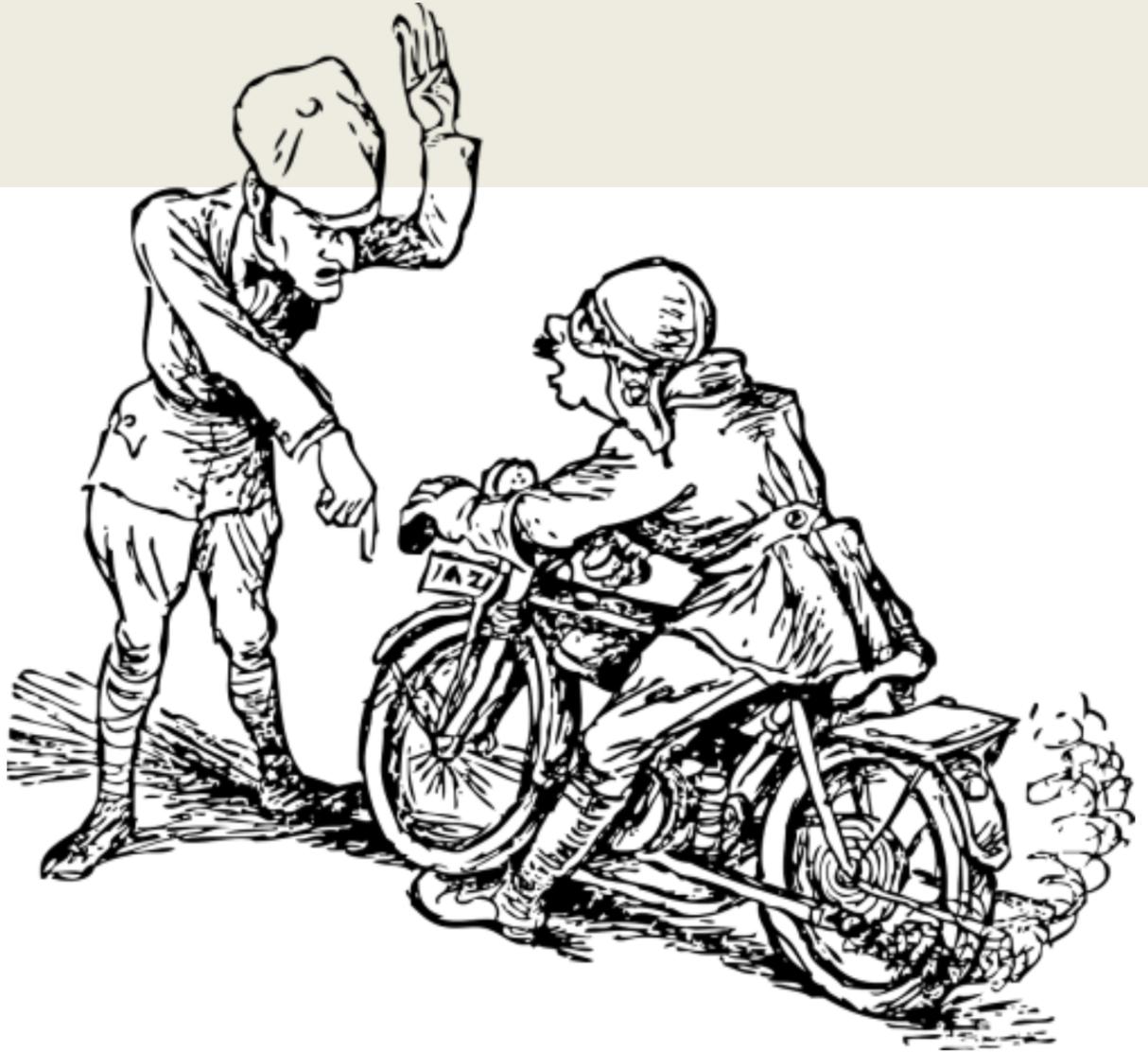
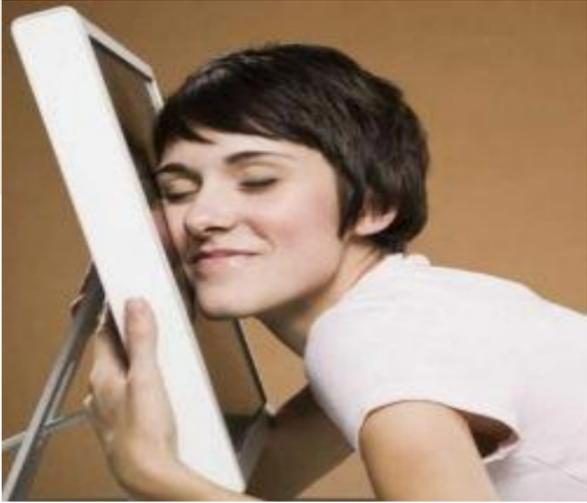


VMCC BEDS NEWS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN



May Virtual Club Night is coming

Following the runaway success of the April Virtual Club Night, Will's fingers have been clicking away on his keyboard to bring you a fresh offering for May. Not fish and chips I'm afraid but he has offered this tasty morsel:

'As something of a "spoiler" motorcycling is terrific and getting started is only one of the terrors I'm prone to. The others could well form the basis of future presentations'.

