

# BEDS VMCC NEWS

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN**



April 1<sup>st</sup>, no joking, and we're getting ready to set off on the first run of the year (see run report inside) – Don just happened to be passing

## On the road again

*IN THIS ISSUE:*

**SIDECAR  
LESSON TWO**

**ALL OUR  
YESTERDAYS**

**MANX GP  
RALLY**

**THIRD TIME  
LUCKY?**

**EDITORIAL**

My apologies for the delay in producing this newsletter but I was a little “under the weather” yesterday. Luckily, I have Rapid Flow Test kits at home, so I was quickly able to confirm it wasn’t the dreaded Covid-19, just a tummy bug. Thankfully, it didn’t keep me from leading Thursday morning’s first post-relaxation midweek run; there’s a brief report below.

It did, however, mean that the opportunity for a bit of April foolery was missed – but, I hadn’t received any articles in that vein; at least, I don’t think so.

Bryan

## *Beds Section News*

**MIDWEEK RUNS**

Response has been encouraging and we will be running a second group of maximum six riders, over the same route, next week. There is still one place available if anyone wants to snap it up. If you would like to join in please contact me on [bryan.marsh@btinternet.com](mailto:bryan.marsh@btinternet.com) or by phone on 07309 731191 or 01525 877585 for details of the start location.

As you can see from the picture on the front page it was the “usual suspects”, from last year’s runs who were first to sign up again – Eddie, Gerry, Gerald, Norm, Will and myself. Will brought his vintage Ariel as a fitting tribute to the club’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year celebrations, and I was on my 1946-registered Triumph 3T Deluxe although I hadn’t realised the significance at the time. Somehow, neither bike appears in the photo, but you can just make out Eddie’s Ariel Arrow behind Don’s left arm. Don “just happened” to be passing but is signed up for next week.

The temperature had taken rather a tumble from the previous few days but, at least, it was dry – apart from a few barely noticeable drops on the visor as we went around. A roadside stop halfway round gave the sun a chance to make an appearance and warm up chilly fingers. The roughly circular route covered 50 miles of varied road types, from narrow lanes to a couple of short stretches of main road – in largely quiet traffic conditions, making it easy to keep the group together.

The route was essentially:

Layby on A5120 near M1 Jn 12 – Toddington – Tingrith – Woburn Woods – Bow Brickhill – Aspley Guise – Ridgmont – Lidlington – Houghton Conquest – Haynes Church End – Clophill – Campton – Gravenhurst – past Chris Dawkins in his garden – Hexton – Streatley – back to the tea caravan in the A5120 layby for a bacon and egg sandwich.

Although I’ve been lucky enough to be able to use my modern bike quite a bit for essential journeys during lockdown, it was great to get back on an old bike and remember just how uncomfortable a rigid-frame can be on a really bumpy road, and over those pesky speed bumps they insist on putting in the middle of almost every village now.

All-in-all, a really enjoyable outing – interesting roads, great company and lovely bikes.

**CLUB NIGHTS**

As mentioned a couple of times before, the first normal club night at Shefford should be the July Car Park Concours.

**VMCC WAYPOINT RALLY – BEDS LOCATION**

No further suggestions received so it looks like Jordans Mill will be put forward as our suggestion. I’ll wait until after the Easter weekend just in case anyone has an alternative. We can suggest up to three, but I understand that just one will be selected.

**VIRTUAL QUIZ NIGHT – WILL REPORTS...**

All in all, an interesting set of challenges. The software wasn’t one of them - I’ve been doing it for much longer than I’ve been doing quizzes

so that was business as usual. It was the multi-choice questions which presented one challenge and the fact that entries would be a one-person effort rather than the team efforts that have happened in the past.

I had already decided that all the questions should be based on the club magazine - ‘Vintage and Classic’. This simplifies the task of verifying the answers, my memory and the internet being demonstrably error-prone. The questions had to be presented as multi-choice so I could mark them automatically. What turned out to be unexpectedly challenging was that not only did I need a correct answer I also needed a number of plausible but incorrect answers. ‘None of these’ was a late-night inspiration but it was still a lot more work than I’d expected.

