

# BEDS VMCC NEWS

**STILL KEEPING YOU INFORMED**



## One that got away – one of the few bikes I wish I'd never sold

Norton 500T look-alike, with 1951 (I think) 16H engine, built by someone down Bristol way for the MCC Exeter Trial and used by me mainly for green-laning (hence the TRF sticker on the battery box) and the occasional charity trial – I even cleaned one tricky section after Don Morley told me the best route to take.

Why not send me a picture and a story of the bike(s) you wish you still had.

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## EDITORIAL

The evenings are slowly starting to get a little lighter and hopefully, storms aside, the days are beginning to get a little warmer. As you will see from the upcoming events section below, runs are starting to appear in the calendar in the not-too-distant future. Better get the last of the fettling done so you'll be able to join us on your pride and joy. As ever, it doesn't matter what you ride on our runs, as long as it's over 25 years old, and capable of "staying the course". And I don't think we'd be too upset if circumstances meant that you needed to come along on something a little newer.

Many thanks to the indefatigable Will for yet another fascinating article in this newsletter and for making Don's talk from the February club night available online. And thanks also to Ivor Rhodes for the dreadful puns you'll find dotted around.

Bryan

## Beds Section News

### Upcoming Events

#### BREAKFAST MEET – SUN, 27<sup>TH</sup> FEB, from 10am

The February breakfast meet this Sunday will be at the Scald End Farm Shop Tea Room, Mill Road, Thurleigh, MK44 2DP. Indoor and outdoor seating available, and the best bacon sandwich in the area.

#### INFORMAL MIDWEEK RUN – THURS, 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH

Please let me know ([bryan.marsh@btinternet.com](mailto:bryan.marsh@btinternet.com) or 07309 731191) if you would like to attend and, I'll let you know the starting point. This time of year, the weather on the day will dictate the format – it may just be a run to somewhere serving hot drinks and a decent bacon sandwich, as we did last time (see below), or it may even get postponed.

#### MARCH CLUB NIGHT – THURS, 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

It's quiz night! We will be inviting our neighbouring sections to send teams but please come along and join in to make sure we have some "home" teams. As usual, it will be at the Shefford Memorial Hall, 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start.

For those not wishing to venture out, Will is going to create an online version on the following link, available on the night and for a while afterwards:

[http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/quiz\\_night/intro.php](http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/quiz_night/intro.php)

#### MIDWEEK LUNCH – THURS, 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, noon



The ever-popular midweek lunch will be at the Cross Keys pub, 13 High St, Pulloxhill, MK45 5HB from about noon. They have an extensive and varied menu, including a "retired persons" special deal of two courses for £11.

#### CHAIRMAN'S / TRAIN ROBBERS RUN – SUN, 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

As you may know, our revered national Chairman, Mario Costa-Sa, lives in our area and is hosting a run at the end of March. Final details haven't been released yet but I believe it will start from the Dunstable

Downs Visitor Centre. Lunch will be available at a pub en-route but will need to be prebooked – look out for details. No trains will be robbed during the event.

#### SPRING RUN & BREAKFAST MEET, SUN 10<sup>TH</sup> APR



Hooray, it's almost time for the first weekend run of the year. To make it even more attractive we're combining it with a breakfast meet - but you don't have to do both if you don't want to. Full details nearer the time but the start will be at Jordan's Mill. Breakfast is served from 9am and we'll aim to set off around 10.30-11am. It'll be a route sheet run.

#### FIRE UP YOUR BIKE ON GOOD FRIDAY



We've been invited to have a presence at a Motorcycle Road Safety Event at Luton Fire Station, Studley Road, LU3 1BB, on Good Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2022, 10am-4pm. With any luck we may be able to borrow the VMCC stand from HQ and look frightfully professional. We'll need a few volunteers to bring their bikes along and, if possible, someone with a car to collect the stand from Mario in Kensworth. Please let me know ([bryan.marsh@btinternet.com](mailto:bryan.marsh@btinternet.com) or 07309 731191) if you can help.

## Other events

#### OPEN INVITE

Andrew (Sam) Samways writes:

"Just to let you know I have organised a meeting at The Greyhound in Haynes for the 1st Tuesday of the month. All invited. It's for the Kawasaki Triples Club & VJMC but the more the merrier.

#### PURE TRIUMPH CAFÉ CLASSIC MEET

The first classic meet of the year at the "Stop 'n Stuff" (Boy, do I hate that name) café at the Pure Triumph dealership in Woburn is scheduled for Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March (10am onwards, but the café opens at 9am). These tend to get dominated by modern "retro" bikes, so we need some real classics there to restore the balance in our favour.

