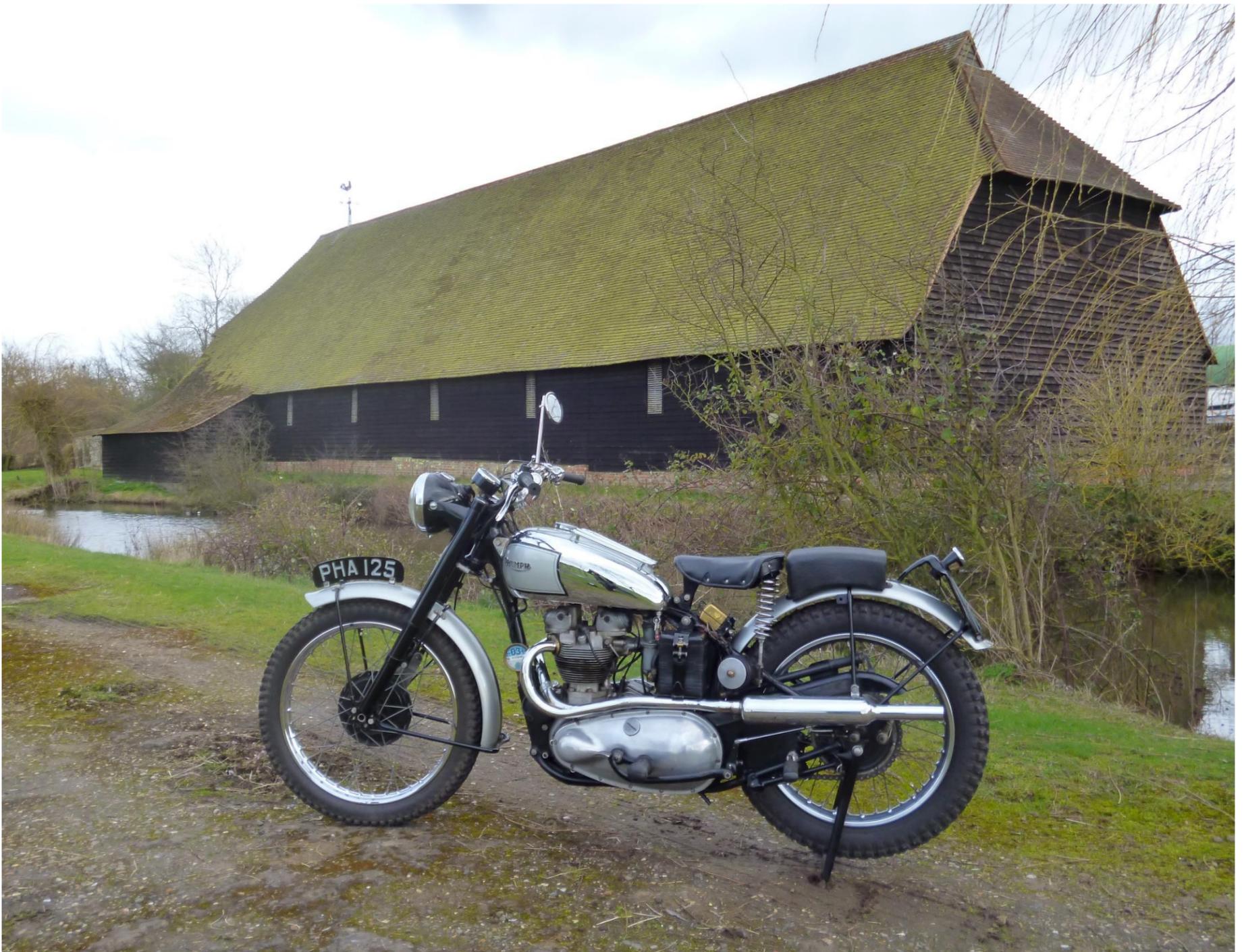


# BEDS VMCC NEWS

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN**



1951 Triumph TR5 Trophy outside Prior's Hall Barn, Widdington, Essex on the 2017 TOMCC Landmark Challenge

## Any excuse for a ride

I'm really looking forward to the VMCC Way Point Rally, starting in June. Events like that provide a great excuse to head somewhere different for a change. Add to that the Triumph Owners Club Landmark Challenge, the Round Britain Rally and the ACU National Rally and I'm hoping to be busy all summer long, just piling the miles on. And, hopefully, before long I'll get chance to put together another Bedfordshire Navigation Event.

