

BEDS VMCC NEWS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN



John Butcher, Section founder member, RIP

Philip and Tony Butcher have informed us of the sad passing of their father. Please see his obituary inside.

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OF HOPPY**

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EDITORIAL

Despite everything having been pushed back by at least another four weeks, it feels like we are slowly and cautiously starting to emerge into a world that seems a little more familiar. The vaccination centre where I've been helping out is due to close next week and I've already been stood down as the flood of people needing jabs has reduced to a trickle. More time for riding bikes and, maybe, I might even get some of those jobs done that kept being put back – probably not.

So many events coming up, it's difficult to choose which ones to do. Take this weekend, for example, three shows and a cyclemotor run, all of which I'd like to attend but will miss them all in favour of heading west for a four-day weekend on the T100S taking in Herefordshire-on-the-Edge (report in the next issue). If you're heading to any events, why not take a camera and send me a short (or long, should you be so inclined) report for the newsletter.

Next weekend is the ACU National Road Rally, Covid-style (no manned checkpoints or overnight riding), and the Stafford Show. Not quite sure how the latter will operate, but I have my ticket.

Many thanks to this issue's contributors who responded magnificently to my desperate plea for content: Chris I, Chris S, Don, Martin B, Martin L, Paul, Phil & Tony, Tim and Will.

Beds Section News

JULY CLUB NIGHT

The postponement of the relaxation of Covid-restrictions means we can't hold the Car Park Concours on its usual July club night. At this stage it looks like Will will bring forward the presentation he was kindly preparing for October, converting it into the virtual format. This leaves a gap for October, see below.

THE NEXT MIDWEEK RUN

The next run will be on Thursday, 1st July. I'm organising this one – if "organising" is the right word. Sometime between now and next Thursday I hope to have worked out start and finish locations, and a route between the two. Information to be sent out nearer the time.

AUG, SEPT AND OCT CLUB NIGHTS

In the absence of any further extensions of Covid-restrictions, the Car Park Concours will now be held on the August club night, Thursday 12th, at the Shefford Memorial Hall. Yet another month of polishing!

It then seems sensible to move the usual August "Noggin & Natter" back to September, unless anyone has anything they'd like to present instead, bearing in mind that we currently don't have anything firm sorted out for October.

And round about now we usually start thinking about next year's programme...

Midweek Run report

DON MCKEAND



Bikes and riders gather on Toddington Village Green for the start

We have just held what I think is our seventeenth Midweek Run since they re-commenced in June 2020. The Spring Run, Albert Brown Run, Summer Saunter and Autumn Gold Runs have all been cancelled, but the programme of twice monthly midweek runs by Bryan, Norm and myself have meant we have almost certainly exceeded the number of runs from some previous years, although not necessarily with a greater mileage.



Double yellow lines? What double yellow lines? Note the Oddfellows (or should that be "odd fellows"?) in the background.

The weather forecast for 17th of June was not promising, with warnings of thunderstorms and possible flash flooding, so I was grateful to find that we had eight riders gathered at Toddington for the start. It was certainly dull and slightly drizzly at the start, but we travelled along a mixture of dry, damp and some wet roads without needing the over-trousers I had struggled into as a precaution. We were very fortunate as the following day proved to have continuous heavy rain from dawn to dusk.

After a long wait at a 3-way set of temporary traffic lights to get onto the A5, the route took us through Eaton Bray and Edlesborough to Dagnall and up into Ashridge. At this point I noticed that there were rather fewer people following than I expected. It turned out that Gerald's Dominator had broken its clutch cable. He opted to wait for recovery and so we pressed on over Ivinghoe Beacon, then through Aldbury and another steep climb back onto the Ashridge estate.



A rest stop at the Bridgewater Monument provided a chance for ice creams before setting off towards Nettleden. The line of riders was further reduced as the dynamo on Gerry's Velo loosened, so he chose to stay and tighten it up before heading home. Steep and very narrow lanes led across the Hemel Hempstead road and up to Gaddesden Row. From there a run to Studham and over Dunstable Downs took us through Totternhoe and Hockliffe to the café at Pure Triumph in Woburn.

There are some stunning views on the route, but misty weather reduced visibility; however, staying dry was compensation.

Upcoming local events

A BUSY WEEKEND AHEAD

This weekend sees several events that might be of interest:
Previously mentioned in earlier newsletters:

- Classic Car & Bike Show, Pure Triumph, Woburn, Saturday, June 26th, 10am-3pm
- Vintage Vehicle Show, Pages Park, Leighton Buzzard, Sunday, June 27th
- Luton Festival of Transport, Stockwood Park, Farley Hill, Luton Sunday, June 27th, 10am-4pm
- Bikes in Beds Cyclemotor Run, Sunday June 27th, 10.00 for 10.30, The Dukes Arms, High Street, Woodford, NN14 4HE

FOR YOUR DIARY

[See previous Newsletters for details]

- Flitwick Lockdown Car & Bike Show, Sunday, 1st August
- Pirton Classic Vehicle Show, Thursday, 12th August
- Classic Stony, Stony Stratford, postponed until Sunday 29th August
- Redbourn Classics Motor Show, Redbourn Common, Saturday 4th September 2021 Noon-5pm
- Northants VMCC Navigation Rally, Start/finish at The Grange Sports Ground, Northampton Road, Earls Barton, Sunday, September 5th.

