

BEDS VMCC NEWS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED DURING LOCK-DOWN

George Wrench, Section Stalwart, RIP



Rod Atkins informed the Newsletter, just before going to press, of the sad news that George passed away a couple of days ago, shortly after being admitted to hospital with pneumonia. Although he hadn't been seen at club nights for the last few years, George had been a mainstay of the section for many years.

The short notice has meant the Newsletter has only had some initial reactions, see below, but Nige quickly dug out a few images from the archive, including the one here showing a relatively youthful George with, what I assume is, a Wall Autowheel. Hopefully, the next issue will be able to include a few more pictures reminiscences.

More pictures inside.

[Don McKeand] Really sorry to hear about George's passing. My fondest memories are of the hospitality he and his wife offered on the Boxing Day runs. After a bracing ride, a quick drink in Stagsden and then round to George's house to sit around a blazing fire in good company, and sample the food Ann had generously provided, was the perfect way to round off the Christmas festivities. RIP

[Chris Illman] So sorry to hear the news about George.

Many of us 'Oldies' will recall the many events held on George's land. From the 'Bedfordshire Clanger Runs' to the many Trials Practice days.

George & Anne were always amazing hosts with unlimited tea & snacks.

There are many photos of these events in the Section Archive.

I also have some but will need an hour or so to find them!

[Nigel Coote] We seem to be doing this all too often at the moment but see attached a couple of photos of George from the archive. I've also included a couple of shots at George's place from Clanger runs (I guess late 80's early 90's).

Once again a great friend over the years, always made me welcome when I joined the club as a teenager, introduced me to trials riding with the informal sessions he organised at the bottom of his garden and years later introduced Sam by giving him his first bike. We always enjoyed going back to George's after a boxing day run to be fed, and to warm up by the fire.

He will be much missed by my family and myself.

We have no information at the moment about funeral arrangements or whether the family would wish to see a motorcycle entourage escorting him on his final journey. Any news will be passed on as soon as we have it. If anyone hears anything please let me know.

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EDITORIAL

Sad news graces the cover once again. As Nige says, we seem to be doing this all too often at the moment, made all the worse by the current restrictions.

Unfortunately, I was never able to attend any of the events at George and Anne Wrench's, and didn't know George well, so I really look forward to reading your stories of Boxing Day and Bedfordshire Clanger Runs, gymkhanas and the like, and of the man himself.

I seem to have very busy riding recently (last week was my first 1000-mile week of the year) and I hope you don't mind me filling some of these pages with my reports and pictures

By my reckoning there is time for two more issues before we can start meetings again, so please keep those contributions coming, just a little bit longer. Many thanks to this issue's contributors: Chris I, Chris S, Don, Martin, Nige and Will.

Beds Section News

JULY VIRTUAL CLUB NIGHT

It's not too late to tune in to Will's presentation "Reliability", on the following link:

http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/net_night_jul/w_001.html

The link can also be found on the website.

CAR PARK CONCOURS - AUGUST

Hopefully, the message got around and not too many people showed up at the Memorial Hall on our normal July club night. It will, hopefully, take place on the 2nd Thursday in August instead. At this stage, we have no idea what else will be going on at the Memorial Hall but, no doubt, space will be at a premium so please come on a bike if you can. Hopefully, we will be able to put the bikes on the grass again.

THE NEXT MIDWEEK RUN – THURS, 15TH JULY

This one will be slightly different as it will take in two of the destinations suggested for the VMCC Way Points Rally, which is a 75th anniversary event.

The destinations selected for this run are the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne and the Birth of Radar Memorial in Northamptonshire. The start will be at Cranfield outside Ivor Rhodes' house, which is at the junction of Crane Way and Bourne End Road. Ivor has kindly agreed to have a pot of tea ready when we assemble and will make toilet facilities available. Departure approx. 10.30am but arrive at Ivor and Jane's in time to enjoy the tea.

The early part of the route will take country roads and lanes to Stoke Bruerne where a rest stop will be taken. Carrying on to the Birth of Radar Memorial between Towcester and Weedon, the route will then take back roads to the Super Sausage for lunch.

