

The Cotswold Section

Newsletter



Covid19 Issue 4 Lockdown week 5



Tony Page rides into the Yukon
Read his story in this issue

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The purpose of this mailing is to occupy the thoughts of members of the motorcycling fraternity during the current crisis when non-essential riding might be deemed to be unlawful. Articles may be technical, thought provoking, humorous, accompanied by images, etc, but definitely about our hobby of motorcycling. Please feel free to share the contents with any other interested riders and send appropriate material to me at the above email address. Thanks!

From the B190

Why am I doing jobs in the garden when the workshop is full of unfinished jobs? I need to get out more. May I continue to forward thanks to those who have submitted stories, and I hope they will have persuaded you to submit your thoughts or reports of your actions. This issue contains longer stories of longish rides. I apologise in advance for the 'blockiness' of text. The third set of questions for the **Virtual Felix Burke Rally**, appear in this issue courtesy of Eric. Thanks to Bill, Peter and Tony for their articles/stories of their long rides.

[Stop press: I have just received news of a hoard of motorcycles in New Zealand. My contact is Peter Thomson and he tells us about it. I may not have enough space for many of the amazing photos he sent me.](#)

Reg Eyre KOB

Questions, as promised

Answers are at the end of this Newsletter.

11. Name the colours on a circular shaped road sign.
 12. Name a black and white mandatory road sign.
 13. Name the colours on an octagonal road sign.
 14. Name the colours on a Give Way bollard.
 15. For what do the initials D.V.S.A. stand for?
 16. On a motorway, the first sign showing an exit will state what details.
- 3 picture questions;
17. A town on the Isle of Man shares the same name as this machine maker.
 18. This motorcycle manufacturer and a car manufacturer both used the same model name in 1936.
 19. George hid an Austin 7 gearbox under the steel covers of this show model in 1937.
 20. Submit a detailed sectioned drawing of your favourite motorcycle engine.
(Okay, this last question is part of the editor's poor humour!)

Memories of a Long Day's Ride

I'd never ridden 400 miles in a day. But when I first heard that, after a gap of many years, the Ariel Club was organising another London to Edinburgh Run in 2011, that fact didn't enter my head. It was only as the date of the event got closer that I began to get a little apprehensive – would I manage such a long day's ride? I had ridden about 200 to 250 miles a day when I went to the Ariel Italian Rally and the Annual Rallies in Germany and Scotland. But was I going to cope with about 12 hours in the saddle?

As soon as the rally was announced I got in touch with the organiser and told him to put my name down for it – I think I was one of the first on the list. My thought was that I hadn't been in the club when the event was previously run and this might be my only chance to do this ride. I didn't want to miss the opportunity. And if I didn't manage to get to Edinburgh because of tiredness or because of a breakdown,

well at least I had tried. Finally, I had never done much riding on the eastern side of the country before, so most of the roads were going to be new to me.

Gary Baker had also said that he was going to do the run. So, we decided that we would ride to London together and have an overnight stay at a hotel on the Friday night before the ride north. We also agreed, for a number of reasons that we wouldn't try to ride to Edinburgh together. Generally, I don't ride quite as fast as Gary so we both felt it would be best to ride at our own speeds. Also, it would mean that we wouldn't feel that we had to stop and help if one of the bikes broke down. Any breakdown that would take more than about an hour to sort out would, almost certainly, mean the rider wouldn't get to Edinburgh in time for the dinner in the evening.

Our Friday afternoon ride up to our hotel at Hayes in West London had its own little twist. Gary's 1948 VG usually starts easily but it decided it was going to have a starting problem. A slight adjustment to the points gap improved matters but it left both of us wondering whether it was going to appear again the next day or during the following week when Gary was going to be touring around the west coast and islands of Scotland.