The page 3 girl



John Butcher (1931-2021)

PHILIP AND TONY BUTCHER

John was one of the original founder members of the branch after Hoppy wrote to gauge local interest in 1977/78.

Dad had been brought up on a local farm where his first bike was an old flat tank Triumph, which he rode until the inner tubes expired; they were

then duly packed with straw to keep the wheels turning. This started a passion with all things mechanical, that lasted a lifetime.

Apprenticed as a blacksmith in Ashwell, Hertfordshire, he made a small 125cc bike with a new engine picked up from J.A.P. The frame was bent from a double-decker bus chrome rear handrail! Various scrapyards parts were added to complete the machine. In 1953 this little bike took him back and forth from home, through London to Ashford, Kent, where he was in the R.E.M.E., attached to the 16th parachute brigade. On one hair-raising occasion, he had run out of petrol and was towed back to camp, using the two belts from their jackets, by the Sergeant on his International Norton, in the dark (with no lights)! He said it was the fastest the bike had ever been!

Back in civvy street, a recon 741 Indian was the daily ride and a sidecar was attached when my brother was born. A period without any bikes followed, until he was given an MAC Velo (or the dustman will take it - would that be the green or the grey bin nowadays?), followed by a Bantam. An Ariel Square Four, a multitude of other Ariels, a Rudge Special, a Rudge Multi and a pair of O.E.C.'s, all of which were restored to the highest standard (other than the Bantam) at the Engineering Works he established in Potton in the mid-seventies.



Many trips and rallies were participated in, home and abroad, with family and friends (especially with dear friend, Rod Atkins) and many tales are still told! Anglo-Dutch, Ken Craven Mojacar Partitour, Munster Rally, London to Brighton Run, Banbury Runs, TT, and Dutch TT (last two watching, not competing) and various touring holidays.

On retirement, he kept fully occupied restoring various clocks, more motorbikes and, most notably, a four and a half year rebuild on my MG TA Midget.



Dad will be sadly missed by our family and his many friends.

Motor Cycles – Safety First

BRYAN MARSH

The latest adornment for the shed wall is this rather interesting sign I picked up from an online auction in Halifax. It's cast aluminium and I'd be very glad to hear from anyone who might know it's approximate age, and what hazard it might have been used to warn of.

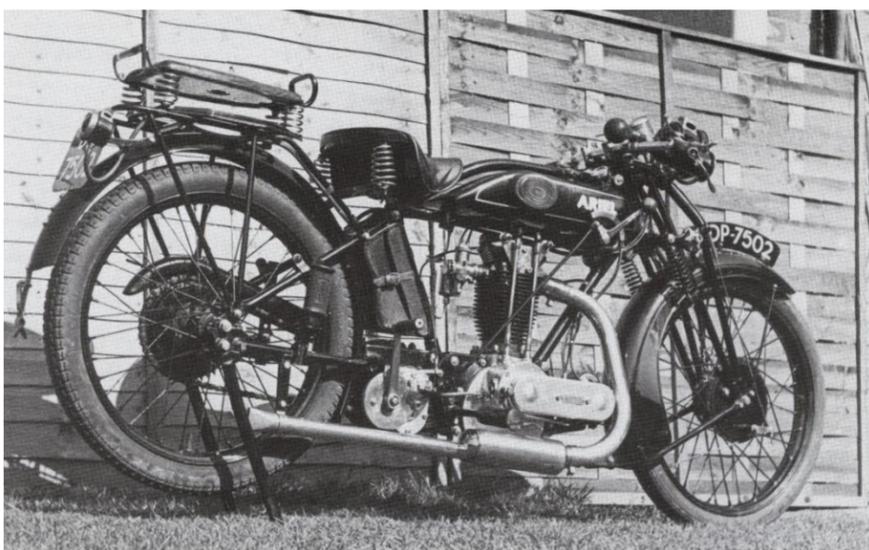


Goodness me. Is that the time?

WILL CURRY

As recounted elsewhere, I joined the VMCC in order to ride in the trials that the sections organised. The nearest section to me then was the Chiltern Section - the Beds Section wouldn't happen for quite a while. I soon made the acquaintance of Ray Newell, plumber, builder, restorer, organiser of the Chiltern Section's Navigation Rally and occasional comedian, turning up at one waterlogged event wearing flippers and a snorkel, much to the displeasure of the local committee. I helped with the not inconsiderable paperwork and printing for the Navigation Trial and had the pleasure of the use of his lovely 1926 Ariel.

Another of the Chiltern Section's events was the Road Safety Run. This started from a car park in the middle of Hemel Hempstead. The idea was that the competitors followed a route and were observed on the safety or otherwise of their progress. At the start, and various other points, there were questions on the Highway Code. It was a popular event and a good ride. The first rider started at 10am and everybody was back in time for lunch with the awards being presented after lunch.



