

BEDS VMCC NEWS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN



Simon Smith's glorious 1928 Model 180 Royal Enfield taking part in last week's midweek "rule-of-six" run

Come ride with us

Midweek runs are truly back as part of our calendar – the only “real” part, in fact. They’re a great chance to meet up with a few friends, air your steed and refamiliarize yourself with some of the backroads and wonderful countryside we haven’t been able to see much of for a while. Whilst we are still limited to groups of six, there’s no limit to the number of groups – provided we can find someone to lead each one. New leaders, with new thoughts on routes are more than welcome and, with a small group and no route sheet required, it’s not hard work.

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EDITORIAL

I hope you've been taking advantage of the limited new freedoms bestowed upon us by our caring government. Go for a ride beyond your "local" area, stop for coffee and cake at an outdoor café, grab a haircut and, once the bike is back in the garage, head to the pub garden for a refreshing pint. So far, I've only managed the first of those but, hopefully, some of the others will follow soon.

The newsletter is a little light this week, which is probably understandable after 33 issues but, hopefully, there are still some articles to be written and photos to be unearthed. Let's try to keep this going, at least until we can resume section meetings in a few months' time. Gosh, it sounds so far away when put like that – I just hope it doesn't rain on that first gathering, the Car Park Concours, aka "shiny bike night".

Many thanks to this week's contributors: Neil, Richard, Roger and Will.

Bryan

Beds Section News

MIDWEEK RUNS

The next run will be on Thursday, 22nd April; hopefully it will have warmed up a bit by then. If you would like to come along, please contact Don either by email: donmckeand@hotmail.com, or by telephone on: 01525 720629.



The most recent expedition was essentially a re-run of the previous week's inaugural outing, but with a different crew. As mentioned on the front page we were joined by Simon with his relatively recently acquired RE V-twin in its wonderful unrestored glory. Dave Bourne also came down from "up north" in the county with the hope of riding with us – but his BSA B31 seemed to have other ideas and leaving a pool of oil in the lay-by before sadly heading off home. Better luck next time.

As for the previous week, the weather gods smiled upon us, staying dry but definitely on the chilly side. Thank Heavens for the tea caravan at the finish point and a highly enjoyable egg & bacon roll. We know how to live.

CLUB NIGHTS

As mentioned a couple of times before, the first normal club night at Shefford should be the July Car Park Concours on Thursday, 8th July.

Hopefully, some of you took the opportunity to tune in to last week's virtual club night "Hoo's the Fastest", the story of the speed trials at Luton Hoo in the 1900s, 1910s and 1920s. I found it a little tricky to translate all the information I'd gathered into an "online" form but maybe I'll get the chance to present it a proper club night sometime in the future.

I've had some interesting feedback from Roger Mills that you should find here somewhere.

VMCC WAYPOINT RALLY – BEDS LOCATIONS

It seems I was misled into thinking only one Way Point would be selected for each section and they were, in fact, expecting three. I only discovered this at the last moment so hurriedly put forward two more.

One of these was the one originally suggested by Ivor, Dunstable Downs. I make a quick reconnaissance visit and noticed that there is a dedicated motorcycle parking area by the Visitor Centre which, presumably, means we can park for free.

To get a decent geographical spread across the county, I looked for something in the north of the county for the third one. Not a huge range to choose from but I've suggested the Butter Market and lock-up in Harrold. I hope we don't get too many complaints from the residents when vintage motorcycles turn up there in their hundreds over the summer; as if.

VIRTUAL QUIZ NIGHT

What a shy bunch you are. We can, however, reveal that the "Brain of Britain" 2021 was Don. Unfortunately, everyone else has decided to remain anonymous.

ALEX OXLEY, ILLUSTRATOR

Quite out of the blue, Will received an email from the grandson of Alex Oxley who, somehow, seems to have seen the article I wrote about the legendary cartoonist in Issue Nine (June 25th, 2020). I shall be eagerly following this up.

