

The Cotswold Section of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club



Newsletter

Issue 96 – June 2014



A Cotswold Road Trial 'green lane' when the weather had helped to solidify the mud at Salperton – not like this year! – image by Bill Craswell

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Copies of the Newsletter can be obtained from our web-site, by letting the editor know that you want to receive it by email or by sending 6 stamped self addressed C5 envelopes to the editor.

August 2014 deadline is 13th July 2014

From the B190

A mixed bag of contents this time including event reports, reports from the other side of the world and the new feature of KOBİ Corner.

Reg Eyre KOBİ

A Plea for Help

A long time-served member of the section, John Deane, is looking for a lightweight motorcycle or lightweight sidecar, or just a chassis. John wants to continue riding but he has difficulty with stands and kick starting machines. If you can assist, please contact John direct on 01453 823044.

Many thanks.

60th (Felix Burke Memorial) Cotswold Road Trial 2014: or, 'Here's Mud in Your Eye!'

I think that most of us are aware of the threats to our future use of green lanes, and of the efforts of LARA, in particular, to mitigate this threat. But even were we to lose the battle tomorrow, at least we went out with a bang! Clerk of the Course Fred Smith Junior's interpretation of Regulation 8.6.4.1, "Approximately one third of Control Points will be unsurfaced country roads..." was as stretched as the official mileage-matrix distances were compressed! With eleven green-lane checkpoints, plus one with a ford, we were spoilt for choice as never before (and one can only hope, not for the last time).

Devising a 60 'official-mile route' was more difficult than usual: I think that traces of many of them must have resembled treble-clef signs, or bowline knots.

Although there hadn't been much rain for three weeks before the event, the legacy of February was hanging around...I've never known mud like it! Sunday 6th April was definitely my hardest day's riding for many years. It crossed my mind soon after the start that the loss of two machine bonus points for the use of a pair of knobbies, instead of my well-worn road-rubbers, would have been a bargain. In fact, some green lanes weren't all that bad: Barton, Bagendon, Temple Guiting, Duntisbourne and Sparrowthorn weren't much worse than squelchy. Barrow Wake, as always, was simply bumpy. Sapperton contained some mudholes, and Winstone must have been dredged since I last rode it: I was expecting the worst, but it was an anticlimax. However, Salperton was spectacular! Marshal Pete Cole tried his best to dissuade me, but I didn't believe him...I had to leg continuously all the way up, from the black porridge at the bottom, through the ochre pudding of the mid-stratum, to the green sponge at the top. Phew! Then came the *piece de resistance*, Condicote North: it was majestic! Marshal Chris Roberts did warn me, but I was on a mission...although this lane is on the level, I still had to leg continuously to maintain forward motion at all! It was one of the longest miles in my life.

Did anyone do Condicote South? My eleventh challenge was the Kineton ford, a mere bagatelle. I plunged into the clear clean flowing water, and left it looking like the Limpopo delta.

My last checkpoint was Andoversford, in the Royal Oak. Aaaah! And finally on to our new and well-chosen Finish Checkpoint at the Village Hall for the traditional junketing. There were a lot of muddy motorbikes parked outside, although curiously I had encountered very few on the green lanes. I gathered that some of the checkpoint questions had been on the crusty side, so maybe all the mud-and-struggle had been worth it...we'll see.

Anyway, my sincere thanks to, and appreciation of, the army of marshals and officials and the main organisers without whom this unique event could not be staged. It was a classic!

Cheers! Here's to the next!

A Cotswold Rider

Additional Comments – snippets from emails

It would have been nice to have a mixture of questions and lanes – say two points for doing the lane and one question to answer.

Why was it so difficult to find a route of 60 miles?

How much damage did we do to the lanes?

An interesting comment was that since Arthur Mortimer devised the Cotswold Road Trial, why do we commemorate Felix-Burke and not Arthur?

Editor

Signpost Rally 2014

Sunday 18th May dawned bright and fair, and dry and warm too. The Scott started first kick and buzzed up to Denfurlong Farm, to meet fellow entrants to the Signpost Rally, with new Clerk of the Course Dave Hoskins. I have to say that the number of riders was disappointing, although it included quality, Bob Ashwin with Champion, Reg with Invicta and Brian with Francis-Barnett in particular.

Dave's choice of signposts, and associated questions, was first class, and very fair. OK, difficult in places, but still fair. He'd done a Short Course too, for those with shorter legs.



Three of the four Flat Tank machines, which took part in the Signpost Rally based at Denfurlong Farm, near Chedworth. The missing pre-1931 machine was Paul's Scott parked with the more modern machines.