On this occasion, I collected the Ariel from Ray's by riding my Ariel over to his house and riding his back. The afternoon was spent polishing - yes, I did know how to, and somewhere I've got pots to prove it - and tinkering. I set off in good time the following morning for the run of about 20 miles to Hemel. This Ariel was a 500cc OHV single with a three-speed hand change gearbox and total-loss oiling - two to three

drips a minute were the order of the day. It was also a lightweight, qualifying for a reduced rate of road tax by being under 224lbs. This meant that it was quite quick off the mark and, unusually for the time, it had brakes which actually worked. The final piece of icing on the Ariel's cake was the Bonniksen speedo. This clockwork marvel had not one but two hands. One would be telling you how fast you had just been while the other was making its way round to give you the next instalment. Stopping quickly sometimes caught the mechanism unaware and meant that the position of the hands was best described as arbitrary.



That I was enjoying myself must have been too obvious. Outside Aston Clinton I spotted the police car. I pulled over. He was a police motorcyclist and would much rather have been riding it. He was very interested in the Ariel and its unusual controls which I spent some time explaining. The tax disc was a complete novelty to him and so there was more explanation. By now I was becoming a little concerned about time. I explained where I was going and suggested that he come along if he could and there would be lots more interesting old bikes. This attempt at subtlety didn't work and so, finally, I said that if he'd finished, I needed to get moving as if I didn't I'd be late. He looked at the Bonniksen 'Goodness me. Is that the time?'

First Trip

MARTIN BROOKMAN

Fifty years ago, almost to the week, Hoppy and I had just returned from a two-week holiday at the 1971 IoM TT.

Hoppy had acquired his 1926 model 180 V-twin Royal Enfield and this was to be its first trip. If memory serves me correctly, it was solo, or maybe with just a chair chassis. With the help of his father, Reg, he made a single-seater sidecar body from plywood. The plan was to make the sidecar big enough for me to fit in, with a boot at the back for toolbox, luggage, waterproofs, etc. I was going to take a 1958 350cc Matchless, so we had two forms of transport, should the worst happen. The Enfield had not been on the road for 15 years, but was in reasonable condition after fitting new tyres and the usual engine stuff to recommission it - points, plugs, tappets, oil, carb and tank filter, etc. Compression was good on both cylinders. A few hefty kicks and he had the engine running, and all sounded good. A few issues were taken care

of - the fuel tank had a leak but Hoppy was confident in his soldered repair. He managed to get some paint to match the original and my father painted and lined it for him. The front mudguard was repaired and painted. Everything was looking good, but time was tight. The sidecar body was finished and fitted. The MOT was booked for the morning, so the test ride was from Hoppy's house to Bryant's at Biggleswade - about one mile. Once tested, a quick trip home to load up and we were off.



Hoppy's 1926 Model 180 RE must have been similar to Simon Smith's 1928 model we saw on one of recent midweek runs

A stop at Bedford, to get it taxed, and then out to Northampton to pick up the A5, cruising at 45-50, we got close to Cannock where we stopped to adjust the rear chain. Chain adjusted, Hoppy went to restart, only to find it wouldn't kick over. Turns out the Shellac in the mag had melted and it was stopping the armature turning. We took the mag to pieces and managed to get the armature out, but, in the process, some of the ball-bearings in one the cages escaped and found themselves on the A5. Hoppy said he would stand in the road and slow the vehicles, and I could go into the road and pick up the ball-bearings. After an interesting couple of minutes, enough balls were recovered, so we cleaned up the armature and the inside of the mag. Reassembled it all, timed it up, and got it running. It was now nearly dark, so we carried on until we found a transport café/garage and managed to get somewhere to sleep. A single downstairs room with ten camp beds - eight lorry drivers, Hoppy and myself, and Hoppy's trusty cantilever toolbox which he dared not leave in the sidecar. A 4 o'clock start was decided on. Everyone was asleep, except Hoppy and me, until Hoppy's alarm! Then just leaving the room a side-link came off Hoppy's toolbox - sockets and spanners went everywhere. Odd that it was only Hoppy and me who saw the funny side of it. The lorry drivers were not amused!

Back on the road, and up to Liverpool and the ferry with no dramas. We had digs in Port St Mary, so the trip into Douglas, and to the race course, was wasted time each day, and had to be completed in the shortest possible time. Handling limits had been fully explored on a VMCC run around the old Clypse Course, when a right hander was tighter than anticipated, and we adjusted the paintwork on the nose of the sidecar.

Midway through race week, we were on our way from the digs to Douglas, in a very spirited fashion, and I felt the bottom of the sidecar starting to drop down, and had to grab the sides of the chair to stop falling further down. Trying to stop Hoppy didn't work, as he thought I was panicking about his riding. He eventually stopped about half a mile later when the car driver behind us kept flashing his lights and blowing his horn. It seems he was concerned about us ejecting waterproofs, camera, packed lunch, tools, etc., from underneath the sidecar. A quick run up the road to retrieve the lost items, and then an inspection of the now completely detached sidecar floor resting on the chassis. The only thing we could do quickly was to use the rope Hoppy had brought, in case towing was called for. Fortunately, it was long enough to have climbed the Eiger, so repairs completed over the Fairy Bridge and down to Quarter Bridge to watch the race. The rest of the week and the journey home was uneventful, In fact, for the whole trip, with the exception of the mag issue and a few leaks, the Enfield was great.

