

# BEDS VMCC NEWS

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN**



## **Heartbreak at Austria's "Top of the Mountain" Motorcycle & Car Museum - See inside.**

### **EDITORIAL**

Good and bad news in the wider motorcycle world this week. Good news that Brit Sam Sunderland took third place in the "Dakar" Rally, fought out in the mountains and deserts of Saudi Arabia. Fantastic scenery if you managed to catch any of it on the television but not a country normally high up on anyone's dream holiday list. I went there for work a couple of times in the late 1990s - 46°C in the shade, they said, but try finding shade on a construction site that's only at foundation level! Dreadful news about the disastrous fire at the prestigious "Top of the Mountain" museum – more about that inside, but that was a place on my "one-day" holiday destination list.

Also inside, you find a new contribution to the debate on the future of the VMCC, from some recognizable names. I haven't read it in detail yet, but I believe it may, to some degree, address the concerns of some of our members who feel the four options on the consultation document are insufficient and that a fifth option is needed. Anyway, have a read and form your own view.

Many thanks for the kind comments received on my attempt at a virtual club night, and also to this issue's contributors: Don, Gerry, Neil, Richard and Will. Please keep the contributions coming, especially any ideas for a virtual club night.

Diary Date (provisional): Northants Section Navigation Rally, Sunday September 5<sup>th</sup> – highly recommended; one of my favourite local events.

### *IN THIS ISSUE:*

**FUTURE OF  
THE VMCC**

**CLASSIC  
NICKNAMES**

**BANBURY  
CAMERA**

**COTSWOLD MOTOR  
MUSEUM – PART 2**

## *The future of the VMCC*

I have recently received the following communication:

*[the covering email]*

...the VMCC Board has issued a consultation document about the future of the club... The document outlines four options on which members can vote and there are also some webinars proposed for which registration is available on the Club web site.

Consultation is of course welcome, but many are concerned that it does not provide an adequate range of options and that a more fundamental review should first be undertaken. Attached *[below]* you will find a letter sent today by Roger Bibbings to the Chair of the Board of Directors with a copy to the VMCC President. The letter has a number of co-signatories who endorse what Roger is saying, all are respected long standing members and you will be familiar with many. It is proposing a much wider ranging review to establish what the VMCC of the future needs to offer to thrive and the cost implications. It is emphasised that this letter is not an attack on the directors nor is it opposing a move from Allen House if that turns out to be the right option. The letter identifies issues that need consideration but does not put forward a specific solution; that will hopefully emerge in the form of a wider range of costed options for members to vote on. In due course arriving at a strategy the majority will support to retain and grow the membership of the UK's premier motorcycle club.

It is up to individual members to decide how to vote on the consultation paper being issued with the February Journal. However, it would be appreciated if you would circulate this email and the attached letter to your members so that they have another view to consider before voting. Clearly what is being proposed here is not an option they can vote for under the current consultation process but if anyone finds merit in our suggestion or indeed if they do not, they can take part in a Poll to express their view on our proposal by clicking this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yykfpngw>

The link is active now and will remain active at least until voting on the board's consultation closes – unknown as yet. All responses will be treated in confidence and membership numbers are only included as a precaution against duplicated entries, not to identify individuals.

*[The letter]*

Dear Fellow Member,

As you will know, the Board is presently consulting on future options for the Club. While consultation is welcome, we believe that a much broader debate is necessary. Now coming up to 75 years old, the VMCC remains the biggest and most important club of its type, enhancing the pleasure of many thousands who love old motorcycles. Even though beset by technical, social, commercial, legal and demographic change on all sides, it has a bright future - but only if it confronts certain key challenges.