The 10.00 distributions of paperwork, the 15.00 quiz and the Announcement of Results were all done *al fresco*. Dave had set up camp on the green bit of the car park, with wife and family to help, and operated out of the boot of his car, with impressive efficiency, including freshly sharpened ball-point pens for the quiz. All riders stood in line to hear the Results. Notably, Bruce Grant (South Wales Section) won the premium prize, (the Bovenizer Yacht Anchor) by a short nose, with Dave and Sue Collins as runners-up, (winning the Cotswold Signpost Trophy). A footnote. Dave had received only 13 entries up to the morning of the event, two of which were from out-of-section riders, and only two from our Committee Members. This is a pretty dismal reflection of the sportiness of the Cotswold Section however one looks at it.

On behalf of all entrants, I take this opportunity to say a big ‘Thank You to Dave’ for his polished and effective organisation of the day, and may he be minded to do it all for us again next year.

To all non-entrants, you missed an excellent event and it serves you right. Start to take part in your own locally based events.

Paul Button



Photograph of the Cotswold Section Relay Rally checkpoint at the Jet Age Museum at Staverton airfield.

A Dandy of a Tale

The year was 1958. I was 16 and owned a scruffy plunger Tiger Cub that I had to keep at a pal's house, as my parents were so set against me having a motorcycle of any sort. A few years prior to the acquisition of the Cub I had an old Excelsior Autocycle that I never ever did get going. I was 13 at the time and reckoned that the Excelsior was the best exercise bike ever made as I must have pedalled it many a mile trying to coax some life into the Villiers JDL motor. Anyway, back to 1958. I was about to leave Cathays High School and start work with Cardiff Corporation as a junior accountant in January 1959 and some form of motorised transport was

essential – or so I kept telling my parents. Couldn't admit to having the Cub, could I? At the time I really fancied a Triumph Tiger 110 and a friend who worked in the motorcycle workshops of Cyril Morgan Motors in Caerphilly had a brand new silver one. Gosh, how I dribbled over that bike, it really was the bee's knees at that time. I spent many an hour in various motorcycle dealers showrooms in Cardiff and Caerphilly dreaming about what it would be like to legitimately own a motorcycle.

After working for several weeks and being transported to and from work by dad in his A40 car, my mother made an announcement, "We've decided that you can have a motorcycle for going to work". At last, I thought – a Tiger 110!!

My grandparents, who ran a motor trade business in Cardiff, had a family connection with the Parsons family who owned Car Distributors (BSA House) Ltd, which was one of the main motorcycle dealers in Cardiff at the time. Unknown to me, my mum had been into the 'BSA House' showroom and arranged for me to be supplied with a new bike. "I've already bought you a bike", said mother and added "It'll be delivered this next Saturday lunchtime".

Whilst waiting those few long days before Saturday I dreamt of my new Tiger 110 and the wind in the face feeling that is so narcotic to all of us who love motorcycles. Must say that I didn't give any thought to the fact that the bike that mum had bought could be anything other than a Tiger 110. There was nothing else worth considering, after all, but the bike was coming from 'BSA House' - and there's a clue in the name.

The first Saturday in February dawned and one of the 'BSA House' workshop mechanics, on his way home, rode up to the front door with my new bike – what was it? Not a T110 but a BSA Dandy registered as RUH232. Gee, how could mum have got it so wrong and bought me one of those? It came complete with a



set of panniers and a gigantic windscreen that must have reduced the top speed quite a bit. However, at last I was mobile and I rode that little bike a lot during the summer of 1959 and also passed my test on it. By November it had begun playing up, so I soon part exchanged it for a new BSA C15 250cc – still couldn't afford a Tiger 110. As an aside, I did eventually get my hands on a 1959 T110 in 1964 – and still have it to this day. Back to the Dandy - little did I know that all

the problems that I was having with the bike could have been cured by simply adjusting the points – but where are the points? Right in the middle of the engine, and to get at them the motor had to be removed from the bike and split in half to access the points. At the time I didn't know that, of course. What a naff idea – but then the BSA group designers did produce some weird and wonderful things back then.

I shouldn't be too critical of the Dandy though, as it was a good little bike really – flat out at 35mph though. At one point I had a go at 'tuning' it by removing that huge windscreen, the leg shields and all other extra bits. Then, with great expectations, I took it to the top of Caerphilly Mountain and ran it flat out down the mountain road with my chin on the headlamp. It made – yep, you've guessed it, 35mph. That was all I ever got out of the 70cc, two-speed, two-stroke motor. Technically, the Dandy does have some interesting features such as a pre-selector gearbox and it was well received at its launch in 1955 being described by the press



as being well ahead of its time and a cross between a scooter and a moped. Move on 50 odd years and one day, the subject of Dandys arose whilst talking to a good pal from the Vintage Motor Cycle Club who lived near Andover. He mentioned that he had three. "You must sell me one," I argued, without even thinking about it. I was given the option of a maroon and cream one or a blue and white one.