*My dad always said "Time is a great healer" great bloke, terrible A&E consultant.*

## Event reports

### JANUARY BREAKFAST MEET



An impressive array of machines for a February morning



Lovely weather, glorious surroundings, and great company

Overnight salting of the roads didn't put the hardcore riders off and the car park at Jordans Mill was graced by a wonderful selection of machines including Ariel, BSA, Laverda, Panther, Triumph, Scott and Velocette. Very impressive.

### INFORMAL MIDWEEK RUN



A small but select group of five had a very enjoyable backroads run from Flitwick to the Scald End Farm Shop Tea Room in Thurleigh to meet up with Brent. Lucky with the weather again.

### CLUB NIGHT – TEN COUNTRIES IN FIVE DAYS



Don McKeand entertained us with the story of how he and his good lady challenged themselves to visit ten countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy & Slovenia) in just five days on their trusty big-head Bullet. The adventure was their way of celebrating Don's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday – hence the numbers (10 x 5 = 50). Most people would probably have taken an easier option and gone for 5 countries in 10 days whilst still satisfying the mathematics (5 x 10 = 50 also). The presentation is still available online at: [http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/net\\_night\\_feb\\_2022/w\\_001.html](http://wcurry.co.uk/vmccbeds/net_night_feb_2022/w_001.html)

*When I was a little kid, I got my brother to swallow a torch, it was well worth it just to see his little face light up.*

### The page 3 girl



### The page 3 boy



I hope he won't mind but I recently came across this picture of a rather youthful Brian Cornwell.

## *The EMC*

WILL CURRY



As pictured in Newsletter 44

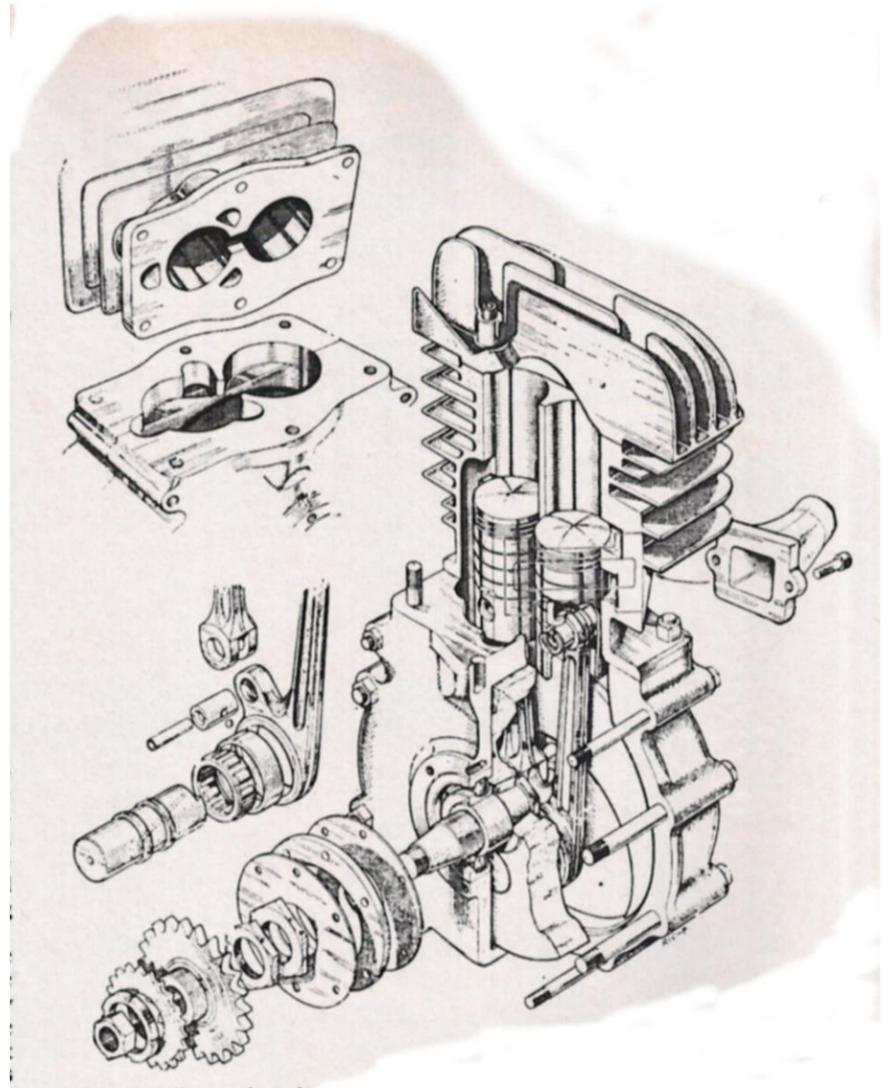
This EMC is special. As far as I'm aware it's the only roadster 500cc, all the others being 350cc. It's also special in that it has swinging arm suspension. The 350s seem to have been fitted into rigid frames. At least, I've never seen a contemporary photograph showing anything but rigid frames.