Hoppy always said he thought the floor of the sidecar issue was only due to the fact that the previous evening, in the pouring rain, he had said sod the fairies and it was revenge. The fairies did it!

A short lockdown tale

PAUL HOLLAND

Great idea - buy a project before the first lockdown, methinks.

After obtaining a shabby oil-leaker with several issues, the Commando 850 Mk3, in a state, was a perfect polishing alternative to drinking away the lockdown hours.

I had previously owned a roadster and BRG Interstate, back in the day, so here we go again, but this one won't be sold on!

Glad to say, it already had the RGM front stopping conversion, so no expense required there.

First job was to replace the battery and fit a Boyer Tri-Spark [*I don't think Tri-Spark is by Boyer - Bryan*] leccy ignition. So far so good. An AGM lithium battery was fitted, YTX14AHL-BS to be precise, accept no substitute! It's just the job to spin the starter into action.

The false neutral between 2nd and 3rd didn't require a gearbox strip, but just a thorough clean and refill with redline, shockproof heavy gear oil (also recommended for dogged vintage transmissions). Sprockets and final drive chain replaced and a splendid re-upholstered seat from, good-old, Leightons in Brum and she's beginning to look the part.

Oil leaks from tacho drive, rocker-feed, gear-change shaft, primary chaincase and drainplug, were eventually cured alongside two wiring issues (thanks Ramondo).

Some TLC does help 😊

A replacement clutch required in the future, but that's one for wintertime. Several fixings either changed or removed, and polished, tyres gooped, new valves fitted, mirrors as well, and we're good to go. 600 miles, so far so good.



Many thanks to Mick the legend Hemmings RIP 😞 for help and advice over several previous years, and to Andover Norton for parts and guidance recently.

Outwitting the ACU (and succeeding)

CHRIS ILLMAN

Last month, in my bit about Pendine Sands, I made a brief reference to my past competition life as a Grass Tracker. Well, this piece relates to the time we confounded the ACU and had the Scrutineers reaching for the Rule Book and scratching their heads!

For those of you who don't know, in the mid 60's, there was a South Eastern Centre Solo rider called Arnie Hendrickson. He was one of the top riders, despite having a prosthetic leg. Now the S.E. Centre ran predominately left-handed sidecars. Arnie had thoughts about changing his allegiance from his successful solo career to having a go at sidecars. Being an innovative sort of chap, he appeared at a meeting with a novel outfit that was essentially one of his 500 JAP Solos with a wheel on a tiny 'A' frame, effectively attached to the lower frame at just two points. The only other difference was his JAP was fitted with a dual seat and a piece of rope connected to the 'A' frame near the outrigger third wheel. Everybody wondered how he was going to ride this weird contraption. Well, if you haven't guessed already, basically he rode the outfit like a solo with his passenger behind on the dual seat. As for the rope, it was simply used by the passenger to pull up the 'hinged' third wheel! As a result of the construction, it was nicknamed Arnie's 'Hinge'!

As Arnie was already a very successful solo rider, he quickly mastered riding it and, almost immediately, started to beat the conventional sidecars. As you can imagine, there was a certain amount of unrest and the ACU banned the 'Hinge' within a couple of months. They introduced a new paragraph in the rule book stating that all sidecars must remain upright and have a fixed platform.

Moving on some three years, myself and another Grass Track friend were getting somewhat inebriated at a party, when the subject of Arnie's Hinge came up. We concluded that it might just be possible to replicate the Hinge idea but complying with the new ACU Rules. An idea was drawn up on the back of a fag packet (yes, really!). Using a BSA Victor frame, we grafted in a unit Triumph Daytona engine, and I built the special sidecar at our local schools evening classes. What evolved was our version of the Hinge.



The new rule stated that all sidecars must be 'Free Standing', i.e. stand upright when left unsupported. It did, however, still allow for sidecar wheel suspension. But what it didn't say, was how much suspension was allowed! So we planned the fixed sidecar platform, angled at 45 degrees, and used a Woodhead Munroe unit (spare off my Velo Clubman) and mounted it close to the bike, which controlled a large 'A Frame' with a small wheel at the end. The result was that you could push the outfit along and it would remain upright just as the regs demanded. However,

it took no effort to compress the spring unit (you could do it with one finger!) so that the bike could be leant over at 45°, but when you let go, it just stood up straight again! As for riding it, we followed Arnie's example by me riding pillion solo style and we could just nip up the inside on the bends, and I could pull up the sidecar wheel on the straight! In theory, it was a good idea, in practice it was even better!



The plot in action! #74 Ian Peacock/Chris Illman 500cc BSA/Triumph Daytona Leaning Sidecar.

