackleford is nearby. He's been testing his Goldies and had just packed them away in his van. Suddenly we hear and see an aeroplane, taxiing along the grass towards us, but on the other side of the perimeter road. Funny, I think, he shouldn't be there, but at least he's on the grass.

Suddenly it veers across the road and the wing collides with Brian's van, denting the bodywork and tearing the fabric of the plane's wing. The co-pilot leaps out and accuses Brian of damaging his plane with his stationary van. He treats us all to a tirade of abuse and swearing and says he is going to report us all for being on the airfield, despite us all having permits authorising us to be there.

Dave is horrified and bemused, as he is studying for his own pilot's licence and tells us that under Aviation Law the pilot/co-pilot are committing various offences as well as endangering lives. The plane then takes off, without anyone even examining the damage to the wing, buzzes the airfield and flies off. (And they say motorcycles are dangerous.)

Brian says he is going to report the incident to Race Control and asks me to be his star witness, as he knows I am a policeman. It does no good. The incident is recorded, but that's all.

Monday afternoon. Dave and I visit the pits for a walk about, or in Dave's case a hobble about as his leg is badly swollen. We visit Tim Johnson for a coffee and chat, and look for the other Velo which, Tim tells us, belongs to a chap nicknamed "Swampy." We find "Swampy" alias David Brasier and introduce ourselves. He's not a member of the Velo club, probably why we haven't heard of him before.

He's busy on his knees, trying to fit the gearbox sprocket, complete with rear chain attached, onto the gearbox mainshaft. He has a socket with

extension bar and is trying to fit the sprocket by hitting the extension bar with a hammer, whilst trying to line the sprocket with the cruciform on the mainshaft. It's obvious that it won't go on, as the chain is too tight. We suggest he removes the chain, but he has several more blows with the hammer before he concedes and removes the chain, then sprocket goes straight on!

Monday evening. Practice, more sunny weather, two laps 80 and 83 mph. We qualify on speed, two more laps and we're in the race. My riding number is 103 and I check the results to see whom I start with. It's a Manx Norton ridden by Andy Spencer, himself a Velo owner and member of the club. He's lapped at 76mph. I later meet Andy and find that he is also an ex-police motorcyclist, like me. Brian Shackleford only manages 72 mph, more problems with the Goldie. Graham Rhodes has arrived and ridden his Seeley round at 91 mph. No results for Tim, Len or Swampy, and I didn't see them, so presumably they didn't go out for various reasons.

Tuesday. Dave can hobble sufficiently around the garage to check the bike, while I go for a lap or two on my GPZ 600 Kawasaki. I return for lunch and Dave pronounces everything perfect with the Velo, nothing needs doing. Tuesday night's practice - cancelled due to low cloud on the mountain making it unsafe to race, as the helicopter can't see to land if required.

Wednesday is near enough a day of rest, as we haven't used the bike since Monday. We visit Vern and give the bike a polish. Whilst we are there, a stranger arrives and asks Vern if he has a bearing for the end cover of a Velo gearbox. Yes, you've guessed, he's come on behalf of Swampy!

Evening practice. I put in two more laps at 80 and 81 mph, so I've qualified for the race. Andy Spencer goes around at 85 mph; I'll have to try harder if I want to beat him. Brian manages 81mph on the Goldie. Len goes round at 89 mph. Phil Read is also riding in his last Manx before being disqualified by age (60 years) and laps at 95 mph on a G.50. No result for Tim or Swampy.

Thursday morning. I leave Dave in the garage to check the bike over again, while I do a lap with Vern in the passenger seat of the van. He gives me endless advice on position, late apexes and braking points, which I hope I can remember and put into good use for the afternoon session. We return to the garage, unbelievably Dave pronounces everything perfect on the bike. Since the repair to the sleeve gear bush, we haven't had to adjust anything, not even the chain or clutch.

Thursday afternoon. The sun is shining again; this can't last, it's too perfect. I do two laps, 83 and 86 mph; Vern's pep talk appears to be paying off. Andy Spencer does an 81mph lap, No result for Swampy. Tim Johnson puts in a lap of 94.28 mph - I believe the fastest ever on a Velocette. I wish I were anywhere near as good as Tim. Not only is he a very good rider, but he's friendly and helpful and offers encouragement and advice. Also, together with Keith his mechanic and Eddie his sponsor, Tim always has a quantity of real ale on hand. It's a pleasure to visit them in the pits.

Friday morning. A check over of the bike again reveals there's nothing to do, nothing has broken or fallen off, we must be improving our preparation technique. I've not mentioned it so far, but every morning, lunch and afternoon, Sally keeps us supplied with coffee, food and biscuits, whilst Vern helps and offers advice. They really are a splendid couple, and Sally's cakes go down a treat.

Friday evening. It can't keep on like this; the weather is again perfect, two more laps at 83 and 85 mph. No result for Tim, but Swampy does a 69 mph lap.