Out of pure nostalgia I opted for the maroon and cream bike as that was the colour of my original Dandy. This one was also declared as 1959 on the paperwork – even better, I thought. My pal Peter had completely stripped the bike for restoration and had set about restoring the wheels but had since changed his mind and went for an earlier example.

There was some paperwork with the bike and I wondered, as I drove home from Andover with the Dandy remains in the boot, about the bike's history. It had a V5C for the number AKG568A which I knew was a number from 1963 due to the A suffix and that the KG series were issued by the Cardiff DVLA office. So did the bike originate in Cardiff? Could it be my old Dandy RUH232? Highly unlikely, I thought, but worth investigating, especially as the A suffix number was totally out of keeping for the bike.

Well, it took a few months and two years of 'planning', you have to 'plan' these things, don't you? Anyway, at last, sitting in my garage is a rather resplendent cream and maroon BSA Dandy. It's a 1959 model, of course, and was acquired by my pal from a trader at the Netley Marsh autojumble. Prior to that, it had passed through the hands of two people in Birmingham. Then comes the interesting part – the bike went to Birmingham from a motor dealer in Cardiff back around the mid-1990s – so the question still nagged in my mind, 'Could it be RUH232'? I just had to find out.

The Cardiff motor dealer had used the bike in 1990 to obtain an age related number for his Hyundai car – as the system for the recovery of old reg. numbers was not in place back in the early 90's and at that time age related numbers were transferrable.

So the Dandy was allocated VSU468 and the number was then quickly transferred off the bike and on to the Hyundai. When my pal Peter had bought the bike, it sported the number VSU468 – but now had a V5C for AKG568A. Gets complicated, doesn't it? However, the A suffix number was completely out of place for a 1959 machine and would need changing for a more appropriate age-related one at the very least.

One day I had the opportunity to research the original BSA despatch books at the VMCC Library and found that the Dandy now in my possession was despatched on the 8th January 1959 to Car Distributors (BSA house) Ltd in Cardiff – it was, the only Dandy sent to them that month. Their next Dandy delivery wasn't until the 22nd February. Everything fitted, so far.

Next stop was the Glamorgan archives and a check of the old Cardiff registration records confirmed that the Dandy in my garage was indeed RUH232. I've since managed to convince the nice people at the DVLA to let me have the number back. The engine is not the original one, which is a shame – but the rest is my old bike, for sure.

Everyone visiting my garage during the last few months and seeing the recreation, must wonder if I've lost my marbles, I know my wife thinks so, but hey, what price nostalgia!! Each time I look at the little bike I smile and wonder just where it's been for the past 50 odd years.



All that's wrong is the seat, as in 1959 mine had the new style grey rubber one – I have the seat frame, but it seems that the rubber seats just rot away over time. So it's a case of make do with one of the earlier type of seats for now - anyone know of a proper serviceable grey rubber Dandy seat? Now that would really make my day.

Bill Phelps

Section Library

Even though we don't have Library nights as such during the summer months, the Library is still open for business. If you would like to borrow a book or magazine, please let me know by phone, text or email and we can make arrangements to meet at a club night and I will bring the book with me. My mobile number is 07717 672210 and my email address is keith.twist@hotmail.com. The book and magazine lists are available on the Section website or hard copies can be provided. Thanks.

Keith Twist - Section Librarian

Musings from the Deep South

Among the many little differences between English English and New Zealand English – and you could compile half a book of them if you tried – are our versions of road tax and the MOT test. These are known as registration and the warrant of fitness. Registration is a nicely ambiguous term as it can mean the process of getting a vehicle legal for the first time and also the annual payment for the privilege of using it. The WOF is a self-explanatory term and is almost unavoidable. The only road vehicles that are immune to it are scooters of under 50cc with a minimal power output and, whilst my 1924 BSA Round Tank would qualify on power output, its 249cc means I must get it tested.

The warrant of fitness was instituted in New Zealand in the late 1930s preceding the UK by more than twenty years. You can occasionally see such early WOFs on museum cars when it took the form of a luggage label tied with string through the eyelet and attached to the steering column.