Make of that what you will – but rest assured, it'll be good. Available from all good computer screens on Thursday, May 14th.



Are you absolutely sure your journey is essential sir?

Your contributions please

So far, we've seen Nigel educating his offspring in the finer arts of motorcycle maintenance, Don self-lacing the rear wheel for his Model S Royal Enfield, Norm re-energizing his Norton ES2, and Neil breathing new life into the engine of his AJS 18S. Many thanks to them for their contributions. There must be an awful lot of interesting things like these going on in sheds and garages, maybe even front rooms, throughout Bedfordshire whilst we're being denied the joy of riding. Why not grab a few photographs and write a few words to let everyone know what you're up to?

It doesn't necessarily have to have lots of oily bits in the picture, anything that you think

might be of some interest to our members. And, of course, we'd particularly love to hear of mishaps and disasters.

Old pictures, new pictures, for sale/wanted adverts, drawings, cartoons, jokes (keep them clean please), tales of adventures (tall or otherwise), book reviews, almost anything. Please send them to me at my usual email address:

bryan.marsh@btinternet.com

Unfortunately for you people, everything in this issue has had to come from me, so nothing mechanical this time. They don't call me 'dangerous with spanners' without reason.

IN THIS ISSUE

I HAVE A DREAM

MOTORCYCLING FOR BOYS

RARE LOCAL MEDAL SOLD

BOOK REVIEW

The Motor Cycle Book for Boys 1928

by the Staff of 'The Motor Cycle'

They say you should never judge a book by the cover. But buying online you often have no more than the cover and the title to go on. Sometimes purchases disappoint, sometimes they enthrall. This one falls very much into the latter category.

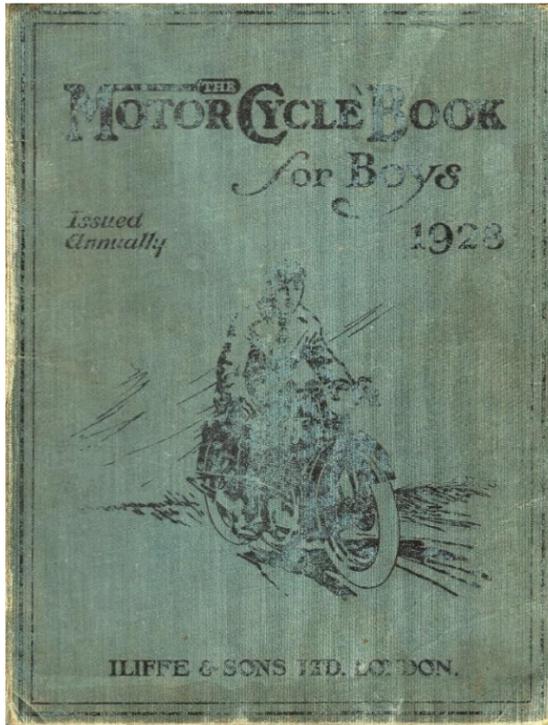
A rare book, intended to have been produced annually but only actually appearing for 1928, these don't come up for sale very often. I snapped this one up on eBay for a fraction of what I think it's actually worth. But its true value to me is not as a collector's item but as a damn good read. I doubt there are many copies around in good condition because this is a book that would have read time and time again.

Filling 195 pages including 583 photographs, line drawings and cartoons, the 35 chapters cover almost every imaginable aspect of motorcycling that would interest a lad in the late 1920s (no equal opportunities then - girls don't get a look in, nor even a mention). The staff writers of *The Motor Cycle*, although generally not acknowledged individually, did a wonderful job in not talking down to their young readers, even though the minimum riding age would then have been only fourteen. Indeed, I found it perfect for me with my limited mechanical engineering knowledge. Mechanical matters are covered in surprising detail, with individual chapters covering the engine, horse-power, gearbox, carburetter and magneto, with others explaining the various technical terms, and even how to carry out the annual overhaul. The manufacture of a Triumph Model W 277cc lightweight is described and fully illustrated from the drawing office to the final road test over a full fifteen pages. Absolute joy for a Triumph nut like me.