Historical Beds Section Notes

January 1986

Down among the Brussels sprouts (*not quite sure what it was with Hoppy and Brussels sprouts*) something is stirring. The Bedfordshire Section is having a Film Show at Shefford Church Hall. Club Nights are picking up at Henlow with some new faces appearing. Slide shows and Quizzes booked for your entertainment. We have people attending with a range of interests from the veteran years to the Sixties so there is always someone to talk to who shares your interest. [Hoppy]

Radio silence until Hoppy has a dig about seemingly low attendances:

June 1986

The Bedfordshire riding season opened with the Coventry to Brighton Run, when Geoff Hobbs and John Mitchell joined up with the Taverners. Perhaps due to John's RAC outfit they had a trouble free trip. The wet and boring Sunday lightened by John's efforts to start the organiser's car. We all hope to ride in the Banbury Run and we have promised ourselves an outing to ride in the Towcester Run this year. See you all at the Club Nights at Henlow. Drag yourselves from hibernation or wherever it is you have been hiding all the winter. [Hoppy]

All quiet again, until:

November 1986

The last few months have been a busy time for the most active members of the Section. September saw us out in force at Towcester Run when Hoppy Hopkins carried off the Brains Trust Quiz; Geo. Wrench and his Matchless Combo, the Most Desirable Post-War Machine; and Albert Wallace Sidecar awards. The following week a van load plus trailer put in an appearance at the Taverners Road Trial to sample the best of the road and green lane routes. We do not know what we achieved but a good day was had by all. [Geoff Hobbs]

December 1986

A close of season Social Run was organised for the last Sunday in October. The Run started and finished at the home of George and Ann Wrench. The route took us into the lanes of North Bedfordshire, as we passed through the village of Stevington I stopped at the cottage where 20 years ago the local builder owned my Enfield outfit. The builder has since died but his sister is still alive though well into her eighties. A lot of local people remembered the bike.

Again, no ink wasted until:

December 1987

Morning sun shone on riders gathering on the 6th September for the Bedfordshire Section "Clanger Run" around the Ouse Valley, north of Bedford. However, the midway pub stop saw the weather change and it was a soggy second half to the Run. At the finish our hosts, the Wrench family, treated us to a superb buffet lunch. We all departed vowing to return next year. The Section Dinner will be at the Crown Carvery, Henlow on Saturday, January 23rd, 9.00pm for 9.30. Format as last year. [Hoppy]

The page 3 girl



Hoo's Next

ROGER MILLS

I liked the Luton Hoo feature. As a Luton lad I was familiar with the vastness of the estate and that the Queen stayed there at least once a year as guest of the Wernher family and they would then visit Luton Parish Church with a big police presence (about 4 bobbies!).

I don't know if there were any more speed events at Luton Hoo in the inter-war years, but I did attend one there in 1948. I was eight years old and my father, who took an interest in car and motorcycle sport, took me for an exciting day out. I didn't obviously realise the significance at the time, but this was one of the first post-war motorsport events. I also didn't know what all the cars were, although I was probably told at the time. The speed sprint was an out-and-back up the main (not straight) drive, a distance of just under 1.5 miles.

I did some research much later and found out that the car that did the F.T.D. was Bob Gerard in a white ERA. The colour white was important as I can still remember an open wheel white racer was the fastest car. In the paddock I remember being shown a very low flimsy car with TWO V Twin JAP engines and a wooden chassis. This, I found out later, was John Bolster's famous "Bloody Mary", which was second. The noisiest

car, and in third place, turned out to be a four-litre Alfa Romeo racing car driven by Dennis Poore (later to become the controversial Chairman of Norton Villiers Triumph in the 1970's).

Luton Hoo also had a motorcycle event there back in about 1960 as part of a Gala. I belonged to a motorcycle display team organised by my club, the Dunstable MCC and I still have a pic. somewhere of me jumping through a hoop of fire!

[Roger's daughter found that picture]



Fearless Roger Mills on his Greeves trials bike at Luton Hoo

Carpet? In a workshop?

WILL CURRY

When I collected this bike, I was assured it was a runner when it was put away under the workbench over 40 years ago by an ancestor of the soon-to-be ex owner.

I'm sure there must be people who think along the lines of 'This bike's running perfectly. I'll just abandon it under this bench'. I certainly don't. If it's running, I ride it. The bench comes later when it isn't.

Based on the premise that the bike had been running when put away, my plan was to do as little as possible necessary to get it running again. Being a two-stroke, and a twin at that, the engine was always going to have to come apart. The crankcase oil seals, essential to the running of any two-stroke, won't have survived that long without crumbling away.