The first of these is to establish a very clear mission or overall statement of purpose for the Club which we believe is to promote and support the enjoyment which its members derive from owning, restoring, maintaining, riding and enthusing over older motorcycles. It has then to work in a united way to achieve that mission by focusing on the following core objectives:

- supporting the activities of our local and specialist Sections, including expanding communications and promoting opportunities for riding veteran, vintage and classic machines;
- delivering a monthly Journal, running a website and Forum and fully exploiting other communication opportunities;
- organising and delivering a national and/or regional events programme;
- preserving and ensuring access to our unique and precious archive and supporting our marque specialists and dating services;
- delivering otherwise-hard-to-access services as appropriate, curating the Club machines, running awards and so on; and

- maintaining links with like-minded organisations while scanning the scene for legislative and other potential threats and speaking up when necessary to defend our members' right to go on riding older machines.

Looking to the future, the Club also has to work imaginatively to draw upcoming generations into our pastime in order to pass on knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.

All this must be delivered with effective operational cost control within budget and reporting.

The current consultation as presently configured, while clearly aimed at stemming current and future financial losses, does not allow for a broad enough discussion to address the above objectives in the medium to longer term.

While the job of the Board is to employ headquarters staff and deploy volunteers in order to recruit and retain members, manage the membership database and ensure the quality and delivery of communications and services, their over-riding objective must now be to encourage and support activity within the Club's Sections. The Sections are the VMCC's cornerstone, providing a unique setting for the social enjoyment of motorcycles with other members. A full discussion is needed on the range of services that the Club should seek to deliver in future for members, including options for the future of the library and for delivering the Club's events programme. A proper debate is needed on how best to achieve all this with effective cost and IT expenditure within a budget that members can afford.

For this reason we suggest that the current consultation should be paused and as a matter of urgency, be reframed against this wider background, while creating new opportunities for members and officials to continue to share and compare ideas and experiences freely across the Club. It is imperative that future financial projections are subject to rigorous scrutiny before major decisions on the way forward are taken. We believe the VMCC has a great future ahead of it but only if approached by the Board on the strategic basis we have set out here.

We would urge you to support this approach and to make your views known to the Board as soon as possible. We have also set up an on-line Poll to collect views at: <https://tinyurl.com/yykfpngw>

Signed:

Roger Bibbings MBE, Secretary Herefordshire and Mid-Wales Section (and Convenor of the Regulatory Advisory Group)

Countersigned by and presented alphabetically:

<b>Name</b>	<b>VMCC Background</b>
Daron Baker	KOBI and former Cotswold Section Secretary
Bette Barber	Past VMCC President
Ian Clarke	Past VMCC President
Tony Donithorne	Vice President since 2012
Peter Fielding	West Wilts Treasurer
David Giles	Past VMCC Director
John Goodall	Former Burton Section Chair
Rodney Hann	Past President & Area Rep
John Harding	ConcernedMember
John Holt	Past VMCC Director
John Kidd	ConcernedMember
Mike Larcombe	SW Area Rep
Geoff McGladdery	Chairman Herefordshire and Mid-Wales Section.
Peter Miller	Past VMCC Chair
Ivan Rhodes	Past VMCC President
Roy Robinson	ConcernedMember
Pat Robotham	Past VMCC Chair
David Sellars	Sheffield Section Chair
Chris Wells	Concerned Member
Harry Wiles	Past President & Current Area Rep
Ian Young	Past President & Previous Editor

*The page 3 girl*



*Classic nicknames*

**DON MCKEAND**

It is not just people who have nicknames – bikes do too. Some are complimentary, some are affectionate, but many are not and appear to be put-downs by those who do not own the bike in question and wish to establish their superiority over those who have bought one. So the owner of a Triumph Ton-Ten might be quite pleased with the epithet for his steed and want to establish that his mate’s choice of a Royal Enfield was inferior by referring to it as a Consternation or even a Constipation (due to its performance being reputed to cure that condition). For me, the ultimate verbal put down was for the small number of Hungarian-built two strokes imported in the 1960s. They were the Csepel Pannonia but I suspect it was an embittered owner who had difficulty in obtaining spares who christened them Cesspool Pandemoniums. I may be wrong, but I suspect they were brought in by Pride and Clark; otherwise known as Snide and Shark – more nicknames.



