

# BEDS VMCC NEWS

**STILL KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

**No, we're not joking – the Hoppy Shield goes to...**



**...Chris Dawkins, for his brilliant efforts organising the raffle and, together with his wife, Heather, being a great host for our committee meetings.**

## *IN THIS ISSUE:*

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## Fred Eames RIP



Fred with his beloved Ariel NH350 at the 2011 Albert Brown Run

Geoff Hoden has informed us that Fred sadly passed away on Sunday night after a long illness; he would have been 87 on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

In his younger days, whilst in the army, he used to train squaddies to ride motorcycles. He was also a keen and successful grass-track racer, good enough to attract sponsorship, and was often heard swapped stories with Ron and Rod. After a long career with Vauxhall he took over and, together with his wife, ran Kempston Cycles for many years selling bicycles and MoT testing motorcycles.

In the picture above he's standing with his favourite bike, an Ariel NH 350; its well-used appearance belying its perfectly maintained mechanicals. He also tried his luck with a Honda 550 but couldn't get on with it, always coming back to the Ariel. Geoff described him as "a clever bloke" and told how, one day, when they were out on a ride, Fred's bike broke down at the traffic lights in Towcester. Unfazed, he removed the magneto on the side of the road, cleaned up the points on the stone wall of the Saracen's Head, put everything back together again and off they went.

Fred's funeral will be held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December at Cranfield Church at 2pm. His wife would be pleased to see some bikes. Arrangements for anyone coming on a bike aren't yet known.

## EDITORIAL

A sad start to the newsletter this month, I'm afraid with the news of Fred's passing; he was such a nice chap. I wish I had known him better. No news of funeral arrangements yet but I'll pass on any information I get.

After an exceptionally mild Autumn, the dreaded news from Central Beds Council finally arrived on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup>: "We're going out gritting this evening." Luckily it poured down the next day and washed the salt away but it's the harbinger of the days to come. Maybe it's time to think about putting the best classics away until Spring - or think about moving to California. Luckily, I've got a bike that I don't mind using through Winter, just as long as I take the trouble to give it a good rinse when the gritters have been out, so the monthly informal rides will continue as long as the weather isn't too shocking. Even the doctors agree that too much salt is a bad thing.

Many thanks to our contributors this month – Don, Geoff, Kerry, Sam and Will who have kindly responded to my appeals for content. Please submit any contributions to me on [bryan.marsh@btinternet.com](mailto:bryan.marsh@btinternet.com), or even hand them to me, written long-hand if you wish, at any of our events.

Bryan

## Beds Section News

### Upcoming Events

#### BREAKFAST MEET – SUNDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 10AM

As stated in the last issue this is a change to the originally advertised venue. We will be going to Maypole Farm in Fletcher Road, Kempston, MK42 7FY. The name is a little deceiving – as you can see, it's anything but an actual farm and no sign of a maypole either.



There will be no breakfast meet in December as it coincides with Christmas Day so most places will be shut – most inconsiderate.



## INFORMAL RUN – THURS, 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, SHEFFORD MEMORIAL HALL (STMA), 10.15 FOR 10.30AM

The weather is, of course, rather unpredictable this time of year but, if it's not icy, snowing or absolutely lashing it down, we'll head out for a quick spin to a suitable café somewhere not too far from home, for a warming cuppa and a bite to eat.

## CLUB NIGHT – AUCTION & CHRISTMAS GRUB - THURS, 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 7.30 FOR 8.00PM, SHEFFORD MEMORIAL HALL (STMA)

It's that time again. Time to sort through all the clutter in your garage, shed, attic, front room or wherever, and see what you no longer need, and think someone might be able to make good use of. Once again, our star auctioneer, Brent, will be wielding the gavel – so, expect to go home with something whether you want it or not. Bring lots of cash as we're not switched on enough to have a card reader, and IOUs don't cut the mustard.

Please, no VHS videos (or Betamax), DVDs or stacks of Classic Bike, etc. magazines as we just get left with them at the end of the evening and, regrettably, they end up in the bin.

This year, the proceeds will be split evenly between a Diabetes charity and SERV Herts & Beds, the Bloodbike people.

## MIDWEEK LUNCH – THURS, 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, NOON-ISH

Back to an old favourite for December – The Toby Carvery, Goldington Road, Bedford. Turkey not compulsory; paper hats optional.

