

The Cotswold Section

Newsletter



Covid19 Issue 8 Lockdown week 9



Dick Hobart took a shine to my recently acquired 1959 Ambassador Envoy
Read his email to the editor

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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

I have tried to aim for a variety of items in this newsletter, but concentrating on problems in the workshop with all the extra time we all now have. There is also a report of a rally in Holland, organised by our Dutch contributor, Roel, run before the lockdown in January. I have included two reports from 'down under', one is rude about Joe Lucas!

Reg Eyre KOB1

Here is a nice photo of the late Stanley Woods near his home on the shores of Dundrum Bay. There are glorious views of the Mountains of Mourne from here, but unfortunately not shown in the photo. Lets hope you can come and see them in real life in August if our Mountains of Mourne weekend is still on that is! Hope to see you in late July.

John Kidd



Service with a Sunbeam

When I was called up for deferred National Service in the RAF, my father quite reasonably wanted his garage back. So I had to move my small fleet of bikes out, rented a garage nearby and loaned one bike to a friend. I had a very nice 1937 Sunbeam Model 9 with Noxal Quick-fit

sports sidecar, (the side car attached via a sub-frame and could be detached by lowering a jockey wheel at the front and rear of the chassis, a large lever like a car handbrake could then allow the chair to be wheeled away). There wasn't room in the rented garage for the outfit and no one wanted to borrow it, so just after Christmas, I decided to ride it to my training camp near Preston, Lancashire. Apart from the cold, snow and a broken secondary chain, I got to camp okay. It was a hutted camp made up of wooden huts with 10 bed spaces and two pot bellied stoves in each. After a couple of weeks training we were given a 48hour pass. All the other lads in the hut went home, but I had a cunning plan, the Sunbeam needed some attention and when the lads had gone. I re arranged the beds, separated the sidecar and wheeled the bike and the sidecar into the hut. By Sunday lunchtime I had completed a sort of mini restoration and re connected the sidecar to the bike inside the hut. I was just having a brew up and feeling pleased with my efforts when, with not so much as a by your leave, the Orderly Sergeant burst into the hut. He wasn't best pleased with what he saw, and I don't know if he was trying to think of a regulation I had broken. He said, "I wont ask how you got that thing in here, but it better not be here when I come back." When he came back, it was standing outside the hut gleaming. I wanted him to ask me how I got it in the hut, but he didn't. The snap was taken at the start of the exercise after I had got the sidecar in the hut. (The gentleman from whom I bought the outfit claimed it had been purchased off the stand at the 1937 Motorcycle show, it was a lovely bike with a Jaeger speedo about 6ins. diameter and a copper plated cylinder head.)

Reg Glading



UK Ambassador

My Real Classic magazine arrived today and I just had to say how much I enjoyed your article on your newly acquired Ambassador!

I LOVE Ambassadors! I joined my local motorcycle club at the age of 13 so when there was help required putting up a scramble course or the like I had to scrounge a lift. Sometimes this would find me on the back of a friend's 197 Ambassador and I remember then being struck with what a solid little bike it was and how well it went and handled 2 up. Later, in my teens, a friend had a 3 star (or was it 5 star?) twin. A beautiful thing with deeply valanced guards and a Triumph style bathtub rear.



When I made my second sally into pre-65 trials it was aboard an Ambassador Supreme in trials trim (i.e. lighter guards and trial tyres!) It was a lovely little thing and I rode it successfully for several years - again, that word 'solid' comes to mind! I always had the impression that Kaye Don made them as a bit of a hobby and quality was placed ahead of profit.



So, as I approach my dotage a small two stroke seems more and more attractive. I love the green lane Greeves that I now ride instead of my Ariel greenlaner (although I still have that) and I would love a two stroke for road use, and a 197 Villiers appeals to me, as I'd like to have a go at the Marjorie Cottle element of the Levis Cup trial.

So, Reg, whilst I would counsel you to keep that little gem that you've acquired would you please add me to the list of first refusals I'm sure your article must have originated should you ever decide to part with it!