Having individual entries rather than team entries has a bearing on just how easy - or difficult - to make the questions. My ideal is to have the highest score somewhere in the upper 30s and the lowest no lower than the low teens. Also, there shouldn’t be more than one or two questions which every entry has correct and none at all that no entry gets correct. For this quiz questions needed to be simpler than the usual team quizzes. Looking at the scores and the numbers of correct answers for the questions I think I should have things a little easier still. Only one question was answered correctly by all but there were three that not answered correctly at all. No entry scored in the 30s and one entry scored in single figures.

Entry	Start	End	Score
1034	March 11 20:23	March 11 20:53	27
1035	March 11 20:23	March 11 20:56	26
1043	March 11 20:59	March 11 21:24	26
1041	March 11 20:35	March 11 21:02	23
1037	March 11 20:29	March 11 20:56	22
1062	March 12 16:39	March 12 17:05	22
1081	March 18 19:19	March 18 19:46	21
1087	March 22 10:21	March 22 10:46	21
1044	March 11 20:59	March 11 21:26	20
1038	March 11 20:30	March 11 21:00	19
1040	March 11 20:30	March 11 20:57	18
1071	March 17 20:04	March 17 20:30	16
1067	March 15 11:18	March 15 11:44	11
1085	March 20 19:43	March 20 20:09	7

The answers and the full details of each entry will be published on the website from 8:30 in the evening of the 1st of April:  
[http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/quiz\\_night/intro.php](http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/quiz_night/intro.php)

Here you will find the questions, the correct answers, the references to the issue of Vintage and Classic from which the question came and the number of correct answers for each question.

*Would anyone like to lay claim to the winning entry 1034? Or the wooden spoon, entry 1085? Don’t be shy.*

## *Historical Beds Section Notes*

*After fairly regular reports through 1983 and much of 1984, the section seemed to fall back into its secretive ways and, correct me if I’m wrong, but the impression is given that, at times, it was struggling to survive.*

**January 1984**

To start 1984 in good style we are all invited to the VMCC/Velo Owners’ Club Film Show...at the Village Hall, Husborne Crawley. The cold nights are with us and I can report that both the bar and private room at the Bird in Hand are nice and warm. Good wishes for ’84 from the “Clangers” to all. [Geoff Hobbs]

**April 1984**

The meetings at the “Bird in Hand” at Henlow are being attended by slightly larger numbers than of late, with new faces. Several machines are in the final stages of rebuild so we shall have to arrange an evening car park meet on one of the lighter nights. [Geoff Hobbs]

**May 1984**

Most important! Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, AGM... The main point of

discussion will be “How shall we wind up the Section”. Don’t miss your opportunity to object. [Geoff Hobbs]

*Was this a “wind up”, in itself?*

**August 1984**

The AGM decided to retain the present team with Jeff Davies taking the chair. New faces mean that some evening and weekend meets are to be held soon! Ridges are to the fore, with items and “how to” knowledge passing thick and fast. It was nice to hear of Bob Tomlin’s ride in the Unicorn, in Belgium, Rally and winning a major award – on a Rudge, of course. We shall have to get Bob to give us a talk on his experiences, if only to avoid yet another of my quizzes... [Geoff Hobbs]

*Incidentally, the front cover of that month’s Journal showed a nine-year old boy polishing a beautiful 1937 Rudge Ulster he’d won in the VMCC raffle.*

*Nothing then until:*

**December 1985**

As we approach 1986, here in Brussels Sprout country the only way this Section can go is up. Having reached a situation where we cannot fully occupy a table in the bar we have decided to stage a revival. Joking aside we have already welcomed some new members and look forward to seeing some of the existing ones at our now established meeting place, “The Bird in Hand”, at Henlow Camp. We have been forced to meet on the second Thursday of the month and we hope to meet you all there in the future. We have a small bar to ourselves and we have already staged a Slide Show. A Film Show is on the cards for the New Year. [Hoppy]

