

BEDS VMCC NEWS

STILL KEEPING YOU INFORMED

Money burning a hole in your pocket?



See the report on the Stafford Classic Mechanics Show to see what your hard-earned £30k could have bought you

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest issue of the Newsletter, crammed full as usual although I'm not quite sure how we continue to manage that considering the lack of contributions from section members at large (dig, dig), Will excepted.

As I write this, we are just one day away from the end of British Summer Time and the start of long, dark nights. Gosh, how depressing. It makes me wonder whether the reasons for changing the clocks are still valid. If I had my way...

But there's still lots going on within the section as you'll see in the Section News below – quite a lot of it seems to involve eating; can't be bad. And at the end of the newsletter you'll see the programme of events for the whole of next year, thanks to our hard-working committee and especially Brent for compiling the list. No real surprises – if it ain't broke... But there is the welcome return of the Founder's Relay Rally at the end of April. We'll be setting up our usual checkpoint at STMA and, nearer the time, we'll be pleased to hear from anyone who won't be riding in the Rally and would like to help man the checkpoint.

Many thanks to our contributors this month – Brent, Richard and Will. As always, it would be good to get a few more written articles and/or pictures – please submit them to me on bryan.marsh@btinternet.com.

Bryan

Beds Section News

Upcoming Events

BREAKFAST MEET – SUNDAY, 30TH OCTOBER

Danish Camp, Willington from 10am. They do an excellent traditional cooked breakfast.

INFORMAL RUN – THURS, 10TH NOVEMBER, SHEFFORD MEMORIAL HALL (STMA), 10.15 FOR 10.30AM

This is moved from the usual 1st Thurs of the month slot, just for this month, as I shall be on my way to Ireland for the weekend. No route sheet, just a simple follow-my-leader to a café somewhere not too far away.

CLUB NIGHT – AGM & SLIDE SHOW - THURS, 10TH NOVEMBER, 7.30 FOR 8.00PM, SHEFFORD MEMORIAL HALL (STMA)



Yes, it's your chance to stage a coup – vote the committee out and take over. Or you could just vote us all back in, en bloc, as usual. At the end of the meeting there'll be the usual chance to discuss anything you like regarding the Section, followed by the slide show of everything we've been up to, as a Section, since last year – courtesy of IT wizard Sam.

MIDWEEK LUNCH – THURS, 17TH NOVEMBER, NOON-ISH

One of our favourite spots - Scald End Farm, Thurleigh. There is also an excellent farm shop on the site should you wish to stock up with fruit and veg, etc.

Future dates:

- Dec 15th - Toby Carvery, Goldington Road, Bedford.
- See the 2023 diary for next year's venues

BREAKFAST MEET – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH, 10AM

A change to the previously advertised venue as we will be going to Scald end for the Midweek Lunch in November, so we'll give Maypole Farm in Fletcher Road, Kempston, MK42 7FY, a try. But don't expect to see pigs, sheep or even tractors there – the name is a little deceiving as it's anything but an actual farm.

Future dates:

- December 25th – no breakfast meet (Christmas Day)
- See the 2023 diary for next year's venues

DECEMBER CLUBNIGHT – AUCTION / XMAS GRUB



An early reminder to search out all those parts you no longer need but which might be useful to someone else. Please no DVDs or piles of classic bike magazines, we can't shift them these days.

October event reports

INFORMAL RUN – POTTING SHED CAFÉ



Gerald's little Honda causing some amusement

A select group of eight of us took advantage of the fine early autumn weather to head west into Buckinghamshire and the Potting Shed Café at Thrift Farm, just off the A421 near Waddon. It was a bit of a gamble as none of us had ever been there before, but it worked out fine – a nice, friendly place with good food, although we arrived just a little too late for the breakfast menu.

The route took us from STMA through Campton, Upper Gravenhurst, Barton, Harlington, Woburn, Little & Great Brickhill, Stoke Hammond, Drayton Parslow and Mursley. Nice quiet roads flanked with trees and hedges in the beautiful autumn colours. After lunch we headed back to the café at Pure Triumph in Woburn, via Stewkley, Soulbury and Old Linslade, for a cuppa and to disperse. All-in-all, a jolly good ride.

CLUB NIGHT – SHELVOKE & DREWRY

Malcolm Bates treated us to a fascinating history of the Letchworth-based manufacturer of dustcarts and much more, based on his experience whilst employed there. A true enthusiast, he even took the trouble to bring along a collection of pictures, publications and scale models of some of the vehicles they produced.