Dick Hobart

2020 Pre Season Rally

Just before the start of the new rally-season, we put on a pre-season-rally for friends, where we ride and test the old stuff, to find out if riders and bikes are ready for action for the season to come. We also see if and how we can get some more speed out of our machines.

This year, the pre-season-rally took place at the end of January, when there was no sign of Corona in Holland. The modern Motorcycle magazine "PITBOX" wanted to come and do an article about some of the bikes and the riders. Friends came from all across the country to our house, some came for the whole weekend, others on a daytrip and we made available some bikes from our garage, which have not been used for some time, or we adjusted sidecars where possible, preparing them for a "sidecar race" later in the afternoon.

Our aim for this weekend was to be talking about bikes, working and tuning bikes and riding them. The weather was cold but dry. Gijs came all the way from Leiden on his modern supercharged BMW and changed that for the 1907 500cc Brown. The Brown was undergoing some modifications by the de Boer brothers, so it is becoming a very fast bike. They modified the timing of the camshaft and made the forks more solid for high speeds. Gijs was testing the Brown and seemed very happy with its performance. He told me, "it feels super now and I had to adjust my braking points significantly!" Maud was in the mood for riding the ex Sue Hanson LE Velocette. Joek fixed a nice sidecar on the LE in the office where it was nice and warm, just in case Maud was still somewhat wobbly from a party the day before the sidecar race.



Hennie was preparing her 1913 Humber, with the hand start and the Sturmey Archer hub in the rear wheel. She was oiling the rear wheel hub using very thin ATF oil. The bike seems to be in a perfect condition and started at once.

Joek had come all the way from Eindhoven and was trying out a 1904 Werner and later, a 1903 Griffon. It was great fun to see the sparkle in his eyes. He could not make up his mind what the best choice for the rally would be. They both had plus and minus points. The Werner has a lever to let the belt slip, so you're able to stop with the engine running, a very modern feature for 1904.

He was also promised a ride on the ex-Vesey bike in the rally, so his day was to become a truly stunning one!



Arend was riding and testing the Pebok, (big smile on his face,) before he started on his 1912 Zenith Gradua single. Carolien drove the 1913 BSA, Lex Biermans the BSA with sidecar. He was trying to make it go more quickly for the sidecar race later on. Someone suggested that he should take everything off the bike to save weight! Mark de Boer was riding our 1909 V twin Premier and Geert took the 1904 REX, originally a 400cc, but now performing like a 550 cc, after recent minor modifications. We swapped the surface carburettor for a spray carburettor, using a B&B-type we found in the garage. Kees de Jong had taken his 1913 Bradbury and Fred was on a 500cc (!) 1904 Peugeot, a really fast period bike!

We had a phone call from the well connected, (and world renowned,) Mr McDuffy of Scotland, just a few days before the rally, because an old friend from his grand prix days had approached him, and said that Marc Marquez was seeking the purest bike experience available. McDuffy, not riding himself anymore, quickly contacted us to see if Marquez could join our pre-season rally. He would make a suitable bike available for him to use, because of the lack of vintage Honda's!

When our friend appeared he truly stole the show with the ex G.R. Vesey Norton, together with a 1922 Martinsyde, (ex Chris Tait). The Norton was a great performer and we could deduce the following details:

Engine: 490cc, 79 x 100, approximately 7:1 C.R., inlet valve to suit 1 and seven-eighths inch diameter port, Exhaust valve to suit 1 and a half inch diameter port, inlet guide approximately ¼ in. Inlet port, B & B cams, hardened caps on valve stems, push rods standard, ball ends at top, parallel return springs, magneto ML, timed 45 degrees BTDC, rods and flywheels standard, undrilled.

Gearbox: Close ratio S.A. bottom approximately 9:1 between 2nd and top, 4.4:1, standard SA change, but gear arrangement made all changes except 2nd to bottom positive.

Forks, frame, handlebars: standard but Vesey made a steering damper to size! Tank T.T. type approximately 11in. wide flat-tank with knee grips, and quick action filler.