*The page 3 girl*



*From the album...*

**RICHARD CHAMBERS**



I think this is from the gathering before Dave Watts’ funeral

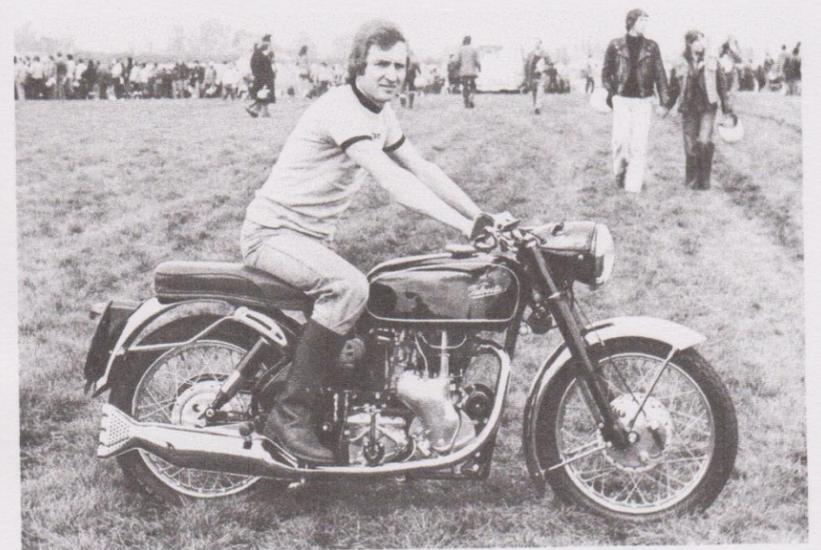


A Greeves 325, and is that a Tiger 90?

*All our yesterdays*

**GERRY GIBBINS**

Four pages of pictures of Gerry Gibbins and his 1964 Velocette Viper Clubman as seen at the 1977 BMF Rally at Peterborough. Engine number is VR4344 and it’s as good an example as you can find anywhere



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THE FIRST VELOCETTE SCENE

Many years ago, I took my first Velocette restoration to the BMF Rally and after it had won a Concours Award, a bearded man in a dirty old raincoat took a picture. I thought he looked familiar and later realised it was Moose Brain Smith but thought no more of it. Sometime later a

friend bought me a copy of the BMS 'First Velocette Scene'. Low and behold he had taken enough to fill the four centre pages and not a word or even a complimentary book. That was my one minute of fame.



The Covid Lockdown MSS refurbishment is now completed albeit with original paintwork, except where welding and rework made it necessary. It's turned out as a good solid machine which no doubt will be seen on Club Events as soon as allowed.



In the years between these two bikes there were quite a few others but the most drastic was the burnt out Thruxton which cost amazingly very little money but a great many hours. All except the chroming and seat being achieved at home. I rode it for about ten years, but the MSS is now more my scene and it was sold last year to give someone else backache.



## A word of caution near lorries

SUBMITTED BY DAVE BOURNE

*Just thought this might be of interest, received from Triumph Owners Club, via a friend near Sheffield.*

"Please take note as we start to ride again. If you see a truck with no mirrors, then it probably is equipped with a new camera system which appears to be slightly flawed. Take note and take care! Just a little heads up for you guys. Today I had the pleasure (not) of driving a new Merc truck fitted with mirror cameras, from a bikers' point of view, they're bloody awful. Although you no longer have the big blindspot caused by the half-acre of plastic sticking out, which makes it hard to see approaching bikes on a roundabout, you now have quite a large area beside the cab that isn't covered by the wide-angle section of the mirror, and you could easily lose sight of a bike if you're not careful.

It is also impossible to get a better view by moving your head, as it's like looking at the TV, no matter where you stand, the picture isn't going to change. Probably the worst bit though is the lack of eye contact, especially in slow moving traffic. With normal mirrors, I can see you, and you can see me, and that little bit of eye contact makes a massive difference. With the camera, you have no way of telling whether I've seen you or not, so it's best to assume that I haven't. So, there you go, if a truck has cameras instead of mirrors, give it a bit more room, don't get anywhere near the corners of the cab, and never assume the driver knows that you're filtering up to the front of the queue???

## Third time lucky?

BRYAN MARSH

Forty-seven years ago, this week, I took to the roads of Cornwall on a Villiers 2T-engined, 1964 Panther 250cc M35 that cost me all of £15. Unfortunately, it suffered the well-known "occasional twin" syndrome and, lacking both money and mechanical knowledge, I soon moved it on in favour of a Honda CB 175.

Just over eight years ago, I bought another – 1965, this time. It too proved a troublesome beast and despite now having money (but still little mechanical knowledge) and throwing said money at a, then local, classic motorcycle establishment, I gave up on that one too. Brian Cornwell took it, applied his two-stroke magic, got it sorted and, he tells me, is hanging on to it.



