

# BEDS VMCC NEWS

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN**



How it started, and...



...how it finished [see story inside]

## *IN THIS ISSUE*

**SECTION  
NEWS**

**WILL'S  
SIMILARITIES**

**MIDWEEK  
RUN REPORT**

**THE GRAND  
NATIONAL**

**EDITORIAL**

Autumn is upon us. A beautiful time of year when the weather is favourable – so don't put the bike away just yet. Grab your thermals, some waterproofs and warm gloves, and let's keep riding for as long as we can. Hopefully, it'll still be a while yet before the gritters appear.

Boris has suggested the latest measures could be in place for up to six months, so that seems to scupper any thoughts of reviving traditional club nights or breakfast meets. Indeed, virtually all bike-related events are being cancelled. The October Classic Show at Stafford and all meets at the Ace Café being amongst the latest victims. Below, you will read a suggestion of how we can abide by our Section Constitution and hold our AGM through a combination of correspondence and a "virtual" meeting. I doubt anyone would challenge us if we didn't actually have an AGM until normality is resumed, but why not give it a go. If you have any comments on the proposal, then please let me know.

Possibly because of the earlier production date of this newsletter, it is somewhat shorter than has become the "norm". My fault for deciding to take a week's holiday, leaving on Thursday morning. Please keep your fingers crossed for good weather as I take my modern Triumph on a tour taking in Northern Ireland, Scotland, The Lake District and North Yorkshire. I suspect my new waterproof suit will get a thorough testing.

Many thanks to this week's contributors: just Dave, Neil and Will this time – as always, please keep the contributions coming.

Bryan

**Section news and events****SECTION AGM**

Will has pointed out that our section AGM would normally be held in November but, of course, these are not normal circumstances. Our constitution sets the frequency of AGMs at not more than 15 months apart which brings us to February. The way things are going it seems that a normal AGM in February is unlikely too.

One solution is to provide the Chairman's, Secretary's and Treasurer's reports and 2019 Minutes in advance of a "virtual" AGM and to invite questions and/or motions within a specified time limit. The reports, and any questions and/or motions, can then be formally presented at the "virtual" AGM. Comments and, in particular, any objections would then be invited, again with a specified time limit. Absence of formal objections would be taken as agreement to accept the 2019 Minutes, the Treasurer's Report and Committee Membership.

As might be clear, this hasn't been thought through fully, but it seems a sensible approach. Unfortunately, we have no way of communicating directly with members who are not on the email distribution list, other than through the Journal. Because of this, it may not be possible to hold the "virtual" AGM on the traditional November club night date.

**MIDWEEK DAYTIME RUNS**

The next run, weather permitting, will be on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> October. Please contact Don if you'd like to come along, either by email: [donmckeand@hotmail.com](mailto:donmckeand@hotmail.com), or by telephone on: 01525 720629.

We will try to keep these runs going every couple of weeks through Autumn, for as long as anyone still wants to come out to play.

**BEDFORDSHIRE NAVIGATION EVENT**

Thanks to the (few) people who have sent in entries for the Navigation Event; hopefully, many more have actually had a spin around the locations just for amusement. I'll put together the promised Roll of Honour for the next issue.

**Ode to the Spell Checker**

SUBMITTED BY DAVE CROWE

Eye have a spelling checker  
It came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.  
Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight 4 it 2 say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write  
It shows me strait a weigh.  
As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.  
Eye have run this poem threw it  
I am shore your pleased two no  
Its letter perfect awl the weigh  
My chequer tolled me sew!

**The Midweek (partial) Run  
Or: The Trials and Tribulations  
of a Run Leader**

BRYAN MARSH

Don and I have been taking it in turns in organising the midweek runs, every two weeks. Last week it was my turn, but I left it rather late to work out a route. Normally, I plan the route then ride it a few days before the run to make sure all is well. But I didn't leave enough time for the trial run of my proposed clockwise circumnavigation of Luton on minor roads, relying instead on a website to identify any road closures. Rats! - it said the road through Lilley was still closed off during the daytime.



The only practical alternative was to take the B-road from Barton to Hitchin then head down to Preston via Gosmore, and on through King's Walden to Darley Hall, Chiltern Green and New Mill End. I don't know the roads around Preston very well, so I quickly nipped out on Tuesday evening to suss them out. All well and good until I got to Preston where the road to King's Walden was closed, adding a further diversion to St Paul's Walden, via the hugely inappropriately named St Albans Highway (nowhere near St Albans and anything but a highway – really nice road though), and Whitwell back to Breachwood Green.