AUTUMN GOLD RUN



A neat line-up of bikes at the mid-point stop at the Scald End Farm café

Once again, Norm Lorton came up trumps with a truly inspired route around the backroads and gorgeous villages of the northern part of our county. And, boy, were we lucky it was on the Saturday, when the weather was glorious, and not Sunday when it was heaving it down in the morning. An excellent turnout of sixteen bikes and riders, including two machines from the 1920s (Chris's 3½ hp Raleigh and Simon's V-twin Royal Enfield) and a good spread from the 40s through to the 70s; I don't think there were any 30s bikes present.

The 70-mile run was broken up by a welcome refreshment stop at the wonderful Scald End Farm café where we seemed to totally confuse the chef with our various individual orders. But I don't think anyone went hungry. More coffee, and some excellent cake, at the finish point at the Barn in Cardington. Another great day out, thanks Norm – by the way, we've already got you down to organise next year's run.

The Page Three Girl (& dog)



Something of a quandary

WILL CURRY

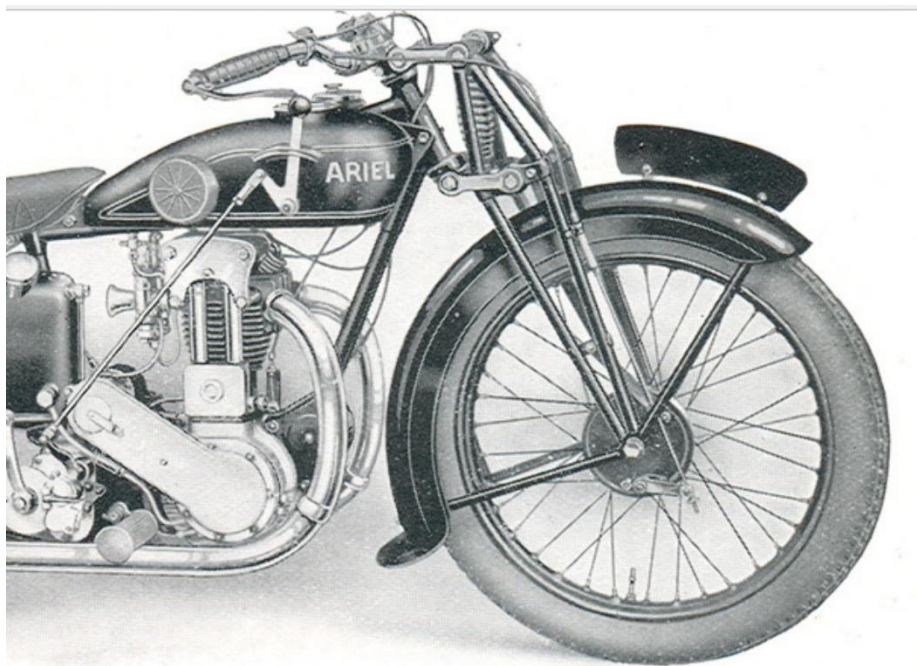
The quandary arises in part from the mixed blessing of an inheritance. I now have something that I can't really turn down or even sell. In a very particular way, I've been very lucky - those bikes I have inherited have all fitted in with my motorcycling preferences: the Goldie, the Arrow and the vintage 250 Ariel.

Working on the Goldie there was no real issue with what came on the bike, but I wasn't going to use. The mudguards were complete strangers - probably not even British - so they're in the stack of 'mathoms'. In old English a mathom is a treasure but in Yorkshire dialect it is something completely useless. Other parts of the Goldie, like the gearbox, which is a special wide-ratio box, are too worn out to use and will be replaced with a standard item until the original can be refurbished and replaced.

Anybody got a usable 42-3091 I could have?