*[photograph by H&H]*

Last week, despite my better judgement, I bought another – 1964, again, and originally from Pride and Clarke just like my first one. I almost didn't buy it, and if H&H Auctions online bidding system worked properly, I wouldn't have. I'd put in a commission bid a few days before but, on the morning of the sale, I had second thoughts and removed my bid. It then came as a bit of a surprise, the next day, when an invoice arrived – I'd bought it. A phone call to H&H did nothing to clear up the mystery but, because the bike was being sold by the widow of the deceased former owner and VMCC member, I decided to honour it. I just hope this one is a good one because, compared to the £15 I paid for

the first one, and even what I paid for the second one, this was in no way a bargain. What is they say about a fool and his money?

## *Sidecar lesson two*

**WILL CURRY**

Well, that was all rather exciting, wasn't it? Don't those blue lights show up really well, even from miles away.

Now you're out of hospital and can walk a short way without sticks we can carry on with the lessons. You're getting the outfit moving reasonably reliably now. We can work on the stalling later. That electric start really is a boon, isn't it? We'll concentrate on stopping for now, this time with the brakes as there won't always be a convenient lamp post or bus stop, especially on national speed limit roads; a point to remember there.

This outfit is exactly like the last one was, even down to the same registration number. That can save a lot of rather tedious paperwork and some expense too. The lovely bright red colour may turn out to be an advantage as well as it shouldn't need cleaning quite as much as the black one did. Yes, I did find your St. Christopher. It was under one of the cars. I found it when the recovery people were winching the damaged ones out of the front garden by the bus stop. I must say I think your faith in that medallion is not well-founded.

Have the authorities been in contact yet? I'm fairly sure they will but if you keep to that nice simple explanation we talked about while waiting for the ambulance there's no need to worry.

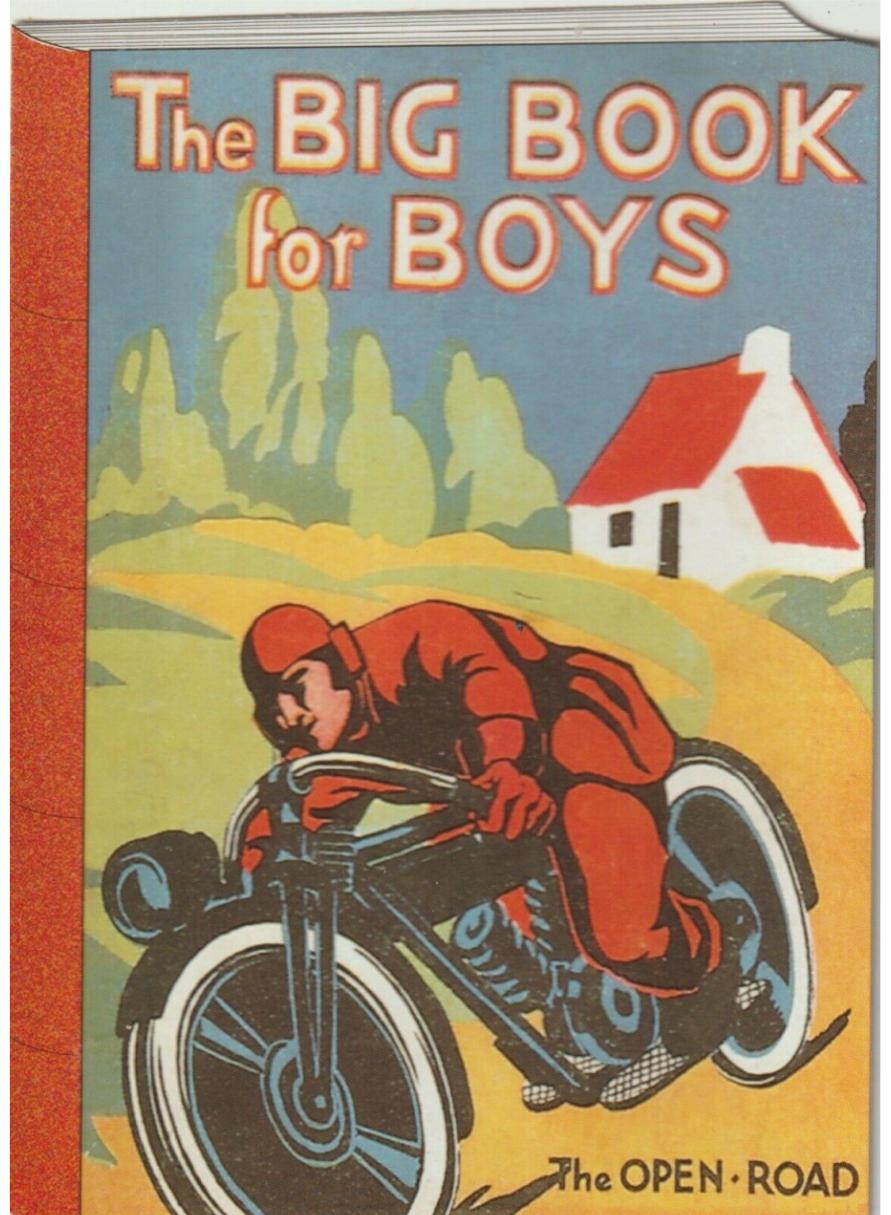
I'd not considered power steering for an outfit before. I've never felt the need myself. It can be hard work but there's probably a better way than brute force. As you've already found out, the outfit tends to turn left as you open the throttle - anticlockwise. Against the hands of a clock. You know. You don't? Old clocks had numbers, yes but they didn't move. Twelve of them, all at once. There were two hands - like fingers - that pointed to the appropriate numbers. I was going to say like a speedo but I've just noticed what this one is. The other way to the way the sun goes. Never mind. Forget I mentioned it. Back to outfits. You'll find when you get to using them that when you put the brakes on the outfit will turn clock, no, to the right. With some practice you can steer an outfit without moving the handlebars, just by using the throttle and brakes. No, really.