### *IN THIS ISSUE:*

**HOW TO MAKE  
AN OLD TAX DISC**

**CAVEAT  
EMPTOR**

**ALL THOSE  
YEARS**

**MORE MILES  
ON TRIUMPHS**

## EDITORIAL

Hopefully, like me, you've been taking advantage of the amazing dry weather throughout April and airing some of those bikes that have been locked up for far too long. Or maybe you're waiting for it to warm up a bit first – can't blame you.

I've managed to get out on almost everything that's running at least once, including the newly acquired Panther 250 – the Villiers 2T is a great little motor, really good fun. One highlight of my outings, or low light depending on how you look at it, was being overtaken by a cyclist whilst tackling a small incline on the 1946 James Autocycle!

A few jobs in hand: a sticking throttle on the '47 T100, disc brake upgrade on the Commando, a misfire to be cured on the '39 T100 and a leaking petrol tank to be sealed on the Model H. Once those things are done, I think everything in the garage & shed will finally be up and running. The hard job then is deciding which one to take out – but being spoilt for choice is not something to complain about.

Many thanks to our contributors: Gordon, Nige, Simon and Will. Please keep them coming as, by my reckoning, there'll be about another five issues before the final lockdown restrictions are lifted and we can get back to "the way things were".

Bryan

## Beds Section News

### MIDWEEK RUNS

The next run will be on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> May; this will be the last one where we need to limit groups to six riders/passengers. If you would like to come along, please contact me: [bryan.marsh@btinternet.com](mailto:bryan.marsh@btinternet.com). We will attempt to run more than one group if we get more than six people interested.

### VIRTUAL CLUB NIGHT

Two more virtual club nights to go before (hopefully) the Car Park Concours on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> July. Will has kindly taken care of these and the first will go live at approximately 8:30pm on the evening of Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. The subject will be 'Handlebars' and will be found on: [http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/net\\_night\\_may/w\\_001.html](http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/net_night_may/w_001.html)

### WANTED

*Nige needs another bike:*

Due to the ever-increasing size of the offspring, I'm looking for a 4 stroke classic trials bike (No 1 son's now riding mine). I don't mind some recommissioning, servicing or something cosmetically challenged but not a full-on restoration or basket case. If you have an old B40 in the back of the shed you're never going to get around to riding again, I might be your man. Anything 4-stroke considered.

Give me a call on 07968 301544.  
Nigel Coote

Does anyone have a spare hard rubber battery box and lid I could buy, please? The new soft rubber ones from Lucas just don't work so well.

Bryan 07309 731191

### CAFÉ UPDATES

The Super Sausage is waiting until the May 17<sup>th</sup> relaxation before re-opening, when they can serve indoors.

"Stop 'n Stuff" (hate that name) at Pure Triumph Woburn is now opening Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm.

Gerry Gibbins recommends the Lordship Farm Tea Room, Upton End Road, Shillington – open Fri-Sun, 10.30am-4pm.

Plenty of outdoor space at Jordans Mill, open Weds-Sun, 9am-4pm.

Any more favourites you'd like to see included? Just let me know.

## Upcoming local events

**petrolheadonism.club** & **AUTO ANONYMOUS EST 2020**  
#sharingthepassion  
**Presents**  
**Father's Day Sunday 20th June 2021**

Show Car Entry - £20 Per Car includes Driver & All Passengers  
PLUS Full Access to ALL Shuttleworth Attractions  
Book now on: [www.petrolheadonism.club](http://www.petrolheadonism.club)

Spectator Information - £15 per Adult, Under 16's Go Free - Via Shuttleworth Website Only

**MOTOFEST '21**  
The Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden Aerodrome, Hill Lane, Biggleswade SG18 9EP

*'Supercars, Classics, Vintage, Americana, Highly Modified & Motorbikes Welcome'*

COVID SECURE EVENT - ALL TICKETS WILL BE REFUNDED IN EVENT OF CANCELLATION

Full details on [www.petrolheadonism.club/motofest21](http://www.petrolheadonism.club/motofest21)

**Sunday 1st August 2021**  
**Flitwick Lockdown Car Show**

Join us for a great day around the town

Car show covering the whole town to aid social distancing

**Book your space now!**  
10:00 to 16:00  
Follow us on Facebook for up to date info

Find our Facebook page or call 07368 117032

We attended this one last year (see Issue 15) and it was jolly good but would have been much better with a lot more old bikes.