Route sheets will be available for those who want to ride independently and can also be obtained from donmckeand@hotmail.com, for those who might like to use them at a different time. Depending on the size of the group, the run will be the follow-my-leader sort, which has proved quite popular, or the drop-off system if numbers warrant it.

Estimated 45 miles.

WEEKEND RUN – SUNDAY, 25TH JULY

Don has also been investigating the practicalities of a run to the Chinnor & Princes Risborough railway on Sunday 25th July. They will be in steam that day and catering is available at Chinnor for a lunch stop.

Starting point - the village green at Clophill - 10.30 as usual. Estimated mileage about 30 miles for the morning route, which should allow enough time for people to look around, and have something to eat, before a slightly longer run back through the Chilterns to disperse at Clophill, or wherever suits people before that. No need to pre-book, but Don can be contacted on 07535 860745.

Midweek Run report

BRYAN MARSH

The organisation of this run was a bit of a rush job, as is my wont – always leaving things to the last minute: Route roughed out on Monday evening, test ride on Tuesday, and route sheet drafted on Wednesday evening. Rewarded with a record turnout, I believe, for one of our "lockdown" midweek runs – no less than nine of us. This presented a bit of a challenge, as everyone elected to take the follow-my-leader option, rather than ride independently with the route sheet. Luckily, my choice of roads turned out to be largely traffic-free allowing the group to stay together except, that is, for one wayward white van driver (had to be, didn't it?) who decided to pull out after most of the bikes had passed directly in front of him, seemingly oblivious to back-marker Don, despite his bright orange hi-vis vest.



Breather and chat stop in Old Weston

Continuing our new habit of varying start and finish locations, we met up at the Roxton Garden Centre before our tour of less-frequented northern parts, taking in Duloe, Great Staughton, Stow Longa, Old Weston (stopping for a breather in the village hall car park), Kimbolton, Colmworth and ending up at the Willington Garden Centre for lunch. I won't mention Simon running out of petrol just a few yards from the entrance to the garden centre, that would be mean. A jolly good run, even if I say it myself – favourable weather, quiet roads, excellent company and a goodly collection of bikes, spanning no less than five decades.



Note Simon's innovative side stand on his vintage Royal Enfield

Upcoming local events

- Classic Car and Commercial Show, Wingfield Village Show Field, Toddington, Sunday 18th July, 07813 758401
- Flitwick Lockdown Car & Bike Show, Sunday, 1st August [has anyone booked a place? Can you let the Newsletter know, please]
- South Bedfordshire Classic Vehicle Show, rear of Cross Keys Pub, Pulloxhill, MK45 5HB, Sunday 8th August, 10am-4pm
- 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

[If you know of anything else of interest, please let the Newsletter know]

The page 3 girls



L to R: Molly Briggs, Joan Slack, Lesley Blackburn, Barbara Briggs and the writer

Chains

WILL CURRY

I've been very lucky with my motorcycling in many ways. One of the ways I consider to be most fortunate is that while I've had a number of broken chains the chain breaking hasn't damaged anything else. I've seen the after-effects of a broken rear chain wrapping round the gearbox sprocket on a unit Speed Twin - new crankcases.

So, what constitutes a well looked-after chain? It needs to be clean, properly lubricated, correctly tensioned and correctly aligned.

Keeping the chains clean shouldn't be too difficult if your bike has decent chainguards. These will keep the rain and road dust off the chain. This is especially important for the rear chain as the back wheel will bombard both top and bottom runs of the chain with everything it picks up. A decent chainguard will also help to contain any lubricant flung off the chain. The best sort of chainguard must be the fully enclosed oil bath type as it not only keeps the chain clean but also makes the task of lubrication so much easier. For those with indecent chainguards or suffer from that urge to clean and polish rather than ride there are kits available to make the scrubbing with paraffin and subsequent lubrication less of a chore.