Future dates:

- Thurs, 19<sup>th</sup> Jan - Flitvale Garden Centre, Westoning

## November event reports

### INFORMAL RUN – NOBBY'S FARM TEA ROOM



A select group of just four of us, Gerry, Norm, myself and Sam (Andrew), taking the picture, headed out from the Memorial Hall car park on a suitably tortuous route to Nobby's, in Billington near Leighton Buzzard. My original route plan was defeated by the dreaded "Road Closed" signs at the turning off the road out of Hexton intended to take us on to Sundon via Streatley. A quick U-turn and through Barton and Harlington to get back to the route at Sundon via Sundon Hill, as used by the MCC for a hill climb competition in 1911. Incidentally, I believe the hill out of Hexton was also used for a hill climb in the early 1900s.

I took a gamble with the next "Road Closed" sign on the Leighton Buzzard Road at the Hockliffe crossroads as we only needed to get to the Stanbridge turn; luckily the closure was further on so we carried on our merry way.

### CLUB NIGHT – AGM & SLIDE SHOW

It came as no great surprise that the existing committee were, once again, voted back in for another year. We'll take that as a vote of confidence and not even consider any other possibility.

Treasurer Bob revealed that we made a small loss over the year but we still have a healthy bank balance, so no need to call in the Official Receiver just yet. Indeed, if we were to sustain the same level of loss

each year, it would be over 600 years before we go bust. So, we won't start panicking just yet.

As seen on the front page, the "Hoppy Shield" was awarded to Chris Dawkins for his splendid effort over the year. After the business was concluded, we were treated to the annual slideshow review of the year expertly put together by son and father team, Sam and Nige.

### MIDWEEK LUNCH – SCALD END FARM TEA ROOM

For the second time in a row, the midweek lunch day was greeted with heavy rain which probably accounted for the fairly low turnout. Excellent food and conversation, as ever.

## The Page Three Girl



Hardly a road safety advert – not looking where she's going and one hand off the bars carrying a bunch of flowers!

## The Prince of Dunstable – Pt 1

DON MCKEAND

In the early 1970s we lived in a first floor flat in Dunstable. The Mini we had just after we got married had a rotten rear sub-frame and we could not afford to get it fixed, so our sole transport was a D14/4 Bantam. It did carry us both, but something bigger was obviously desirable, so a very second-hand Royal Enfield Crusader Sports replaced it. Always on the look-out for spares to keep the Crusader mobile, I heard of a bike repair business less than a quarter of a mile away run by Rod Ward, who later had a motorcycle business in Luton. He had no Crusader parts but did have a little Royal Enfield two stroke which was for sale incredibly cheaply. It was a non-runner and although rather scruffy, most of the parts seemed to be there or somewhere nearby. On an impulse I bought it and then wondered about how to get it home. Eventually I draped the frame around my shoulders and carried it home. Several more trips on foot brought all the other available parts back to be deposited on the balcony of the flat.

Not really knowing quite what I had purchased, the buff logbook said it was a 1960 Royal Enfield Prince of 1960. Restoration in a first-floor flat is not a really viable option, but I did bolt together some of the major components. Then came a move to a terraced house on the other side of town, but crucially with a brick-built garage at the end of the garden, which became the new home for the Prince.



By this time, we had become more affluent and had an old Morris Minor as family transport, so when another Prince was advertised in MCN for sale in Shropshire for £8, I decided to pay a visit to my sister who lived in Oswestry for overnight accommodation and to see if this Prince was worth buying. We eventually tracked down the address (just "Holly Bush Cottage" with the name of a nearby village) in the rural wilds of Shropshire. Locals who were asked for directions backed away and pointed nervously down a tiny lane. When found the isolated cottage it looked semi-derelict with no curtains at the windows and nobody in sight. Peering in the windows revealed bare boards with a couple of motorcycles within as well as a camp bed and dog basket, so we seemed to have found the right place but after waiting quite some time for someone to turn up we were preparing to depart, when a 600 Panther solo was heard approaching. Yes, he was the owner of the Prince, which was still for sale. We were led round the back to an outhouse crammed with bikes in various states of completeness. The Prince was extracted and was fairly complete, so we did the deal and dismantled the bike into lumps which were small enough to fit into the Morris Minor. Invited into the cottage we decided to decline the offer of coffee in one of the large array of unwashed mugs littering the kitchen sink and draining board, but I accepted the offer to wash my hands in the bathroom. Picking my way through the engines on the floor and skirting round the bath filled with dismantled engine components and a black fluid which had probably started life as Jizer or Gunk, I got to the sink and removed the worst of the dirt from my hands.



#### The second Prince

When we got home, I decided to make one good bike from the two available and this was to be Mary's bike. However, the project stalled due to a combination of Government interference and a cuckoo in the nest in the form of a (free) D7 Bantam fitted with a 150cc D3 engine and a spare 125cc DI engine which was already a runner. The Government interference was the ruling that learners were to be limited to 125cc, which ruled out Mary riding the Prince on the grounds of engine capacity, but did allow her to use the Bantam if fitted with the smaller engine.