I'm on firmer ground with the ABS. The outfit does have ABS and, while the front wheel did lock up, it wasn't the brakes that caused it. That bicycle jamming in the wheel was undoubtedly the cause. Isn't reverse gear useful? The bicycle came out as soon as we backed up. Somewhat unfortunate that the cyclist was just getting up behind us. You can understand it when he said he thought you were coming back to 'finish him off'. I agree with you he was being irresponsible riding a dark bicycle while dressed in camouflage gear on a dull day on a country road but cycling is popular now with all sorts. Me? I've absolutely no intention of getting involved with any so-called sport that requires me to dress up as a novelty condom thank you.

I didn't know you spoke Russian. That was an interesting word you called him. It certainly bought forth quite a response, almost psychotic in fact. I was grateful you didn't stall when we set off. He did follow us for quite a long way, especially as they said he had a broken leg. I suspect he's from one of the countries occupied by Stalin post-WW2 - no love lost there. That word occurs in both Germanic and Scandinavian languages as well and it's from the latter that it probably found its way into Slavic Russian. The first kings of Russia were Swedish and a number of what we consider typically Russian names are actually Swedish in origin. Indeed the name Russian comes from a name for the Swedes. In their travels east rowing was important and they became known as the Rus - the rowers. In modern German that word you called the cyclist now means 'farmer'. Funny how the meaning of words changes over the years and from place to place.

Sorry to harp on again but are you sure you've taken your pills this morning? That episode last week was unfortunate, to say the least.

Oh well. Let's get started.



## *The Club's VMCC Manx GP Rally Team*

**GORDON HALLETT**

After a few last minute hitches, your team of Pete Blackburn (1971 Moto-Guzzi V700), Steve Capp (1980 BMW R100RS) and self (1968 Velocette Thruxton) had loaded the van, together with our President's Honda 90, for the trip to The Isle Of Man Manx Grand-Prix Festival. The VMCC (Vintage M/C club) run a rally for members at both the TT and the Manx, which includes a track day, timed lap of the course, displays, and lap of the 37.75mile course under closed road conditions on their 25+ year-old bikes.

Good start, ferry on time, and the sun is nearly shining on The Island, just time to check-in at the hotel, unload, do a lap, and pick-up Pat who flew from Luton

Pat's taxi from the airport was the Guzzi, on which he complained that MY arse was too big, leaving no room for his.



Sunday morning was time to meet fellow guests for breakfast before riding up to the north-west for the track day and display at Jurby, an ex-airfield track.

Track days for all of us are new, but we gave it our all, Pete removed some metal from the stand, I was lapped, and Steve enjoyed our first session of seven laps on the 1.8-mile track.

The second session was held in hazy sun, with Pete really getting to grips with the quirky Guzzi, with MORE metal being removed, I DIDN'T get lapped, and Steve DID enjoy it.

Monday held a promise of a dry day, and good racing, with Pat showing us a new place to watch.