1964 Csepel Pannonia 250 – aka the “Cesspool Pandemonium”

Another contender for vitriolic naming was that flat-twin offering from Mother Russia – the Urinal. I even saw one once which had tank badges made from the circular Vacant/Engaged signs from lavatory doors.

Manufacturers came in for the same treatment as well. Not many people objected to their bike being a Matchbox or a Trumpet. However, they may have been less pleased to own a Jimmy or a Frantic Barstool/Bastard and the term Royal Oilfield was particularly wounding when one was parked in its own puddle of lubricant next to a similarly incontinent Triumph which did not refer to this characteristic (to balance this up a bit, a friend had a Triumph with its own personal nickname – the Torrey Canyon – *the tanker that went aground off Cornwall in 1967 causing a massive oil spill*). The lightweight Royal Enfield is referred to as a Flying Flea to acknowledge its wartime role which is a bit more respectful, although its performance and brakes don’t deserve a great deal of respect.

Some manufacturers seem to have defied the efforts of the nick-namers. Velocette seemed to do rather well in this regard until they went to small horizontally opposed twins when the LE became the Noddy Bike and its cousin the Vague. I can’t recall any AJS or Ariel nicknames except for the faired-in Bleeder, but the Ariel 3 was apparently beneath contempt and thus avoided a nickname altogether [*the manufacturer even introduced it as “here it is, whatever it is”*]. Norton’s racing reputation ensured that they were treated with respect in the naming department. BSA is another make which largely escaped re-naming, even when they produced such un-loved models as the Beagle and Dandy.



Foreign competition is seldom viewed with favour by the die-hard British biker, so it is not surprising that large numbers of V-twins should be disparaged as Hardly Dangerous. Those who bought oriental bikes had to put up with the term Jap Crap but got their own back with the Honda Black Bomber and the Yamaha Fizzy, both suggesting speed. The Suzuki Kettle or Water Buffalo was not quite so complimentary with the Buffalo one hinting at a bulky machine. The Kawasaki Green Meanie may have referred to handling shortcomings but did at least suggest lively performance and that the owner was able to tame a wild beast.



The Yamaha FS1-E Sports Moped – the “Fizzy”

Clubs often have groups of riders who meet regularly at rallies and develop nicknames for each other. I personally know a Mudguard (with a shaved head, like a mudguard shiny on top and sh\*te underneath), Rocket (a V-twin rider named Stephenson), Mayhem (Mayhew, but also capable of creating the condition) and Worms (“I would rather eat worms than ride a Japanese bike”).



**Kawasaki H1 500 triple – the “Green Meanie”**

I am sure you know more nicknames than this; some may not be printable, but I would be interested to hear of those that have passed me by.

*Ones that spring to my mind are “flying maggot”, “plastic pig” or even “güllepumpe” (German for slurry pump) for the Honda CX500, “motor sausage” for Motosacoche and “doll’s head” for a particular Norton gearbox resembling that shape. There must be loads more – why not send them in?*



**Honda CX500 - “flying maggot”, “plastic pig” or even “güllepumpe”**

## The application of idleness

**WILL CURRY**

I'm idle. I've been idle all my life. It's possibly my greatest character strength although others don't always see it that way. I'm prepared to put quite a lot of effort into doing as little as possible. As my background is in publishing and computers this effort often manifests itself as creating computer programmes to add format to the base text.

The first of these was created to help with producing the Quiz Night. Hoppy used PowerPoint to present his quizzes and apparently while the creation of the questions was fun the formatting of them was something of a nightmare. I create what is effectively a Quiz website using HTML - HyperText Markup Language - which is the basis of all websites. My process starts with me creating a text file and entering in the questions as I dream them up together with their answers and any other details such as if there is an associated picture. Once I've got to the point where

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idle_text.sor - Kate
File Edit View Projects Bookmarks Sessions Tools Settings Help
8 start
9 Your team should now have an answer sheet for Section One.
10
11 question
12 As usual, we'll start off with some questions about the club:
13 Who is the Club's current chairman?
14 Bob Clark
15
16 question
17 Allen House News - Current VMCC Membership
18 According to the March 2020 magazine there were how many members:
19 14328
20
21 question
22 How many more or less is this than in March 2019?
23 Down 463 from 14791
24
Terminal Search and Replace
    