## *The page 3 girl*



My cousin had one of these (the bike, that is) back in the 70s and wrote to Kawasaki to complain that he was only getting 17mpg. They replied saying this was poor and he should be able to get 23!

## *Historical Beds Section Notes*

*Just one set of notes appeared for the whole of 1988:*

### **March 1988**

January 23<sup>rd</sup> saw us enjoying our Annual Dinner at The Crown, Henlow. We were pleased to have as our guest Ian Young, the Club President. The last time a President came to see us was our old friend Trevor Wooton back in the 1970s. March club night sees the Section playing host to an Inter-Section Quiz. This will be at Shefford Memorial Hall. [Hoppy]

[NB Anglian "A" won]

*From the East Herts Section Notes, May 1988:*

Bob Crawley led the team to support Bedfordshire's Quiz Evening and even if they were slightly "off tune" on the night they deserve all our thanks for their efforts. [not sure who was "off tune" – the Beds organisers or the East Herts team...]

### **1989**

*No Section Notes at all from the Beds Section all year – secret society?*

### **March 1990**

*Almost a repeat of March 1988:*

Our Section Dinner took place on January 20<sup>th</sup>. We were pleased to welcome the President and his lady to our "knees up". Our next event is the inter-Section Team Quiz. We would like to see some of the many club members who do not normally attend Section events turning out to cheer for the home team. So March 8<sup>th</sup>. Shefford Memorial Hall, 7.30pm. Do not forget. [Hoppy]

[NB Anglian "A" won]

*Silence again until:*

### **November 1990**

The Section's Annual Dinner will take place on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> January, at the Sheffordtown Memorial Hall. Same format as last year. The Clanger Run in September was a success, and already we are working towards 1991 events. The Team quiz on 14<sup>th</sup> March and the SOS Run on May Day, 6<sup>th</sup> May. Now the dark nights are with us don't hibernate – congregate! [Hoppy]

*That concludes this mini-series as I don't have a complete set of Journals for the 1990s.*

## *Making an historic tax disc*

**SIMON SMITH**



Having decided to keep my Royal Enfield 180 looking as original as possible I have been learning new skills, particularly how to make new things look old!

I always like to have a period tax disc on display, something I did recently for my 1949 Alvis TA14. For a motorbike I also needed to get a suitable holder for the disc.

There is a website <https://www.britishtaxdiscs.co.uk/> which will make you a period disc for £28 and also sell you a holder for £56. Crazy money I thought - I can do this myself.

Firstly, I Googled "1928 motorcycle tax disc". Then I downloaded the best one I could find:



Used Fireworks to touch it up and add vehicle specific information:



I then further distressed the metal by heating up until the metal darkened then plunging it into damp coffee grounds (free!)

A light clean with a cloth and here is the finished article - total cost £13



Bought a cheapo tax disc holder (£5 off eBay):



Used a wire brush to scuff the surface then rifle blueing to tarnish the surface (£8 off eBay). Gun blue is supposed to work only on uncoated surfaces, but I found that abrading the stainless-steel finish and leaving the gel on for 1/2 hour before cleaning off did the job. I repeated the process three times.





### *For sale*

The photos are of an early 1970s Honda SS 50 which my friend (not a VMCC member) has just put back on the road after 15 or so years of dry storage. He now wants to sell it and is open to sensible offers. I can direct any interest his way. I can be contacted by email or phone 07752622473.

Regards,  
Paul Rose



## *Caveat Emptor, or, Getting the Reaction Right*

**WILL CURRY**

The internet can be a useful tool for finding information. It can also be the mechanism of choice for the unscrupulous in their attempts to deceive.

I browse eBay for amusement. I'm interested in Ariels for obvious reasons and also in BSAs. Occasionally I'm asked to view and comment on particular items. One of my on-going challenges is to sort out an Ariel Arrow and it's to this end that I've been browsing most recently. Contemporary photographs can be the best source of information, but they are often poorly scanned and sometimes wrongly described and dated.