Tuesday was the timed lap from the Tony East Museum, at Kirk Michael, round the circuit and back, trying to average 24mph, with two check-points en-route, a difficult task in normal traffic, with Steve leading (cos e ad a clock), we finished with a team deviation of 1.8 mph too fast.

Wednesday saw some terrific classic racing, with a push-rod Royal Enfield 104mph lap, and 102 race average, but just missing the podium in 4<sup>th</sup> place, I hope this gets the credit it deserves.

The evening saw a trip to Douglas, four-up in the van, to "Chillie's", an Asian restaurant, of some repute, for an early meal, so we could watch some spectacular beach racing, new for the Manx Festival.

Thursday was a full day, the team signing on for Friday's closed road parade, scrutinizing of bikes and riding gear, roam the stalls at the grandstand, up to Ramsey for the sprint then down to the start of the Southern 100, for a parade of the 2.25mile circuit finishing in Castletown Square for a display of rally machines, what a collection, including a 3-cylinder MV racer from the 70's. We were to meet Pat at 7.00pm for a meal in the Shore at Gansy, but seeing his Honda 90 all on its own was too much for me, I rallied the Team and in no time it stood on a table in the pub garden, in the now infamous photo. When we got Pat away from his Okells to "admire the sky", his face was a picture, even if his language wasn't; he was then known as Joe 90 in the hotel.



Friday's forecast was grim, road closure was delayed by 30mins., but the wind blew the clouds away, racing was on, and so was our highlight, the Closed Road Lap, from start to finish line. By lunch the sun was out, we sat in the grandstand and saw John McGuinness, do a "parade" lap in 27mins, including a stop for ½ pint at Ramsey!!!!.

15.00 hrs we assembled in the paddock area, Pete with butterflies, me with "will it start syndrome" and Steve, was, well, Steve.

16.10, Velo starts, we line up & OFF, I note the clock, 16.20, control marshal disappears down Bray Hill, no chance keeping with him, but hell, 60mph down the hill on a 40+ year old bike, shakes my 60+ year

old bones. I was just getting used to using both sides of the road going through Glen Helen, 75mph along Kirk Michael High St is frightening, crowds waving, the buildings just close in. I find I brake for corners that aren't there, don't brake for the ones that are, still this is FUN. I overtake a Goldie going up the Mountain, he retakes me on the flat, I chicken out on the corners, 90 down to Creg, but 45 round it, down to a crawl in the dip at Governors, out on the home run, cross the line, 40mins, WOW that was FANTASTIC, into the show line up, Pete & Steve follow me 2mins later.

We are all high, EVEN Steve, we had to rest a while & come down to earth.

Now Friday night is "prize gala night dinner"!!! & the individual winner's time from Tuesday was just 0.007 mph deviation, but all was not lost, there's the "Team Prize", and of the eight teams entered, we were 2<sup>nd</sup>, the winning team beat us by only 0.6mph.

This was a splendid effort by the club's Manx GP Rally Team SPG (Steve, Pete, Gordon), but our special thanks to Pat, whose local knowledge, & banter made a good week GREAT.



## SEEN IN THE PAPERS

The motor bicycle is said to have gone out of fashion, but there is apparently no means of finding out what is the immediate cause of the slump. A few years ago the motor cycle was very popular, but all at once it seems to have fallen into disgrace, and manufacturers cannot say why. The only reason that can be advanced is that the introduction of the low priced motor car is responsible in a large degree, and that the number of accidents to the motor bicycle have also detracted from its popularity, while others say the intricacy of cycle motors and their aptitude for "going wrong" at critical moments have been responsible for the slump. But, whatever the reason, the fact remains that the number of motor cycles is decreasing, street. at seeing one as we should at one of the old "bone shakers" making its appearance in the street.

[North Bucks Times and County Observer - Saturday 12 May 1906]