```

**Part of the source text file for the 2020 Quiz**

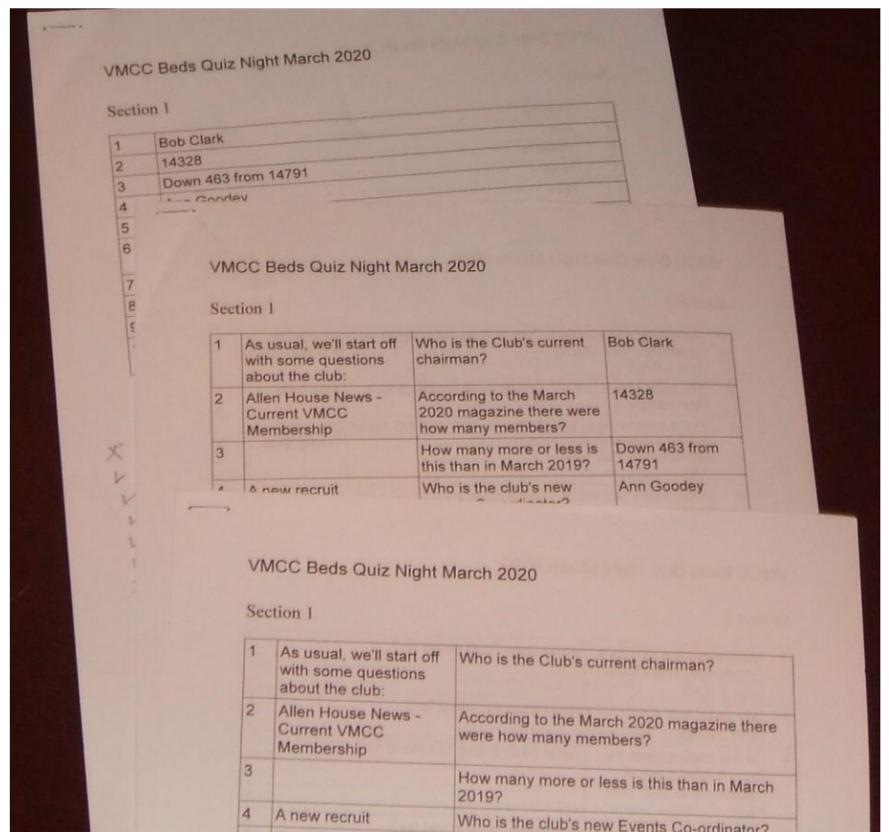
I want to see what it's looking like I run my formatting programme and in a couple of seconds I have another version of the Quiz to browse. This process not only creates the Quiz website it also creates the paperwork which is needed: the question list for Brent to read from which doesn't have the answers on, just in case he gets a bit too enthusiastic, and the answers lists for the markers. The paperwork is created as PDF files which can be sent to any printer. The answer sheets I get printed by in the hundreds by a printer in Luton from a print master I made years ago - it's much cheaper that way.

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v_005.html * - Kate
File Edit View Projects Bookmarks Sessions Tools Settings Help
64 <table width="100%" cols=3 cellspacing=0 cellpadding=4>
65 <tbody>
66 <tr>
67 <td colspan=3 height=630px valign="centre" bgcolor="white">
68 <p class="question">
69 <span class="italic">Q3.</span> How many more or less is this than
70 in March 2019?</p>
71 </td>
72 <td width = "15%" valign="top" bgcolor="white" align="right"><p class="
73 </tr>
74 <tr>
75 <td class="nav" width = "15%" valign="top" bgcolor="white" align="left":
76 &lt;<a href="v_004.html">Last</a>
77 </td>
78 <td width = "70%" valign="top" bgcolor="lightblue">
79 </td>
80 <td class="nav" width = "15%" valign="top" bgcolor="white" align="right
    
```

