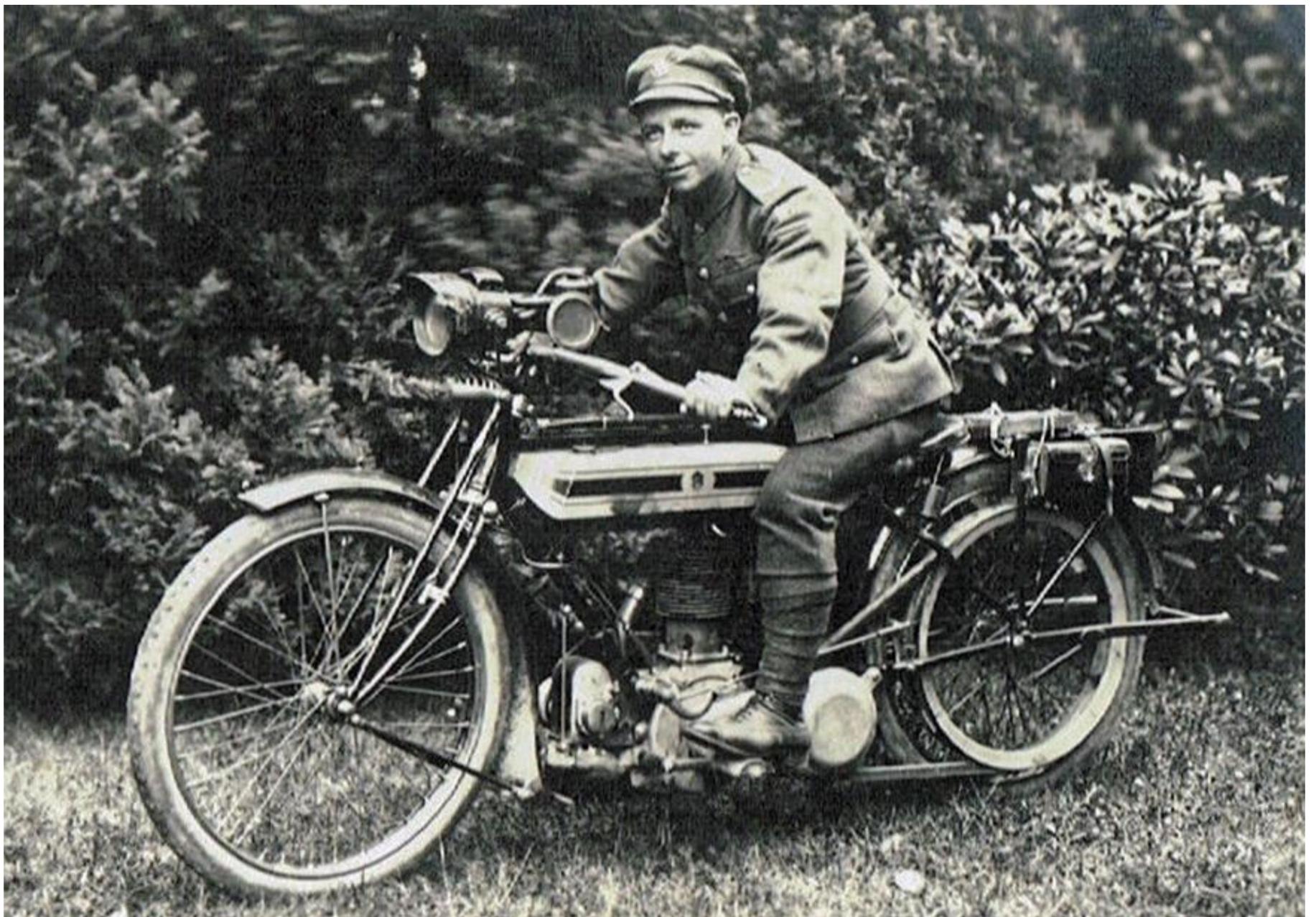


BEDS VMCC NEWS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN

Lest We Forget



The ubiquitous 'Trusty' Triumph Type H (aka Model H), introduced in February 1915. Some 30,000 are reputed to have been supplied during WWI, with 17,998 still in the possession of the British Armed Forces at the time of the Armistice.



IN THIS ISSUE

**SECTION
AGM
REPORTS**

**THE THINGS
PEOPLE SAY**

**MIDWEEK RUN
REPORT**

**LOTS, LOTS
MORE**

Editorial

The widespread belief in 1914 that 'It'll be all over by Christmas' has a worrying ring to it here in 2020. I doubt very much that the current situation will be over before the New Year, but let's hope the conflict doesn't drag on for a full four years like it did for the First World War.

Yesterday saw the 102nd anniversary of the Armistice so I hope it's not too late to commemorate that on the front page. Motorcycles and their riders were crucial to the prevention of German victory in the Great War. As motorcyclists ourselves, we may be well aware of this but perhaps not quite so by the wider public. A few books have been published based on the personal accounts of despatch riders, such as 'A Motorcycle Courier in the Great War' by Captain WHL Watson (originally published in 1915 as 'Adventures of a Despatch Rider'). For a detailed appraisal of the contribution of the motorcycles I can recommend 'San Fairy Ann' by Michael Gallagher, first published in 2013. For a quicker read you might try this article on the BMF website: <https://www.bmf.co.uk/news/show/How-motorcycle-despatch-riders-helped-win-World-War-One>

Another packed issue which, this week, includes the first two reports for the 2020 Section AGM. Many thanks to all our contributors – Brent, Don, Gordon, Kerry, Richard and Will. I've even been able to hold some exciting articles and pictures back for the next issue but, as ever, please keep them coming. The new lockdown must be giving more time for research, reminiscences or repairs, so you might like to scribble a few lines about what you've been up to. I've been spending more time myself on the online British Newspaper Archive, discovering more local motorcycling events held in the first few decades of the last century, one of which, in Haynes, I've included in this issue.