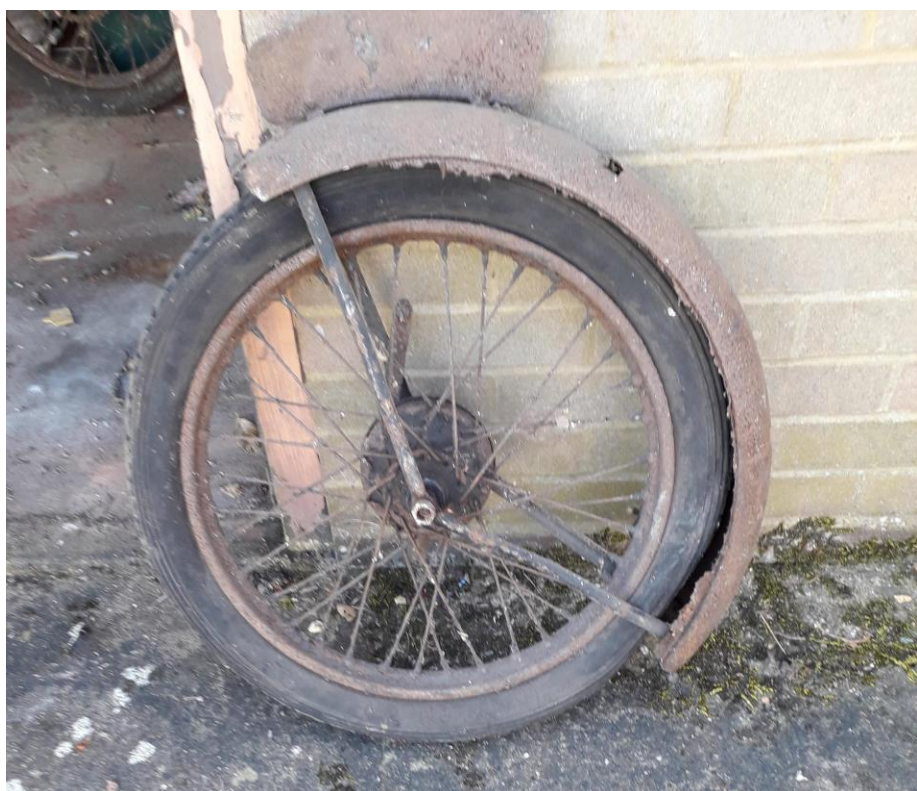
With the Arrow there were only two un-Ariel items needing replacing, that is if you ignore all the Dexion and other strange nuts and bolts. The engine doesn't belong to the frame, but it is an Arrow engine. The points cover, subject of previous articles in this newsletter, will be replaced with the proper item from my stock of useful parts. The front part of the rear mudguard has suffered from a common fate - it's directly in the path of acid spraying out from a boiling battery. A common modification was to swap the wiring around from the alternator to the rectifier to increase the charging rate at low revs. With no regulation in the circuit this means that at the first decent long run the battery gets seriously overcharged. The aftermarket replacement is made from fibreglass.

My problem comes with the vintage 250 recently acquired. It is substantially more original than most which come this way, partly due to having done nothing since 1963 at the absolute latest. Original as it might be it has spent enough time both partly dismantled and poorly stored for some parts to have suffered badly from the wet. The wheel rims in particular have rusted very badly but not the spokes some of whose nipples surprisingly unscrewed. The other major casualty is the front mudguard and the provocation for this article.



Original front mudguard as catalogued

The original has valences on either side and a skirt at the bottom, the better to protect the rider from the dust in dry weather and mud and water in the wet. Of the skirt there is no trace. Of the valences one side has disappeared completely and of the other there is about half left. The main body of the mudguard has a number of rust holes. In summary, there is nothing left to repair. However, there aren't many of these mudguards still in existence and the remains do provide a good example of how the skirt and valences were attached to the body.