Failing contemporary images there are the offerings from magazine articles, auction house sites and eBay. Some few years ago at a motorcycle meeting - nothing to do with the VMCC - I happened upon a hybrid BSA twin. It interested me because, like a number of others I've seen over the years, the set-up of the front brake arm was diabolical, the angle between cable and arm being much greater than 90 degrees. The owner of this hybrid must have mistaken my disdain for awe and launched into a fanciful lecture on the topic of BSA's Rocket Gold Star which this patently wasn't. The engine from its number was a 1956 A10 with big-flange barrels and an alloy head but it wasn't a Rocket and the frame number was for a 1955 B31 or B33, not even Gold Star, let alone Rocket Gold Star. I smiled, nodded and wandered off.

Out of interest, when I got home, I did a search on the registration number. Two results were particularly interesting, both from auction houses. The earlier was for a 'Rocket Gold Star' replica and the latter, and from a different auction house, was for the same bike now promoted to a 'Genuine Rocket Gold Star - rarest of the rare'. The sale price was some four times what the first price was. Someone hadn't done their homework. It can't have been that long before its true pedigree was discovered for it appeared on eBay soon afterwards with a very cautious description. It didn't sell.

Using eBay images as a guide as to how to build your project is fraught with problems as the following illustrates. The front brake on the Ariel two-strokes is somewhat unusual in at least two ways. The first is that it is a 'floating' brake - the brake anchor is attached to part of the front forks which doesn't move. This has, in turn, two consequences: The brake plate needs to be free to pivot, slightly, on the wheel spindle and, when the brake is applied, there is no brake dive which may account for the not entirely undeserved reputation the brake has of being 'just adequate'. The second unusual feature is that the brake arm is operated by the cable outer, not the inner. This is the only reason I can think of to explain why the wheels have been fitted as they are - an attempt to arrange matters so that the inner of the cable operates the brake arm.

The best of this is that at one time there were two examples on eBay with the wheels so fitted. One of these was a 'barn find' Leader but the best was an Arrow - obviously it has been rebuilt at some stage but according to the vendor 'Needs recommissioning'.



As found in the barn



As found in the workshop...

How did Ariel intend it to be done?



...and finally, how it should be done.

The brake torque stay should be in tension, not compression. It does rather beg the question as to what else might have been wrongly assembled.

Caveat emptor indeed.

## *All those years...*

GORDON HALLETT

Having a multitude of bikes from my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, rarely paying much more than a tenner, selling them, then buying another was a good background for a Machine Maintenance Electro-Mechanical Engineering apprentice. I played at grass-track racing and trials, both on sidecar outfits, but funds as an apprentice meant basics, like oil changes and decent fuel were outside my budget, so I retired from my sporting endeavours, whilst in one piece.

When women entered my life I still rode everywhere on an outfit of some sort, but soon found the future wife preferred a car; maybe it was the flames that often shot out of the 9TT10 carb on my 1959 Connie, or the reluctance of her dog to crawl down to the nose of the sidecar, often to be sick on her shoes. Either way it had to go, but bikes never leave you, do they?

Fast forward 20 years, a colleague invited us to a motorcycle club dinner/dance; the same club I had joined in my teens. Old faces were still around and re-kindled the lost love of two wheels.

Just the two of us again now, daughter fled to uni, so an old playhouse

became available in the rear garden, and an advert in the local paper for an up-and-running '56 Fanny-B aroused my curiosity. A viewing, and an exchange of money, started the whole thing running again.