'Despatches'

'TOUCHSTONE', IN THE DAILY MAIL 1914

Swift as a bullet out of a gun
He passed me by with an inch to spare,
Raising a dust cloud thick and dun
While the stench of lubricant filled the air.
I must admit that I did not like
The undergrad on his motor bike

I have seen him, too, at the wayside inn,
A strapping lad scarce out of his teens.
Grimy, but wearing a cheerful grin;
A young enthusiast, full of beans.
While his conversation was little better
Than pure magneto and carburetter.

Now he has got the chance of his life,
The chance of earning glorious scars,
And I picture him scouring a land of strife,
Crouching over his handle-bars,
His open exhaust, with its roar and stench,
Like a Maxim gun in a British trench.

Lad, when we met in that country lane
Neither foresaw the days to come,
But I know that if ever we meet again
My heart will throb to your engine's hum,
And to-day, as I read, I catch my breath
At the thought of your ride through the hail of death!

But to you it is just a glorious lark;
Scorn of danger is still your creed.
As you open her out and advance your spark
And humour the throttle to get more speed,
Life has only one end for you,
To carry your priceless message through!

Section news and events, etc.

SECTION AGM

Written reports are appended to this newsletter (to avoid having too many pages of text without pictures up front). These are offered for review and comment for the next few weeks. They should also be available on the website from today. Due to difficulties caused by current restrictions, the financial report is not yet ready.

MIDWEEK DAYTIME RUNS/LUNCHES

Runs are currently suspended in line with the lockdown restrictions. Should anyone be sufficiently brave/foolish, it may be possible to hold a run the day the restrictions are due to be lifted, Thursday 3rd December, or possibly the following week. As they say, watch this space.

By now we would normally have gone over to lunches instead of runs but obviously that's not possible until things change.

LOCAL CAFÉ RECOMMENDATIONS

List currently suspended whilst we aren't permitted to visit them, except to pick up take-aways, but please keep sending suggestions ready for their re-opening.

VIRTUAL CLUB NIGHT

After seven months, Will has unfortunately run out of material for his virtual club nights – at least for the time being. It was hoped that some others else might grab the mantle but no joy to date; volunteers please, we're going to be here for a few more months yet (sorry to keep reminding you of that).

Riding for recreation

[The following guidance has been issued on Weds 11th November; I am personally surprised by this interpretation of the Government rules and guidance. But who am I to argue when it's in our favour?]

The Coalition of Motorcycling Organisations (COMO) has examined legislation and guidance for the new lockdown in England. If you are not required to self-isolate, the rules do permit riding alone or with one other individual. You are still subject to the social distancing rules and other measures.

Many riders have been asking whether riding alone is allowed under the new lockdown rules. Government has clearly stated that riding as essential travel is allowed. We looked into rules on riding for leisure and mental well-being which are not so clear.

We have studied both the legislation and the guidance and have concluded that the rules do permit riding for pleasure, alone or with a mate.

You can ride for recreation* on public roads so long as you are:

- on your own
- with one person from another household, or
- with the people you live with (your household) or your support bubble

Bikers congregating in groups is not allowed under the legislation and will draw unwanted attention, as will any reckless riding. Please use good judgement and avoid any action that will adversely affect the reputation of motorcycling.

**The actual wording of the Government regulation is "to visit a public outdoor place for the purposes of open air recreation" - Bryan*

The Midweek Run Report

DON MCKEAND



Not the VMCC Beds Midweek Run, despite appearances to the contrary

The midweek run was scheduled to take place on Thursday 5th November. The weather forecast was good, six riders had expressed an interest and all looked good until the Prime Ministerial announcement of the lockdown just four days before we were due to set off made it look as though our plan had been scuppered. However, a hasty straw poll by e-mail had everyone agreeing to a move to Wednesday 4th to squeeze in what will probably be the last run of 2020. Bryan agreed to the change but had to drop out due to his museum involvement, but his place was filled by Eddie Lloyd.

So, on a (very) crisp, sunny morning six riders met by the village hall in Stewartby – Don, Eddie, Will, Gerry Bird, Gerry Gibbins and Gordon Luff from St. Ives who were we pleased to welcome to the group, and who also provided a bit of variety in machinery with his Triumph Trident T160. The route took us to Marston Moretaine and Cranfield, then through the Cranfield University campus and on to Salford. The road from Salford across the M1 and A421 has been closed for well over a year, but is newly re-opened now that the motorway bridge has been replaced, so we took advantage of that to get us to Aspley Guise, only having to pause briefly at the level crossing for a freight train.

Narrow lanes from Aspley were taken cautiously thanks to a liberal coating of fallen leaves and then on into Woburn. The road through Woburn Abbey grounds was surprisingly devoid of deer but, leaving the park, we passed through Eversholt and Milton Bryan and into the outskirts of Toddington. The imaginatively named Long Lane got us to Tingrith then on to Westoning, Greenfield and Flitton. Heavy traffic on the A507 meant a long wait to get across to Maulden with my clutch starting to drag a bit. Limbersey Lane from Maulden led up to Haynes West End then via Deadmans Cross and Ireland to Stanford.

The scenery and autumn colours looked superb in the sunshine and I was congratulating myself that I had at last managed to lead a route without a road closure – until we came to the turning to Broom, almost within striking distance of our destination. The dreaded yellow signs meant we had to detour via Caldecote only to be greeted by the other end of the road closure at Broom. Fortunately, one of the workers moved a cone and waved us through before my blood pressure reached danger levels.

Jordan's Mill was the destination and provided us with sustenance before we dispersed to find our own ways round the road closure to get home.

Meeting up for rides is probably not going to happen until 2021 with the new restrictions in place, but I know how I will break up the tedium of lockdown on an individual basis, especially if we get days with such good weather as our ride out.

The page 3 girl



The things people say...

WILL CURRY

These are all more-or-less motorcycle based, not because I don't talk to people without motorcycles, it's just not interesting.

There are broadly speaking two types of people who engage me in conversation. Those who really know what they are talking about and those who only think they do. The former I learn from and the latter can be a source of amusement or annoyance or both. What follows comes solely from the latter and are all variations on a theme of misidentification.



Will's HT Ariel

There are no tank badges on the tank of my HT Ariel. All that declares it to be an Ariel is the cast-in name on the crankcase. A further deviation from standard is that the bike is painted light blue, not black. The usual off-target comment: "Oh, a Greeves", presumably because of the colour.