I started at the rear, cleaning and touching-up the paint. This required a certain amount of dismantling and it was here that problems began to emerge.

One of the fixings for the nearside grab-handle got overlooked in the cleaning frenzy.

Come the time to reassemble the nearside grab handle and the oversight became obvious. It couldn't go back as it was, and the handle wouldn't stay put without it and, without the handle in place, the next step couldn't happen. A situation probably more common than many would care to admit.

With this impasse preying on my sense of reason, there seemed only one obvious course of action to take but, before I go further, I should explain that the intention was to reuse the original fixings; they were, after all, what was used when the bike was assembled at the factory nearly 60 years ago. Anyway, anything new would look as horribly out of place as a tiara on a tramp.

So, a specialised cleaning frenzy was put in hand. The wire cup brush was eventually clamped in the chuck of the drill - who would have thought of looking for the notoriously nomadic chuck key in the chuck itself - not me. Getting it out of the chuck presented another of the day's challenges. Ian came round when he got back from Bedford and his key fitted. Ian can be sensitive at times and hardly laughed at all.

The threads on the bolt cleaned up well with the wire brush. Those on the nut also responded well to a rather special wire brush. They came many years ago from a hardware shop in Luton, now long gone. They are a cross between a teapot spout brush and those little plastic-handled jobbies the dentist always tries to sell you for cleaning between your teeth properly.



The bolt, washers and nut that started this off

The washers were in good, shiny condition with only a trace of rusty paint around the edges and this came off with a quick scrape. It was with the bolt head that things took another turn for the worse. The wire cup brush in the drill had worked quite adequately on all the other fixings and the intention was to use it again. I screwed the nut onto the bolt and clamped the nut in the vice leaving the bolt head nicely positioned for the application of the wire brush, or so I thought. The nut was nowhere near as secure as I thought. Looking on the bright side, if it had been when I caught it with my elbow reaching for the drill, I would certainly have broken the skin. As it was, the bolt merely fell out of the vice jaws. The clear-thinking here would have simply watched it fall to the carpeted floor. 'Why carpet the workshop floor?' I hear. For exactly the same reason I put a blanket under a bike when I'm working outside. Things that fall and otherwise bounce and roll out of sight rarely move any distance at all and can usually be found without undue effort. I was not a current member of the club of clear-thinkers. I tried, unsuccessfully, to catch it. The metallic clink suggested, correctly, that I'd managed to knock it into the dark, uncarpeted depths underneath the workbench.

A quick search with the torch failed to find it. I had some beer and went to bed.



The 'Black Hole' under the workbench

The following evening, I resumed the search, carefully removing the items, one by one from under the bench. Eventually, all that remained was the engine from the ISDT Gold Star and the old toolbox. This is full of all the tools which don't get used that often and quite a lot of workshop detritus too. To search it properly it would have to come out and into the light - no trivial task as it is heavy. To lighten the load I carefully removed some of the bigger items, all the time listening for another little clink announcing the bolt - or something similar - had just found another hiding place.

Quiet.

I lifted the toolbox out and into the better light. There in the far corner of the top tray was the bolt. Simple as that. That just left putting everything back again and cleaning up the bolt head. Ever had that feeling you've been here before?

For the curious, there is enough room between the offside suspension unit and the frame to remove the offside grab handle without having to take off the suspension unit. The nearside suspension unit is nearer to the frame to allow room for the rear chain and there isn't enough room to get the grab handle off without taking the suspension unit off first. Moving the bike to get to the offside with one suspension unit off probably isn't going to end well.



The carpeted floor - I never said it was new carpet.

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

BRYAN MARSH

PART 3: HINCKLEY MACHINES

At the end of the previous episode I had just bought my first Hinckley-built 'John Bloor' Triumph, a 1993 model Trophy 900 triple. This proved to be an amazing bike that introduced me to European Touring

– Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Ireland – I’ve been everywhere man. The first trip I did on it was to Nice, in France, for a conference – so work were paying! I stayed on a few days and visited places I’d only ever heard of before - Monte Carlo, Cannes and Juan-les-Pins (home, according to Peter Sarstedt, of the ...carefully designed topless swimsuit, so you get an even suntan, on your back and on your legs...).