It went like lightning and the guys from the PITBOX magazine were not able to keep up with him and became very excited. They were convinced that this bike was like no other, especially in the capable hands of Marquez. They were very impressed by the performance of all the bikes being ridden, even the LE Velocette with the green sidecar. They loved it and found it very trusty, the only thing they noticed was that the combination was a bit wallowy, but we all told them that was not the bike, but Maud!

A few weeks after this pre season rally we heard that everything was in a Lockdown because of the Coronavirus and the VMC rallies in Holland are cancelled until at least September this year. We have great memories of the rally and of course the feature published by PITBOX.

Roel v Maarseveen

P.S. As you will understand, due to sponsorship agreements, no pictures of Marquez using, or on our bikes can be published.



I am trying to fill my time in lock down. I am succeeding

Answer: Buy a Honda VFR800F (vee four).

Ride frequently.

Now time to carry out a 48,000km service.

Order air filter, oil filter and four new sparking plugs, and ensure adequate supplies of good Ozzie Red are on hand.

Remove all the flash plastic panels. This was very fiddly. Trouble with some patent plastic clips right at the bottom, and behind the front wheel. Covered in good gungy Ozzie red dirt. These little clips are very difficult to remove, as they are only a few inches above bench level and impossible to see without a mirror.

Replace both filters. Not too bad as I have done it before.

BUT the B****Y spark plugs! Gee, never have I found changing plugs so difficult. This is all to be done with the fuel tank in place.

They are set about 6" down through a .875" hole through the cam box cover. I did not have a 3/8" drive plug socket to fit. I had to grind down my 1/2" drive socket and extension bar to fit down this .875" hole. Locate 'plug and unscrew it. Remove socket, then use a magnet to grab the plug. With a spring loaded grab and release tool very gently lower in the new plug. Lower the socket, engage the plug and start the plug into the head. Luckily they all started in quite easily. But this is all done blind.

To do the front plugs I had to remove both coolant radiators.

This then was an ideal opportunity to pick out all the red grit in the radiator cores. This took a couple of hours.

This has all taken about three days so far. I have had it running. Now I have decided to change the coolant as I lost some.

Waiting for some new plastic clips and then put all the panels back on.

Ah, for the days of a twin cylinder s.v. Douglas where the plugs could not be any more accessible.

The VFR is a brilliant machine, but it is so compact and sophisticated: Fuel injection, A.B.S, cruise control, three radiators, etc, etc. The designers must have fiendish minds.

When finished I will not really be able to go for a legal ride. We are allowed out for shopping, hospital visits and once a day for exercise.

I can hardly go shopping or down to the beach for a swim on the VFR.

For exercise, if hot, I go for a swim, now it is getting cooler I go for a ride on the deadly treadly. My normal route is about 14.5 km. This is getting a bit boring. To go a different route I am looking at about 30+ km. Too long for an old asthmatic with Covid. So, on an into town beach swim trip, I then went and bought an electric treadly. Once it was loaded in the car the dealer realised they could not find the charger, so I can't ride that either just yet. I look forward to engaging in some L.P.A on two wheels. Years ago I did have a couple of Wall Auto Wheels. At that time, these required plenty of VPA, (Vigorous Pedal assistance).

But hey - life is pretty good here in W.A. The state is in lock down with SA and NT borders closed. No air services, and with just seven dead, all connected to the b...y cruise ships. You are having it much tougher in the U.K.

Just back from the shed. I was startled to hear a very welcome sound - rain on the tin roof. Nothing like it!!

This is the first rain we had had here in W.A for some months; perhaps autumn has finally arrived.

22.04.20.

Coolant changed and all panels back on. "Hello, what's this? One metal screw left over. "Bother!" I have looked and looked. No vacant holes.

So I will have to have the panels off again. "Bother".

At least it is keeping me occupied in the shed.

Take care

All the best

Bob

P.S. I took all the cowls off again to see if I could find a home for one left over screw. No luck but I did swap two over to get them in their correct positions.

Bob Main KOB (The only one in Australia!)

Lockdown – off to the shed to repair my Royal Enfield

On my last few rides before the lockdown the engine used to miss a beat or two before kicking back in. This disease became progressively worse until I could start all right but after opening the throttle the engine would cough and die.