## Half a Million Miles on Triumphs (and quite a few on other makes)

BRYAN MARSH

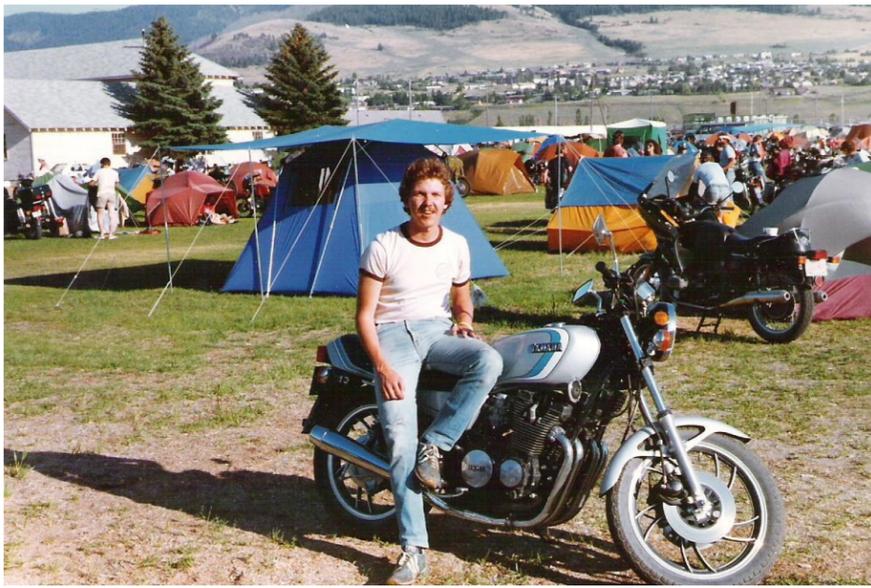
### PART 2: THE GAP YEARS

At the end of part one, the float needle in the carb of my Harris TR7 Tiger had fallen apart and I decided there and then that that was it – I'd had more than enough of its unreliability and lousy build quality. The mechanic at Roebuck's, who had diagnosed the problem, told me about a seven-year-old, 25,000 mile, BMW R100T for sale just a couple of streets away. It belonged to a chap who ran a car hire firm but whose business partner had broken his arm. The Beemer was for sale because, as the chap said, if anything happened to him on that bike, they would

lose their business. I had a test ride and, apart from one carb emptying its contents over my boot, all was well and a deal was struck.

That bike was an eye-opener. Just keep it fed with petrol and it started every time, on the button, and off I would go on my daily commute from Luton to the Building Research Establishment in Garston (North Watford). No more spending every weekend fixing something or other, I was free to just ride – so ride I did, and started piling on the miles. But let's go back a step first, to the bike I had when I was in Canada for 2½ years – the Yamaha XJ650RJ “Seca”.

Scouting the bike dealers in Calgary it was apparent that there wasn't much of a second-hand market, and what there was generally comprised over-priced cruisers – not my style. But, it turned out, Walt Healey Yamaha had a supply of new-old-stock 1982 XJ650s still in their crates (it was now 1984). It seems the European styling didn't appeal to the Canadians so they were selling them off at a bargain price, barely any more than a second-hand cruiser. As it was my first job after finishing my postgraduate studies, I didn't have any money so had to get a loan. As a foreign worker that wasn't easy but the Head of Civil Engineering at the University, where I was working, stood as guarantor. He claims the loan company phoned him up and asked, “Does Bryan earn much?”, to which he relied “No, but now ask me how much we pay him”. Perhaps surprisingly, they lent me the money and a brand-new Yam emerged from its crate and took up residence outside my apartment building.



**A youthful me with my 650 “Seca” at a BMW rally in Missoula, Montana**

Quite different from anything I'd had before, that was a good little bike, although two-up with camping gear at high altitude in the Rockies it did tend to get a bit breathless – a good reason not to go two-up, I thought. I rode it everywhere, purely for leisure (I was in walking distance from work) and a bit of motorcycle instructing for the Canada Safety Council. I rode it to a BMW rally in Montana, up the Icefields Parkway from Banff to Jasper (an amazing road), across four mountain ranges to the coast and across on the ferry to Vancouver Island (including a couple of 700-mile days), and even to a Neil Young concert at the Calgary Saddledome on the last rideable day before winter set in.



**September in Calgary!**

Without a garage to put it in, it sat outside through ice, snow and temperatures as low as -30C. By a strange set of circumstances this resulted in the engine seizing up though corrosion in the bores. The only explanation I have is that melting snow got into the petrol tank and through the leaking vacuum petrol tap into the carbs. An unsuccessful attempt at starting it during a (relatively) warm spell must have then dragged the water into the cylinders where it sat for the rest of the winter. That's my theory anyway.



**BMW R100T in Scotland**

So, back to 1987 and the BMW R100T. Freed from reliability worries, I set off for my first ever UK motorcycle holiday. The intention was to find a campsite near Fort William, but it rained so hard on the way up that I cut it a bit short and headed to Oban instead. It stayed wet most of the week and I had the whole campsite to myself – all very well until the bike toppled over off its main stand, with no-one there to help me pick it up. But, somehow, I managed.