A blue, Greeves trials bike

The Rapide doesn't fare too well either. It's one of the last badged as 'HRD'. I don't think it says 'Vincent' anywhere. The comment: 'Oh, a V-twin. I bet you wished you had a Vincent'.



A Velo twin, in this case a Valiant. It could have been an LE or a Vogue or even the Model O or the Roarer

One of my bosses at Rank Xerox managed a good one. He asked me how old it was. I answered that it was a 1929 model. He paused and then asked me if I'd had it from new. It must have been over 35 years ago, and I wasn't quite as grey then. He worked it out before I had a chance to reply and his embarrassment was undoubtedly genuine - Thanks John. That aside, he was a good manager and I learned a lot from him.

Two more examples, both mother/daughter duets with one Rapide based and the other Yamaha based although it didn't really feature. I'd parked the Rapide outside the bank in Welwyn Garden. There were two ladies in motorcycling gear looking at it when I returned. A Rapide had been family transport in the 50's, solo and sidecar. An interesting 10-minute conversation followed. It was the end that really amused me. As I climbed on mother asked me if I needed a push. This drew a horrified 'Mother' from the daughter. Mother replied, 'Your dad's often needed a push'.

The other occurred in Letchworth. There was some festival in process, and I'd had to park a long way from where I needed to be. The pavements were crowded and coming towards me were two ladies in blazers and carrying what was probably some sort of musical instrument in a large bag. I stepped out into the road and gestured them by. The elder lady thanked me and was promptly admonished by the younger - 'I've told you not to speak to strange men'. It was the mother's response which tickled me - 'But he's such a polite strange man'.

Uphill at sixty miles an hour

FROM: BEDS AND HERTS PICTORIAL - TUES 10 MAY 1921

LUTON MOTOR CLUB'S TRIAL

FULL RESULTS

Hill-climbing by a motor cycle at only a fraction under 60 miles an hour, and by a cycle car at over 56 miles an hour, against a head wind, were the outstanding performances at the meeting held in Haynes Park on Saturday afternoon under the auspices of the Luton and South Beds Automobile Club. Eight of the eleven clauses were decided purely on time, and the two performances mentioned were easily the best in their respective classes.

It was the first competitive event of the season, for the reliability trial fixed for April 16th had to be postponed when the Triple Alliance fixed a general strike for April 15th. The strike did not materialise, but it is hoped that the reliability trial will on May 21st.

In getting the use of the hill in Haynes Park for the trials on Saturday afternoon the Club were fortunate, for possible difficulties with the police were avoided by using this private road, and it gave a track which was, if anything, too good for a showery afternoon, but would have been ideal had it kept dry. Mr. Saunderson, who readily gave his consent to the trials being held in his grounds, is closely associated with a motor of the "slow but sure" type - the Saunderson tractor; but he knows the value of something a little speedier for personal use, and his interest was such that he not only provided the Club with a useful private track, but, together with other members of his household, was an interested



Will's V-twin



A "real" Vincent

I've had variations on a theme with Fred, my Square Four. As a Mk1 it has just one exhaust pipe and silencer on each side and could be taken as a twin on that basis. However, the distributor with five HT leads and the timing cover engraved by Ariel, possibly with this situation in mind, with 'Square Four' should clear up any confusion. Having noticed the exhaust system, not many people seem to be bothered to look any further. 'I bet you'd like a four'.



Fred's timing side



A "real" Square Four



Will's vintage 500 single Ariel

The most prolifically mis-identified has to be the vintage Ariel. Twin-port head, fish-tail silencers, black petrol tank lettered 'ARIEL' in large letters... Overheard at an AKMR not that long ago at the Willington stop: 'I didn't know Velocette made a twin'.

spectator of the greater part of the trial.. He made the reasonable stipulation that there should be a small charge for admission in so far as the general public were concerned, and the money so raised will be used for the benefit of the crippled children of Luton, for whom the Club will provide a day's outing during the summer.



Haynes Park approach road, as it is now

The measured distance was 800 yards. and only the heavy storms caused it to be anything short of ideal. With the exception of the steepest part, where it was a little dusty at first, it had an asphalted surface equal to a first class town road, and this appeared to have been recently swept for the benefit of competitors. For the car classes it had little width to spare, but there was a total absence a those loose fine stones which give stripped cars in particular such an encouragement to roll, to the great alarm of spectators who sometimes cannot otherwise be persuaded to keep clear of the track. But because it had such an excellent, hard surface, in the frequent sharp storms every drop of rain lay there, with the result that many machines threw up water enough to cause considerable belt slip, and consequent bad times. One competitor who had a stripped Douglas which looked a bit hotter than usual, found that under such conditions stripping did not pay. His front tyre threw a steady stream of water on to the plug of his front cylinder with the result that he limped up with only the back cylinder firing.

This spoiled one possible attempt for fastest time. Another probable, J. Hill, had an early misfortune. The first man to be started in the first event of the afternoon, he broke his piston half-way up the hill, and had to retire. This was a great pity, for he has a speedy machine, and knows how to use it. He received much sympathy. but something much more practical was a lift into Bedford and back, for a new piston. He took his engine down and fitted it, took a sporting chance later with it, and won two side-car classes. Apart from this, no one suffered any particular mishap, but it left a Bedford youngster with a Norton 3½ an easy winner of the special prize for the fastest time of the day. His time was 27 2-5 secs., the equivalent of 59.7 miles per hour — not bad going with a head wind and up a hill rising to a maximum gradient of about 1 in 7. On a second trip in another class he was three seconds slower, but still easily the fastest. His nearest rival was another Norton rider, with 29 secs.

This 29 secs. was equalled on two occasions by a G.N. cycle car. Mr. Godfrey's "Bluebottle." He looked quite happy doing 56 miles and a bit per hour uphill, but one would have to be very enthusiastic to compete with him for premier honours. Even another G.N. in three attempts could not do better than 36 secs. Apart from the G.N.'s, the best time was made by a New Hudson three-wheeler, which a good many saw for the first time. On its first ascent it was firing badly, and was unplaced. but in a later class it followed the two G.N.'s into third place.