Fully enclosed rear chain

An unlubricated chain is a terrible waster of power and wears itself and the sprockets it runs on at an amazing rate, both of which are hard on the overdraft. This lubrication not only lubricates the parts of the chain as they move relative to each other it also lubricates the rollers of the chain as they bear against the teeth of the sprockets. This is one reason why modern 'O' ring and sealed chains still need some lubrication. Chains in an oilbath need no more than the level periodically adjusting and the occasional drain to get rid of any condensation. Some engines breathe quite heavily through the driveside main bearings and into the chaincase. This breathing includes water vapour, hence the condensation and oil, hence the need with some engines to drain oil out periodically. Engines which suffer from draindown with standing can have the chaincase fill up without going anywhere.

Unbathed chains require some extra effort, either oil or grease. Some makers provide a controllable oil bleed onto the chain which in my experience is effective although somewhat messy at times. If this luxury isn't provided by the manufacturer aftermarket kits are available. All my modern bikes have been fitted with Scottoilers which are just as effective and sometimes as messy.



Scottoiler

The more traditional route and the one I used on the trials bikes is Linklyfe. Once the chain had been washed it was soaked in molten Linklyfe for a few minutes, taken out and hung up for the excess Linklyfe to run back into the pot. Apart from the necessity of a spare chain to help run the one to be cleaned off and then on again, a chain puller was a necessity. The Linklyfe filled the wear in the chain links so the ends of the chain didn't meet up. This little device pulled the ends close enough to get the spring link back in.



A more traditional method

When it comes to chain tension a chain which is too tight will wear rapidly and the unnecessary extra load risks damaging the bearings the shafts run in. A chain which is too slack will flail about, damaging guards and sprockets in the process and also runs a serious risk of jumping off the sprockets and locking up the mechanism. The contention comes in what constitutes the correct tension. My feeling is that a lot of documentation suggests a tension which is too tight particularly for rear chains. With any new bike I drop the rear dampers off and jack up the rear wheel until the swinging arm spindle, gearbox output shaft and wheel spindle are in line. This is the condition at which the chain is at its tightest and where I set the chain tension. With the dampers back on and the bike on its centre stand the chain tension is such that no matter what load and bump I encounter the chain will not be overtight. The chain tension is often considerably slacker than suggested by the documentation.



With everything in line, the chain is at its tightest

The final destroyer of chains is misalignment. I'm not aware of any circumstance where normal use will result in a chain running out of alignment, but I do see misaligned chains not infrequently. These usually come about as a result of a rebuild with poor quality pattern parts or the wrong parts. Ariel use Burman gearboxes as did AJS, Matchless, Panther, Vincent and various others. Sprockets differ in offset and there are mainshafts of differing lengths to confuse the innocent. Another cause of misalignment is the fitting of the rear sprocket back to front or even the wrong sprocket.



Now which way round did it go?

No matter what else gets attended to, there is one part of a chain which requires regular inspection, and this is the weakest link, the spring link. While a riveted link is much less likely to fail - as long as it's been done properly - it's also less than convenient. Once the pins of the spring link wear the removable side plate a little the action of the chain will flex the fixed side plate. This bending will cause the fixed side plate to fatigue fail - snap in half. Once this happens what's left of the spring link will come apart very quickly and all sorts of woe will follow.

The current modern bike has done just over 2500 miles. Its predecessor did over 30,000 on its original chain before being stolen. In that time I adjusted the chain four times and one of those was to slacken it off after taking delivery from new. Needless to say, it was fitted with a Scottoiler. Good for chains but no particular security benefits.

So, how do you treat your chains?

Herefordshire on the Edge

BRYAN MARSH

This looked like my kind of event – a long day's ride in unfamiliar territory – so I signed up for the 2020 event which, of course, was cancelled but entries were carried over to this year. Despite the postponement of the relaxation of Covid-related restrictions, they were able to go ahead this year as there was no large gathering involved.



8.30am, Leintwardine, and the Tiger 100 is raring to go

Like most navigation events, it essentially comprised riding to a number of checkpoint locations, the number being defined by the level of award being attempted. As the name suggests, the waypoints pretty much form the perimeter of Herefordshire with compulsory “cardinal points” of Leintwardine, Hay-on-Wye, Ross-on-Wye and Little Malvern. To add a little spice, it was possible to go for a “Ragged Edge” endorsement to one's chosen level of award by visiting the four waypoints positioned down relatively gentle green lanes, said to be suitable for normal road bikes tyres. And, indeed, that proved to be the case – a little slippery in one or two spots because of the recent rain but generally hard-packed gravel which proved no problem for my 1969 Tiger 100.