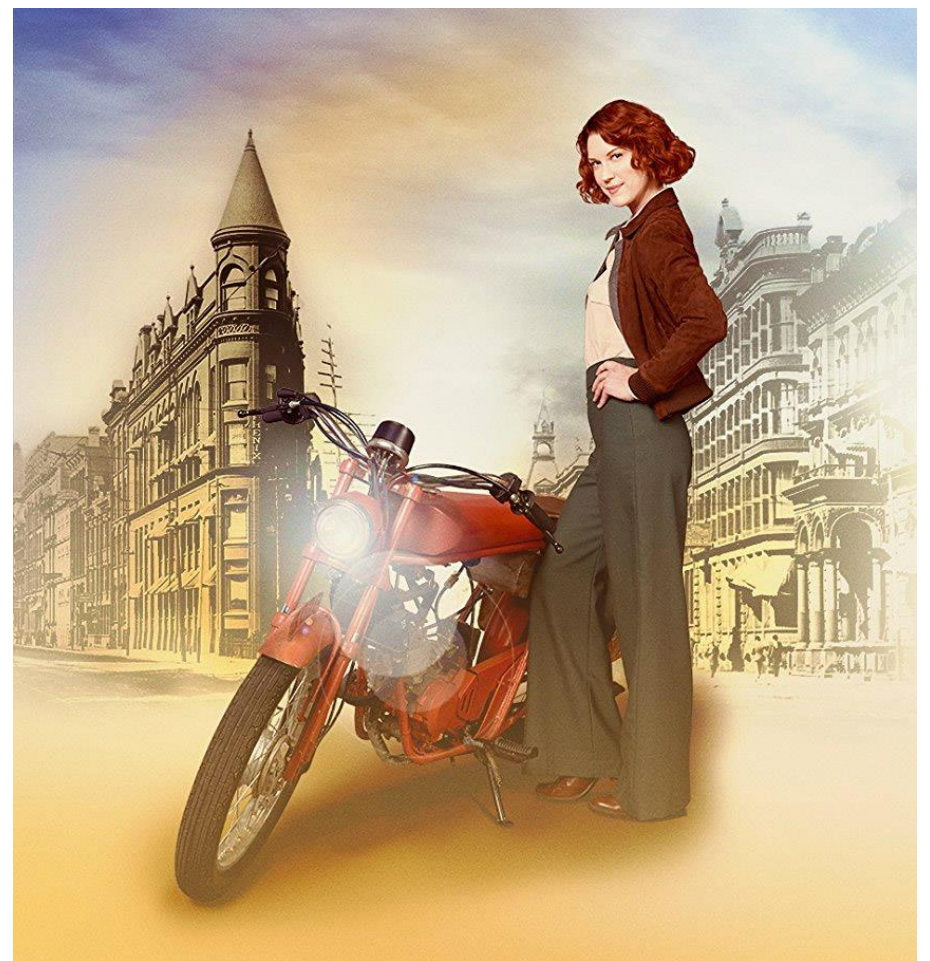
Rusty front mudguard as found

My quandary: do I consign the remains to the scrapheap, or do I retain them so that at some time in the future should someone wish to manufacture replacements they have an original pattern for at least the assembly technique?

A Frankie Drake Mystery

BRYAN MARSH

Anyone who watches the rather amusing Frankie Drake Mysteries on the telly will be painfully aware of the lack of effort to disguise the totally incongruous motorcycle the star, Frankie Drake, sometimes rides in make-believe 1920s Toronto. Who can fail to spot the water-cooled engine, telescopic forks, ball-end levers and "modern" speedo, brakes and lights?



Frankie Drake with her time-travelling motorcycle in 1920s Toronto

But have you noticed that, in several scenes, there is a current-day Royal Enfield lurking in the shadows? It seems odd because they seem to have gone to great lengths to have correct period cars. Was the props buyer a little naïve, thinking we'd not know the difference, perhaps they themselves didn't know the difference, or maybe it's just a ploy to wind up the motorcycling viewers



Screenshot from an episode of The Frankie Drake Mysteries showing an unusually modern Royal Enfield for a show set in 1920s Ontario.

Recently seen on eBay



Silver medal from the 1910 Albert Brown Trophy event, awarded to J Platt-Betts. By 1910, the event was entirely for motor cars and was no longer in this area. The medal sold for forty-something pounds.

Norman Hyde at the NMM

BRYAN MARSH

It's fifty years since Norman Hyde took the world sidecar record with his Triumph Trident powered outfit, Roadrunner III. To celebrate this notable anniversary, the Triumph Owners Motor Cycle Club (TOMCC) held an event at the National Motorcycle Museum. Always up for a ride, I offered to lead a ride there for the local Milton Keynes branch of TOMCC, the biggest in the world with over 300 members. Of that vast membership there was just a solitary taker of my offer so off we went, him on his Hinckley Bonneville (he does also have a T110, I'm pleased to say as most MK members have no interest in pre-Hinckley Triumphs – heathens!) and me on my 1947 Tiger 100.