The special motor cycle class for lady riders only attracted one entrant. In the cycle car and car classes there was also one lady, whose principal achievement was to put the track under a heavy pall of smoke each time she made the ascent.

The side-car classes were not well supported, and one "dark horse," an R.A.F. officer, apparently got tired of waiting for these classes, which came later in the evening; he did not, at any rate, take his place at the starting line.

Mr. Archer Wright acted as starter, and Mr. S. V. Brown did all the timing. The provisional results are:-

FASTEST TIME.

Special prize for fastest time of the day:

B. Wood, Norton 3½ 27 2-5 secs. Equal to 59.7 m.p.h.

250 c.c.

1 G.S. Davison, Levis 35 3-5secs.
2 G. Dunham, Velocette 38 2-5secs.
3 F. Biggs, New Hudson 47 1-5secs.

350 c.c.

1 G. Dunham, Velocette 38 1-5secs.
2 G.S. Davison, Levis 40 2-5secs.
3 F. Waters, Douglas 41 1-5secs.

550 c.c.

1 B. Wood, Norton 3½ 27 1-5secs.
2 C. Smith. Norton 3½ 29secs.
3 G. Davison, Levis 35secs.

750 c.c.

1 B. Wood, Norton 3½ 28 1-5secs.
2 C. Smith, Norton 3½ 29 4-5secs.
3 A. Saddington, James 5/6 .. 36secs.

More about MK3 Shackletons

RICHARD BROWNE

[Richard adds his own experiences with Shackleton aircraft to those of Neil Cairns in the last issue]

Ref the story about a Shackleton Mk3. This aircraft struggled to fly with one engine out, let alone three, even allowing for the thrust of two Vipers giving it a bit more umph! The Mk3 had a normal max take-off weight of 100,000 lbs. This is with all engines at max boost of 25 lbs.

On some rare occasions this max weight was exceeded at St Mawgan with its long main runway and into a good wind. On one occasion, one of our Mk3 aircraft was carrying a spare engine on a trip with the Squadron to the U S A. It had an engine failure just after lift-off. Despite dumping as much fuel as possible, which was not much. It took over three hours to gain enough height to make a circuit and land again.

I was lucky in the fact that I was in an aircraft that had already departed, Number three in fact. My mate was on the aircraft that had the failed engine which is how we got to know the facts.

The story in question is a version that circulated with the earlier Mk3 aircraft. This was supposed to have approached a large US aircraft carrier, possibly Forrestal or similar, in the Mediterranean in 1960 or 61. It was said that the Mk3 approached the carrier with one engine out with prop feathered, requesting permission to land. It subsequently did a fly-by restarting the shut down engine.

One thing that was done was to drop bags of flour onto any submarine that was found on the surface during an exercise in the Med.

I only spent about 19 months on Shackletons at St Mawgan on 201 Sqdn, flying 300-odd hrs. Our longest flight was 22 hrs and it was rare to do less than 12 hrs, and we frequently did 14 to 18 hrs patrolling the North Atlantic. Believe it or not, the groundspeed was often only around 90 mph at around 200 ft or less, but usually at 500 ft. One 206 Sqdn Mk3 had a prop-gearbox fail and the resultant engine over-speed before it was shut down; it was a right mess, as we saw later. This incident occurred whilst the aircraft was banking over the sea and quite low. The aircraft dropped towards the sea and the tip tank on the side of the failed engine hit the water and was stoved in. They were very lucky indeed. Everyone who could, went to see the aircraft as it taxied in. We were all amazed. Some of the crew patted the ground on reaching Terra Firma!

By the way, the picture of the Shackleton in the article is a Mk2 which had a normal max take-off weight of 84,000 lbs.



Avro 716 Shackleton MR.3 WR989 of 120 Sqn RAF [picture taken from BAE Systems website]

The RR Griffon engine life was 600 hrs. This was rarely achieved on Mk3s as they cruised at a higher boost pressure than the Mk2s which usually made 600 hrs. I seem to remember seeing a boost pressure of +4 on Mk3s and was informed that Mk2's usually cruised at 0 boost.

I could probably bore you with even more flying stories when on Hastings. I seem to remember doing 1015 hrs on them on 24 Sqn. based at Colerne. Incidentally, the use of the main runway at Colerne was very useful in setting up my Manx engines during the 60s. The same applied at Tengah in Singapore when setting our machines up for Grand Prix in the Far East.

PS. I was also trained at Halton on engines, Jan 59 to Dec 61, but was later an All Trades Tech but that's another story...

[I recall seeing, and hearing, Shackletons when I was growing up in North Cornwall, presumably from RAF St Mawgan. I believe they were involved in air-sea rescue at the time – Bryan]

More info on Shackletons can be found online:

<https://www.thegrowler.org.uk/avroshackleton/mark-three.htm>

<https://www.baesystems.com/en/heritage/avro-696-shackleton>

Not the Isle of Man... (Part 3)

GORDON HALLET

Tuesday looked the best weather day of the week, with a promise of 17C (wow), and I was to meet the pair in Osmotherly, for a ride through the Dales.

The V35 and DT175, the bike Jed took to the Island last year, were lined up waiting for me, so off we set, crossing the A19, onto the A684 to Northallerton for fuel. Pick up the same road and follow the Wensleydale railway for a few miles before getting to yet another road without a classification, at Bedale, through Thornton Watlass, and Masham, home of Theakston Brewery *[and the Black Sheep Brewery – Bryan]*, passed the Leighton and the Gouthwaite reservoirs, for lunch at Pateley Bridge.

A local bakers made me a chunky bread sandwich filled with local cheese, and home-made pickle, that and a cup of tea, and I was fit to carry on, but not before buying some real pork pies, you know the ones, with melt-in -the-mouth pastry and that jelly!!!

I must say, after passing through Northallerton, and lunching in Pateley Bridge, it was good to see butchers, bakers, (sorry, no candlestick makers!!) and even fishmongers in these towns, sadly lacking "down south".