But the Prince was not completely forgotten as I had now joined the newly-formed Royal Enfield Owners Club and anyway why waste two bikes which looked as though they might make a viable machine?

## Better off with a motor cycle

### THE MOTOR CYCLISTS ANNUAL 1939-40

#### Ways in which motor cycles save time, cash and energy -

- The Daily Worker* – Riding to and from work
- The Journeyman Tradesman* – Getting from job to job quickly
- The Parson* – Getting around the Parish easily
- The Foreman* – Getting around the jobs on time
- The District Nurse* – Doing the rounds without fatigue
- The Tradesman* – Quick service for customers
- The Supplier* – Collecting orders and payments
- The Insurance Man* – Keeping the payments up to date
- The Inspector* – More inspection in less time
- The Collector of Accounts* – Keeping in touch, and getting in the

arrears

*The Public Services Man* – Keeping the equipment in order without delay

*The Business Man* – Keeping contact with customers cheaply, quickly and effectively

#### Ways in which the motor cycle makes a man out of a boy -

Develops confidence and road sense

Trains a boy in applied mechanics and makes him like it (!)

Keeps him fit mentally and physically

Makes a man out of him

The keen motor cyclist is the world's handyman

## State of the Classic Market

### KERRY DELLAR

We are often told by dealer adverts and auction houses that the classic bikes they sell are good investments, this is not always the case!



This Vincent Black Prince shown above in big lumps was sold at auction in June 2014 and made £91,100.



Restored at great expense, most probably at well over £25000 and a year or so later, it was put up for sale by a top car dealer at £135,000, apparently it did sell.

In October this year it was put into Bonham's Stafford auction where it sold for £66,700. A loss of £68300. Ouch! So how is the market for our Classics looking?

During 1991-2 we had one of the worst recessions ever which saw many



classics almost halve in value, since then other recessions have shown the opposite and restored those losses partly due to the banks lack of interest on our savings, now once again they are and about time too which may affect the market for classics?

According to interesting research, prices slowly moved back up from 1994 to around a peak in 2016 and has been slowly falling since. So, what's next? With another recession almost certain, most of us classic bike owners getting older, plus we are seeing increasing numbers of 'collections' being put on the market, particularly into auctions, further falls look very possible.

Will the younger riders of today be buying 'what my Dad had', that does not seem likely as they are currently happy with their 70s-upwards Hondas, Yamahas, Ducatis and others, these apparently are also starting to lose value. Maybe the advice Antique Dealers used to give 'buy what you like and enjoy it for its beauty and use' rings true. So, for us, the advice is 'ride and enjoy' which is what most of us do anyway.

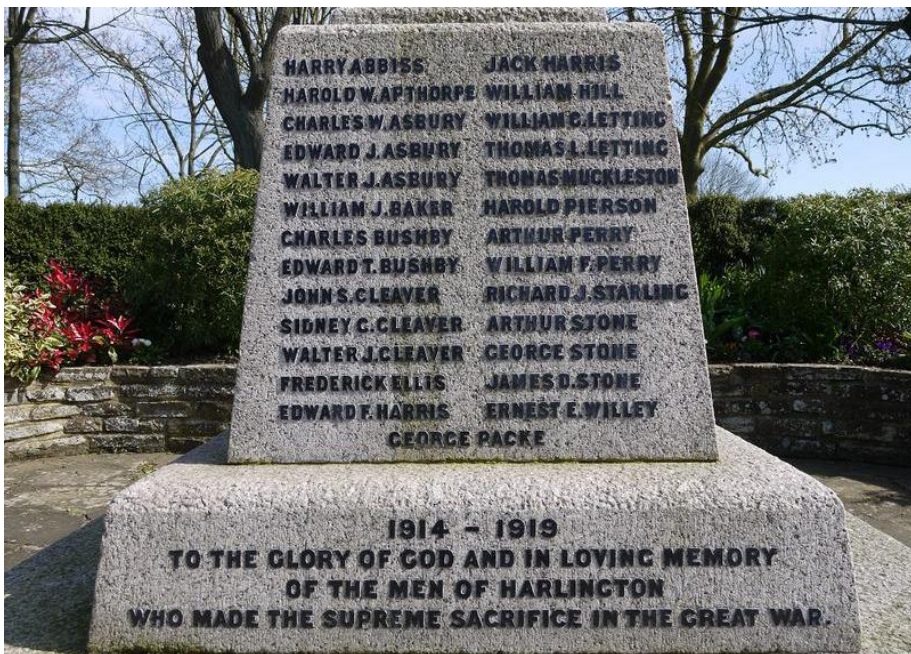
## Harlington War Memorial

WILL CURRY

Bryan asked me a question at the recent section AGM which was more appropriate to the date than the event. He wanted to know why the dates on the War memorial were 1914 to 1919 and 1939 to 1946. While I was flattered to be asked, I was also amused that he thought it worthwhile to ask me. As it happens, I know someone who would know so I asked Ian. Ian is an expert on both the Great War and War Memorials. His answer is as follows:

With regard to the dates of the Great War, while hostilities ended at 11 o'clock on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1918, the Great War didn't officially end until the Treaty of Versailles on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1919.

According to Ian, another reason for later than expected dates is that the death of one of those named on a Memorial occurred after the end of the war was concerned. In the case of Harlington this happened with Jack Harris who died on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1919 after the Great War.



### Fallen of the Great War

In the case of the Second World War date of 1946 one of those named, Derek Lawman, died on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1946.



### Fallen of the Second World War

The Great War was 'The War to end all Wars' and so the fallen from the Second World War, Korean War, Falklands and Iraq often have to be listed on one side or even the back of the War Memorial as there weren't expected to be any more wars or fallen to be named.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Bedfordshire/HarlingtonRollofHonour.html>

[The two images come from the Imperial War Museum under their non-commercial licence.]

## Motorcycle Live – NEC

BRYAN MARSH

Q. What do AJS, Ariel, BSA, Dot, Norton, Royal Enfield and Triumph have in common?

A. They all had stands at this year's "Bike Show" [aka Motorcycle Live], and most had older machines on display in an attempt to claim heritage.

### AJS



#### Stormer 370

This particular Stormer was built just two years ago from new old-stock parts to an original 1973 specification and raced by Wim Kroon in the Netherlands.

In its day, the Stormer was an over-the-counter scrambles machine developed by Norton Villiers. It was the most successful British two-stroke machine ever produced – and parts are still available from AJS Motorcycles Ltd. [or so said the blurb by the bike]



See the family resemblance?





7R "Boy Racer" - built from 1948 to 1963



The modern equivalent? (or, maybe not)



1924 Model B

There didn't seem to be a modern equivalent of this rather wonderful single-cylinder, side-valve machine. This one was discovered in 1981 in the back of an antique shop in Sri Lanka (the "C" in the registration stands for "Ceylon"). The tax disc suggested it hadn't been used since 1935 as there was a tax reminder for 1936 found with it. The original owner was a lecturer at the Government Training College.

## ARIEL



It takes quite a stretch of the imagination to see any lineage connecting the quadricycle from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the fire-breathing V-twin monster currently marketed under the Ariel banner, although the 20bhp 1927 Model C would probably have been pretty sporty in its day.



## BSA



Original 500cc DBD34 Gold Star



The new 650cc pretender to the throne – the first customer bikes have just been delivered (from India)



## DOT



Works racer



Will the modern bike be Devoid of Trouble?



## NORTON



The latest “completely re-engineered” incarnation of the Commando



## ROYAL ENFIELD



Another new bike pretending to be an old one



1923 Type R "Fast Roadster"

## TRIUMPH



A rather tasty 1962 TR6SS "Trophy" on the modern Triumph company's stand, paying homage to 120 years of the Triumph name.

There was also a rather nice display of Triumphs on the National Motorcycle Museum, including these beauties:



1954 650cc ISDT "Trophy"



1971 350cc Bandit prototype

## *The end of an oil leak*

WILL CURRY

I watched an interesting application of technology the other day. The object of interest was a Triumph Trophy of, I think, 1968 vintage. The engine had been completely rebuilt and the bike had just returned from its first road test. Up on the bench it went, and the scrutiny began.

The only obvious issue and it really was obvious against the pristine crankcase was a small seepage of oil around the front pushrod tube. These are known to be a potential source of trouble and so considerable care was taken when the engine was built so the leak was not expected.

Further inspection cast some doubt on the base of the pushrod tube being the source of the leak. This is where the technology was swung into action. All motor oils contain additives for various reasons and some of these additives fluoresce under ultra-violet light. An ultra-violet torch was shone on the area of the leak and, as expected, the oil, or rather an additive within, duly fluoresced a distinctive yellow-green colour - Kermit green in fact.