Saturday. We decide not to go out tonight, rather than risk any last-minute problems, so we check everything, tappets, ignition, brakes, the whole works. Unbelievable, nothing needs altering. We give it a good polish to pass the time.

Saturday night. We watch the practice. Afterwards we visit the pits where they produce a sheet showing everybody's fastest lap during the week. A breakdown shows the following, just out of interest: Graham Rhodes 95.92, Phil Read 95.53, Tim Johnson 94.28, Len Clutterbuck 91.09, Me 86.22, Andy Spencer 85.83, Brian Shackelford 82.78 and David Brasier 77.84. Theoretically, Swampy shouldn't be in the race, because he hadn't qualified on speed, but he successfully appealed and was allowed to start.

Sunday morning. I rode over to Douglas for my race numbers and then we went to meet friends from the East Midlands Centre and anybody else we knew at the Bungalow gathering. We took the Velo in the van and displayed it to enable anybody interested to have a closer look.

Sunday afternoon was spent at the Castletown gathering of Vintage and Classic bikes, plus a walk, (or limp, in Dave's case) around the Castle and surrounding area.

Monday, race day, I said it couldn't last, very blustery, low cloud, rain, mist on the mountain, everything the weatherman could throw at us. The

Newcomers race was delayed until about midday, but finally went off comparatively smoothly.

The Senior Classic race was delayed until approximately 3.00 p.m. and reduced to three laps. The race strategy was the same as 1997; check boots for oil as I exit Governors dip, if all is well, keep going to the finish. The large tank, courtesy of Richard Adams, holds five gallons so no stop was required.

The race began; it was wet/damp through Glen Helen and all the way to Ballaugh. There were many areas where oil had been dropped or people crashed and cement dust was over the road through Ballacraigne, Ballaspur, Laurel Bank and Sarah's Cottage, yellow flags warning of each hazard. Chris East, on a 499 Matchless crashed at Kirkmichael and was helicoptered to Noble's Hospital with serious chest injuries. Unfortunately, later in the week, he died.

Over the mountain, it was very greasy and blustery; I frightened myself twice, once when I had it sideways at the Mountain Box and then at the Graham Memorial due to the tricky surface conditions. There were headwinds in places over the mountain, making it difficult to pull maximum revs in top. They say that the crowd wills you on and it was really nice to see people waving to me on the last lap - like the chap with the "keep going" sign at the Bungalow. If you're reading this, it was a nice gesture.

Andy Spencer pipped me to the flag, averaging 85 mph and finishing 36th. In the end, I finished in 42nd place. My fastest lap in the conditions was 85 mph; my race average speed was 83 mph, would you believe the same as last year. But as a friend pointed out, the 1997 race was run in perfect conditions, so I must be improving slightly, if slowly.

Tim Johnson was sidelined when his carburettor induction spacer broke off, but being the sport he is, waved me on as I went past him on the last lap.

Swampy failed to finish. He had gearbox problems caused by the circlip holding the new bearing in place failing, preventing him from selecting the gears. But you all knew that would happen didn't you, because you all do it right, don't you? To be fair he was working alone and maintaining two bikes. He road an Aermacchi in the Junior Classic race but he didn't finish, reason unknown.

As usual my thanks go to everybody who helped: Dave, Vern and Sally, Pauline, Andrew, and especially to my sponsor (and wife) Carol. I couldn't have done it without you.

**Tony Ainley**



## Club Life

Perhaps it's time to recall my association, and activities, with VMCC, and other vintage activities.

I joined in, I think, 1966. That was with the KSS Section. In 1969 a change in my employment brought me to Derby. I then had a couple of months looking for a suitable house. The house move was completed in October 1969, and we've been in the same house ever since. The selection was made as a result of finding a house with a garage, and the more importantly, basement workshop space. This has the great advantage of housing the central heating boiler which keeps it comfy in the winter months.

When I first moved here my first VMCC contacts were made. The first being the late Alan Walker, as he was only four miles across the fields. Second was Ivan Rhodes on the recommendation of Adrian Richmond, who was and hopefully still is, a Velo man who raced an immaculate Mk VIII. He emigrated to Canada around 1972. I soon got into the Notts & Derby Section and the club nights at the Nags Head & Plough, where we stayed until the move to The Royal Oak. I'll always remember the night Ivan gave a demonstration of tyre changing. Part way through the landlord came up complaining that Ivan's activities were causing dust to fall from the ceiling and going into his customers beer! Later I became the Clubs BMW Marque Specialist, taking over from John? Porter. Being an engineer, I always appreciated BMW's design, manufacturing and quality. I always fancied a BMW, but way back couldn't afford one. I got my first, an R12, from a friend in Berlin in 1969. That was an interesting experience dealing with HMRC! There's a story there alone.