But I digress, where was I, ah yes, heading west now. Glasshouses, then onto the B6265, up Greenhow Hill, with the view-point at Stump Cross,

then Skyreholme and Grassington, before turning north(ish) to Conistone, Buckden and into Hawes for an ice cream, yes, it was warm enough for even this southern lad to sample this local home-made delight, in a real Wensleydale town, with a street market. As well as a very good ice cream, I could not leave without getting some Wensleydale Cheese, and a local nougat, soft, with berries as well as nuts.

Heading east out of Hawes, through Askrigg, north at Castle Bolton, Fremington, onto the B6270, Marrick, then continue to Richmond, before following the River Swaile, cross the A1(M) near Catterick Barracks, through Bolton-on-Swaile, Danby Wiske, Lovesome Hill, East Harlsey, Ellerbeck, then back to Osmotherley.

Wow, I am enjoying these almost traffic-free roads (the occasional tractor or livestock is bearable), twists and turns in undulating countryside, and breath-taking views, and in places, 360 degree.

140 miles today, and every one a pleasure; why has it taken until my 76th year to find the Dales and Moors. I did pull my caravan up there maybe 25 years ago, but then I never had my own personal guides.



No jokes about ruins please

A weak sun greeted me on Wednesday, a promise of a dry day, not hot, but I am more than happy with dry.

I met the local pair at Swainby. Tiggy on his lovely Guzzi Airone was on parade, along with Jed's DT175 again, I would think an ideal bike for this area.

We started by following some of Saturday's route, through Faceby, Gt. Kirby, past the Captain Cook Memorial and onto Gt. Ayton.

Onto the A173, with a photo-stop at Roseberry Topping, a popular view point for walkers, at 320m. Joining the B1268, we rode into Saltburn-by-the-Sea, and parked in the car park, which is used as the pits and holding area for the Saltburn Hillclimb; and, wow, that twisty climb looks awesome.

After tea and chips (no gravy) for lunch, we set off for the return. B1268, A173 again, then turn off at Guisborough to ride in the Guisborough Forest, almost following the Cleveland Way footpath, to Gt. Ayton. Then cross the A173 and A172, through Tanton, Seamer, Rudby, and Potto. Now most of us have seen the lorries, on our travels, "Preston's of Potto", well, now I know where it is! (not that it will ever come up in my conversations again); stuck out in the middle of nowhere, then back to Swainby.

Now that was another good day, 136 dry miles, stunning lanes and tracks, with another ford or two thrown in for good measure.

After agreeing to meet Tiggy in the local pub that night, I had enough time to explore on foot, from the camp site to Cod Bec, a reservoir, with an old aptly-named Sheep Dip at the other end, and both popular start points for a day's hike across the Moors from the car parks.

I rode to meet him that night on my Motom moped, but only after having to "tap" the carb to free a sticking float. After a chat and a pint, I had a

hairy ride back to the site as, when it is dark in the Moors, IT IS DARK and the direct lighting system on the Motom is totally inadequate, even with the engine singing away. Next time I will walk! but it was a fantastic day.

Well, it's Thursday, and this is due to be my last day and, again, it looks as if will stay dry.

I was told I can't come to N. Yorks and NOT have Fish and Chips in Whitby, so that is today's plan; but anyone can go straight to Whitby, A172/171. I am sure my hosts have a more scenic route.

The V35 and s/a B31 were ready in Swainby, and I asked for a slower ride, to enjoy the surrounds, better than I could on that horrible Saturday ride.

Faceby behind us, climb up to Chop Gate, over Urra Moor, seeing the Moors in their full glory now, purple heather like a carpet in places, and green ferns adding to the colour, with a great views from Clay Bank. Even the Sun came out to enhance the panorama.

Onto Ingleby, Greenhow, Kildale, Westerdale, then just a track south into the middle of nowhere. Danby Bottom, fords everywhere, some dry, others decidedly wet, swing north(ish) to Street. Again, the sights all around makes me understand why thousands come here to walk and cycle throughout the year.

East to Egton bridge, south to Gothland, better known as Aidsensfield, where a certain Constable Rowan (other actors were available) rode that AMC-engined Fanny B around to check up what skulduggery a Mr, Greengrass (definitely no other actor) was up to.

Tea-stop here, and a wander around, waiting for a 60's song to come from somewhere, but no. Take-away only available as the Aidsensfield Tea Shop was full (bloody tourists), so, tea for three, plus for me, a local delicacy, Yorkshire Curd Cake, to which Tiggy commented "ain't ad one of them, since I were a kid" (he's in his 50's). The contents of said delight I was told, was a secret, obviously before Google, so we sat on our bikes and drank our refreshments. He did tell me about another local "dish" and suggested I should try it, Apple pie with CHEESE!!!!, well, I might have a slice of apple with cheese and biscuits, but in a pie!!

North out of Gothland, cross the N. Yorkshire Railway at Beck Hole, through Briggswath and into Whitby, and parked alongside some modern steeds. What is it that makes modern bikers show little interest in what were the ancestors of their mounts, or am I showing my age!!

Strange, we appear to time our stops at lunchtime. So once again, it was take-away only, served through a window. No sitting down inside, and coming out smelling of the shop. As promised, the contents of the box lived up to the best Whitby tradition, but DID it taste better out of newspaper????

North from Whitby, (but slowing up now, I don't want this ride to end) along the coast to Lythe, then west to Ugthorpe, passed Scaling Dam to Danby, and a stop at the Moors National Park Centre; then onto Castleton, before going through Comondale, Kildale, Kirkby, and back to Swainby.

Another great day, 135 miles, meaning I have covered approx. 640 miles since my arrival. Now, compare that with my usual 12 days in the Island, where I might cover 500. Now I know the Island is a very picturesque place, but I was gobsmacked at the sheer vastness of the Moors and Dales; I should think the Moors are nearly twice the size of the whole of the IOM.

There has been the odd mention of foodstuffs along the way; for this, I make no apology. Much as I like my bikes, I have always loved my food; I like sampling local food, and I have not been disappointed, but this year alas, I have missed my Manx Kipper breakfast(s), especially a kipper bap from the stall in Peel Harbour!!!