The entire MK TOMCC contingent ready to leave for the NMM

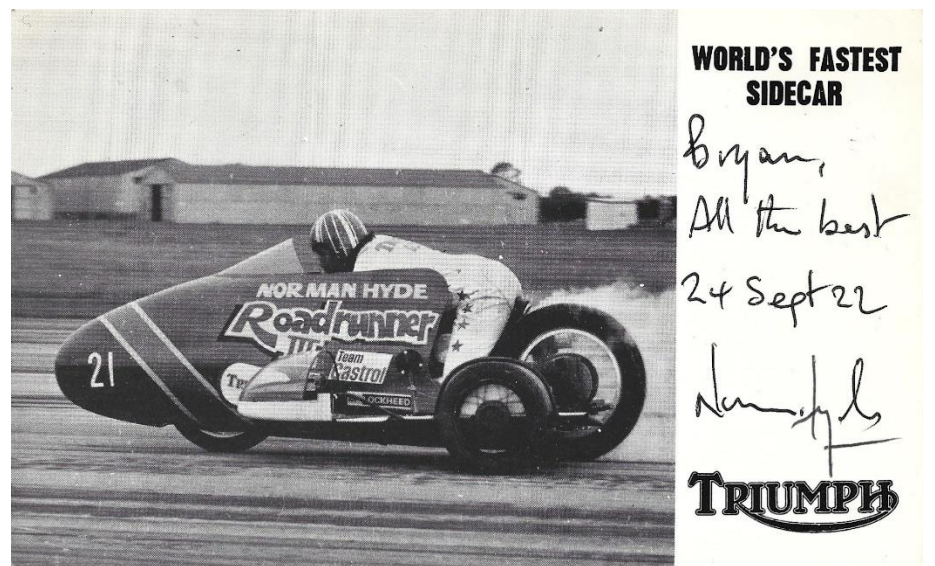
An enjoyable non-motorway route gave us an uneventful ride, apart from the inspection light on my tank panel coming loose and having to be temporarily secured with insulating tape. A quick zoom around the museum seeking answers to a quiz sheet, with questions relating to the many Triumph machines spread through the whole museum, was great fun and an excellent way to pass the time before Norman's presentation.

In his presentation, Norman detailed the events leading up to the world record attempt, from his personal introduction to motorcycling on a Francis Barnett Plover, followed by a Velocette MAC and, having finally seen the light (my words, not his), a 1961 Triumph Tiger 100. He made a brief attempt at trials, only to reveal a lack of skill in that department, before discovering sprinting. The rest, as they say, is history. A series of wins and records led to that memorable day, the 24th September 1972, at RAF Fairford when he beat George Brown's long-standing world record for the flying kilometre by 3.5mph at 161.8mph.



Norman Hyde with the world-record breaking Roadrunner III outfit

A fascinating story straight from the horse's mouth but also raising money for prostate cancer research by signing some of the remaining souvenir postcards, produced in large numbers at the time, in return for a £5 donation to the charity.



Contemporary souvenir, signed by Norman

A special thrill for me was meeting Arthur Jakeman, ex-Triumph race mechanic, whose credits include Slippery Sam and the engine in my recently-acquired Renegade.



93 year-old Arthur Jakeman, Triumph factory race engine builder

A sad and sorry tale

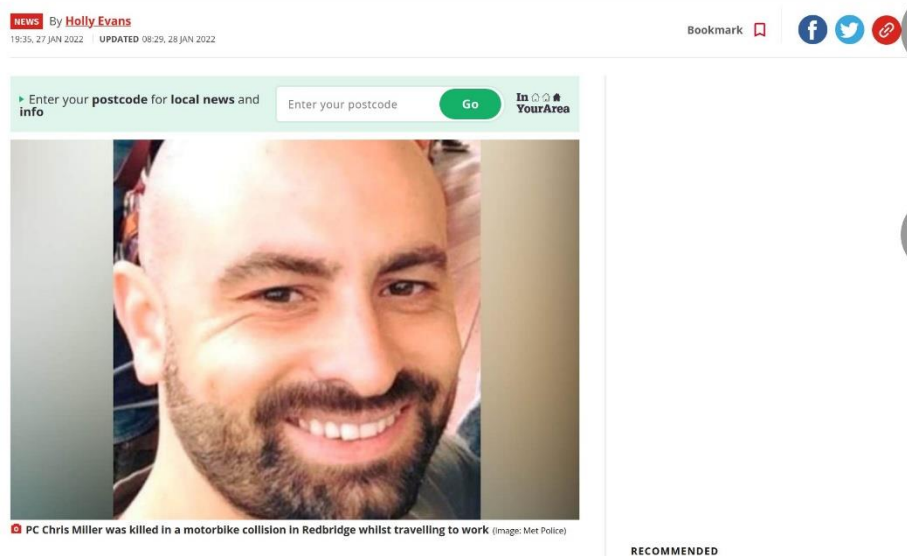
WILL CURRY

I came across this news item shortly after it had first been published and before it was subsequently edited to remove an amount of the detail, presumably to avoid issues with the enquiry.