It was not long after I joined the N&D Section that I became a committee member. Around 1975 I was asked if I would become Chairman. I was flattered but declined as I was about to study for a Dip. F. Ed at Nottingham University. When that course was completed, I did agree to stand for Chairman. I was then Chairman on and off for almost twenty years; often alternating between chairman and Vice Chairman with Keith Bostock. On a couple of occasions, I organised the Derbyshire Trial. Each was based at the Grouse & Claret (Louse & Parrott as Ned Sparkes called it), in Rowsley. Many club runs and green lane runs were arranged. For several years I organised an annual green lane run and Sunday run. Green lane runs started and finished at my house. Most Sunday runs were also from my house, but a couple were run from the Meynell Arms in Kirk Langley. I also organised a couple of annual dinners at the Meynell. The advantage of starting runs from my house, or the

Meynell, was that I could be the first to have a good shower, especially after a green lane run. For Sunday runs there is the advantage that, in a very small area, there is a labyrinth of traffic free and picturesque lanes. After one such run, Keith Bostock commented that we had covered about fifty-five miles, with less than a mile on the A52 and even less on the B5020. We never went on one piece of road twice, although we did go to one crossroads twice, and we never got further than nine miles from Kirk Langley.



The start of a Sunday run.

When I started my business in 1993, I had to drop out of club life as all evenings were taken up with paperwork. For a couple of years, I did manage a few club nights. I did make it to a couple of AGMs as I wanted to keep in touch with what was going on. I was also able to take part in some Derbyshire's and Robin Hoods, as well as a few other events, especially 1000 Bikes and Burton Parades. This was up to six years ago when my wife developed her problems. My business still keeps me out of mischief. I have made many good friends through my business which is, I suppose a good alternative to club life. I have only made one real enemy, so I think there may be another story there?

### Vintage Activities Outside the VMCC.

These activities centre, mainly, around the BMW Club which I joined in 1975. Obviously, this was

due to my interest in that marque. A year later I became Vintage Secretary, taking over from the late Joe Greenwood. I held this position for twenty-five years. This also made me a BMW Club National Committee member, until there were some rule changes. Having spent over six months on holiday in the US (not all in one go!) I became a member of The BMW Motorcycle Owners of America, BMW Riders Association and the Vintage BMW Motorcycle Owners of America. I did manage to get to the MOA Annual Rally in Lake Placid in 1983, but only as a day visitor.

I organised a number of events which included camping weekends, green lane and Sunday runs, often with the N&D Section. Also, some club stands at the Classic Bike Shows, Founders Day, and some shows at the NEC.

The Brooklands Museum was also an organisation I got involved with. This took me to a couple of Monthéry Vintage Revivals and Brands Hatch, taking the R51RS and Booker replica. I also joined in a couple of their attendances at the 1000 bikes, taking the R51RS. Another was a Norton day when I took my 1953 500 Beart Manx and the Enfield. Both had several runs up the test hill.

There were many attendances at some Hungarian rallies, where I took my Sunbeam and, on a couple of occasions, the Vincent HRD. Often, I was able to take in two rallies and/or autojumbles. I did pick up a few awards, mostly for furthest travelled. I have been to South Africa on a couple of occasions, once competing in the Durban to Johannesburg Run on a friends MKII KSS, a very pleasant bike. That is a VERY competitive timed event. Often the winner is only seconds out over the two days and 700 km (about 440 miles). The locals found this particular run to be very cold and wet. I encountered normal "British weather".

Many memorable events.

**John Lawes.**

### **What's on in August.**

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>: Lunch time meeting, Duke William, Matlock.

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>: Normous Newark.

### **Heage Windmill Classic Motorcycle Day cancelled.**

The Heage Windmill Society has announced that the decision has been made to cancel all provisional Event Days in July.

Their statement reads: "We hope to rearrange them for later in the year. The Government's decision to

delay the further lifting of Covid restrictions until 19th July has meant that we do not feel we can offer such events on a safe and secure basis. We are a small charity made up entirely of volunteers and receive no external funding. We simply do not have the resources or personnel to provide an Event Day environment that offers the security and safety required under current rules and that the public would rightly expect."

### **60 Years Ago.**

#### **Saturday 1st July 1961**

Learner riders in Britain were restricted to machines of 250 cc capacity, to try to reduce motorcyclist fatality figures.



### **FOR SALE**



**Genuine Lucas 6-volt ammeter 8-0-8 bought in error. Brand new, never used, bought in error. £10. Bruce 07442168932.**

## **WANTED**

A new member is still looking for a **1930/40s Triumph Speed Twin** or something very similar. Please contact Peter Gibson 0115 9314362.

## **CONTACT US:**

**Please** let me have any stories from the past, amusing or otherwise, concerning motorcycles, or any technical information, rebuild stories, photos or news of events by replying to this email.

Let us know what you've been up to by emailing me at: [nottsandderbyvintageclub@outlook.com](mailto:nottsandderbyvintageclub@outlook.com)

Use the same address and format if you have any items or motorcycles for sale. Don't forget to include a phone number and a price.