That was as far as I had time to explore as it was getting dark, so I headed home via Lilley only to find that it looked very much like the daytime works were completed and the road would be open!

I just about managed to get my gear dry ready for Thursday morning after a thorough soaking from some very heavy showers on the way home from Bourton-on-the-Water on Wednesday evening. And, thankfully, Thursday morning turned out dry, ideal for a run.

We met at the café in the car/bike park of Pure Triumph in Woburn – “we” being Norm, Will, the two Gerrys, and myself. A quick discussion led to agreement to give the Lilley route a try and hope for the best, so we headed off.

With just five bikes it’s easy to keep the group together without the need for route sheets or using the drop-off riding system. The last man dons a bright orange hi-vis waistcoat which makes it easy for the run leader to spot in his mirror.



Ariel, Honda, Norton, Triumph and Velocette waiting for the “off”



Ducati and Triumph “Scramblers” and BMW to tempt your wallet

From Woburn up to Milton Bryan and across to Toddington when my 1969 Triumph T100S (the one I’ve had for 44 years) momentarily lost power but then picked up again. Odd, I thought, until a mile later when it lost power again but, this time, didn’t pick up again. Suspecting a flat battery (no lights) causing the electronic ignition to go on strike, it was clear that the bike wasn’t going anywhere in a hurry.

Being only three miles from my home meant I could scrounge a pillion ride from Norm to go and get my car and trailer and perform my own recovery. Will kindly stayed with my bike, for security, and the two Gerry’s were honourably discharged to find their own amusement, choosing to head to the parking area at Upper Sundon. Ironically, the route would have passed that way.

Later inspection revealed the battery to be fully charged, and fuses intact, but no sparks or lights, except the brake light which works fine. Well beyond my diagnosis, currently awaiting expert input.

[photographs courtesy of Will]



The Guardian Ariel

## The page 3 girl

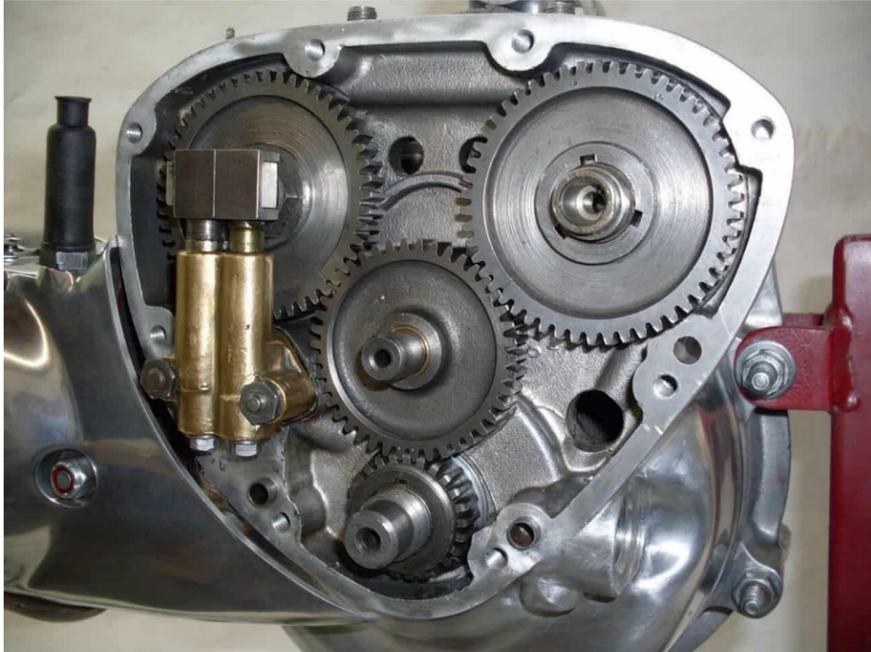


## Similarities

WILL CURRY

Ever noticed how some parts of your favourite bike look remarkably like parts used by a completely different maker?

The activities of Lucas, Burman, Villiers and others goes a long way to explain most of the similarities. Even the mighty BSA bought in electrical equipment from Lucas.



### A Triumph twin oil pump . . .

When you take the timing cover off your Meriden Triumph twin one thing you will notice is the plunger oil pump. This is essentially the same pump which was used in the first Speed Twins from Coventry in 1938 through all the Meriden twins up to the very last of the Harris twins in 1988. 50 years of production of the same item must be something of a record. However, Triumph used this type of pump prewar on their singles too so it's actually a bit longer than that.