At one of the green lane waypoints (the sign on the post contained symbols that had to be written down to show you'd been there)

I opted for the highest, gold, award - which meant visiting 20 waypoints, recording the symbols on the sign, and the compulsory four cardinal points between 8.00am and 6.00pm. I initially thought it would be a fairly relaxed itinerary but slow progress along miles after mile of really narrow lanes challenged that view. As it turned out, I finished with a good half-hour to spare but how a few people managed to visit all 32 stations (just for the sake of it) within the time escapes me. The total entry was about 90, including some three-wheelers, outfits and even a group of scooters (in a VMCC event – shock horror!). Oldest bike was 1926; a 1914 Humber was entered but didn't show up on the day.

A total of 216 miles for the day (175 on the event itself) and I definitely knew about it – exhausting but great fun. I can recommend it to anyone who likes a good ride in a lovely part of the country – next year’s event is on Sunday June 26th, I’ll be there. I made a weekend of it, travelling down on Friday and back on Monday, staying at the Fountain Inn, Oldwood, nr Tenbury Wells (also highly recommended). 620 miles on the Triumph and it never missed a beat.



The gold, Herefordshire-on-the-Ragged-Edge award

When are Electric Vehicles cleaner than petrol engine cars?

MARTIN LUKER

After you have dug deep into your pockets and spoken nicely to your bank manager; you glide silently out of the Tesla showroom in your sleek new electric Model 3, satisfied you are looking great and doing your bit for the planet. But keep going – you will have to drive another 13,500 miles (21,725 km) before you are doing less harm to the environment than a gas-guzzling saloon.

That’s the result from an analysis of data from a model that calculates the lifetime emissions of vehicles, a hotly debated issue that is taking centre stage as governments around the world push for greener transport to meet climate targets. The model was developed by the Argonne National Laboratory in Chicago and includes thousands of parameters from the type of metals in an electric vehicle (EV) battery to the amount of aluminium or plastic in a car.

Argonne's Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions and Energy Use in Technologies (GREET) model is now being used with other tools to help shape policy at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board, the two main regulators of vehicle emissions in the United States. Building EVs generates more carbon than combustion engine cars, mainly due to the extraction and processing of minerals in EV batteries and production of the power cells.

Estimates as to how big that carbon gap is when a car is first sold and where the "break-even" point comes for EVs during their lifetime can vary widely, depending on the assumptions. The payback period then depends on factors such as the size of the EV's battery, the fuel economy of a petrol car and how the power used to charge an EV is generated.

NORWAY'S A WINNER

The Tesla 3 scenario above was for driving in the United States, where 23% of electricity comes from coal-fired plants, with a 54 kilowatt-hour (kWh) battery and a cathode made of nickel, cobalt and aluminium, among other variables. It was up against a gasoline-fuelled Toyota Corolla weighing 2,955 pounds with a fuel efficiency of 33 miles per gallon. It was assumed both vehicles would travel 173,151 miles during their lifetimes.

However, if the same Tesla was being driven in Norway, which generates almost all its electricity from renewable hydropower, the break-even point would come after just 8,400 miles.

If the electricity to recharge the EV comes entirely from coal, which generates most of the power in countries such as China and Poland, you would have to drive 78,700 miles to reach carbon parity with the Corolla, according to the data generated by Argonne's model.