**Part of the HTML text file for the same part of the 2020 Quiz**

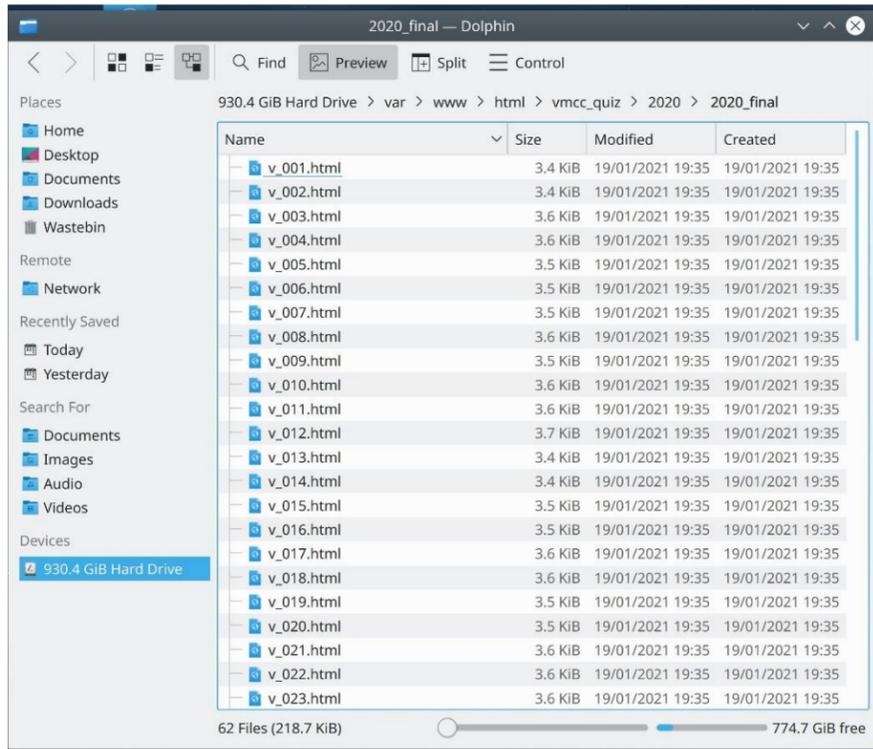
Currently I'm using an HP Elitebook laptop, one of my son's cast-offs. It's running Linux, 'cause I've used Unix and Linux since the year dot. I use Apache and PHP for the programming. These are free and definitely not Microsoft but they are available, similarly free, for Windows.



**Some of the paperwork - The top copy is the questions for the Question master, no answers, just in case.**

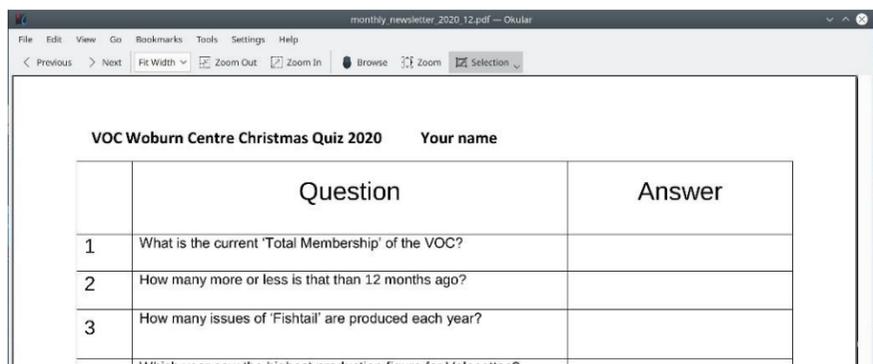
The intention for this year is to have a Quiz but it's not certain yet what form it will take. It will have to be on-line and it probably won't be in

'Real time' - that is that it won't necessarily start at 8:30: you can start when you're ready. Not only are there administrative problems with a 'Real time' start for everyone, I think my server will melt under the strain - It's not very big. It's also not obvious how we can cope with teams at the moment.