Hilt Woodrow, the respected scrutineer nearly had a fit when we first appeared, but he had to pass it because it complied with the regs! Again, although really under-powered as it was only a 500, we could out manoeuvre the conventional outfits, just like Arnie had a few years before. After a very short while, we were giving the conventional outfits a hard time.



Guess what - the following year, the regs were changed again and the principle was banned so that was that! It was great fun while it lasted though!



Cyclemaster Special (Mk1)

CHRIS SAWYER

On my exploration down the path of bikes lower-powered than my LE Velo, I had decided for reasons of association to purchase a Corgi. As I slowly got my new 'fully running and complete' Corgi into something like the condition where it was usable and safe, I started to wonder what I should do with the Cyclemaster unit that I had bought all those years ago as part of my first steps along the low-powered route. As I got to meet other Cyclemaster riders, I tried to first sell and then give away what was somewhat less than a complete unit. As there seemed to be no takers – certainly, no hands were bitten off – I decided to put it on the market.

Before I did so, I thought I would get it down from its resting place and see how it could be reasonably described. Certainly, it was much less complete than I remembered. I thought I might just give it a spin in the vice to see if it sparked. Surprisingly, considering its age and the fact that it hadn't run for at least ten years, and likely much more, sparks ensued.

Intrigued, I applied some two-stroke from the grass-trimmer and, after a few promising coughs, the thing awoke into screaming, smokey life. This was indeed, as they say, a result. I was hooked; this was an engine that deserved a home.

We only have one bicycle in the house these days, a folding Raleigh, called a 20 Stowaway. As it was my daughter's school bike (she never rode it), it was in a vibrant shade of pink. The bike had survived because I occasionally rode it and it didn't take up much space in its folded form. Said bike was retrieved from a distant garage, unfolded and fixed upright whereupon, two things were clear: The 26" Cyclemaster wheel wouldn't fit and, even if it did, there were far too many bits missing to connect the engine unit to the wheel. So, the idea occurred to install the engine unit alone in a more conventional clip-on style behind the saddle and employ a chain drive. The engine was dangled over the rear wheel with the mag and sprocket straddling the mudguard. This thing had possibilities.

It was clear that the main challenge was going to be the chain drive. I considered un-riveting the large chain-wheel from the Cyclemaster drum, but a check of the chain on the engine sprocket strangely showed it was the wrong pitch. Closer examination showed that, sometime in its distant history, someone had started (or succeeded) in using the engine to drive a cycle pitch chain. It really felt that this was meant to be.

By luck, I had discovered a complete new cyclemotor kit for sale on E-Bay for fitting to modern bikes; I dismissed it as far too easy and probably very difficult to register. Further searching revealed that the company also sold the large wheel sprocket as a kit, with its rubbers and plates for clamping to the spokes, this also being luckily the same chain pitch that I needed.

When the sprocket came, probably the most difficult technical problem presented itself: being to suit a 26" wheel with the normal 36 spokes, it was drilled for 9 holes to fit between the spokes. My little Raleigh had 20" wheels with 28 spokes, more suited to 7 holes. Suffice to say that I ended up resorting to the drawing board to get 7 holes to fit between 9 holes with reasonable spacing.

The next task was related to the need for both the drive sprocket and the pedalling sprocket to share the same side of the bike, and to be fitted alongside the 3-speed Sturmey Archer. This was eventually overcome with an acceptable proximity of the two chains, just.

Having solved the real show-stopping engineering problems (subject to testing), I set to, mounting the engine. To keep the general tubular bicycle theme, I use Mr B&Q's 14mm mild steel tube, which comes in metre lengths, and bent it with my 15mm pipe bender. Engine mountings were brazed on, together with a fuel tank mount and a useful rear handle (a bit like the Corgi). Fixings were to the rear wheel spindle slot, which I believe bike people call a drop-out. The front fixing used the fortuitously placed rear rack mountings and the rear brake spindle

hole totalling 5 bolts.

All of this had taken me about two weeks, just before Christmas 2013. It was far from finished, with a temporary fuel tank and no silencer, but I was keen to test the feasibility. Expecting to hear a fearful clash of chains preceding me being launched onto the road, I was pleasantly surprised when it promptly started and rode (noisily) up the road. It worked!



If the rear sprockets were a potential technical show-stopper, then the other one which really would stop this project, at least from being ridden, was to register it. Up until now, I had validated the idea at the investment of a couple of weeks. If it couldn't be registered, then it would have to stay like that. There would be no point in all the detailed finishing off and testing if I couldn't use it on the road.

At this time all the local DVLA offices had been closed, so communication would be through formal channels with Swansea. Guidance on registering previously unregistered bikes is available from the various cyclemotor organisations as well as the VMCC. I managed to get a dating letter, giving the date of manufacture of the Cyclemaster unit as 1953, and an example of how the photographs of engine/frame numbers and the complete bike should be presented. This was a good start.