Analysis has shown that the production of a mid-sized EV saloon generates 47 grams of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per mile during the

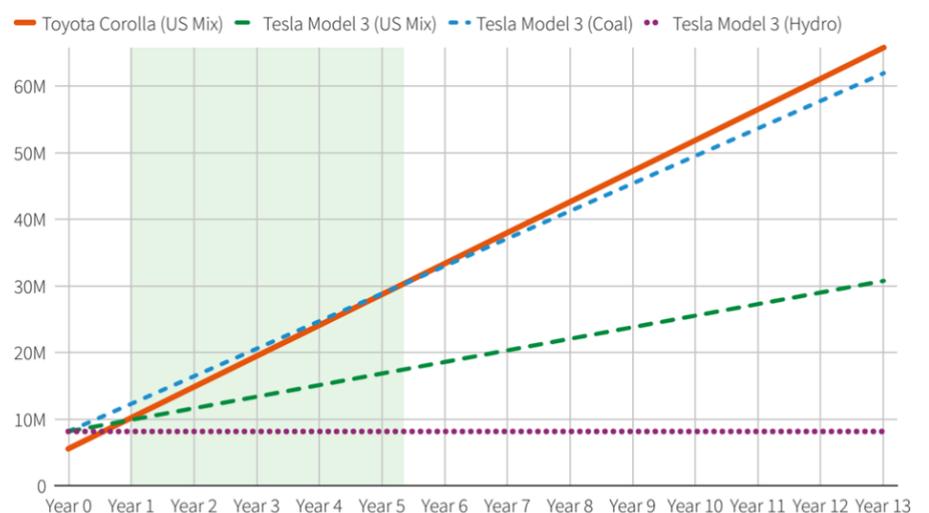
extraction and production process, or more than 8.1 million grams before it reaches the first customer. By comparison, a similar petrol vehicle generates 32 grams per mile, or more than 5.5 million grams. Generally then, EVs emit far less carbon over a 12-year lifespan.

Even in the worst-case scenario where an EV is charged only from a coal-fired grid, it would generate an extra 4.1 million grams of carbon a year while a comparable petrol car would produce over 4.6 million grams, the analysis showed.

Perhaps this analysis, although based on US practice, will temper the anti-petrol lobby. It has not been applied to motorcycles, but the considered opinion would be that the mileage to reach equity would be greater.

When are EVs cleaner than gas cars?

It takes a typical electric vehicle about one year in operation to achieve "carbon parity" with a gasoline vehicle. Although the production of EVs and batteries generates more CO₂ before the first wheel turns, the total carbon "footprint" of gas cars quickly overtakes that of EVs after 15,000 miles of driving. If the EV draws electricity from a coal-fired grid, however, the catchup period stretches to more than five years. If the grid is powered by carbon-free hydroelectricity, the catchup period is about six months.



Note: Total lifetime CO₂ emissions in millions of grams
Data source: Argonne National Laboratory GREET model

The Classic Motorcycle Show

BRYAN MARSH

I was in two minds whether to go to Stafford this year, what with Covid and crowds, and all that entails. But I had a ticket, numbers were restricted well below normal levels, so I thought “what the heck, I can always leave if I don’t feel comfortable).

Having stayed in Rugeley overnight, I got to the show good and early – about 9.30am. That, it turned out, was a good thing. I headed for the main hall – no queues, straight in. Fewer stands than normal, wider aisles and people being generally fairly sensible meant it felt fairly safe. When I came out there was a huge queue to get in – it seems they had a capacity limit and a one-out, one-in system once it had been reached; I’d timed it right.



The Main Hall at Stafford, much less crowded than usual

I had a good chat with the VMCC President, Mike Wills, who I know from MCC trials. He’s keen to come and visit us sometime so we’ll see

what we can sort out. He's been rather hamstrung during his Presidential term being unable to get out and visit sections because of the obvious events of late. Another good chat was had with Gordon May – you'll remember he came and talked to us about his "Overland to Vietnam" trip on a rigid Matchless G3L. We're hoping to grab him again when his next book comes out and I initially thought the lockdown would have seen it completed. But no, having lost his normal sources of income, Royal Enfield came to his rescue and extended his normal consultancy role into a fulltime job – so the new book has been side-lined. He is also selling his mint pre-war Speed Twin should anyone be interested.

I also bumped into Gordon Hallett who was there helping man the Italian Motorcycles stand.



1927 James Model 18 Standard Sport – used by original owner for just two years then stored until 1984. Used occasionally by next owner until 1994 then stored again. Believed to have done only about 2500 miles total. Coming up for auction in October. What an opportunity!



Not just one BSA Fury, but two!