The Trophy 900 on the Hungarian border

The only time it let me down on those trips was in Germany when it wouldn't start on the morning of the run back to Hamburg to catch the ferry home. As luck would have it, there was a Triumph dealer right opposite the hotel so, as soon as they opened, I wheeled it across and, without being able to speak any German, tried to explain the problem. It turned out to be just a sticking side-stand safety cut-out switch, but they were amazed at the mileage on the clock and did it for free. At that time, it was only up to about 40,000 miles which is nothing compared to the 150,000+ miles it was showing when I finally sold it to Martin Brookman. I actually owned it twice, having originally sold it at 123,000 miles when the engine got noisy. That was just the bearing on the engine balancer shaft, but I didn't know it at the time, and it wasn't worth paying to get it fixed at that high mileage not knowing what the fault was. The mechanic at the bike shop bought it for his father and fixed it up with parts at cost and labour for free. I bought it back some seven years later at 132,000 miles, and put another 20,000 or so miles on it.



The SprintST 955i in Italy

In the meantime, in 2000, I'd moved on to a brand-new Triumph Sprint ST 955i – another triple but this time with fuel-injection. Another amazing machine on which I covered over 130,000 almost trouble-free miles, including a single day, 1023-mile ride to Aviemore and back, just for the hell of it; never again though! The only problem I had with the bike was of my own doing. The radiator sprung a leak when I was in the single-lane part of a contra-flow section of the M1 just south of Watford,

heading to Portsmouth to catch a ferry to St Malo (another conference – tough work but someone had to do it). I couldn't stop as I would have blocked the whole lane, and a recovery vehicle wouldn't have been able to get to me, so I rode on – and cooked the engine. Second-hand pistons and cylinder liners saw it right for another 60,000 miles until I sold it in favour of yet another brand-new Triumph, this time a 2001 Tiger 800XC because I fancied something with a more upright riding position (age, yes I know).

The Tigers came in three colours: black, orange or white. I wanted it in black, with orange as the second choice but, as it happened, because it was a new model, I would have to have waited an extra month for either or those - but I had an imminent trip to Spain planned, so white it had to be. I remember the day I collected it from 'On Yer Triumph' in Aston Clinton and left the SprintST with them to be collected by the dealer I had sold it to. I headed off on the Tiger to put some running-in miles on it, essentially just following my nose and taking me through Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and into Shropshire before heading home after 379 miles. I can't remember exactly where I went now but I came across a section of Offa's Dyke Path that was classed as a byway so off I went, green-laning on the brand-new bike - topbox, panniers and all. In places the ruts were so deep I was afraid the bottom of the panniers would 'ground out'. The following Thursday I took a day off work and headed off to Leicestershire to put another 212 miles on it to complete its running-in, ready for its first service a week after I first collected it.



The Tiger 800XC in the South of Spain

Just under five weeks from collecting the Tiger 800XC, I was on a ferry from Portsmouth to Bilbao with a mate and his Honda Pan-European. A couple of days in the Picos de Europa then south to Almeria to visit a lady friend who had deserted me in favour of Mediterranean sun (women!), leaving my mate to visit his son in Granada. The XC was the off-road pretender version of the Tiger 800 and my intention was to have some fun on the gravel roads. Well, that was the idea, but I admit to chickening out when the gravel turned to silt on a downhill section, and it started to rain. Without proper knobblies, I had visions of trying to pick up a very heavy and tall bike, so headed back to the safety of the tarmac. Nevertheless, the "adventure" styling and long-travel suspension proved perfectly suited to the less-than-perfect Irish roads on the twelve trips it made across to there – I just love riding in Ireland.

After almost ten years and 105,000 miles I decided it was time to move the Tiger 800XC on in favour of something lighter, and easier to get onto its centre stand in the garage. Unfortunately, Triumph don't currently make anything that fits that bill and, shamefully, they've now moved almost all production from Leicestershire to Thailand.