Now what can I say about my 1971 250 Benelli? It took all the week could throw at it. I have always had a concern about a horizontal engine with a carb mounted vertical, (with an open bellmouth). It got left out at night, it shrugged off rain, fords, and mud, 1-in-3 hills, (both up and

down), started well (but didn't stop as well after fords). It done me proud. I saw my award winner turn into a filthy hack; dirt that took two cleans to remove, followed by elbow grease on the alloy - but was it worth it? "by heck it was".



Gordon's 250 Benelli

My thanks to both Tiggy and Jed, without whom this last week would not have happened, and I hope that at the same time next year, we will all ride together again, but on the IOM.

More fancy-dancy facemasks

BRYAN MARSH



Not your normal Triumph...

SUGGESTED BY KERRY DELLAR



1953 "Triumph" TWN BDG 250 H

Over the years, Triumphs have been built in Coventry, Warwick (WW2), Allesley (Meriden), Birmingham (Small Heath), Newton Abbot, Hinckley and Chonburi (Thailand). Whilst we would recognize the bikes made in these locations as familiar Triumph machines, from the 1900s through to the present day, there was also a factory in Nuremburg (Germany) making less-familiar machines – although that wasn't always the case.

[from online sources] The Nuremberg factory was originally set up as far back as 1896, to produce Triumph bicycles, in the hometown of Triumph founder, Siegfried Bettmann. Motorcycle production started in 1903, a year after the Coventry factory. Up to 1929, the machines they made were similar to the British, even through the Great War.

Subsequent models were produced with MAG and Sachs engines. During this interwar period there was a legal wrangle with Triumph UK which resulted in some German models being badged as Oriol, but after complaints by a French company of the same name the company settled on TWN - Triumph Werke Nurnberg. In the 1930s Otto Reitz, an engineer they had hired away from rival NSU, designed a single cylinder 200cc two-stroke along the lines of the Puch "Twingle", with the two pistons sharing a forked conrod. This was developed in 250cc and 350cc versions which were used in military machines during preparations for the coming war. Nuremberg was badly damaged in the latter years of the war, the TWN factory suffering extensively. By 1948 production had resumed. In 1956 the company merged with Adler and German-built Triumph motorcycles ceased production.



The other side of the 1953 "Triumph" TWN BDG 250 H

Readers of The Classic Motorcycle might recognize this particular machine as it featured in a five-page article in the September issue. eBay browsers may also have spotted it as it's currently on sale by Kerry, who recently purchased it from a friend to help him buy a somewhat different machine, a Triumph T150 Trident. The bidding ends just after 10am on Saturday should you fancy and, despite strong early bidding, it's currently still at a bargain price.



Gerry Gibbins trying the TWN Triumph for size

[from the TCM article] "Firing-up the TWN was straightforward affair, with the key inserted into the switch mounted in the headlamp shell.

There's a tickler button on the remote BING float chamber and unless the motor is stone cold, that's generally all that's needed. A decent swing on the left-side kick-starter had the bike firing up with a deep two-stroke tickover with hints of something else playing as an undertone. With foot controls as per continental machines, first gear is tapped down with the left foot, and we were away. My initial impressions were that the bike is obviously strongly influenced by 1930s designs and apparently sits high on a pair of period 19 inch rims. However, the low seat height, once you've squiggled the rubber mounts, drops you down beneath the bottom of the fuel tank. The handlebars feel like they are almost in your lap and give a very relaxed riding stance once you get used to the heavy throttle."

The author is full of praise: "What never failed to impress was the willing nature of the engine...The power delivery is smooth and strong yet unlike anything else on two wheels...The engine is obviously built for torque, not revs, but, even so, it is remarkably, pleasantly smooth when being used as those Nuremberg engineers intended...The bike is supremely engaging to ride and those rubber seats offer levels of comfort most of us can only dream of...The quality of the Teutonic and engineering shines through and there's an inherent feeling of dependability about the machine"

I'm convinced, if only I had space in the shed...

Made in Hitchin – the FHW

BRYAN MARSH

Browsing the Framlingham, Suffolk dealer Andy Tiernan's website I spotted an FHW for sale, or should I say *the* FHW as it's the sole survivor of only two that were made by Frank Herbert Wells of West Street, Hitchin. The first was an OHV 500cc single which was dismantled after a friend of Frank's was killed riding it; the fate of the parts is unknown. The fatal accident also signaled the end of FHW production as Frank did not have the heart to make any more, and, understandably, didn't like to talk about what had happened.



The 1924 FHW 680cc, currently for sale at Andy Tiernan's for £25,000

Intrigued by the note in the advert that there was a folder of information and photographs, and always up for a ride, I hopped on my modern bike and nipped over to Andy's showroom (if you can call a 200-mile round trip "nipping"). I was in the market for one of his excellent calendars and a visit to his premises is as good as many museums. If you've not been there, believe me, it is literally crammed with bikes, with one long wall covered in shelves stacked with engines of almost every description.

Andy and his wife, Jo, are good types and readily agreed to let me have a look at the bike, which was behind closed doors in one of his storage areas, and, to my delight, the folder of information and photographs. Most of the paperwork was of no real interest – old insurance certificates, etc. - but there were original letters from FHW's daughter and son, from the late 1990s, giving their recollections of the bike and its history. There was also a newspaper cutting which appeared to have been from the "Unearthed" column of Old Bike Mart but there was nothing to indicate when this would have been published. Mr Worthington-Williams had clearly also had access to the same letters as were in the file. The picture in the article, reproduced below, shows the bike prior to its restoration but in fairly complete condition.



The picture (assumed to be from Old Bike Mart) of the unrestored FHW

Other pictures in the file show it in much the same condition, on a bike trailer, but with the petrol tank removed. According to the article, the bike had passed through two owners, after the family had let it go, without being restored. At that time, it had been acquired by Ken Sheppard of Sproughton, Suffolk who, I assume, may have restored it to its current condition. Ironically, Sproughton is only about 20 miles from Framlingham. The current owner, on behalf of whom Andy is selling the bike, lives, I think he said, in the Czech Republic – quite far from its Hitchin origins.