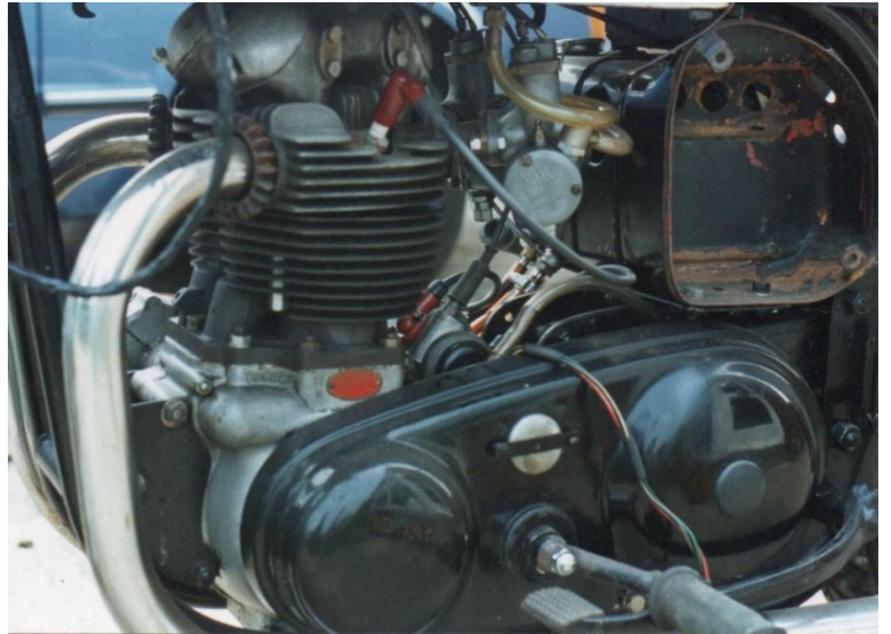
But as an engineer, I felt the need to restore a bike, maybe from a basket case, and a Royal Enfield "Super 5" in a collection of boxes fitted the bill. Restored in that shed on a B&D Workmate, not ideal, but then the purchase of an old hospital rise/fall bed transformed things, sturdy, four-wheel lock, brilliant.



Another two Enfields, one Norton, one Douglas, and a Radco followed, all in bits and all took a year each to finish. Then my first bike in one piece, an oh-so-pretty 1956 Gilera 150SS found at the A10 Pageant, in Enfield. I looked, went away, had another look, then struck a deal for this tatty, but complete, bike - unaware that this was to be my future Moto-Giro mount. (see Issue No.?) – *sorry Gordon, I couldn't find it.*