To actually achieve registration you need to send, in addition to photos:

- V55/5 (apply online and it comes by post).
- V112, effectively the MoT exemption, or an MoT if you are post 1961.
- Insurance certificate for the frame number.
- Fee (£55)
- Proof of who you are (copy of driving licence, etc)
- Proof of where you live (bank statements etc)

(The above was the requirement in 2014)

Although a bit of a slog, the really daunting bit comes when you first see the V55. However, help is at hand in the form of a guidance sheet from the VMCC which tells you what boxes to fill in (the important ones) and which to ignore (all the stuff about emissions and type approval).

So, all this heap was sent off on Monday and, amazingly, by Friday a brown envelope appeared with a V5C (logbook) in it. Flushed with success, I ordered a number plate using the V5, changed the insurance to use the new number and also used the V5 to get a tax disc. I wasn't giving them the chance to change their minds. In fact, a hand-made number plate left me nominally legal on the road that afternoon.

In fact, if I had waited until the Monday, I would have got a number plate certificate and another tax disc by post. Obviously, the computer at Swansea didn't mind issuing two tax discs, academic now anyway as we don't even need to display one.

I should make it clear that this was all done according to official process, no fiddles were employed and no lies told. A full photograph of the complete bike was supplied to the DVLA.

So now started the process of turning something that was nominally mobile into, hopefully something I could use reliably on the road. I set myself an objective for technical sign-off and that would be to complete the route of one of our local runs, the Vincent Run, which goes about 14 miles around the (bumpy) cycle paths of Stevenage. If I could do this without problems, I would be happy.

So, coming to the constructional details:

Engine is a 32cc unit and, apart from fiddling with carb settings, is unmolested. Doubts raised during testing led me to get a reconditioned magneto with new points and condenser from Villiers parts. (now CDI ignition).

Although the brakes were quite good, I set my heart on a drum brake for the front. Again, I fell foul of the 36-spoke thing - plenty of nice brakes fitted to 26" wheels and plenty of separate brakes for 36-spoke wheels were available. I was on the point of getting a 20" wheel laced up with 36 spokes when the good fairy of E-Bay smiled on me and I found a 20" wheel with a nice drum brake, marked with the Sachs name. The tyre size is actually the slightly smaller 40-406 size. The front forks did require slight persuasion to fit the wider tyre. The brake was found to be remarkably effective.

Front and rear brakes are combined into single lever operation via a compensating arrangement.

Clutch lever is the proprietary latching type, with the latch suppressed with a rubber band so that it didn't latch every time I pulled the clutch in.

It had been my idea to adjust the driving chain with a slotted mounting of the engine, but I decided a better way would be a chain tensioner. In fact, I bought two from Mr Mopedland, and I ended up tensioning the pedal chain as well. I really wanted to keep both chains well under control. Both are the best BMX chain I could get. Acknowledgement here is due to Contour Cycles in Stevenage for bicycle parts and advice.

I had a plan to make a custom fuel tank but ended up, for now, with a standard Cyclemaster one, mounted sideways (later proper way around), supplied along with other Cyclemaster bits by Peter Stratford.

The carburettor that came with the engine was strangely a down-draught Amal, with its own home-made manifold. In my ignorance I didn't even realise this was the wrong carb for a while. I had read of some of the difficulties with Cyclemaster chokes, and a reference to the better Winged Wheel arrangement made me realise that this is what I had with its useful throttle operate choke. I remade the inlet manifold to suit my engine orientation and upped the main jet to 35 to suit the Cyclemaster. Accelerator control is, in fact, the twist-grip gear change already on the bike, and the gear change is reverted to the normal lever type (later both Raleigh twist-grip).

The downdraught air filter is home-made from a shoe polish tin and a sweet tin lid, brass adapter soldered on and air filter foam inside. I have experimented with larger main jets of 40 and 45 with no change in performance, just more four-stroking.

Fortunately, I had the Cyclemaster inner exhaust pipe, but no silencer. A click around E-Bay produced a generic 50cc two-stroke silencer which, by dint of a bit of cutting and welding, was made to join the original pipe. This worked well, if anything it was too quiet.

A solution presented itself at an autojumble in the form of a long system from a Chinese moped complete with expansion chamber and 'stinger'. This amused me greatly and just had to be fitted. It makes a sporty two-stroke buzz and, at least, I think it looks quite natty.

Front light is a period type from E-Bay and rear is the existing cycle type. Bulbs are 6+3W halogen from BikeCo (check them out for everything to do with bicycle bulbs). The rear has blown, maybe due to over-voltage, front now brighter, but no more than adequate. I plan to experiment with BikeCo's LED bulbs with their regulator. In the meantime, rear Halfords battery/LED is fine and a dummy bar at the front of the carrier holds one or two high-power LED cycle lights that are bright enough to annoy BMW drivers. (now full LED motorbike spotlight at front)

The standard bicycle rear carrier has been modified and turned around to mount on the now redundant front brake calliper hole.

Saddles are always a bit of a sore point (little joke there) and the standard bike saddle is only adequate. A gel saddle cover was better and a modern moulded saddle not much better. A second-hand, period saddle with tension/compression spring is currently under development (now Puch Maxi saddle). All saddle purchases from E-bay.