Twist-and-go, anyone?

The Lohmann

CHRIS SAWYER

This drawing of an oh-so-Italian girl on a little known cyclemotor sparked my imagination and I thought I'd find out something about the Lupetto.



Lupetto seems to be derived from the Latin root, wolf, and we are told it means wolf cub. Being similar to the Lohman, but with 39cc, it can certainly claim to be diminutive.

The Lohman is possibly the most mysterious of cyclemotor engines and, being of German origin, we can expect the design to be unconventional, but due to German thoroughness in engineering, could be expected to work much better than other people's more conventional designs. An example of this may be cited as the (once) popular Cyclemaster, which has German origins and, in my experience, works very well as period sales figures attest.

I have only seen one Lohmann in action and it did seem to be difficult to start, and slow on the road. However, I have learned not to pre-judge and so took to that most reliable source of all things cyclemotor, The Stinkwheel (SW) Saga books, Episodes 1 & 2, to re-learn a bit more which I will attempt to summarise.

In Volume 1, the Lohmann is amusingly described thus: 'The secret of running a Lohmann is known to only a few, fiercely loyal initiates and true believers who have to swear special oaths'. I guess this chimes with the opinion of most regular cycle-motorists. The Lohmann is consigned to 'The Rest' in Vol. 1, but in Vol. 2 it gets a fulsome 21 pages.

As is my wont, in technical matters that I should understand, but don't, I had a short aphorism that could be injected into conversation in a measured way, so as to give the impression that my general silence just signified dignified wisdom. I developed quite a few of these during my paid employment! For the Lohmann, I would sagely say: 'all diesels are

compression ignition, but not all compression ignition engines are diesels'. At this point, I would hope the silenced gathering would change the subject in the face of such apparent wisdom. Delivery, of course, is all. Apparently, I poached this statement from SW, E2

Just to clarify my statement above, a true diesel compresses air alone to a high pressure such that the injection of diesel fuel at just the right time causes ignition. Fuel is introduced such that expansion takes place at constant pressure over the most effective part of the stroke. This is what gives the diesel engine its good efficiency and torque. In a typical compression-ignition engine, a fuel/air mixture is drawn into the cylinder and then ignited by high compression. To this end, the compression engine, of which the Lohmann is one, has what looks like a carburettor, which is however, essentially a fuel metering device. Hence, the occasionally heard statement 'Oh the Lohmann, it's a diesel with a carb'. It's neither.

Lohmann were founded in 1882, making accessories for the then booming bicycle industry. It thrived, and in 1949 launched its bicycle clip-on engine to a world desperate for any motorised transport. The term inventor is always one that I'm wary of, as will anyone who has ever filed a patent be, but the man responsible for the initial development and the award of the first French and German patents was Hermann Teegen, who worked for Lohmann.