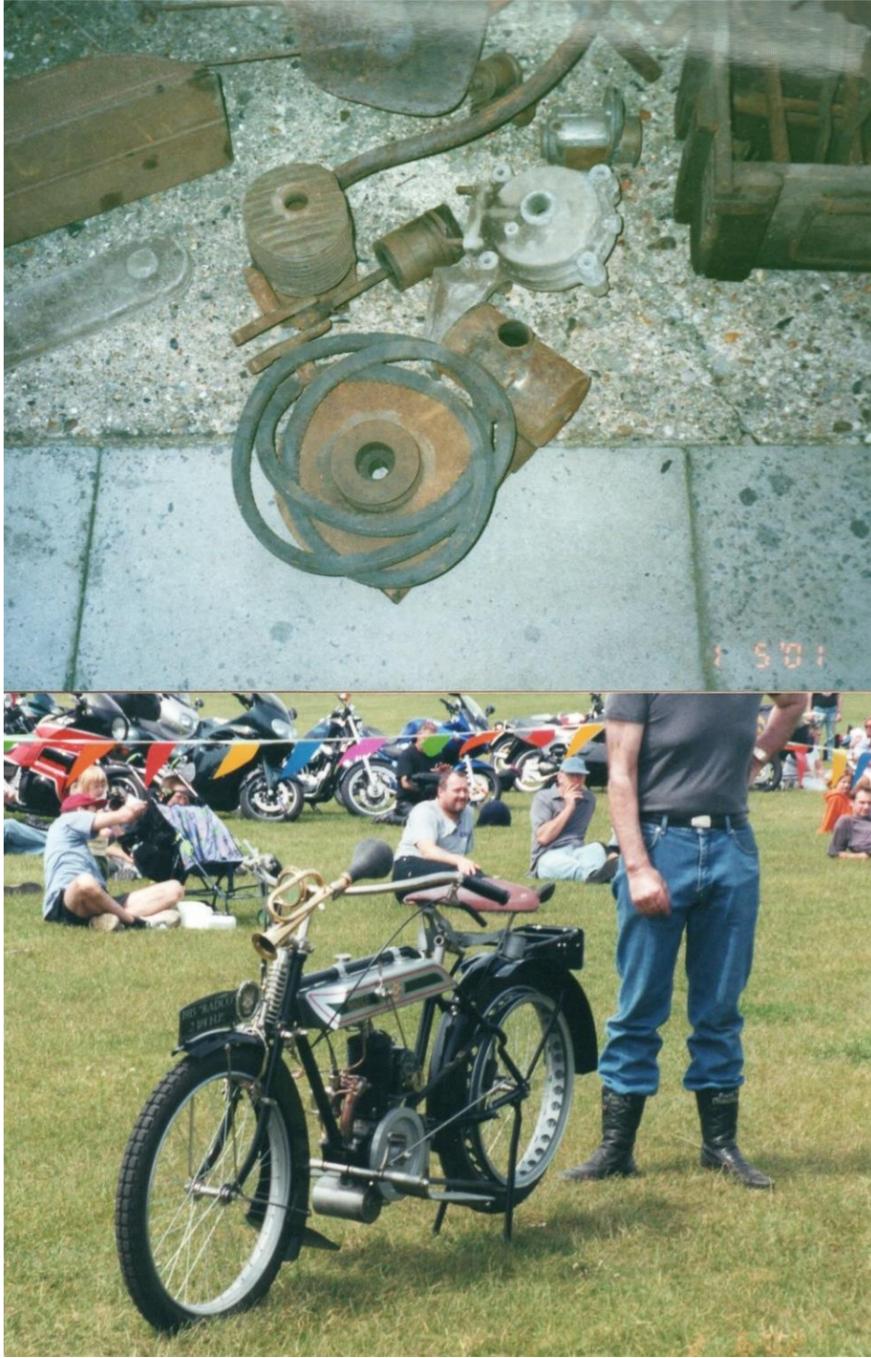


Back in the late '80's/early'90's I was able to get awards at shows, when standards were nothing like today's stunning show bikes, and have seen this evolving, as a further ten restorations were completed on a range of machines, including a 235 Lodola, a 175 ohv MV, a couple of BSAs, a Velo Thruxton, and another Douglas, all basket cases.



I will say, that, over the years, my places of employment offered me all the facilities to help with these restorations, machine tools, coating etc., which all disappeared as fast as the receivers moved in, back in 2008 (wasn't my fault) so at 64, I decided to retire.

All this time on my bikes, I thought. But when I started to add up what a pile of boxes cost to restore, I looked at "fettling projects", but this soon led to boredom and the wife suggested I find a part-time job. So, 10 years later, I am still at a school, looking after a dwindling selection of machinery, as the country cries out for engineers and the schools chase league tables, to which the machine skills don't count, so parents and teachers "lead" kids away from the "hands on" subjects.

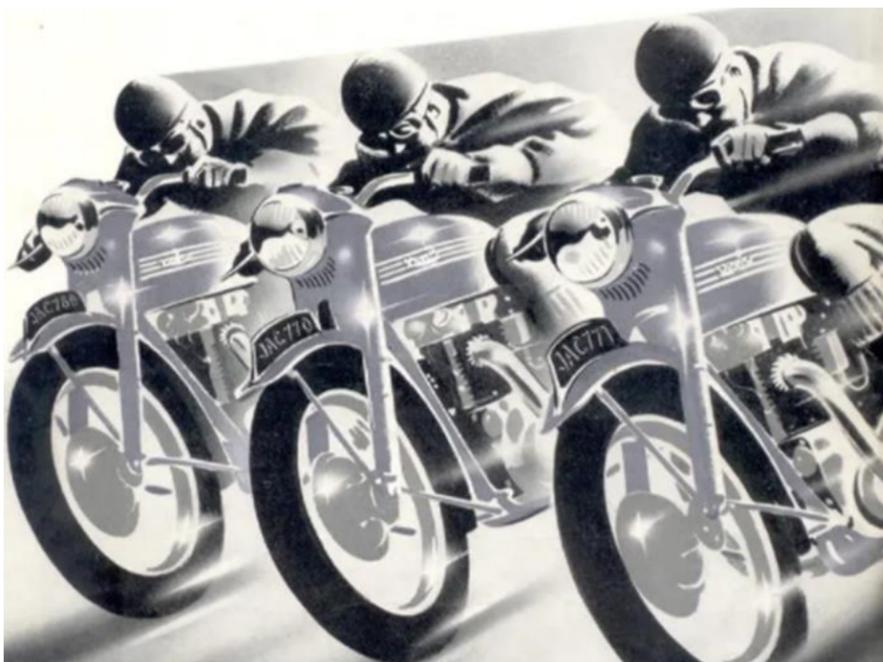


Now, I have become “an expert” at Bonhams sales, buying ready-for-the-road bikes, as well as an e-bay-er and now have five Brits, seven Italian, one Danish and my modern Honda. Oh, and I still use the hospital bed (for the bikes, not me) but I can’t help wondering what happened, to All Those Years!