If you were to take the timing cover off any Ariel single from 1928 onwards the oil pump you find will look remarkably like the Triumph oil pump. Ariel used the pump on their singles up until the end of production in 1959. Another long production run - there can't have been too much wrong with it.



### . . . and an Ariel pump, partly hidden by the gear change

Coincidence? Perhaps, if you design a wheel it's going to be an inevitable roundness to it but I don't think that applies to plunger pumps.



It was this photo which really set me thinking about similarities. For a long time I had assumed the bike was a BSA M20. That is until one day I looked a little closer. I realized that the timing cover was wrong for a BSA. It was a Triumph. The general shape was right, it was the bottom where the cover was for the plunger oil pump that wasn't. The tappet cover looks pure BSA too.



### A real BSA M20

So what are the similarities between Triumph and BSA single engines?

With the exception of one detail, the contents and appearance of the timing chests are very similar. The exception is that oil pump again. The BSA has a gear oil pump which is situated in the sump and gives rise to that bulge which needs that characteristic kink in the frame. The engines also have a very similar mounting for the magneto. Another similarity is that the BSA singles and the 3HW (but not the earlier singles) have a one-piece cylinder head and rockerbox. One fewer joint to leak - wonderful.



### BSA B33



### Triumph 3HW

There is a feature of the gear drive to the magneto on BSA singles which develops over time. The mounting for the magneto isn't that robust and sooner or later both the top of the platform and the bottom of the magneto wear. This means that the driving gears mesh ever tighter and begin to whine. A shim is all that's needed to cure the noise. I've had very little to do with Triumph singles – presumably they eventually whine too.