Marble Arch - Ready to Go

The run was scheduled to start at 6 o'clock sharp and when Gary and I arrived at 6.02am, the other 20 or so riders were standing in a group having their photograph taken. Then it was helmets on and we were off north up the Edgware Road in light rain - this soon stopped as we left London. As I expected, I soon ended up near the back of the strung out line of bikes, riding on my own. I had decided to aim at riding at about 55 mph where the road conditions and speed limits allowed.

The first part of the run, getting away from London and the South East was for me the least enjoyable part of the run. It was only once past Luton that the ride started to improve. The breakfast stop was at Ollerton just north of Nottingham sometime

after 10 o'clock. My 1952 tele-rigid Ariel VH was running like clockwork and the route sheet, supplemented with a road map in a 'route roller' attached to the handlebars, kept my mistakes to a minimum.

The planned route didn't include any motorways and kept dual carriageways to a minimum. Unfortunately, the next part of the run included parts of the very busy A1 and other dual carriageways through Doncaster and up to Ferrybridge. Having passed the iconic cooling towers at the power station, the roads became generally more pleasant. Tadcaster, York and Thirsk were all bypassed on the way to Northallerton where I stopped at a filling station to refuel both the bike and myself. After a hearty breakfast, a sandwich and a drink were all I wanted.

For me, the last part of the run was the best. The 'A' roads weren't very busy up to Barnard Castle then the route followed the B6278 over the moors through Stanhope before joining the A68 west of Consett. On the day of the run, the bleak moors with deep valleys cut across them were great to ride across but it would have been a different story on a wet and windy day. I looked at the ford at Stanhope, which riders on previous runs had ridden through – the level of water in the River Wear was low and it would have been possible to get across the ford without drowning the engine.

The A68 to Jedburgh and beyond was a real pleasure to ride on – little traffic, great scenery, enjoyable bends and for many miles it was up and down a series of hills, what fun! I only stopped once more for a coffee at 'the last café in England' in the village of Rochester.

Over the border at Carter Bar, through Jedburgh and, a little later, turn off through Melrose to Galashiels to pick up the A7 for Edinburgh – another delightful road. As I approached Edinburgh, near Gorebridge it started to rain a little – but not enough to dampen the enjoyment of the run. After crossing the city bypass it was an easy route that continued on the A7 to the university hall of residence where we were staying. It was right next to Holyrood Park. I arrived at 6.20pm – 12 hours 20 minutes from London and I felt fine. And I was definitely ready for the dinner that had been arranged that evening.

Peter Kent



Arrival in Edinburgh

A Day Out in West Wales – sometimes in the rain and sometimes not

Towards the end of 2019 we decided to take our yellow 223 Lomax to Carmarthen, to take part in the Sidecar and Three-wheeler event put on by the West South Wales section. After some confusion over the starting point we arrived at the Morrisons supermarket on the outskirts of Carmarthen, only to find out that we were on our own. It wasn't long before it started to rain – well it does that a lot in Wales. I was about to fit the tonneau in order to keep out the wet stuff when my wife had a good idea of how to keep out of the rain. Quickly she removed the shopping trolleys from a nearby trolley park, which allowed me to park our beloved Lomax in the dry.



An hour later and others started to arrive. Andy MacDougall arrived in his red Lomax 223, followed by a mid 60's Reliant Regal. Sally Chorley was next to turn up with her primrose yellow 223, making it a trio of Lomax cars. A 1932 AJS then arrived, as did a 1932 Morgan and a 1931 Triumph small box saloon. No sidecar outfits this time.

Sally in her 223 was first away and we never saw her again until we reached the lunch stop. By the time we were ready to set off, the rain had stopped and we were the last but one to leave the supermarket car park. It wasn't long before we were off into the middle of Carmarthenshire on totally uncluttered side roads. We followed Morgan Thomas driving the 1931 Triumph Box saloon, which proved to be quite nippy, but lacking in power on the hills. The route took us along the B4300 following the river Towy, before we turned north past Dryslwyn Castle then across the A40 and into some lovely countryside passing through the Brechfa forest. The road was single track in many places with next to no other vehicles to worry about. We passed the Dolaucothi Gold mines, where mining had taken place for over 2000 years, only ceasing around 1938. The National Trust now looks after this site. After having covered about 45 miles, we arrived at Rhandirmwyn and the Towy Bridge Inn on the side of the river Towy where lunch was arranged.