Those three Triumph triples were remarkable – 26 years, 375,000 miles and (apart from the SprintST overheating episode) not a single mechanical breakdown. Maybe they'll start making a three-cylinder, middleweight with some element of weather protection (Tiger Sport 660?). Until then, I'll be buzzing around on my French-built Yamaha. *Part 4 – the classic Triumphs, will appear in the next issue.*

Racing a Triumph Cub

RICHARD CHAMBERS

At first I was quite chuffed with my first bike, a 150 Bantam D3, and then a friend who was an only child and had a dotting granny became the owner of a newish Tiger Cub, with 199 nice sounding four stroke cc's and four gears. It certainly beat my Bantam in most (all) areas...and I wanted one. It wasn't until I passed my test and, of course, went through a selection of bigger British bikes and the odd trials bike that I eventually acquired a Tiger Cub. In fact I bought two, at £8 and £12 each. It was the late sixties and time to go Cub racing with the British Formula Racing Club.

I was very friendly with Jock Christie who had won the Cub championship and kindly helped me and a couple of mates with our Cubs.

It was a cheap formula and you could get one to go well quite easily without having to know too much about things like the mysteries of two-stroke tuning, as you did with Bantams.

Take a Cub, discard everything not needed. Yes, all the bits you have to now search for at autojumbles and weld a brace from the headstock to the top frame tube as it is an old Triumph after all!

Something better than the early forks were needed. I first had LE Velo forks and then some shortened AMC forks. The early formula stipulated the brakes had to be Cub, but this was changed to "any" by the club in the interests of safety.

Also to keep down costs, the engine had to be kept fairly standard so a sports Cub cylinder head suitably polished, but with standard springs, standard piston about 9:1, standard cams but modified followers, decent bottom end with Alpha or Ransome and Marles crankpin, lightened flywheels, no alternator, a decent oil pump of course and all assembled carefully with an ultra-close gearbox that you could get at the time, although I can't remember now where from, maybe Jock procured it.



1968 at Cadwell Park, a lean Tiger Cub and in those days the rider too!

Run all that with a 1-1/16 inch Monobloc, a straight exhaust pipe worked well at Cadwell and Lydden. I later had a long megaphone exhaust for Snetterton but, to be honest, I think I just loved the sound of it! Well, I was young and impressionable.

The racing was always close and great fun. I only managed the last three rounds in my first season in 1968 and had a fourth at Cadwell. This meant you had your name in the back of the MCN, along with dozens of others from all the other different clubs and classes, road racing, grasstrack, trials and scrambling; the MCN covered it all back then.



1969 at Snetterton, "the team" looking into some technical issue, oil leak most likely. Note the 50's cars and Thames vans.

For the following season there were a few mods to the bike, full fairing, not really essential; tachometer, helped with the gearing but not essential, change gear just before the valves bounced and replace the Terry's valve springs every 2 or 3 meetings seemed to work ok.

The first race at Lydden started off well with me leading for most of the race. Somehow, I didn't take the usual wide line round Paddock bend and "the" bump caught me out, (not concentrating!). After the dust settled it was off to the St Johns shed for me where they were trying to crank an old Morris Commercial ambulance into life, (as seen in Carry On films) to be enthusiastically welcomed by an old chap who had half a dozen very young trainee recruits there eager to practice on me... stand up and close your eyes, I didn't keel over so hadn't concussion. It seemed like there were two youngsters to each of my ground finger ends where they administered some evil concoction that made your eyes water, made even worse the next day at Wrest Park where our lovely first aid lady spent ages soaking the masses of congealed lint, etc. stuck firmly to my digits. Mental note - next time don't buy poncy Lewis Leather gossamer thin racing gloves.

Many more meetings followed and they were mostly good fun, the odd second and third place but a first never came, two broken R&M crankpins, apparently caused by faulty hardening, on the last lap being edged onto the grass round "Charlies" when lapping someone when neck and neck for the lead, but that's the way it goes and there is always someone faster than you. No more crashes, well not on the Cub! Great budget racing sometimes mixing it with the Bantams, and happy days on those little Tiger Cubs.