And a view from the drive side. Here the Dowty front forks look to be horribly over-inflated.

The gearbox is a Burman 'box and at the front Dowty Oleomatic forks are fitted. These use air as the spring, with there being a Schrader-like valve set in the top yoke to inflate them. The engine was provided with sparks courtesy of a BTH magneto while an Amal carburettor took care of the petrol supply. A pilgrim type pump cast into the timing cover supplied oil to the bottom end of the engine with an auxiliary feed to the bores. All good quality equipment. As far as the 350s went this meant a price tag on a par with a KSS Velo. Coupled with the postwar drive for exports most EMCs seem to have gone abroad with Australia featuring significantly.

Not only is the bike a two-stroke, it's a split single as well. This means while it has two pistons it has only one combustion chamber which opens onto both pistons. This has both advantages and disadvantages too. There is much more scope for variation in the relative port timings with there being much better separation between exhaust gasses on their way out and fresh mixture entering. This should make for a more efficient engine. In practice the paths for the gasses to follow within the cylinders is both long and convoluted and any restriction such as a silencer takes the edge completely off the performance. The combustion chamber is not an ideal shape either, further detracting from the performance. Furthermore, the added complexity means that the engine is considerably heavier than a normal two-stroke of the same size without there necessarily being any greater power.



This exploded view of a 350 gives an idea of how a split single two-stroke goes together

What did it actually go like? Dr Joe claimed at least 70mph and 100mpg which in the days of fuel rationing must have been most attractive. A modern road test in *The Classic Motor Cycle* impressed the tester in all the wrong ways: the only good word was about the brakes while expressions like 'hitting a dead donkey' were applied to the engine's responsiveness. In terms of speed the maximum was estimated to be 45 - 50mph and an estimation because the speedo wasn't working. There were no contemporary road tests but journalist Cyril Quantrill got to ride one and reckoned that while 'The performance was up to the designer's claims' the exhaust was 'appallingly noisy'.



On the "The Classic Motor Cycle" road test

Another rider of EMC's who wrote about his experience was Ed Stott who I remember from my early days in the VMCC. Ed rode a rather special 350 in the 1949 ISDT held in Wales. He was forced to retire on the fourth day when the frame broke. There were a number of other issues including the Dowty forks leaking and collapsing but the engine gave no trouble. According to Ed it performed well, well enough to keep to time on one day when the gearbox jammed in third. It was however so noisy that he was told he could be heard coming from 5 miles away.



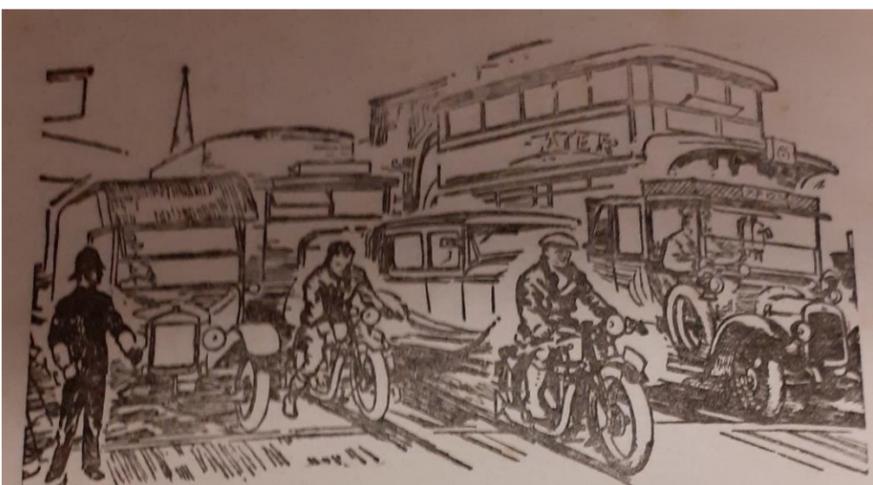
**Cyril Quantrill on that noisy 350 EMC. Of interest is the vehicle behind. It looks very like an ambulance, complete with bell on the front bumper, although unexpectedly black rather than white.**