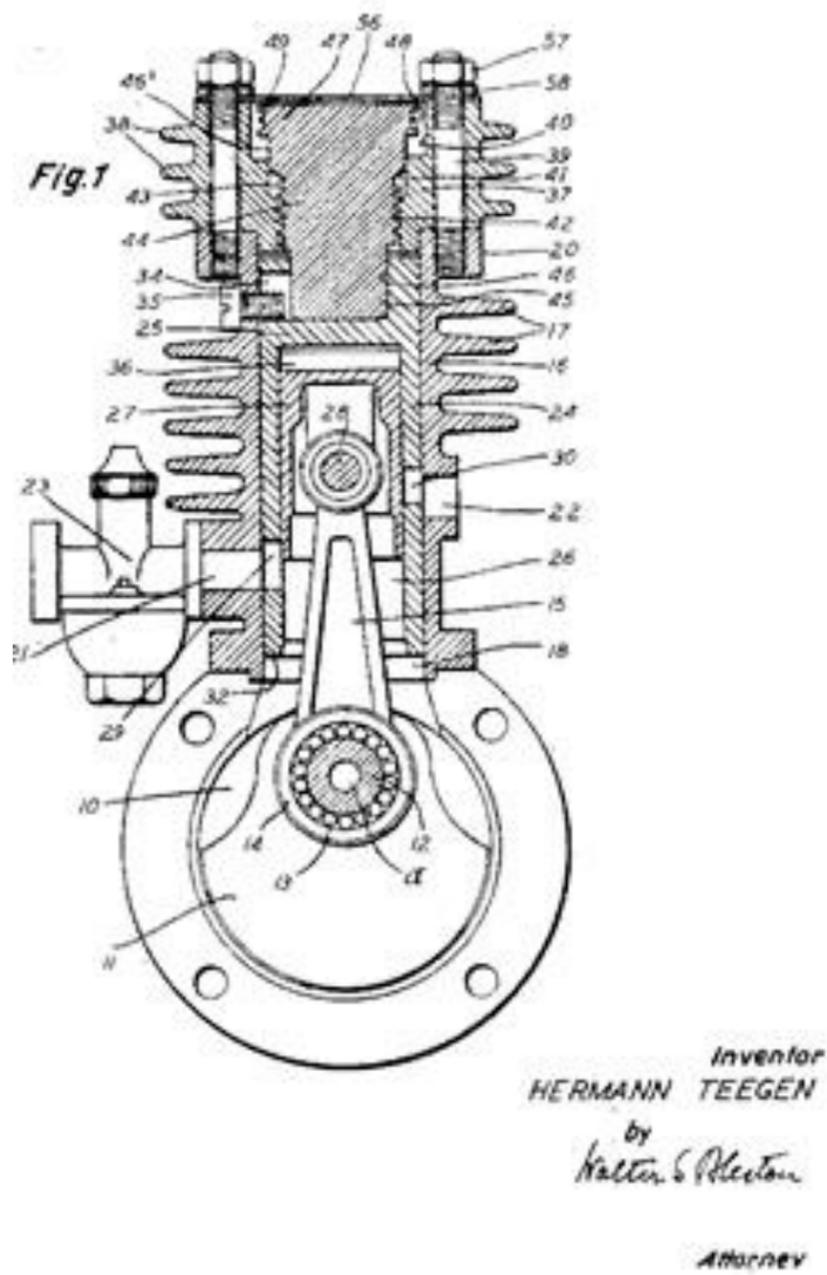
The main feature of the Teegen engines was the variable compression ratio which he achieved by an inverted closed end sleeve which could be moved up and down by a cable control which was operated by a twistgrip. The engine power and speed were thus controlled.

Of course, there was a mk1 version (there always is) and it is the inevitable mk2 engine that established the basis for the design. Effectively, the closed sleeve was actuated by a threaded cylinder in the cylinder head and the sleeve had ports cut into it in a similar way to a sleeve valve engine.

The engine ran on the 2-stroke cycle which is or was a common version of the diesel engine before succumbing to emission problems like most 2-strokes. Some commercial vehicle enthusiasts will recall the Commer, opposed piston 2-stroke engine and also the General Motors 2-stroke, big vee engines, one of which we used at Scammell in the Crusader truck. They all made a fabulous noise. We also had association with the Chieftain tank engine, again an opposed piston 2-stroke derived from a wartime German aero engine, Junkers, I think. End of discursion!

The operation of the Lohman can be described thus: On starting, both twist-grips are turned to the full fuel and high compression positions and after pedalling away the engine can be expected to start, whereupon the compression is reduced. Setting the controls for running seems to be not quite so precise, more a matter of feel and noise. A published report states that at certain positions the engine makes a noise like 'karrakk' and if you 'firm up' the control you hear a woodpecker pecking! That is not good and so manipulation of one or both controls should hopefully lead to a buzzing which is good. The writer goes on to state that untrained women find this intuitive and easy. Men, particularly those more familiar with bikes, find it a problem. I suppose all this may be like very early conventional motorbikes where the mixture and ignition timing must be juggled to best effect. In the case of early American bikes, two twist-grips were also used.

1952 H. TEEGEN 2,583,499
INTERNAL-COMBUSTION ENGINE
1 20, 1949 4 Sheets-Sheet 1



In any event, it seems 12000 units were sold in Europe up to 1951. However, taking the Dutch market as typical of one country, the best year, 1951, showed sales at only 3% of the best seller, Vélosolex. Also, as the Lohmann sales declined steadily to only 40 in 1955, the sales of Velosolex more than doubled, although the general trend by 1955 was either decline or flattening off.