A directory listing of the HTML which make up the Quiz display

Finally, I'm flattered. They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I host the website of the Woburn Section of the Velocette Owners' Club and while uploading their Christmas Newsletter I spotted the Christmas Quiz and in particular Questions 1 and 2.



... and the VOC quiz!

## Top of the Mountain museum

It wasn't called the "Top of the Mountain" for no reason; the location certainly beats being beside the junction of the M42 and A45 on the outskirts of Birmingham. Unfortunately, the museum now has more in common with our National Motorcycle Museum than just a wonderful collection of bikes – a disastrous fire!



Just after 5am on Tuesday morning, fire-fighters were summoned to tackle the huge blaze engulfing the largely timber structure.



At the moment, the extent of the damage isn't clear, but it certainly looks catastrophic and I can't imagine many of the 200 or so bikes, of over 100 different makes, and a few prestige cars, escaped damage or destruction.



Perched some 2,200 metres above sea level, the museum was opened in 2016 through the efforts of brothers, Alban and Attila Scheiber. As you can see from these pictures, it was quite some place.



Quoting from the Austrian Tyrol tourism website:

“About 230 classical motorcycles from approx. 100 manufacturers are shown on an area of 3,000 sqm. Among them are bikes of the brands Motoguzzi, MV Augusta, Ducati, BMW, DKW, Zündapp, Triumph, Sunbeam, Matchless, Brough Superior, Vincent, Honda, Henderson, Indian and of course Harley Davidson. Also, some antique cars like a Ferrari Californian Spider, a Porsche 959 and a Lotus 23 B can be admired. Alban Scheiber, manager of the Hochgurgl ski lift company, and his brother Attila have made their dream come true with constructing this museum in a fantastic location. Not only well-suited in bad weather the museum is perfectly situated at the Timmelsjoch mountain pass road, which is very popular among motorcyclists. Godfather of the museum is Giacomo "Ago" Agostini, most successful motorcyclist ever.”

## *A camera at the Banbury Run*

**RICHARD CHAMBERS**

*Richard says:*

I love this picture, I was at the Banbury Run to help Ivor in case he needed a hand to start Brian Cornwall's Triumph; I was trying to get a quick photo through the crowd near the start when this lovely lady turned round to ask if I wanted a better view, I thought this one wasn't bad...



Very nice of the lady to, almost, get out of the way of the shot



Mr King, looking very dapper, with his 1914 Premier

## *The Cotswold Motor Museum and Toy Collection – Part 2: Cyclemotors, mopeds & toys*

**BRYAN MARSH**

In the last issue I gave a whirlwind tour of the motorcycle collection at the museum. This week, we'll look at some of the more humdrum, but no less interesting, powered two-wheelers on display. There are, of course, lots of cars but, if you're interested in them, you'll have to go and visit for yourself when it is allowed to re-open. Actually, I'd recommend a visit anyway – right in the heart of the beautiful village of Bourton-on-the-Water.



Two, very familiar, veteran Triumphs ready for the "off".



Cyclemaster



PowerPak, with launch style sidecar



1967 Raleigh Wisp behind a 1975 rather neat Motobecane X1 Mobylette



Here it is, whatever it is.



Death trap – Sinclair C5



Puch Maxi – my Mum had a blue one (I often borrowed it when I was 16)



1973 Honda Graduate



Fairground carousel rides?



apprenticeship. The inevitable happened with the ever present self-tapping screw deflating my world and the Finilec only lubricating my tyre and the outside world. Having no repair patches, I dumped the bike, walked from Leighton Buzzard to Dunstable and ran like hell to catch a Luton-bound bus. I thought I had done well arriving just an hour late only to be hauled in front of the Apprentice Training Superintendent and given the benefit of his pompous authority.

Apparently, the other lads said I would have been better off mending the puncture, going home and throwing a sickie. So much for being honest and relying on the Finilec.