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

**BRYAN MARSH**

### **PART 4: THE FIRST FEW CLASSICS**



For many years, early on a certain cold March morning, I’d get on my current modern motorcycle and head off down to Epsom, Handcross or Brighton, sometimes all three, to watch those wonderful machines on the Pioneer Run. Then, one year, 2003 to be precise, I decided that I wanted to have a go. Borrowing a suitable bike was pretty much out of the question, so I was going to have to buy one of my own. Off down to Verralls to see what they had on offer, trusting them to let me have something within my very limited capability, and away I came with a 1913 Type A, single-speed Triumph (had to be a Triumph, really) for, what everyone said I was crazy to pay, the heady sum of £5700 (look what they’re fetching now!).

I remember asking Ian at Verralls what veteran bikes are like to ride. “If you’re riding along, enjoying the ride, looking at the scenery, you’re probably not doing something you should be doing” was his reply.

It turned out to be a great buy – very reliable, taking me to Brighton on nine Pioneer Runs, around the Banbury and even to the Last Post ceremony at the Menim Gate after the Oude Kleppers Run in Holland. I never did quite get the hang of the foot clutch and I’m always amazed at how easy Chris Dawkins and Bob Godfrey make it look. After ten years I felt the need for a change so I sold it (for £10,500, could have got a lot more, it turned out) and bought a 1919 Model H, again from Verralls.



This has turned out to be “one of those bikes”! Despite having had it since 2013, I still haven’t got it completely sorted – and this being a machine that had supposedly been re-assembled from a box of bikes by Sam Lovegrove, he of television fame (Shed and Buried). The list of bodes is too frightening to include here but the final piece in the jigsaw is stopping the leak between the petrol and oil compartments in the petrol tank and getting it repainted. It’s away at the moment, hopefully being done. Eight years and I’ve only ridden in 245 miles.



I saw this 1930 Model X for sale on the British Two-Stroke Club stand at the Stafford Show and was instantly drawn in by its quirkiness, and the chance to own a Triumph that few people would even know existed. A most unusual machine – to start it you had to put it in gear, pull in the clutch lever, and kick. When running it sounded like a very loud Bantam. I tried some fibreglass packing in the “silencer” but that just sapped the very small amount of power it had in the first place. It had a two-speed hand-change gearbox (well, actually it didn’t have a gearbox, per se, but that would take too long to explain) but kept jumping out of gear. Frightened of the potential cost of repair and now being fully aware that this wasn’t Triumph’s finest hour I moved it on. I now know the reason for their scarcity was probably that owners had willingly gave them up during the war to melt down and make bombs or whatever.



Back in the days when I had fewer bikes, and more sense, the only two “old” bikes I had were the 1913 Type A and my 1969 Tiger 100 – one of which I felt was too old for normal VMCC activities, the other a bit too young. So, I decided that I needed something in between, and a late 1920’s Triumph Model N (I think) advertised by Andy Tiernan had caught my eye, so off I went to Framlingham. As it turned out it needed far too much doing to it for someone with my mechanical ineptitude. But alongside it was a 1930 Triumph CN3 in remarkably original condition, so a deal was struck. It had belonged to a, now elderly, owner of a motorcycle dealership in Essex and didn’t seem to have been used since 1959. Once the magneto had been seen to it became a thoroughly enjoyable and reliable motorcycle. Odd, how these things happen but having been rear-ended and knocked off by a following rider, whose vintage Ariel clearly had less effective brakes, on the Rose Of Shires

Run, I lost interest in the bike because of the damage to its originality. Bob Crawley of the East Herts Section did a fantastic job on the badly bent brass headlight shell, but I still sold the bike on to Brent’s brother who, I believe, still has it.