I had a similar problem last year which was diagnosed as a problem with the end of the plug lead where it fits into the top of the coil: oxidation ("rust") inside the top of the coil inhibiting the spark – so first thing was checking this – it seemed to be okay. Next was the carburettor: It sounded like fuel starvation so I stripped the carb and cleaned it.

Carb back on and still the same problem, so I repeated the process but took the carb back into town where the Honda workshop let me use their high-pressure air hose. This made no

difference: starting okay and then cutting out.

So could it be the electrics after all? Changed sparkplug. No difference. I wondered if the ignition coil could be on the way out so took it in to Trevor Hall who has a simple device of testing this. Coil was pronounced sound. At this point in time NZ went into lockdown. This was the opportunity to tidy up odds and ends.

I set off to the shed to sort out this Royal Enfield. Was it the electrics then after all? Checked the ignition timing (spot on) and replaced points and condenser for good measure. No difference; then replacement of the German made ignition coil for one made by Mr Lucas. This caused another wave of anxiety because, while fitting it, I remembered a note about Mr Lucas from a November 2002 newsletter. It goes like this:

LUCAS ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS

The Lucas motto: "Get home before dark"

The three positions of a Lucas switch ----DIM, FLICKER and OFF. The other three switch settings--SMOKE---SMOLDER and IGNITE.

The original anti-theft devices - Lucas Electrical Products

If Lucas made guns, wars would not start either.

Back in the 70's Lucas decided to diversify its product line and began manufacturing vacuum cleaners. It was the only product they offered which didn't suck.

Lucas - inventor of the self-dimming headlamp.

Alexander Graham Bell invented the Telephone

Thomas Edison invented the Light Bulb

Joseph Lucas invented the Short Circuit

Why do the English drink warm beer? - Because Lucas made refrigerators as well

Recommended procedure before taking on a repair of Lucas equipment: check the position of the stars, kill a chicken and walk three times anti-clockwise around your bike chanting: "Oh mighty Prince of Darkness, protect your unworthy servant"

Of course my problems did not go away after fitting this new ignition coil. I decided that the problem must have been the fuel supply after all so took the carb off and replaced it with an Amal, from a Triumph Harris-Bonneville. The reader will not be surprised if I again have to declare that the problem did not go away.

A New Zealand Despondent! – (From the Hamilton Classic Motorcycle Club, NZ)

Request or Wanted

Tony Page asks, "I am after an old, decent, British made pillar drill with a small vice for it, if you know of anyone selling one. Obviously I will collect it, but once the CV-19 situation has ended." He adds, "The heavier and more unwieldy the drill, the better! Single phase though." Please email Tony direct on tp_on_tour@yahoo.co.uk

Ed

Eric Bush, the quiz setter, sent me an article in the Telegraph newspaper about Captain Tom Moore

I bought my first motorcycle, a 1920 Royal Enfield two-stroke, when I was 12 – for two shillings and sixpence. It was broken, so I took it home and managed to turn it into a working, rideable motorbike. When I was 18, studying at Bradford Technical College, my father – who, along with my brother, was a motorcyclist before me – bought me a 1936 BSA for the journey. I would ride it day after day – there was so much beautiful countryside where we lived in West Yorkshire.

In this photo, I'm about 35 years old and I'm sitting on a Scott, which I rode several times for vintage motorcycle races and local competitions in Yorkshire. You were given a set route and a time in which to do it and you had to keep to it. If you did it properly, you arrived everywhere at just the right time. Speed wasn't the thing, it was timekeeping that was important. My motorcycle was owned by a man called Oliver Lampton – I was lent bicycles by people who knew that I was a possible winner. I'm probably quite pleased with myself in this photo



Astride a Scott racing motorcycle at 35, and on his charity walk (below)

going to take part in a war that we were all involved in. I joined the 8th Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, which was made up of men between 20

were eventually shipped off to India. We were in a convoy of ships that left Liverpool and went north around Ireland, then down through the Atlantic,

The most obvious mistake is that the machine loaned to him was from Oliver Langton, brother of Eric Langton, who between them owned several famous motorcycles, and were great Yorkshire men.

Eric also sent me this new road sign.