The unrestored bike being transported, less its petrol tank

The bike spent most of its working life attached to a sidecar, mostly a trade box for general service work, although a sports sidecar was sometimes used, in which form the family knew it as “Flyaway”. An aluminium-shelled Watsonian chair was once again substituted by the son for most of the time that he used the bike.



FHW on the FHW with sports side-car in 1927

The machine seems to have been used in cycles. After being built it was used quite a lot in the early 1930s but was then parked for a long time.

In the late 1930s it was lent to a milkman who ran it into the ground and

returned more or less worn out. For a short time in WW2 FHW used it solo but all wasn't well with it, so it was parked up again.



F H Wells' works in West Hill, Hitchin in 1928 with the bike and trade box sidecar parked outside

At the end of the war, the son got the bike out of its shed and decided to make it useable by overhauling all the moving parts, gearbox and magneto. The wheels were still in good shape so were just cleaned up, keeping the old beaded-edge tyres. The petrol tank was originally chrome but was really rusty. It was sand-blasted and boiled out but always gave trouble with rust particles in the petrol. He then used the bike for several years, first solo but then again with the sidecar. He recalled that the headlamp was next to useless, as were the brakes, but the Brampton forks gave a reasonable ride quality.



Frank Herbert Wells in the Generator Room at West Hill, in 1980

According to the OBM article, when Mr Sheppard obtained the bike it came with a supply of original tank transfers, showing the FHW motif in a diamond, surrounded by a spoked beaded edge wheel with wings either side, suggesting that further production was originally intended.



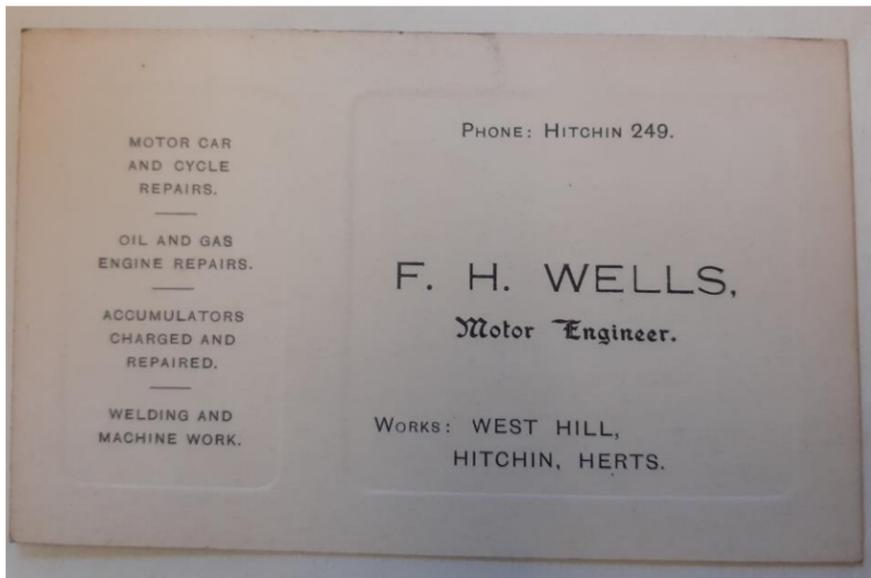
The winged wheel tank transfer, based on a surviving original



The restored bike - yours for a cool £25k

The JAP engined bike is registered NK 9166, a Hertfordshire series, is of 680cc, and has a Sturmey-Archer three speed box and Brampton Biflex forks.

So there you are, if you fancy a unique part of local history and have £25,000 burning a hole in your pocket, the bike was still available at the time of writing. Just think, when someone comes up and says “I used to have one of those”, you can be pretty confident in saying “no, you didn’t!”



An F H Wells original business card

[I am indebted to Andy & Jo Tiernan for allowing me to see, and copy, the information and pictures reproduced here]

VMCC Beds Section AGM 2020

As previously announced, it was decided to hold the AGM through correspondence. The reports from the Secretary and Chairman are given below and on the section website. These do not require formal acceptance by the membership but, as always, any comments or questions are invited. Should you have either, or both, please send them to me at bryan.marsh@btinternet.com and we will address them in a future newsletter.

If you know of any member who is unable to receive this information electronically, we will be happy to send the reports by post on receipt of their contact details.

As mentioned on page 2, Bob Culver has not yet been able to complete the financial statement so that will follow when it is available. That requires formal acceptance so, when distributed, we will invite any objections as well as comments and questions. The other item that is traditionally subject to acceptance by the membership is the composition of the committee for the following year. It is proposed that no change is made to the current committee, notwithstanding the sad loss of Dave Watts earlier in the year. Any comments, questions or objections to that proposal are hereby invited.

The section AGM does not usually raise much controversy, so I hope, on behalf of the whole committee, that you find this improvised procedure acceptable.

AGM 2020 report – Secretary

BRENT FIELDER

Hello Chums,

I normally stand up and read these scribblings to anyone that has decided to drop into Shefford for the annual pint and a slideshow that we grandly title the AGM. This year I’m afraid that you’re going to have to read this load of old tosh for yourself!

Right, so what’s happened over the last twelve months? Well, we had a good AGM last November. All was deemed to be okay within the section and members seemed happy to let us ten, the committee, continue to bumble along in our own inimitable style. The consensus seemed to be ‘If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’. Much the same approach I take to looking after my old bike, if it started today without me ‘fixing’ it, then it probably will tomorrow too.

The Xmas bash and auction saw another convivial evening with a load of old tat, sorry, classic motorcycle spares and memorabilia, being auctioned and a lot of great food being eaten thanks to the outstanding efforts of Martin and his hench-men and women.

Boxing Day saw a good turnout of riders and machines at the Musgrave Arms in Shillington, organised as usual by Will. This is a lovely antidote to the commercial shindig that Christmas has now turned into. A crisp ride-out, a cuppa and then a chat with like-minded souls certainly helps to keep the spirits up during the dark months.

January club-night was an interesting one as Bob Smith moved on to Part 2 of the Cotton story, great stuff.