**Ed Stott at speed somewhere in Wales. I wonder what happened to UME 223. It's not on the DVLA computer but I hope it survived.**

## *The Good Rider*

BY "SARTOR" FROM "THE MOTOR CYCLE"



Discussing with me the varying attitudes of the motor cyclist in action, a certain keen and hard-driving motorist once confided that he – the motorist – must have strange powers of divination. Always, he said, he knows whether a ride is safe and skilled, and whether he is merely pottering or really going somewhere.

Considering that this man last handled a motor cycle in the year 1905, and that he knows next to nothing about the riding and control of the modern machine, I decided there and then that our manner in the road must speak for itself. As an enthusiast I prided myself on being able to pick out the good man on the road by noticing sundry little things, such

as stance and speed under certain conditions. I never imagined that a somewhat biased motorist, feeling only a reluctant admiration for the “courage” of the two-wheeling merchant, would be able to know the same thing.

What, therefore, makes up the “safe and skilled” motor cyclist, and what is the riding attitude of the man who is really “going somewhere”?

To any one who suffers even to a small extent from a temperament, there are days on which he feels a T.T. replica is not beyond him, when his movements are perfectly balanced, when his gear-changing and throttle work are effortlessly timed, and when he feels that he could travel for twenty-four hours without tiring. Perhaps the gods of the motor cycle would always feel like that; but it is only occasionally that we mere mortals feel that the ultimate perfection has entered into our riding. For riding can be, and should be, an art. There should be grace and beauty in all the rider’s movements.

That brings us to the first attribute of the good rider – poise. Some people inherit it in unlimited quantity; they excel at any sport they care to take up. We others must learn; the very worst of us usually attains some measure of perfection in the course of thousands of miles of road work.



Learn to “balance” your machine, both on the straight and on bends, as if the bars were a mere convenience on which to hang the controls. Sit comfortably, paying attention to the weight on the bars, rests and saddle; for an uncomfortable rider is never in full control of his machine. Controls should be in really convenient positions, for a second spent in feeling for a lever or pedal may make all the difference between an incident and an accident.

When everything is “just right,” and when you have become thoroughly at home on a machine, your course on the road should be unwavering, bends being taken as if the machine were on rails and balanced by a gyroscope. If you are really comfortable, a series of waves on a corner will not cause you to leave the saddle or be even momentarily out of control. Your weight should be so perfectly balanced that nothing short of an earthquake can unseat you, or even give you a spinal jar.

If you don’t really think that this “poise” business is the most important thing in a good rider’s curriculum, just pick up a T.T. copy of *The Motor Cycle* and examine some of the photographs. The statuesque pose of the riders on the fastest corners gives one an impression almost of immortality; the fastest riders do not look half as dangerous as does Mr. Jones, perhaps, when he takes that rather bumpy corner by the gasworks.

Then there are all those little niceties of control that mean so much to the rider’s comfort and safety, and to the onlooker’s opinion of him.

Just watch a busy crossing, and you will see what I mean when the Arm of the Law drops and the traffic moves across. Some motor cyclists get away without noise or fuss, with their feet up on the rests before they have moved six inches, while others rev up the engine, crash the gear in, and wobble away with both feet trailing. If you can’t judge the amount of the throttle to the feel of the clutch, and if you can’t balance a machine confidently at very slow speeds, then you should stay at home and practice control in confined spaces. Getting away should be accomplished with hardly a change in beat of the engine. And, while

idling in a traffic block, do not let the engine run unnecessarily fast, nor yet, on the other hand, continually “blip” it – that looks like swank.

The throttle should only be opened enough for requirements – it should not be pulled violently and pushed back again – and changes should be made so that there is no gear sound, no jerk, and no over-sudden change in engine note. This means that the rider who prides himself on his handling of a machine will practice that perfect synchronisation of movement until he never fails to make clean changes, an until his actions are so reflex that he changes cleanly when pulling up suddenly, or when considering some new formation of traffic. And when you realise that a hill is going to be too steep for top gear, don’t fiddle about with the ignition control unless the gear ratios are excessively wide, but drop into middle just as soon as the speed is low enough. There is a certain thrill about getting up a main-road hill at the best possible speed with skilful use of the gear box. A man who habitually slips the clutch should be put up against a wall and shot; clutches are meant to take up drive, and *not* to act as variable gears.