Back to Andy Tiernan’s for a replacement in the form of a 1946 Triumph 3T Deluxe (actually a 1945 engine in 1947 frame and cycle parts but DVLA had it down as 1946 so I won’t argue). A wonderful little bike that I describe as having been as “restored by a farmer” (no offence intended to our agricultural friends) with a single layer of paint and “chocolate-box” electrical connectors – you know the type of thing. As many of you will know, I love that bike and had no hesitation in spending a lot of money on a partial restoration when the engine seized and it was time to install the replacement, built from new parts, that I had acquired at the Bristol Classic Bike Show a few years before. I’ve done over 11,000 miles on it and have no intention of letting go in the foreseeable future.



My dream bike had long been a pre-war Triumph Tiger 100 but they don’t come up for sale very often so when I saw an unrestored 1939 Speed Twin for sale at Venture Classics, I leapt – just saving it from being exported to Japan. Again, many of you will be familiar with this bike and it’s another “keeper”. It started life in Glasgow, was requisitioned during the war (though I don’t know what it did) and passed back to the original owner who sold it in 1946, by which time it appears to have gained the later, larger petrol tank. The next owner had it from 1946 to 2001, only using it for high days and holidays, including trips to Chamonix in France and the Isle of Man. I’m the second owner since then, having bought it ten years ago this October, and, according to my records, have ridden it 126 times covering 8158 miles.



Having hounded him for quite some time, I finally got my dream pre-war Tiger 100 when Bob Culver's son moved to Australia and couldn't take the bike with him. Very shiny compared to the Speed Twin – actually a little too shiny in places, I don't think the brake pedal or engine plates should be chromed; but that gives the rivet-counters something to comment on, so I won't be changing them just yet. Oddly enough, I haven't gelled with it in the same way as the Speed Twin but, once I get a mystery misfire sorted, I'll give it another go.

Never satisfied, I thought it would nice to have an early post-war Tiger 100 for comparison:



Almost as scare as the pre-war version, possibly more so as most of the post-war production was destined for export, they don't come up all that

often. Seeing one for sale at the Classic Motor Hub in Gloucestershire I was thrown into a quandary as I'd only just bought a Norton Commando from Bob Culver. After a sleep-disturbed night, I was faced by the reality that it was a rare opportunity to tick off another from my wish list. A dash down to Bibury, with the bike on hold, by lunchtime it was mine, having beaten more than one dealer who'd phoned after me (the advert had only appeared in Old Bike Mart the day before). The bike was a one-owner-from-new until being restored by Hughie Hancox and then had been through the hands of two non-riding collectors – so I'm only the second real user. The original owner worked for Massey-Ferguson and had ridden the bike to work every day until 1960 when he took it off the road in favour of a van to transport the band he now played in. It sat in the family shed until the chap died when his widow put it out for the binmen but, thank Heavens, they wouldn't take it because it was too heavy. The son, not a motor-cyclist himself, had decided to have a go at restoring it but Hughie Hancox lived just up the road and, knowing the bike, said it was too original for that and he would restore it, which he did. Unfortunately, the detailed file of work done by Hughie has been lost over the years but the provenance is proven as it was written up in British Bike magazine in May 1991, where it graces the front cover.

I've just had some pin-striping on the tank touched up and, once the sticking throttle is sorted, I hope to bring it out to play this summer. Watch out for it.

I think I'll stop there and leave the rest to the next issue.

## *Lovely day for a spin*



Don's route for last week's midweek headed east, taking us just into South Cambridgeshire, pausing for a breather at the Chishill Windmill before heading back, via Ashwell, to Jordans Mill for concluding chat and refreshments. As luck had it, there was a chap working on the windmill and those interested got a privileged poke around inside. Two Ariels, two Triumphs (both TR5 Trophies), a Norton, a BSA and a Royal Enfield – please don't add up the numbers. Very enjoyable.

## **SEEN IN THE PAPERS**

JOHN SMITH." Inspector Callaway said that there was a charge against a soldier for riding a motor bicycle without a light. The man had given the name of "John Smith," but on the summons being served at Staple Hall the authorities said there was no man of that name. The man had given Staple Hall as his address, but had evidently given a false name. The police would no doubt be able to identify him, and he asked for an adjournment.--Case adjourned.

[North Bucks Times and County Observer - Tuesday 22 June 1915]