Sales in UK were handled by Britax, but it was launched late in 1952 and sales never really took off.

One reason for poor sales in UK might have been the issue of fuel. The Lohmann was designed to run on paraffin as even poor petrol was in short supply in mainland Europe, but the UK government took a dim view of low tax fuel being used for road transport. I believe it is the case that owners of the Lohmann have a special dispensation to run on paraffin now.

Performance of the 18cc wonder engine is quoted as 0.75 bhp at 6000 rpm, a competitive power and the more effective considering the reported amazing flexibility and hill climbing. 15 mph (depending on fuel) was claimed although a more typical 23 mph for that power might be available at 9000 rpm.

Britax claimed an amazing fuel consumption of 350 mpg although contemporary road tests suggested 220 mpg or 300 mpg. My own fuel consumption figures are between 150-180 mpg for a Cyclomaster.

After various attempts to prolong the life of the Lohmann, production ended in 1954 after 30000 were made in total. The company went on to produce other non-automotive products but was finished by 2003.

The original subject of our discussion, the Lupetto, is described as a 39cc engine with ‘certain similarities’ to the Lohmann. It was made by Sigma and in truth SW, E2 makes more reference to our picture than the engine itself so facts must be scarce!

We will finish there and again full acknowledgements to Dave Beare and Phillipa Wheeler, the authors of The Stinkwheel Sagas, particularly Episode 2, surely the definitive works on the cyclemotor and its engines.

I hope I haven’t done injustice to their work with this précis, but hopefully now people will stop calling the Lohmann a diesel engine.

ACU National Road Rally

BRYAN MARSH

Many of you will, I’m sure, have done the ACU National Rally over the years although I’m a bit of a late-comer, only having started in 2012. To some, the Rally means riding through the night and 600-odd miles to gain the prestigious top award. Not me, I’ve done enough night riding on long distance trials and, besides, for most of the years I’ve been doing it, the second day clashed with the Albert Brown Run giving another excuse for just a Saturday daytime session. This year, a Covid-safe version, meant no overnight riding, even if you wanted to. And, rather than the traditional manned checkpoints, one simply had to write down the code from a sign erected at suitable locations to provide proof of passage. The normal midday start time was brought forward to 9.00am to allow a full 12-hours riding and one hour’s rest to be fitted in before close of play at 10.00pm, allowing a chrome, bronze, silver or gold award to be claimed. Those crazed people seeking a greater challenge could seek Special Gold or Platinum by carrying on and completing a slightly shorter day on the Sunday.



Covid-style, ACU National Rally checkpoint

I had a Travelodge booking in Rugeley, repeatedly rearranged from the 2020 April Stafford Show weekend, so I decided to use that to advantage and ride different territory from when I normally start from home. Conveniently, the nearest checkpoint was a café near Uttoxeter, so breakfast was sorted and off I headed to Derbyshire in the pouring rain. From there I did an anti-clockwise circumnavigation of the Midlands, including Congleton, Welshpool, Leominster, Stow-on-the-Wold, Warwick and ending up opposite the Marston Brewery in Burton-on-Trent just before 8pm, shattered but with a gold award to claim (13 checkpoints and some 375 miles). My original intention was to use the Norton Commando but instead I opted for the modern bike and the discovery that Yamaha’s interpretation of “comfort seat” is different from mine.

The checkpoints varied from anonymous industrial units to cafés, but the highlight of my mini-tour was the one at Stourport-on-Severn which was the UK HQ of the Indian Motorcycle Company. Some very nice shiny new bikes on display (one, I noticed, with a £25,000 price tag – I quickly moved on) but there amongst the glitter was a rather tasty “real” Indian motorcycle; someone reading will probably know the model and year. Do we have any Indian experts?



A “real” Indian, on display at the “modern” Indian Motorcycle UK HQ

Memories of George Wrench

BEDS VMCC ARCHIVE



Some of the popular events held at George’s property a few years back