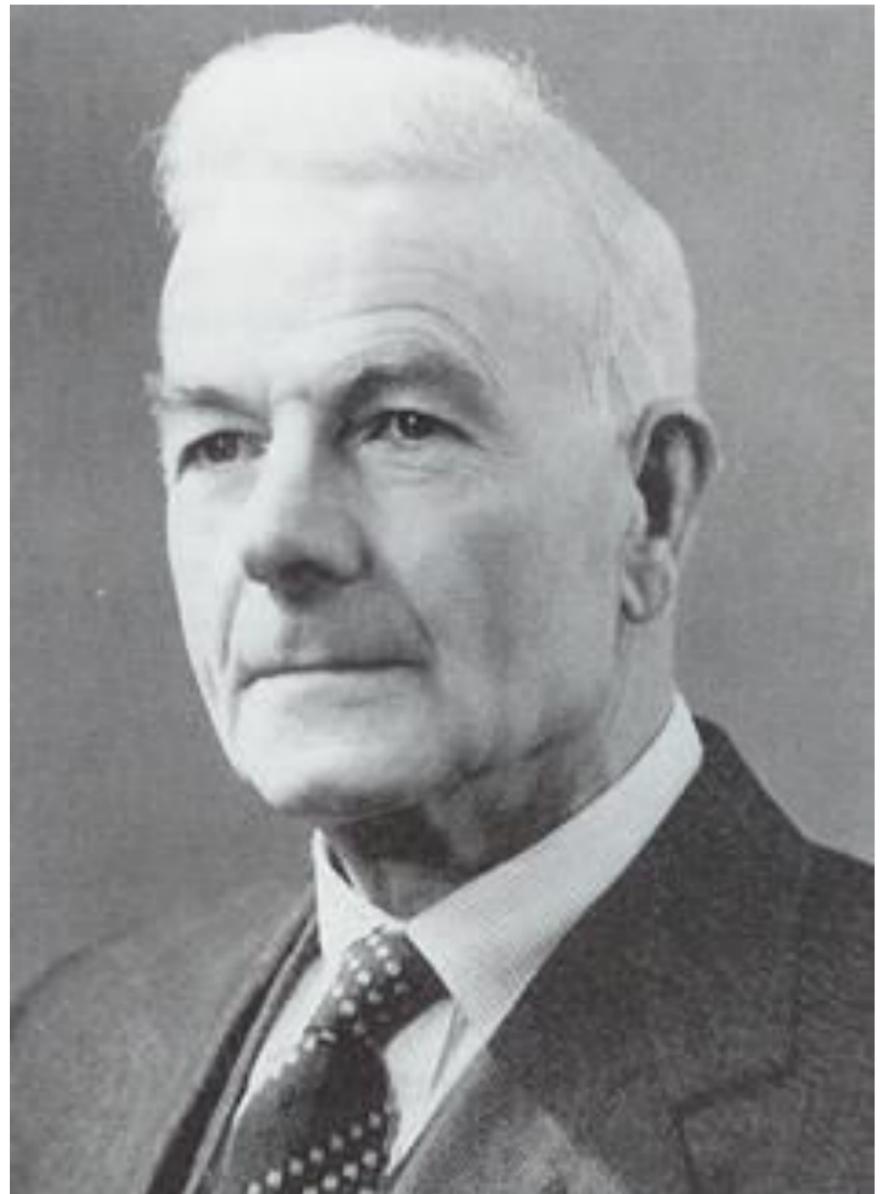
Triumph 3T



Ariel KHA

There's a similarity between a Triumph twin and an Ariel twin too. Ariel's KH 500 twin has its cylinder head and rocker boxes cast in one piece as does Triumph's 3T. I'm not sure which came first as I think both were the post-war fruits of war-time development. *[Possibly the 3T as it was based loosely on the wartime stillborn 3TW, destroyed with the Triumph factory in the 1940 Coventry blitz – Bryan]* While the Ariel lasted until 1957 the 3T barely made it into the 50's. *[I believe this was because the 500s were selling so well, rather than any deficiency with the 350 3T itself – Bryan]* As the 3T was disappearing the Ariel was undergoing quite a transformation which included another feature from the 3T. The original arrangement for holding the head to the barrel was a nasty collection of studs with the nuts positioned between the 2nd and 3rd fin of the barrel. The barrel was then bolted to the crankcase with studs from the crankcase through the flange at the barrel base. The transformation included using the 'captive' through bolts to hold the head onto the barrel and both onto the crankcase like both the 3T and BSA singles before that. The Ariel twin also used a gear oil pump similar to the BSA single.

I've already suggested these similarities are beyond coincidence. So how did they come about?



Val Page

This gentleman may have had quite a lot to do with it. His career started with JAP of Tottenham and he moved to Ariel in 1925. From Ariel he moved to Triumph in 1932 and then to BSA in 1936. His final move was back to Ariel at the start of the war.

There were a number of other nomadic motorcycle engineers - Phil Irving, Bert Hopwood, Frank Anstey - all leaving their mark on motorcycling.

A final similarity involving Val Page has to do with the internet. Do a search on 'Val Page' and you'll doubtless turn up a number of biographies. You'd expect the detail to be similar but this similarity extends to the text used to describe the details. No imagination some people.



Another view of a Triumph 3T engine – in service as a coffee table in my front room, until needed. And, before you ask, no, the mug doesn't leak

## *Seen on my travels*

**BRYAN MARSH**

Standing outside a small business park in Redditch is all that now remains of the former Royal Enfield factory. Thankfully it has not been forgotten thanks to a rather interesting “sculpture”, and a plaque presented by the owner’s club. I thought it would have been rather appropriate had they turned the building into an Indian restaurant.