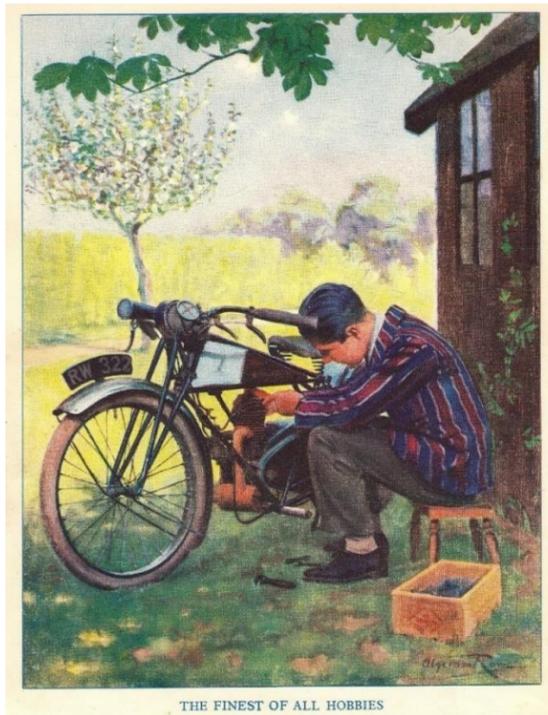
Sport of almost every kind is described including the IoM TT, reliability trials, racing at Brooklands and other European tracks, motorcycle football and even gymkanas.

The very first chapter, entitled 'Beginning Young' is actually written by a 16-year-old schoolboy '...for his fellows and their fathers'; that schoolboy being Falshaw Junior, *The Motor Cycle's* Schoolboy Contributor. Brimming with enthusiasm, it soon becomes clear from his writing that perhaps he's not quite your average schoolboy oik, and maybe he's from quite a privileged background, e.g.: "During last summer term my pater asked me if I thought I could miss school for a week in order to see the T.T. That the answer was in the affirmative goes without saying, and I worked like billy-ho to justify it. After all these years I was to see my first T.T."

The coverage of touring is nothing short of glorious and must have inspired every



Faded and battered but still a great read



The ubiquitous striped blazer – essential riding gear in the 1920s

daydreaming motorcycling teenager to point his imaginary wheels towards the lands pictured; not only the beauty spots of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, but distant and exotic destinations like Australia, Canada, Northern Italy, Norway, Algeria (where a motorcycle outfit is pictured in the middle of an ancient Roman city – try that now!, (or in front of the stones at Stonehenge), Egypt, Matoppo Hills in Rhodesia, even Constantinople, Kiev (then in Russia) and Moscow.

It doesn't surprise me that this 'annual' was only produced for the one year as it's so comprehensive that I think the writers would have struggled to find something new to write for the following year. This book, despite its somewhat tatty ('pre-loved' in sales-speak) condition, has instantly become one of my most prized motorcycle possessions.

JARROT'S FORESIGHT

I have a dream...

'I cannot help but believe that a genius will one day present us with a light form of motor cycle which will be as much a household necessity as the present human-propelled machine. When that day arrives the result will be a good one for England. Dwellers in the towns will travel farther afield; the hidden mysteries of the country will be even more deeply explored; the physically weak will not be debarred from participating in those enjoyments which are now confined to those who have the strength to propel themselves afar; and the great pleasure of motoring will be opened up to that section of the community which needs it most and will appreciate it best – the workers, and the toilers in the towns.

This is not a dream, but something which is bound to be accomplished when the mechanical genius of years has evolved the right machine, and the productive capacity of our English factories is equal to making it.'

Charles Jarrott, 1906 [*Ten Years of Motors and Motor Racing*]

I think it's safe to say that his belief has been vindicated.

IXION'S REMINISCENSES

My first motorcycle ride

IXION, CIRCA 1920

'The first motorcycle I ever rode had its engine insecurely perched on the top of the front mudguard; the carburetter resembled a 2lb. biscuit box full of lamp wicks and petrol, and the ignition consisted of a platinum tube kept red-hot by a means of a petrol burner. The contraption cost about £50 to buy, and perhaps £1 a week to run. I was in at its depth – it sideslipped on the grease on the Euston Road, leapt on top of its owner, pummeled him severely, and catching fire burnt itself to scrap iron. I owed my first road experiences to rich and foolish friends, and they usually confirmed my decision not to own one.'