A more entertaining tale involved a friend who had set his wife up with her own Morris Minor and a Driving School. Sheela was chuffed to bits with her new-found vocation until one day she finished her day and parked up on the drive and switched the engine off. As she was getting out, she heard a noise coming from the glove box and being inquisitive she opened the lid and peered in. Whoosh. Your ahead of me. Her crowning glory was a full head of glossy black hair and she appeared, at speed, through the backdoor with a white sticky Father Christmas hairdo and a face which frightened Danny until he realised what had happened and chanced laughing. Luckily, she also saw the funny side but we never did see a photograph.

Make mine a dose of 'Green Slime' put in at the time of the tyre going on. It did save my bacon when a rear tyre on the Vincent deflated at speed on the M1. It gave me a few seconds to cut across the lorry lane and slither onto the hard shoulder. The valve had pulled out and a dose of Finilec would have been a little late.

## NEIL CAIRNS IS CONTRAVERSIAL ON TYRE PRESSURES

Tyre pressures, the "Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 , Regulation 27(1), states, that a tyre may not be used on a road if, ... (b) the tyre is not so inflated as to make it fit for the use to which the motor vehicle (or trailer) is being put". In plain English that means it must be used at the manufacturers recommended pressure. It is an offence to use the vehicle with under- or over-inflated tyres and can attract points on one's driving license. Both my model 18S AJ's handbooks state the front tyre must be 18psi front and 22psi rear for SOLO use (it also gives a useful chart quoting weights per wheel for sidecar pressures). The article in the last newsletter quoted the use of higher pressures due to modern softer rubber compounds. Just how does one convince a court of law that your bike is legal if the handbook gives lower pressures than those you are currently using?

*Could you perhaps argue that, as the bike's manufacturer no longer exists, the current advice of the tyre manufacturer would take precedence?*

## DON MCKEAND ADDS INFO ON THE ROYAL ENFIELD AT THE COTSWOLD MOTOR MUSEUM



The Royal Enfield two stroke at the Cotswold Museum is a Model RE 125cc two stroke and the number plate is surprisingly accurate. They



### How Triumph got the "Trumpet" nickname (see Don's article)

I've told the museum that if they ever find an empty space on the wall where this sign used to be, they'll know where to look for it. I shudder to think how much this would fetch if it ever came up for auction. I think it probably dates back to the 1910s.



If you like enamel signs, their collection is second to none

## Feedback from the last issue

### GERRY GIBBINS WRITES

Further to Will's comments about Finilec:

I also learnt how useless it was but only after carrying one around for a couple of years. As usual at the worst time to discover their inability to seal anything other than a thorn or small nail puncture.

The only thing it did achieve was to give me a false sense of security when riding the 50 miles daily round trip for my Vauxhall

were a pre-war copy of the 98cc DKW Model RT - so Enfields got their copy in before BSA. I saw a DKW RT at a rally in the Netherlands and assumed from a distance that it was an Enfield until I got closer. Enfield even copied the pinstriping on the tank and tinware but made it as a mirror image of the German original (in the same way as the Bantam), as well as upping the capacity to 125cc. The reason was that the firm of Stokvis in the Netherlands was Jewish owned, and DKW were forbidden to supply them. Stokvis were also agents for Royal Enfield, and persuaded the factory to make something they could sell which closely mimicked the DKW. It went on to become a paratroopers' bike during the war, being dropped in special tubular crates from under the wings of Dakotas, hence the "Flying Flea" nickname. Post-war they were sold until 1950 when a complete redesign resulted in the RE2 and then the 150cc Ensign and Prince. Coincidentally, I have just been offered an RE2 project - this will be my third one!

## *Made in Luton*

### THE TUSROKE



If you're ever up in the Lake District, be sure to pay a visit to the excellent Lakeland Motor Museum. There, hiding amongst a wall of motorcycles is the sole surviving Tusroke. To quote the display board:

"1919 Tusroke – 350cc Two stroke with direct belt drive to rear wheel. The name Tusroke appears to be a play on the Two Stroke engine principle used in their products. Available for only one year – 1919, to our knowledge this is the sole surviving example of Tusroke's motorcycle output. It is believed to have been built in the Luton, Bedfordshire factory for the company manager's 14 year old son.