Finally, there is one little tactic which, I find, keep me out of scrapes and narrow shaves. I treat my machine as if it had no brakes at all, and, unless I am in a tremendous hurry, I roll up to all corners and only have to touch the pedal and lever lightly. If I used them hard all the time there would come the inevitable moment when I had cut things too fine, and found that I had no more brakes left. As it is, I have a comfortable reserve of stopping power.

Incidentally, never ride so that your brakes must be applied *on* a corner. Any braking you have to do should be done before; both cars and motor cycles are much steadier when *accelerated* round a bend, and, further, you have a much greater margin of control and safety. The man who habitually brakes on corners is a very bad rider indeed.

So many articles have been written on and around the subject of actual road behaviour, by better and surer judges than myself, that I turn from the idea of reproducing the good and bad advice all over again.

Nobody in his senses knowingly cuts in or commits any like sin, except by accident or in an emergency; but there *are* people who hang perilously closely behind cars, who brake violently without much warning, who stick to the crown of the road, and who seem to delight in clipping seconds at the most ridiculous places. Instead of hurrying along at a steady fifty-five on the open stretches of road, they use brakes and acceleration to the fullest extent on corners and impatiently “jump” single vehicles in a stream instead of waiting for a space in which to lap the whole bunch. All quite safe, perhaps, but rather unnecessary. Some people even brag about their “phenomenal avoidances” – to use a well-known racing man’s pet phrase – whereas a good rider should rarely find himself in a dangerous position. If he does, it usually means that he has not been observing and deducing.

It often seems to me that the one great feature of an accomplished rider’s progress on the road is its sheer smoothness. We should show our road-sense by slowing down before the man ahead has taken his foot from the accelerator, and getting away again while he is fumbling with the gear lever. Our movements should be so peaceful that no one behind, however fast, will be inconvenienced, and neither the liverish constable nor the sour pedestrian will turn his head as we go by. And *yet* our average may be around the 40 m.p.h. mark!

It is largely a matter of “forewarned is forearmed.” Look ahead and plan your actions accordingly; don’t wait until the thing has happened. Some trivial accidents are unavoidable, but most can be seen developing, perhaps subconsciously, a quarter of a mile away. A queer bunching of the traffic, or a “cutting” motorist, causing a man well ahead of you in the stream to stab fiercely at his brake pedal... Curiously enough, we are not conscious of our reasoning in these circumstances; not in the sense in which we are conscious of it at chess, for instance, with which game it has something in common.

A motor cyclist, because of his vehicle’s narrowness, often tends to take a little chance on a blind corner. But even the smallest of such little chances, such as we all take occasionally, may land him in an emergency. The only really safe method is to expect a herd of elephants or a couple of steam-rollers abreast round every blind corner!

The polished rider, sitting comfortably and travelling fast, the man who can plan ahead and is ready for any emergency – that seems to me to be the good rider.



**The joy of the open road”**

*I found out my new girlfriend is a ghost. To be honest I had my suspicions the moment she walked through the door.*

## ***Telford Classic Off-Road Show***

**BRYAN MARSH**

A few pictures from the recent off-road show:



**1962 Royal Enfield 250 Crusader Clipper**



1960 Cotton ISDT Special, using a Villers 2T (or 3T?) twin, on which Army rider Gordon Coppuck won a Silver Medal in Austria.



Triumph engines on sale in the autojumble



Neat Triumph TRW-engined trials bike



Also for sale, a nice-looking Cotton



"Bultaco" built for hill-climbs and sprints - using KX 250 forks, WR200 swing-arm, Husky rear wheel, Ducati fuel tank, 700 Zabel engine



A rather tasty Dot, owned by VMCC stalwart Pat Davy



A more conventional Bultaco



1953 50cc Motom 12C - This unusual Italian moped caught my eye and it didn't come as a great surprise to find it had been entered by Gordon Hallett, connoisseur of anything and everything unusual and Italian.



Very smart 1982 1000cc V-twin Hedlund Wasp outfit



1932 Levis - £3,350 (with parts)



Another wasp – this time a Honda 750-4!



1961 Lito – Albin-based motor, as used by Sten Lundin to win the world title (or so the note said)



Simply beautiful Rickman Triumph