[and of an early motor car] '...finally she started. She ran rather badly for four miles, and came to a standstill. The crew disembarked, and wondered. One of us struck some matches. By their fitful light we spotted a wet stain on the road behind the car – in fact, a wet trail leading Bicesterwards in the darkness. "The water's leaking", quoth the skipper. The first mate investigated the stain somewhat closely with a match. Over the smouldering ashes we decided that the leakage must have been petrol.'

APRIL VIRTUAL CLUB NIGHT

Huge critical acclaim for Will's personal view on Handbooks

Bravely stepping forward to test his IT skills and the capacity of his server, Will Curry produced an excellent presentation for our first ever 'virtual club night'. Wisely shunning the option of an interactive free-for-all, he opted for a watch-at-your-leisure, slide-show, Released on the usual evening to ensure anyone wanting the authenticity of an 8-for-8.30pm start would be satisfied, with the bonuses of no queue at the bar and not having to worry about driving home. His interest in manuals is understandable considering he had written them himself for most of his working life, albeit for photocopiers, communications equipment, computers and computer programs. That would probably explain why he's so good at all the IT stuff.

Luckily for us, he chose to stick with motorcycle manuals for his presentation. These he divided into technical data (workshop manuals, etc.), parts lists, and riding manuals containing such good advice as a good way to tackle a difficult or troublesome hill is to let the 'bike cool, vent the spent oil, refill the engine with fresh oil and enjoy a pipe (tobacco) before attempting the hill with both 'bike and rider suitably refreshed.' Sound advice, indeed.

He warned us against taking everything written at the time the handbook was written to be still applicable today. New tyre materials dictate changes in tyre pressures, and oil technology has seen large developments but, beware, the original name may still be being used but for quite a

different product, such as Castrol Grand Prix. Nevertheless, some advice still holds sway - Vincent riders who insist on wearing Oxford bags are still well advised to "carry and use a bicycle clip when attempting to start the engine" because of their large curvaceous kickstarts. And ignore at your peril the advice to Silk owners that "The engine starts better with the ignition turned ON and continues longer with the fuel turned ON!". Makes one wonder what opinion the Silk management held of their customers.

Judging by the feedback, Will's efforts were very much appreciated, and we look forward to the next one (see front page). This presentation is still available – see the website for the link.

SHARPENHOE HILL CLIMB

Rare local medal sold on eBay

This medal recently came up for sale on eBay by someone in France, along with several other medals also won by Guy Lee Evans, including one from a very early IoM TT. Although wrongly advertised as 'Dren Hill Climb', instead of 'Open Hill Climb', I recognised the date as a Sharpenhoe event and threw in a generous bid which I was sure would land it. But it wasn't to be and it sold for over £100. In fact, all his medals went for surprisingly large sums, with the TT medal fetching somewhere around £250-£300 if my memory serves me correctly.

This event, held in October 1907 and largely organised by William Sale of Luton on behalf of the Auto Cycle Club, had been hastily re-located to Sharpenhoe instead of Birdlip Hill in Gloucestershire because of police 'interest'. Guy won Class 5 for machines with any size engine, on a 3½ hp Rex, based on the handicap formula but was only the second fastest up the hill in that class, hence the bronze medal rather than the silver which went to O C Godfrey on the bigger, twin-cylinder, 5 hp Rex.

Watch out for 'Every Medal Tells a Story', coming your way soon.



Guy Lee Evans' Sharpenhoe Hill Climb medal recently sold on eBay

Is this the oldest motorcycle in the world?

A recent sale by the Belgian HD Classics company was this French Bourgerie from 1896. Is this the oldest motorcycle in the world? The following is taken from their website: Jean Bourgerie, born in 1874 near Le Mans in France, had the idea to build a motorbike from a bicycle as early as 1893. His first model was ready in 1896. In total, Bourgerie built twelve motorcycles up to 1900, then a car but from 1901 he started to develop and make electric motors. Of these twelve motorcycles a total of three are still known. Number one (this one) had no brand name on the crankcase. Probably because they were still in the development phase and it wasn't a good advertisement if you broke down with your brand clearly readable. The reason that this brand and these motorcycles are totally unknown is because

Jean Bourgerie tried to buy back his motorcycles in early 1900, in total three pieces. These remained in his possession until his death when his collection was bought by a friend/collector, and later sold to two other collectors until last year when the collection of one was auctioned off due to his death. They never came in public ownership and have never been sold in the last 100 years...until now!

The motorcycle was completely overhauled before being offered for sale by HD Classics and is now in running condition. It didn't have a fixed price but was opened to offers. I'd love to know how much it cost and what is going to happen to it now. There are more pictures on <https://en.hd-classic.be/collection/j-bourgerie>



The 1896 Bourgerie recently unearthed, overhauled and sold by HD Classics in Belgium for an undisclosed sum