The Avon Engine

NEIL CAIRNS

The ancient T4 Canberra we had on the squadron had two pieces of history as its power units. These original versions of the Rolls Royce Avon axial-compressor engine had caused the company lots of serious problems. These had been so bad initially that quite a few Hunters had used the Bristol Siddley Sapphire engine. [In those far off 1950's BS were RR's competitors. Today we have engines called 'RR' Olympus as in the Vulcan, TSR2, and Concorde, as well as the 'RR' Pegasus as fitted to the P1127 Kestrel, or Harrier to you youngsters. Both these power units were designed by Bristol Siddley, RR taking them over in about 1966.] The Mk1 RR Avon had lots of money poured into it by the government, and eventually the engine became more reliable. Note the engines title; Mark 1, and not Avon 100, etc. It had a single breech cartridge starter fitted, and a selection of bleed valves bolted to the compressor casing. Here had been the problem. As the engine wound up to a very high idling RPM, the compressor had to go through some very critical stages of airflow operation. The fuel system pressure was used as an rpm indication, and it controlled the actions of these various bleed valves. If the system got it wrong, the engine stalled, and lots of expensive compressor blades were coughed up out of the intake showering the starter crew. Once the engine was above idle rpm, it was quite safe. If just one little compressor blade stalled, it would quickly cause a blockage in the air-flow at that stage, but air still being forced in by previous stages would compound the problem, one blade would break off under the strain, and this would rip off all the others like a tornado in a forest. By the time the Avon 100 series came along, being a much more developed version of basically the same engine, things had improved, especially reliability. The BI6's had Avon 100's, fitted with triple breach starters. All cartridge started Canberra's have a storage for extra cartridges in the aft locker, under the tail. Whilst navigators would do most things, few volunteered on a T4 to pop aft to get another cartridge from the locker, and fit it to an Avon Mk1, in flight. Flame out must have been a bit of a worry on a low-level sortie. The Avon 200's of the PR9's of 80 Squadron were much improved axial compressor, can-annular, engines. The much later Avon 300 annular engines bore little of their earlier parents faults, and were very much more powerful. BAC Lightning's pinched most of these engines.



213 Squadron Canberra

On each flight-check, turbines would be inspected by crawling up the jet-pipe. This was a filthy job, as kerosene produces a lot of soot when burnt. It was not hard to spot an engine technician, and know why he/she

was called a sooty. Once up the jet-pipe, another sooty would sometimes lean into the intake and spin over the compressor, whilst an aircraft adjacent started up. The poor sod in the pipe would think the engine they were behind was being started up and leave in a hurry, only to pop out of the jet-pipe to be met by a number of sooties folded up in mirth on the pan. This was usually reserved for a 'first-time' new lad.

See & Be Seen

We used an ancient cab-less David-Brown tractor to tow the kits about the station, and in and out of the hangar. At that time David Brown also owned Aston Martin-Lagonda in Newport Pagnell, at the Tickford Works, but this tractor certainly did not have the performance of any sports car. An 'MT' order came out that all vehicles used on aircraft movement areas were to be fitted with yellow/amber flashing lights. At the same time all ground equipment was to be painted yellow. The current blue colour was not good enough, (and years later it all became yeuk-green, making things impossible to find in long grass.) So, one night, having put all the kites away to bed in the hangar, the tractor then wended its way to the MT section to gets its very own yellow flashing light. As mentioned, fitting all the Canberra's into the hangar meant they were a very tight fit, and the last in had to be the first out. The last in went in nose first, the tractor leaving by going out under one of the wings. Early next morning, the modified tractor was collected. It had a 4ft steel pole bolted to the RH rear mudguard, with a yellow light on top. The hangar doors were opened ready for its arrival, and its driver drove under the first Canberra's wing so as to connect up to the waiting towing arm, already clipped to the nose wheel. The height under the wing from the hangar floor was about six inches LESS than the top of this lamp. Prior to the pole being fitted, the highest bit on the tractor was its driver, who just bent down under the wing. The lamp obviously did not have the common sense to bend down but insisted upon cutting a neat hole in the under-wing metal, up into the fuel tank as the vehicle passed underneath. The main spar eventually bent the pole. The simple inertia of the one and a half tone tractor had done its terrible damage.

So much for those who had planned the yellow-lamp modification!

Soon after this the Canberra's were replaced by American Phantom's fitted with RR Spey by-pass engines initially made for airliner use. The photos were taken in the last few weeks of 213 Squadron's existence.

The world's most expensive steering head bearings?

BRYAN MARSH



Going through the file of paperwork that came with my newly acquired Panther 35 I found a bill from Robin James Engineering for refurbishing the "severely-worn" original headstock bearings. It seemed they spark-eroded the cups and cones back to their original profile, to accept 7.5mm ball-bearings, and had to get one cone re-hardened as it appeared to have been made from a different steel to the others.

The bill for this? ...£720!! (13hrs labour + materials + VAT)