Robin Braithwaite gave us an absorbing talk in February. His tale of the Braithwaite motorcycle was fascinating, talk about keeping it in the family, history and motorcycling rolled into one.

March was the Inter-Section Quiz. Will had really pulled out all the stops for this one. The questions were even harder yet, strangely, even more interesting than ever. A close fought scrap saw the Anglian section victorious. However, it was a close-run thing, the Beds boys were hard on their tail.

During all of this Richard sorted the very popular mid-week lunches, good attendance showed they were much enjoyed. Well done Richard.

Next came the Covid malarkey and just about everything on the events calendar was cancelled or at least postponed.

Not quite the end though. Through the doughty efforts of Bryan, the Beds Newsletter was born. This mighty organ has been delivered relentlessly throughout the duration of the virus era. Issue 21 hit the news-stands, or at least our screens, only last week. I started to write a list of all of those that have contributed but it is far too long for me to type. I’m sure that Bryan will go into more detail in his report, however I think that we should all raise a glass to him for the enormous amount of time and energy he has put into this glorious campaign of communication, very well done indeed.

Meanwhile, Will was beavering away at his excellent club-night presentations. The April virtual club-night on ‘Getting Started’ was very apt. He then moved on to tell the full story of being a motor-cyclist, Getting Moving, Stopping, Falling Off, Weather, Breakdown and then, inevitably, The Puncture. Really terrific stuff, you could hear Will’s voice in your head as you watched each presentation, brilliant.

Don and Bryan re-launched the mid-week runs with full social-distancing etc, I haven’t been able to attend myself, so I’ll leave that one to Bryan to speak more on. I do know that Don never rests on his laurels and that the amount of work he puts into the runs is enormous and excellent.

Never one to sit on his laurels Bryan then organised a Navigation Challenge. I’m looking forward to doing that one in the future myself.

Sadly, we have lost some of our best people in this last year. Among them were genial Ron Macbeth, our long-term quiz-scorer and off-road maestro, Dave Watts, Section fund-raiser extraordinaire, committee member and all round good-bloke and Tony Dickason, lovely section member and enthusiastic full time-attende at just about everything we ever did. We knew them well. They were much more than just pals, they were made of the right stuff and we are all the richer for having ridden with them.

I'd like to thank the committee: Bryan, as listed above he is involved in *everything* and still finds time to knock out the Section Notes. Chris for the epic committee room and Shuttleworth support, Martin for his kitchen expertise and hard work. Nigel, he is our archivist, projectionist, picture collator and he even drags his son Sam along to give us I.T. support. Will for his super quiz questions and, as above, his virtual club-nights. Don for his wonderful mid-week runs and Bob our financial guru for keeping the books straight. Also very well done to Malcolm and Brian our raffle guys, great work done every month. Norm for his mid-week expertise and if I've forgotten anyone else, sorry, your efforts are appreciated.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you to all of the section members reading this. Without you guys turning up every month the section wouldn't exist.

Keep safe friends, better times ahead I'm sure.

All the best,

Brent

AGM 2020 report – Chairman

BRYAN MARSH

Brent's report has comprehensively recorded the events, and non-events, of the last twelve months and many thanks to him for that and for his continuing efforts as our secretary. It's easy to forget that the year started quite normally, with no sign whatsoever of what lay over the horizon; it seems such a long time since we were able to gather together at Shefford. The year has been made all the worse by the sad loss of our good friends: Ron, Dave and Tony.

As I write this, Bob has not yet been able to compile the financial report, largely because of the logistical difficulties presented by the constraints on meeting with others. I am, however, confident that we are in good shape financially. The lack of any raffle income since March has been balanced by not having to pay for the hall.

A wet afternoon at the end of April gave me the idea of trying to produce a proper newsletter, rather than the simple occasional emails that had gone before as some particular news arose. It proved to be quite fun and seemed to be well-received. Thanks to the wonderful contributions of many of our members the newsletter thrived, and the number of issues is now in the twenties. Other than the monthly Section Notes in the Journal, which are a month old by the time they're published, this is one of our only means of communication until we are to resume club nights proper. It looks like we're going to be in this boat until, at least, Spring so I hope there are still many more stories to be told. Please keep them coming.

Will has been doing a fantastic job of providing the other regular communication through his virtual club nights and many thanks for that. I hope he has a bank of ideas to keep us entertained for the next few months, but I'm sure he would appreciate any ideas or suggestions.

I am very conscious that, apart from the Section Notes, our communications have relied on the internet and that not all members have access. I can only apologize but there is no obvious solution to this problem.

Don and I have been keeping the Midweek Runs going but subject to the limitations imposed by Boris and his advisors, mainly that we have been restricted to six riders. As it turned out, this hasn't resulted in many, if any, potential riders being turned away. The usual Winter

Midweek Lunches we should be enjoying now are, of course, out of the question at the moment.

The Navigation Event was devised to give some incentive to everyone to get out, Covid risk-free, on their bike on their own or in small groups of their friends. Feedback has been very positive including riders from neighbouring sections who took the opportunity to explore our small but interesting county. It is intended to produce a new list of destinations for 2021, regardless of the Covid situation and our ability to reinstate the usual group runs.

Finally, I'd like to offer my thanks to everyone who has helped us get through this rather tricky year: the committee, the newsletter contributors, the midweek and Navigation Event riders and, of course, the whole Section membership who make this all worthwhile.

--OOOoo--

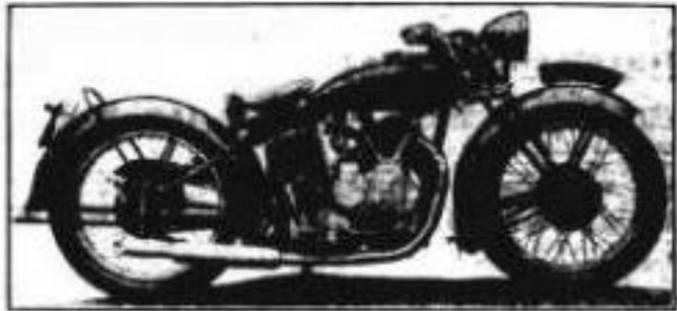
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