All that remains of the former Royal Enfield factory in Redditch



I'm sure someone can tell what model and year – presumably a Bullet



Owner's club plaque

## *Winter's coming*



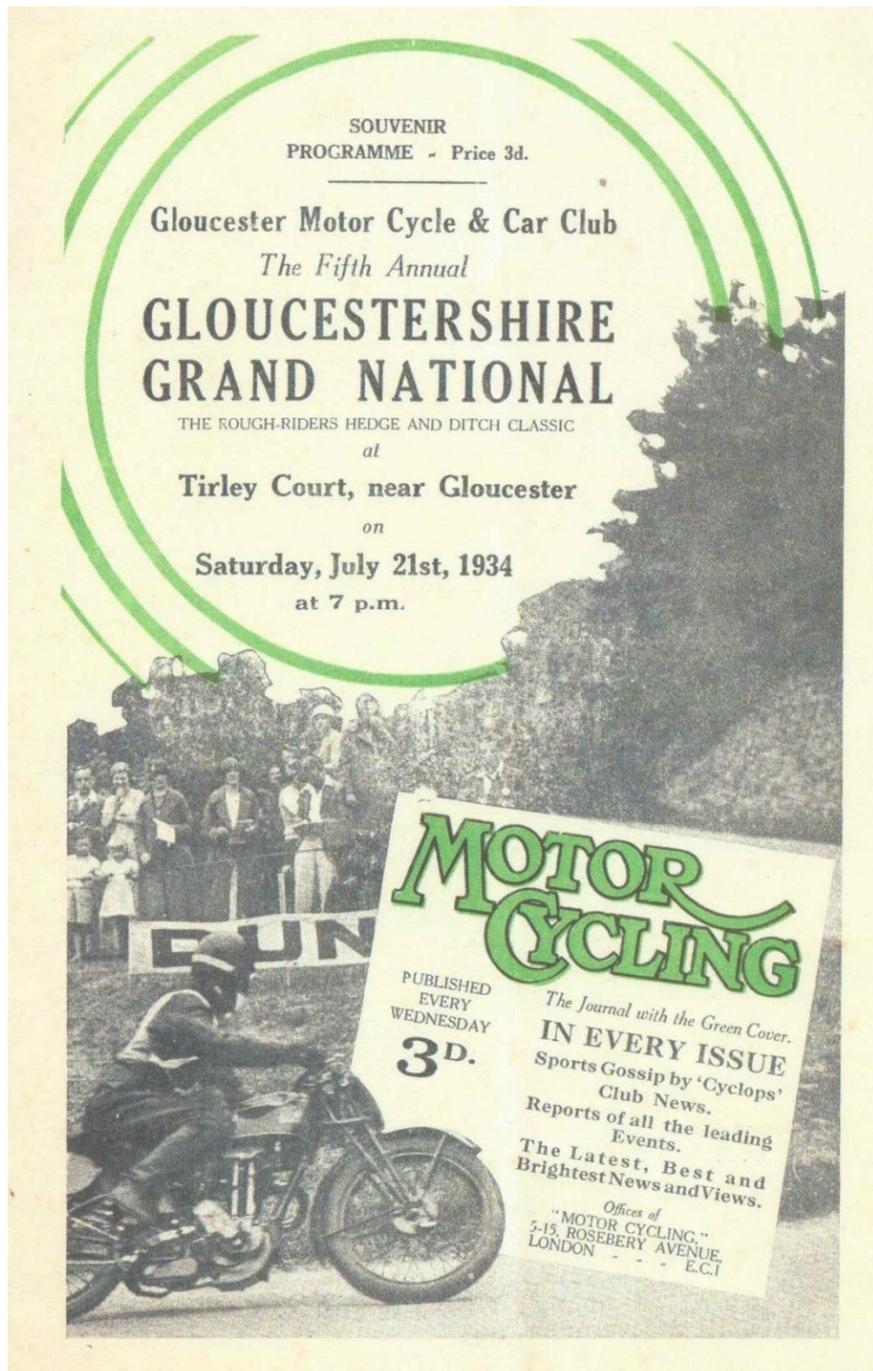
When you forget to add a pillion seat to the list of options

## *The horseless Grand National*

FROM THE COTSWOLD MOTORING MUSEUM AND TOY COLLECTION ARCHIVE

Some surplus items from the museum's collection given to me – sadly, not the actual programme, just a photocopy of the front cover.

It's interesting that it was held at 7.00 in the evening but, I guess, that was a time when most men would have worked at least a half-day on a Saturday. I particularly like the event's sub-title: "The Rough Riders Hedge and Ditch Classic".



Rider 21, helmetless and in waistcoat and tie, leads the more cautious rider 22 with helmet and protective Fair Isle pullover



Press cutting showing some of the huge crowd of spectators

## Stop Press

Neil Cairns sent me a link to an event this weekend at Shuttleworth: <https://www.shuttleworth.org/events/drivein-racing/>

I don't know if tickets are still available, but it looks like fun:

A socially distanced, drive-in airshow and Shuttleworth Sprint, celebrating racing history! Bringing together two- and four-wheel machines from the Veteran, Edwardian and Vintage eras in a public parade, plus a grass sprint track that runs alongside the Old Warden airstrip. This year the cars will run on an extended course that also takes them around part of the perimeter of the airfield.

Race Day is a Celebration of some of the best times of motoring and motor sport – plus there's the opportunity to see some of the finest historic aircraft from the Shuttleworth Collection in action.

For vintage vehicle enthusiasts, they are able to go ahead with the popular annual Shuttleworth Sprint – a non-competitive Sprint on the runway for pre-1939 racing cars and bikes. These will also be on display to the public.



Fashion show, friendly get-together or a fiercely competitive scramble? You'd think they might have cut the grass at the start.