As we arrived at the pub, I spotted a high bonnet car parked up that looked similar to Duncan Pittaway's 1911 Grand Prix Fiat, known as the Beast of Turin. I parked our 223 and walked back to have a look and was amazed to find that it was actually a special, based on a 1970 2CV. An amazing job really, I just wish that I had found the time to have a chat with the owner, as it was soon gone.

After lunch everyone headed home, which involved us taking the A40 from Llandovery and then the A470 up over the Brecon Beacons after a super day out.

Bill Phelps



Home Thoughts from Abroad

The other day, while riding about doing errands, I parked my 1939 BSA Empire Star and upon returning saw that there was a bloke peering at it. He said that he too had 'a BSA' but didn't know what model. Luckily the Empire Star started first kick and I escaped yet another flake and/or loonie...

It reminded me that on the way to Alaska some years ago riding my Vincent with Kiwi John Gurney on his, we'd stopped in a place called John Day in deepest Oregon desperate for 7UP and a sandwich. And because it was a town called John, not Alice. Attracted perhaps by our unkempt appearance and Vincent T-Shirts, we were approached by a guy whose opening line was 'I have A Norton I think I may want to get rid of'.

It's happened to most of us, right? I sat there, wondering how many people within 1000 miles of John Day Oregon even knew what a Norton was. So, sensing an opportunity to basically steal this idiot American's Norton for a few quid, I tried to appear casual and disinterested and asked what he had. The answer was '1975 Mk3 Interstate with a Boyer and single carb.' I asked what he wanted, seeking a mug. "Ten thousand bucks" he replied. He knew exactly what he had and was no 'idiot American'.

Seeing through his act instantly, it was obvious he had no inkling to sell his bike but instead wanted to talk about them. He lives in John Day where, most probably,

no one knows or cares about his priceless piece of motorcycle history. And that's fine...I didn't need another Norton Commando but can always use another story.

So we talked.

His was (what became) a familiar story: Vietnam Vet, married several times, now living off the grid on his little piece of land surrounded by a National Forest, where no one can move next to him, and building his own house. He had bought the Norton in Northern California (next door in US terms) and done most of the work on it himself. It was in a lock up quite close and we decided to go take a look. John and I followed his pick up just round the corner. Not because we were interested in buying it, but – well – as it was a real bike in a place called John Day. And why not?

The bike was indeed an Mk3 Interstate, black, and if not actually a ten-grand vision, it was nevertheless a nice bike. There was also a BSA B44 in there too so we reminisced about riding big singles and then prepared to leave and head further north.

It was then that I remembered that the reason we had stopped in John Day was not only for 7UP but also to ask if there was a tyre shop within striking distance as my rear tyre was getting pretty worn and I didn't relish the thought of punctures.

Our new friend said that there was a guy over in Prairie City who might have some 19" tyres but that he was 'a bit crazy and sometimes hard to deal with'. The then-next nearest tyre place was three hundred miles further on.

We opted to phone Mr Prairie City and, yes, he did have a 19-inch tyre so off we went.

His name was Engo and he was a bit strange for sure. In a voice that could have pierced a Labrador's eardrums at a distance of five furlongs, the first thing he told us after we'd got off the Vincents was that he had broken 177 bones racing motorcycles. I thought (but didn't say) that after I'd broken the second one I'd have packed it in and then found a hobby I was more adept at. And I wondered if maybe he had broken some bones more than once? He would have had to, right? How many bones *are* there in the human body? Or maybe he broke all 177 in one go?