The standard Cyclemaster engine seems to live quite happily in its tin dish, getting no more cooling than provided by the bent-up tabs forming a crude fan.

Moving the engine out in the open behind the saddle and my legs might conceivable be much better or much worse. To be sure, I purchased a cylinder head thermocouple that goes under the spark plug and gives real time and maximum digital readout. Some research seems to suggest that two-stroke cylinder head temperatures should be in the 200°C good/300°C bad range. Typical maximum temperatures around the 200°C mark suggest everything is OK.

Much more on the subject of cylinder head temperatures, and the only other external Cyclemaster special that I found, can be gleaned from the excellent article on Peter Crowser's 14-speed Cyclemaster in the NACC 'Buzzing' magazine (Oct 2009). Technically in another league to mine.

On the subject of similar things, Joe Swain's chain drive Mini-Motor in the last 'Buzzing' looks very interesting; I would love to examine it in detail.



Performance, etc.:

My special is geared for 22 mph at maximum revs, being slightly faster than standard (20 mph). Maximum revs can be pulled on the level with over-run to 25 mph downhill typical. I have seen 30 mph, but that's quite fast enough. Average speeds vary from 18mph, on good roads, to 15 mph on severe roads.

The Sturmey Archer three-speed gives good LPA (Light Pedal Assistance) in 3rd on moderate roads and 2nd is good for starting. 2nd LPA is better on severe routes. Normally, I start to pedal at 12-15 mph.

Real gradeability is hard to judge. Cyclemaster give 6-7% before pedalling, I guess I can only judge when running with other Cyclemasters.

Weights:

- Bicycle only: Front 8.5 kg, Rear 9 kg. Total: 17.5 kg.
- Cyclemotor complete: Front 7.5 kg, Rear 18 kg. Total: 25.5 kg.
- Weight of modifications: 8 kg.

Current mileage: 197 miles (2014), 822 miles (2021)

Typical Fuel consumption: 140 mpg.

Two unsuccessful attempts were made at my test route, the first resulted in a rather spurious performance drop-off at about 10 miles. Checking

everything (points, plug, and jet) resulted in no more problems, but not sure what I did - maybe blocked jet, maybe condenser giving up. This is what prompted my temperature measurement exercise.

The second attempt resulted in the bead wire on the new tyre, that I got with my drum brake wheel, breaking and causing a puncture, ending that run. The tyre was replaced with Schwalbe Kevlar lined tyre and new tube.

Third attempt no problems, sign-off!

Although the first use in anger was supposed to be the Vincent Run proper, I went on an informal local run of nearly 30 miles which was quite severe; the only failure was the sidestand.

The Vincent Run proper was completed on the 12 October.

Future developments: two really - firstly to incorporate a geared hub into the driveline in a cross-over to drive the nearside of the rear wheel, maybe 8-speed for closeness of ratios. This would involve major modifications to the mounting frame and sprocket. This is pending other projects and I will probably run through next year first. I might incorporate this into a completely different bike (this was done). There seems to be no shortage of Cyclemasters (or bikes). Pity a few more aren't seen out and about.

Second, some front suspension. I have a leading link arrangement sketched out and a spare pair of front forks. This may happen over the winter; cyclemotor projects are good for the winter (indoors). Wife seems to object to full size motorbikes in the kitchen. I eventually found a set of 20" wheel telescopic mountain bike forks, (now fitted).

One of my favourite quotations is from Samuel Johnson who refers to something being like a dog walking on its hind legs, not surprising that it's done badly; just surprising that it's done at all. Look it up if you want to know what he's talking about in those non-PC times.

The first Race after Covid

TIM KINGHAM

After two years of waiting, the Mallory Park on Sunday June 13th was a different first race meeting, it comprised two Landsdowne races sandwiched in a car meeting. The new quickly revised silencers passed the rigorous Mallory noise test, so all was go! I was a bit apprehensive about how sympathetic the organisers would be to the needs of bike competitors, and that feeling was reinforced when the first bike race was held up for a long time in a sweltering paddock holding area. The Vincent (and Ben, my son) got so hot he had to cut the engine, so we had a restart pantomime. The second race was even more chaotic. Ben said, during the race, he came across a fallen rider at the hairpin and on the next lap even more fallen riders, but still no Marshall flags! As Mallory was arranged in the original configuration, there was no Edwinas or Bus stop and, with still no warning flags evident, the bikes entered the start and finish from the Devil's Elbow at over 100mph plus, to find two or three riders being assembled on the start line for the restart! A real shambles.