**BMW K100RS in the Connemara, Ireland**

I put 50,000 largely trouble-free miles on the R100T before I got promoted at work and finally had a little more money to spare each month, once the mortgage on my flat had been paid. So, I thought I'd upgrade to something a little more plush. The three-cylinder BMW K75S is what I had in mind so off I went to Sawbridgeworth BMW in Hertford. They didn't have any second-hand K75s so sent me out on a test ride on a K100RS, which I bought – big mistake. Very pretty in bright red, but I really didn't get on with it. Too much weight on the wrists resulting in pins and needles in my fingers even on the daily journey to work, annoying incurable vibration (the later 16-valve ones could be re-chipped to solve the problem, but not the 8-valve ones like mine), and heavy steering. I did, however, take it on a very enjoyable first motorcycle trip to Ireland, but got ride of it after just 12,000 miles, trading it in against a two-year old, 7,000-mile, Wankel-engined, Norton Commander. I'd lusted after these ever since they came out.

That was a very “interesting” bike, unlike anything I'd had before, or since. Unbeknown to me, despite being only two years old, it had spent a year standing idle which, it turns out, is not a good thing for a Wankel engine. The tips on one rotor had seized but the poor running was originally wrongly diagnosed as out-of-balance carbs. Off it went to the

factory in Shenstone where they fitted a new rotor casing under warranty. Unfortunately, the new casing they fitted was porous so, 7500 miles later, back it went for another one. When it came time to change the tyres, I consulted the handbook which said only fit tyres approved by the factory. So, I rang the factory to ask which ones they approved – “anything that fits”, they said. Other bits came from a variety of sources – Reliant Robin air filters, Ford Transit ballast resistor, Honda lawnmower spark plugs, carb rebuild kits for an MGB GT, Opel Kadett rear lights, and much of the rest from a Yamaha XJ900. The factory was at that stage pretty much on its knees and they couldn’t even supply a new radiator when I got knocked off it in Kenilworth, on my way to the 1993 NEC Motorcycle Show, and a large shard of the fibreglass fairing went straight through the fins rendering it somewhat less than watertight.



**Norton Commander on the coast of North Cornwall, nr Widemouth Bay**

In many ways, it was a lovely bike and I was really sad to get rid of it after 25,000 miles because of an intermittent electrical fault that I just couldn’t solve. All the electrics would suddenly disappear, then, usually about two hours later, they’d reappear as if nothing had happened. The first time this happened was at the top of the Healey Pass on the Beara Peninsula in Ireland; anyone familiar with the area will know that’s not a brilliant place to get stranded. The unpredictable nature of the fault was a real problem if you were trying to get somewhere on a fixed schedule, so it had to go. This was now early 1994 and the new generation “Hinckley” Triumphs had been around for a couple of years or so, and it seemed a logical next step to get one of those.

*Part 3 – ‘Hinckleys’ will appear in the next issue.*

**SEEN IN THE PAPERS**

The latest craze of motor trippers around here appears to be to endeavour to negotiate the exceptionally steep and narrow rise of the road leading from Sharpenhoe to Streatley. Our district correspondent was told, from a usually reliable source, that only a few days ago a motor car when half-way up jibbed, then reared, and shot the occupants out at the back.

*[Amphill & District News - Saturday 04 November 1905]*

Petty Sessions on Thursday looked at one time as though they were going to be real good and true "holiday sessions" as such are understood in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. That is to say they looked like lasting almost from early morn till dewy eve. But they did not. To all intents and purposes they collapsed. The start did not look propitious. Punctually at ten o'clock four magistrates entered the Court, but there was neither a Magistrates Clerk nor a Superintendent of Police to meet them. Time went on, and yet these officials did not arrive. One magistrate--Mr. Bramley--went away and did not return. A search party in a motor car was dispatched to seek for the missing two, without whom nothing could be done. They were found stranded in the village of Woolstone. The Superintendent's motor bicycle had gone "on strike," and declined to come any further along the frosty and snowy road. As the Magistrates' Clerk was in the side-car attached to the motor bicycle he was a victim of the strike. It was just 10.25 by the Court clock when proceedings started...

*[North Bucks Times and County Observer - Tuesday 01 January 1918]*