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/east-london-news/inquest-death-loved-valued-met-22897599>

'Loved' Met Police officer died in tragic motorbike crash on his way to work

Chris Miller was killed in a motorbike crash whilst commuting to work



A screen shot of part of the news item

Should this link have been taken down completely by the time this article is published here is a summary:

PC Chris Miller was killed in a motorbike crash on September 15, 2020 while commuting to work. The crash happened in Woodford New Road in Redbridge in the early hours of the morning. PC Miller was pronounced dead at 5.09am. He had hit an 'orca', a piece of road furniture made of rubber and shaped to deflect vehicles from entering a cycle lane.

From the earlier detail it appeared that these 'orcas' were in the process of being installed and that while the barriers segregating the works from the rest of the carriageway had been removed the 'orcas' had not yet been fitted with the reflective wands intended to make them visible. Apparently, the contractors employed by the local authority hadn't been told of the need to install these reflective wands.

It's worth pointing out that sunrise would have been at around half past six at the time of the accident.



Orcas complete with reflective wands

The Health and Safety Executive said that this death was being treated as "work-related" because of the roadworks going on at the time.

There's a number of features of this sad and sorry tale which concern me. Any loss of life is to be regretted but when the reason is essentially carelessness, especially that of a local authority responsible for keeping the roads safe the word 'criminal' springs to mind. I await the outcome

of the Health and Safety Executive's enquiry with interest. The cynic in me wonders if the council tax will have to go up to pay any fines.

I very much doubt the wisdom of using inherently dangerous objects to 'protect' one class of vulnerable road users at the expense of others. Again, the cynic in me wonders why there aren't 'cycle lane cameras' just as there are 'bus lane cameras'. The revenue from fines would doubtless be most welcome to cash-strapped authorities.

A final concern, not specifically related to this tale, is the need seemingly felt by all the 'safety champions' to go further and further than their peers, littering the carriageways with speed humps, 'build-outs', cycle lanes and so on while at the same time permitting the removal of cats' eyes and white lines and the downgrading roads to avoid upkeep, the new B5120 being an example.

An MGP moment captured

RICHARD CHAMBERS



I love this shot of a Triumph, is it a 1956 "ish" T110, or 6T, lining up alongside some serious machinery for a run at the Ramsey Sprint this year at the MGP, I particularly like his period helmet, I had an Everoak Racemaster in 1969 just like that. [...and there's a very nice Triumph T160 Trident in front of it – Bryan]

The Classic Mechanics Show

BRYAN MARSH

The national chairman of the Triumph Owners Motorcycle Club, Ken Talbot, has a terrible habit of emailing me before the Stafford shows to see what I have available to put on the club stand. This was, I think, the fifth bike I've displayed and, as the October Classic Mechanics Show is aimed primarily at classics from the 60s, 70s & 80s, the T160 Renegade seemed the best fit from my stable.



The Renegade, hiding behind a most unusual BSA/ Hinckley Triumph special on the TOMCC stand

Our stand was on the balcony which meant taking the bike up a rather steep metal grid ramp. Not a problem, as such, but it'd been raining, and it was now rather slippery. Coupled with a very heavy bike and a cold engine made the experience somewhat less than fun. On my first attempt I only made it halfway up when the engine fluffed and I was stuck, unable to go up or down, luckily someone came to my rescue and helped me back down ready for a successful second run at it.



Also on the TOMCC stand, this rather pretty (well, I think so) 98cc T10 Automatic, the re-engineered successor to the ill-fated Tina.

I spent most of the weekend on the TOMCC stand so didn't get the chance for a thorough look around the whole show but did manage to grab a few pictures of some machines that caught my eye.



An exceptionally rare Honda from 1956, believed to be the only surviving EK200. The cable-operated trafficators were an aftermarket accessory that the owner took great delight in demonstrating



Another view of the Honda EK200



1963 Suzuki 50cc M12 from the first batch of Suzuki bikes imported into the UK. Restored by Heidi Cockerton, *the Suzuki restorer*



BSA-influenced early (1966/7) Kawasaki W1 650 for sale in the autojumble, reduced from £7695 to a snip at £6995



So, what was it that someone believed was worth this small fortune?