He shared his thoughts on ABS braking systems with us and claimed he could modulate the brakes on a motorcycle better than any computer. I remember wondering whether a guy with 177 broken bones should be making such a claim.

Over an hour or two, John and I listened to his life story about his family coming to the United States all those years ago from Germany and settling in California, then moving north to Oregon. Much of his repertoire concerned tales of trouble with the law - mostly speeding and being belligerent and not paying business rates. Perhaps all related to the fact that he may well have underestimated the vanity of those in public life...

But that's just the way it is. If you want to have stories to tell, you've got to take the fat with the lean. Nobody wants to hear about your perfect day or perfect trip. The story is in the struggle. Overcoming adversity is the essence of drama. When

you're in intense situations is when you meet the interesting people that make your journey memorable.

If I wasn't in need of a tyre, I wouldn't have met Engo; if we hadn't been desperate for a drink and a sandwich I wouldn't have met the guy with the 'ten-grand Norton', and wouldn't have learnt about Engo...

The moral could be "Embrace your Adversity". What comes out of that is often the thing that makes the trip memorable.

Tony Page



Rush hour on the Alaska Highway

Answers to Virtual Felix Burke Questions Part 2

11. Red, white and black 12. National Speed limit applies

13. Red and white 14. White, blue and yellow

15. Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency 16. Town, road number, junction number and distance to exit 17. Douglas

18. Ulster 19. Brough Superior Dream 20. Send your drawing to the editor for publication

Sale of the Ron Carpenter Collection

In late September last year I was approached by the daughters of the late Ron Carpenter and asked to assist them with the disposal of their father's motorcycle collection.

Mid October Jennifer and I went north the 450 kilometres to Hamilton to see exactly what I was being asked to sell and to put together an inventory so that buyers had some idea as to what they were buying.

The initial viewing was overwhelming, three sheds packed to the rafters with motorcycles and associated parts but once I'd caught my breath I set to work with a Dictaphone and systematically went through the sheds describing everything while Angela, one of the daughters, numbered each box. Meanwhile Jennifer got busy photographing everything.

After two days with two sheds done, Jennifer and I headed for home and the real work started.

It took until late December to put together an inventory and during this time the bush telegraph worked overtime and my telephone was running red hot with enquiries.

Following a second visit to firm things up, it was decided to offer the collection as one lot with a sale price of \$200,000.00 NZD, with the buyer taking everything. This included all the workshop gear as well as the motorcycle stuff, lathe, mill, pedestal drill, shaper, benders, grinders, hand tools, you name it and was there and included in the sale.

With a viewing arranged for early March and one small shed still not even looked at, the family set to, emptied the shed, photographed it all and sent the photos to me to try and identify what was there. It was only a small garden shed about 3metres square but the treasures that came out of there were unbelievable.

We finished up with about 50 motorcycles, 70 odd engines, close to 100 wheels, about 40 mudguards and the biggest selection of girder forks I've ever seen in one place. There was also about 8 to 10 tons of motorcycle parts.

The "one buyer takes the lot" knocked out quite a few prospective purchasers who only wanted individual items but we had seven strong interested parties and in the end, by mid- March, one of that seven bought the collection for our asking price. To really describe what was there would fill a book but I've sent some pictures that Reg may want to include with this diatribe.

Peter Thomson

Some of the more interesting bikes were as follows;

C1912 Ariel 1912 BSA C1909/10 Brown 1924 Dunelt 500 2 stroke

C1912 LMC C1916 Levis 2 stroke 1930 BSA 770c.c. vee twin

C1911/12 Humber 1926 Matchless Model R 1928 Norton Model 18

1923 Sunbeam Model 2 1930 Matchless Silver Arrow 1926 AJS o.h.v. 500

1939 Levis sprung frame 500

I could go on and on but hopefully this gives you some idea as to what's still out there.

I have briefly assembled some of the images, just to tempt you - Ed