The company mainly produced two-stroke engines for use in electrical generating sets, and obviously tried their engine in a fairly typical frame arrangement, save for the curved front down tube.

The motorcycle could be specified with an Albion two speed gearbox, with chain and belt transmission, or the simpler direct drive via belt to the rear wheel. Used in the centenary celebration of the Isle of Man TT races on the original course, prior to the introduction of the Mountain course in 1911, this motorcycle is in full working order."



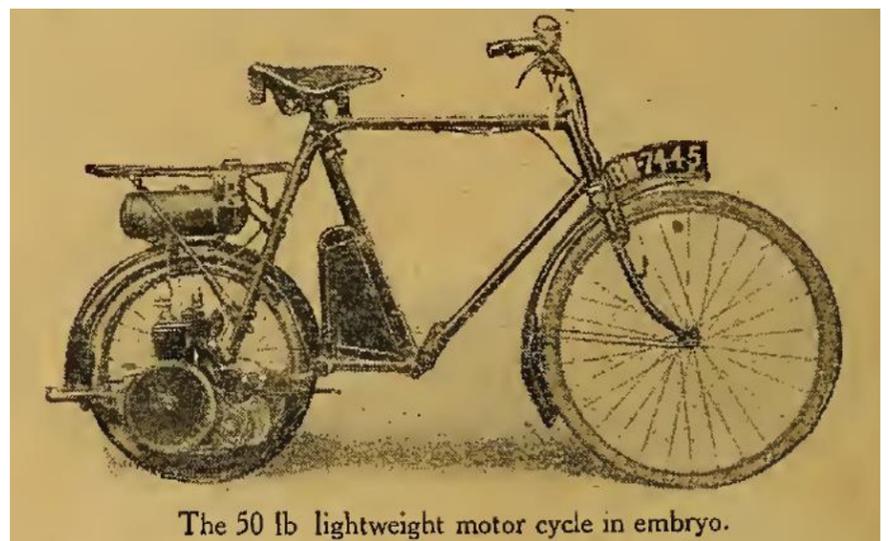
The Tusroke in the Lakeland Motor Museum wall of motorcycles

## *Also made in Luton*

### A 50 LB. MOTOR CYCLE

[from "The Motor Cycle", July 17<sup>th</sup> 1919]

The designer of the machine depicted below evidently believes in the ultra-lightweight motor cycle, and does not deem either the "sit down" or the "stand up" type of scooter as covering his requirements. It is obvious, too, that the auxiliary power as supplied by an Auto-wheel did not exactly meet his approval. It is clear that this constructor - Mr. S. Powell, of Luton - wanted something which is not yet marketed; an ultra-lightweight motor cycle on which l.p.a. would be impossible, even if it were necessary. So he combined his pedal cycle with his Auto-wheel, and the result is by no means displeasing.



The 50 lb lightweight motor cycle in embryo.

It will be seen that the pedalling gear of the cycle has been removed and a pair of footrests substituted, and the conventional back wheel was jettisoned in favour of the complete Auto-wheel unit, with the rear brake made to operate on the flywheel. We are informed that the machine is quite roadworthy, and capable of 25 m.p.h. under normal conditions.

### SEEN IN THE PAPERS

ACCIDENT.—On Wednesday last Mr Mark Young, of Rectory Farm [Sandy], met with a rather bad accident. It seems that he had recently been the recipient of a New Motor Bicycle and was about to test it. The machine was standing in the yard adjoining the house. He switched on the starting power and holding the handles ran by the side of the machine. Finding that the speed was becoming too great he was about to manipulate the valve to check the speed when he stepped on some loose stones which caused him and the machine to lurch over sideways and almost before he knew where he was he ran against the gate at the end of the yard, which was standing open. He was thrown down with the machine on top of him. At first it was feared that the left collar bone was broken but after careful examination it was found that no bones were actually broken, but the left shoulder and side are very badly bruised and the right arm lacerated. Mr Young was unable for several days to attend to his business in the usual way, but under Dr Coate's treatment he has progressed favourably.

[Biggleswade Chronicle - Friday 03 July 1908]