A "KX 545" four-cylinder Kawasaki "triple" – had it been one of Alan Milyard's creations, I'm sure they would have mentioned it – so, presumably, it's not.



The dying gasp of a once proud cat – the last of the Panther 250s, using up Villiers 2T dynastart engines from a cancelled microcar order



1955 YA1 125cc, Yamaha's first motorcycle



The sign said it was a Triumph Model T, but I've never heard of such a model. I think it's either a 173cc Model X or a 150cc Model Z from around 1930. I had a Model X – horrid little thing, thankfully most were probably scrapped in the war to build Spitfires.

Shuttleworth Race Day

BRYAN MARSH

Unfortunately, the action on the sprint track (the grass runway) was too far from the spectator enclosure to get any meaningful pictures, so here are a few shots from the "Period Paddock":



1903 or 4 Fiat, with an engine from an airship



The aero-engined 1933 Napier-Railton race car from Brooklands, I think

The VMCC 1925 Triumph SD



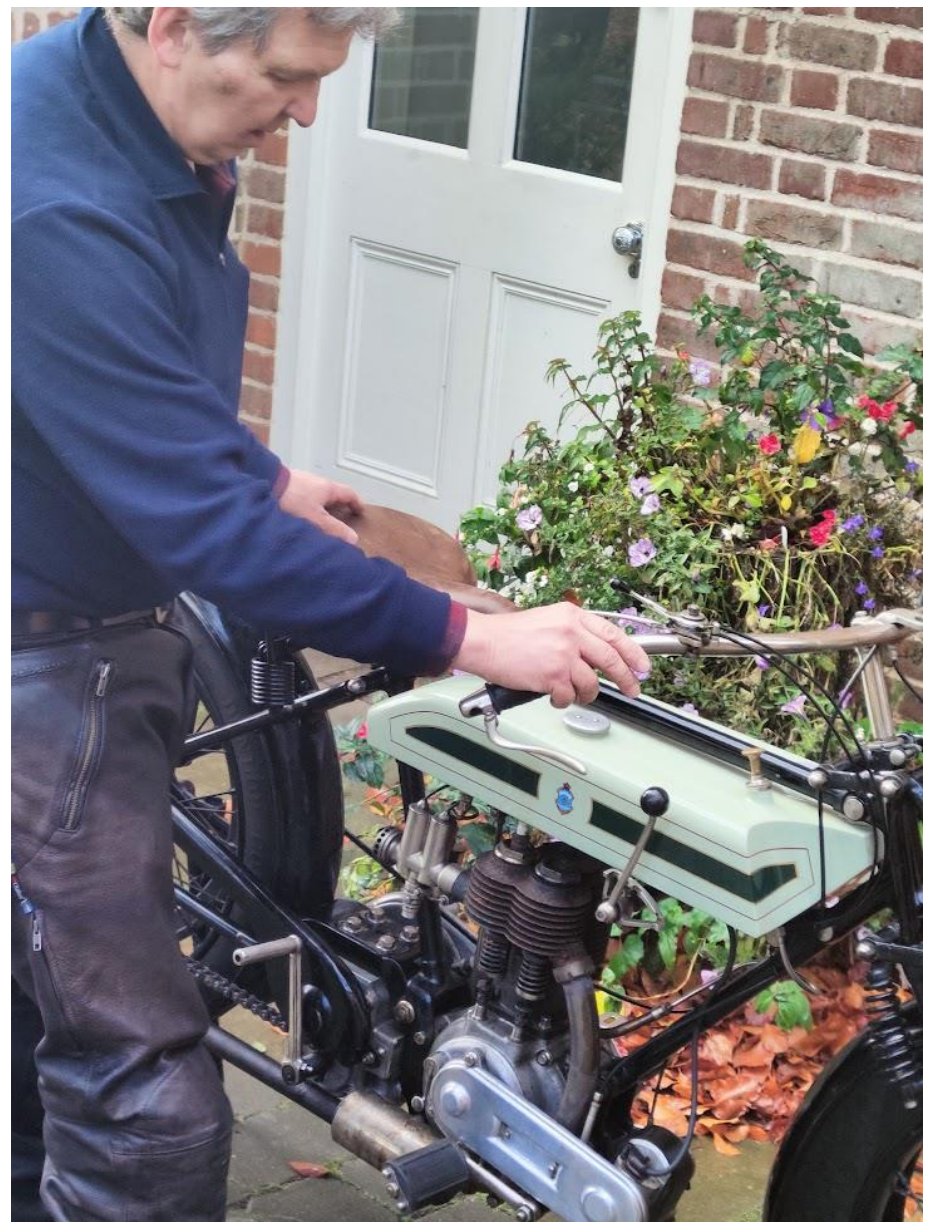
Chris Illman's record-holding Rudge

As you may know, VMCC Chairman Mario Costa Sa lives in our area, Kensworth. He currently has custody of a couple of the club's bikes, including the 1925 Triumph 550cc SD, which some say the SD stands for slip and drag – but actually stands for Spring Drive. Unfamiliar with the controls of a machine of this age, Mario asked if anyone was available to show him the finer points of the starting procedure of such a beast, and I stepped up to assist as it's such a lovely bike.

We didn't keep count of the number of kicks, but we eventually got the levers in the right position and away it went. This is just one of the large selection of VMCC bikes that are available for free loan to VMCC members. The full list, with pictures, can be found on the website www.vmcc.net/Garage, and the ones "ready to ride" include a AJS H4 1926, 360cc; BSA A50 1963, 500cc; Reed Scott, 1920, 532cc; Golland Matchless Blackburn 350cc SV Model L Sport 1923; Sagurs Montgomery 600 1924, as well as several mopeds and more modern Japanese bikes; something for everyone.