Removing one of the cylinder base nuts revealed that the stud on which the nut fitted was dry of oil. When the nut on the other side of the pushrod tube was removed however both the washer and the stud fluoresced with oil. The oil was making its way up the thread of the stud from the crankcase. There wasn't enough room to completely remove the stud but enough could be unwound to expose some of the thread which goes into the crankcase. This was degreased, coated with sealant and then rewound into the engine. With the nut refitted and torqued down another road test showed that the leak was no more.

I've a fairly relaxed attitude to the escape of oil. This comes in part from being told when in my early teens after I enquired about oil seeping from around a crank pin on a steam engine that "if there's oil coming out water and grit aren't getting in". Still, being something of a shiny kit junkie I bought myself an ultra-violet torch, just to see what it would show.

Those of you familiar with my Ariels may be quietly expecting a Kermit-coloured offering. Not so. The monograde oils lubricating my motorcycles obviously don't contain the additives which fluoresce. The



only obvious fluorescence was a label on the outside of the battery which glowed white.



Under garage lighting only...

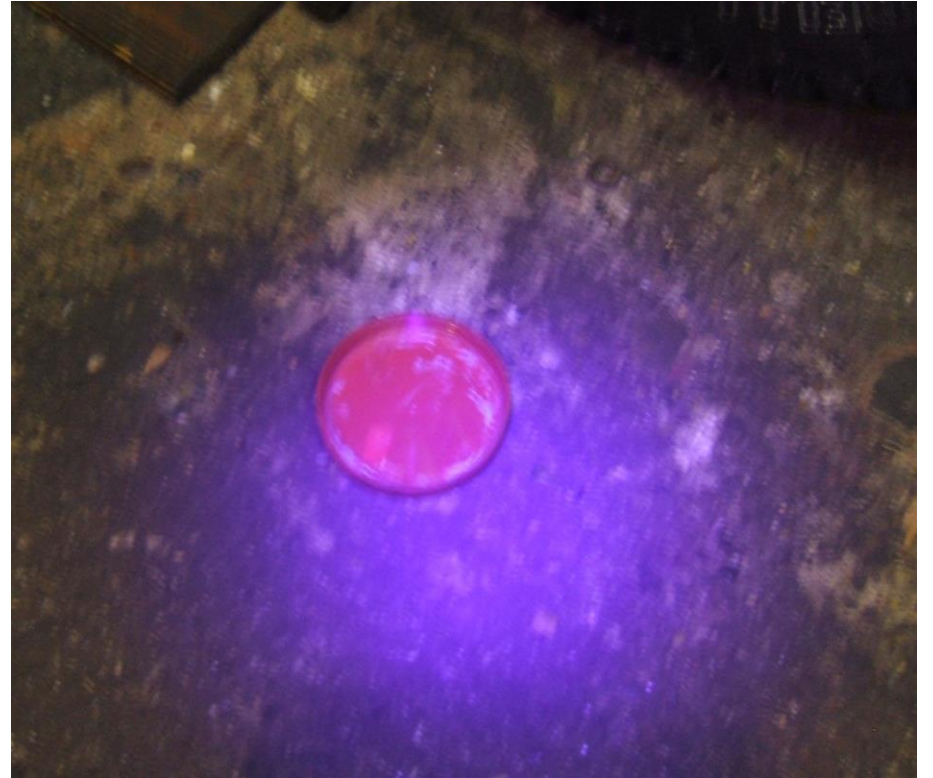


...and with UV light as well.

While playing with the UV torch I discovered that the grease I use for general lubrication also fluoresces but with a light blue colour. I didn't find it easy to photograph the fluorescence as the torch also emits visible blue light, presumably as a safety feature so you know that the torch is switched on and so don't stare at the LEDs.



The lid of the grease pot...



... and with UV light.

## *In Another Coat*

**NORTH BUCKS TIMES AND COUNTY OBSERVER - SATURDAY 25 JULY 1914**

Horace Edward Bland, a Leighton Buzzard machinist, was summoned for driving a motor bicycle without a licence at Leighton Buzzard on July 23rd. P.C. Dorrington spoke to stopping the defendant in Church Street at 1040 on the day in question. Bland failed to produce his licence when requested to do so and explained that he had left it in another coat. Two of the magistrates (Messrs Payne and Brown) complained very strongly of the manner in which they alleged Bland raced about the streets endangering human life. They were sure somebody would be killed one day. Mr. Brown especially appealed to the members of the Press who were present to take particular notice of his remarks. The defendant, who pleaded guilty, was fined 2s. 6d. and 7s. 6d. costs.

## *Farewell Fred*



Fred checking for traffic as he headed out on the 2011 Albert Brown Run on his faithful Ariel.



[This page is intentionally blank – see below for 2023 diary]



**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