Considering it was its first real race meeting in current form, the Vincent twin ran well, except there was a misfire that came in at full throttle. In race one, Ben finished mid-field but was still first in his class and, even without top end, the handling and low down grunt must have kicked in at some point as he was posted as one of the three riders on the fastest lap list. We dropped the jets by 10 and, in the second race, it ran much better. Ben got another first, but I think it's back to the dyno to adjust properly for the new silencers

The other development was the new twin leading-shoe, front brake. This has been CAD-machined to follow the appearance of the original alloy race plates, but using rearranged standard shoes, cams and pivots to fit in the standard 7" finned brake drum (to follow the Lansdowne regulations). We had only finished it the previous week and it had only been tested around the yard in Leighton Buzzard, where BSKspeedworks workshops are, but, in the event, it worked very well. Now we have two first place trophies and a list of things to do before the next meeting. As the tee shirt I saw in the paddock said "RACE, BREAK, MEND, REPEAT".

It pays to look for the simple things first

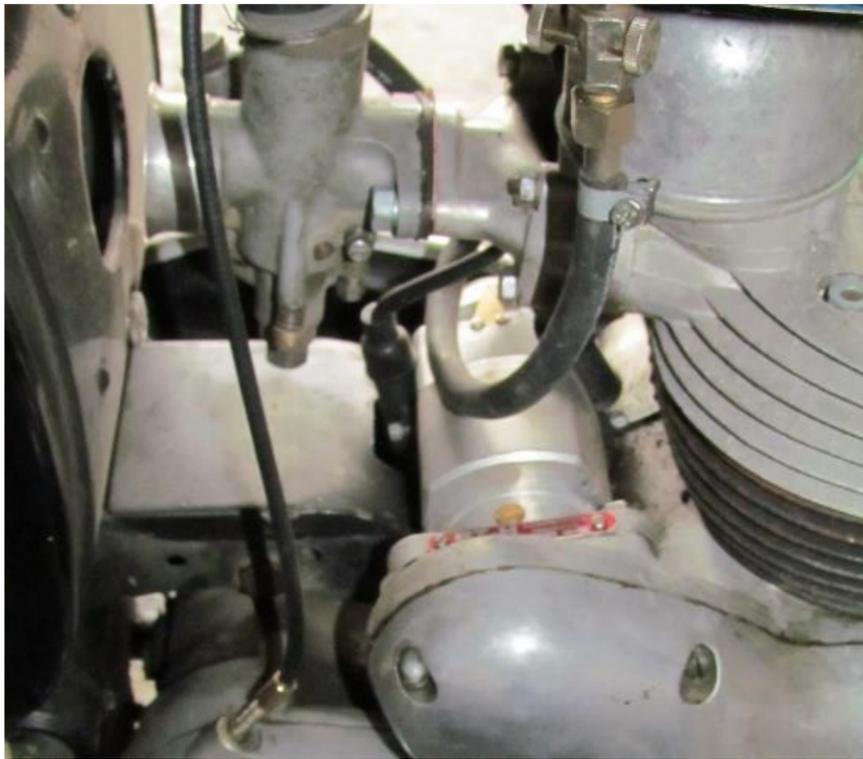
MARTIN LUKER

As well as the Bedfordshire Section, I am also a participant in some of the outings and activities of the Oxford Section of the VMCC. It was while on one of those ride-outs that my, previously trusty, AJS Model 30 developed a loss of power. Initial investigation indicated that there was a loss of spark from one side of the Lucas K2F mag. Annoying, but not fatal and I was able to make a somewhat leisurely return home from north Bicester via Milton Keynes.

On further examination, it was confirmed that the mag had a problem and I looked to have it repaired. My normal repairer had decided to retire but was prepared to sort my mag out as a leisure activity. This did highlight what I believe will be an increasing problem, the future location of affordable, dependable and reliable repairers for dynamos and magnetos. Therefore, in addition to getting the old one repaired, I decided to invest a small windfall in a brand new BTH self-energising ignition system, as I had had faultless service from a similar instrument on my Velocette Venom.

The order was placed, and the new instrument was received in short order. The installation of the new ignition system went well, once decisions had been made on suitable locations for the black box and the two small coils. Timing, as always, was a one-time fit and forget effort with the aid of the locking pin supplied, fixing full advance. The ignition has an inbuilt adv/ret curve for the AMC twin 600cc engine. After re-assembly, expectations were high for a return to first kick starting but this was not forthcoming. What could be wrong? New ignition, coils, leads and plugs had been fitted but the engine was uncharacteristically very reluctant to start!





New BTH installed.

This became a major problem during a trip to the VMCC Weymouth Week, in May, when hot starting became all but impossible without able-bodied assistance with pushing. Cold starting could be achieved with careful setting of choke and tickling the float, followed by energetic kicking. Once back home, a thorough investigation was instigated. No faults could be identified until, on removing the plugs for the umpteenth time, it was noticed that, while the colour of the plug was good, the gap appeared larger than normal specification. The feeler gauges revealed that the plugs had been supplied with .032" gaps. This had not been checked on initial fitting. Correction to the advised .018" gap duly found the starting performance returned to its old dependability.



Good colour for the plug

In conclusion, once more I have discovered, it always pays to look for the simplest of faults from the start to avoid a lot of angst. However, having renewed all of the ignition has revealed that wear in the Monobloc has reached the stage where that will need a rebuild or, as ethanol becomes more of an issue, perhaps an entirely new carburettor is the best way forward.