1915 Blackburne "Scarlet Runner" Brooklands Racer



Setting the air and throttle levers for starting



Up and running, selecting first gear for a quick test ride up the drive

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VMCC Bedfordshire Section Diary – 2023

12 Jan	Club Night - Trials Bikes and Chat
19 Jan	Midweek Lunch - Flitvale Garden Centre, Westoning
29 Jan	Breakfast Meet - Maypole Farm, Kempston
09 Feb	Club Night - Gyrocopters!
16 Feb	Midweek Lunch -Musgrave Arms, Shillington
26 Feb	Breakfast Meet - Scald End Farm, Thurleigh
09 Mar	Club Night - Intersection Quiz Night
16 Mar	Midweek Lunch- Danish Camp, Willington
26 Mar	Breakfast Meet - Jordans Mill, Broom
13 Apr	Clubnight - Blood Bikes
16 Apr	Spring Run – Jordans Mill, Broom
20 Apr	Midweek Run - STMA
30 Apr	VMCC Founders Relay Rally/Coffee - STMA
11 May	Club Night - Fish and Chips Night
?? May	Roger & Arthur King Memorial Run - STMA
17 May	Ride to Velo Club - Rose & Crown, Ridgmont
18 May	Midweek Run - STMA
28 May	Breakfast Meet - Danish Camp, Willington
08 June	Club Night - Ride a Bike to Shefford Night
15 June	Midweek Run - STMA
25 June	Breakfast Meet - Flitvale Garden Centre, Westoning
02 July	Albert Brown Run - Wilden Village Hall
13 July	Club Night - Car Park Concours Competition
20 July	Midweek Run - STMA
30 July	Breakfast Meet - Toby Carvery, Bedford
10 Aug	Club Night - Noggin and Natter
17 Aug	Midweek Run - STMA
27 Aug	Summer Saunter/Breakfast Meet - TBA
14 Sept	Club Night - Moto Giro (Gordon Hallett)
21 Sept	Midweek Run - STMA
24 Sept	Sand & Motorcycles, Leighton Buzzard
24 Sept	Breakfast Meet - Scald End Farm, Thurleigh
12 Oct	Club Night – Bradbury Motorcycles (Mike Wills)
19 Oct	Midweek Lunch - Cross Keys, Pulloxhill
21 Oct	Autumn Gold Run - Saturday!! - STMA
29 Oct	Breakfast Meet - Danish Camp, Willington
09 Nov	Club Night - AGM and Slideshow
16 Nov	Midweek Lunch - Scald End Farm, Thurleigh
26 Nov	Breakfast Meet - Flitvale Garden Centre, Westoning
14 Dec	Club Night - Xmas Bash and Auction
21 Dec	Midweek Lunch - Toby Carvery, Bedford
26 Dec	Boxing Day Meet - TBA
31 Dec	Breakfast Meet - Jordans Mill, Broom