When I first set foot in this fair land forty years ago the requirement for all vehicles was to be warranted from day one and all WOFs were for six months only. Then, as now, any vehicle offered for sale was required to have a warrant no more than one month old and sellers would usually get a fresh one issued after negotiations were complete. The only exceptions to this are the unofficial sales of the sorts of old vehicles we cherish which often change hands on an “as is where is” basis. Over time the WOF regime has relaxed to where new vehicles, but not including imports of used vehicles, are allowed twelve month warrants for the first six years. In recent times the Ministry of Transport has floated the idea of relaxing the regime and this means that new vehicles are exempt a warrant for the first three years followed by a longer spell of only an annual test.

The idea of a reduced WOF regime was greeted with a howl of protest by the Motor Trade Association representing the hundreds of small neighbourhood qualified mechanics that rely on them for income. They recruited a well known car racing driver to front TV and newspaper adverts telling us how important it was that we were all regularly tested. All the specialist vehicle clubs from hot rodders to one make clubs including classic and vintage clubs are represented at government level by a single body so that a single voice puts our point of view. The largest of them all, the Vintage Car Club of New Zealand with some 7,000 members acts for all. In recent years we have watched the changes to the UK regimes of taxing and testing with interest. The VCCNZ, with a thirty-year rolling eligibility requirement, made strenuous efforts to get warrants for our vehicles back to an annual basis but to no avail and has admitted defeat. Although registration costs reduce considerably once a vehicle passes its fortieth birthday we have little prospect of getting it totally waived.

One major difference between the UK and New Zealand is that the warrant has to be on display like the registration label so that P.C. Plod can assess your legality on the spot. Carrying your licence to drive or ride is also mandatory. This means an

instant ticket for an offence with none of the business of presenting your licence where it suits you some days later and the attendant paperwork the Police must do. This is something that the UK could learn from us if you want to simplify things. A curious habit of British bike owners has been to use a circular UK tax disc holder to display the smaller, rectangular WOF label.

You will by now have noticed no reference to insurance, which is not a legal requirement – much to my personal dislike as I insure all my bikes and the car. Under our accident compensation laws, the other person's body is covered by the insurance element in the cost of registration but not his vehicle. When these laws were first established in 1974 Parliament removed the right to sue for personal injury in return for all medical costs being covered and 80% of your income being paid to you until you were ready to return to work. This was a remarkable enactment as Parliament comprised more than the average number of lawyers who have denied their ilk the copious incomes they believe to be their right. These laws also ease the minds of rally organizers from the fear of being sued for anything Joe Public fancies and therefore club insurances are much less costly than yours.

Traps for young players

My riding boots developed a small gap between toecap and sole so I took them to a repairer. He duly heaved on the sole and it promptly parted company right back to the heel so it now looked like Coco the Clown's boot. Off to the bike shop we went and soon came out with a new pair. The 1954 Matchless needed a warrant so it was time to try the new boots. As I set off I could not engage the gear lever with my toe – and neither could I see what was happening but somehow we got there and back. It did not take long to work out that the new boots were deeper from the sole to the top of the toecap than the old and that the cure was simple by adjusting the spline on the gear lever. If you buy new boots try them out for this first.

Paul Whitehead – KatiKati, New Zealand



Your editor going for a Sunday ride in the 2014 Pioneer Run from Epsom Downs to Brighton. He made it despite some very fancy and constant pedalling on his 1913 JES engined bicycle.

Photo courtesy of David Southcott,
www.vintageman.zenfolio.com

KOBI Corner

Burke Bros employed a youngish erk to sort out the metal scrap; brass in this bin, cast iron in that bin and steel in this bin and so on. Not too onerous or difficult you would think.

At this time Felix was running an oldish Rolls Royce. I did not think it was a very pretty one but Felix, quite justifiably so, was proud of it.

On this particular day Felix went in to collect it from Broughton's, the Rolls dealer at the traffic lights in London Road. The car was not ready. The service manager said, "Please come with me Mr. Burke and we will go to the workshop and see how your car is coming along."

A pair of legs were sticking out from under the car and it very soon transpired that they belonged to the same erk that Felix had sacked a couple of days before as he was not up the task of sorting scrap. I believe a few words were aired; Felix was not at all impressed and sold the car very soon thereafter.

Regards,

Bob Main KOBI – Australian Chapter

The New KOBI – Bobby Robinson KOBI



Having been enrolled by his dad, a rotten scoundrel immediately removes the chain of office which invokes the ancient rule whereby the new knight has to buy mead ale for all the knights present and having witnessed the non-wearing of the chain.

Some the exploits regarding Bobby's qualifications were voiced prior to his enrolment but, for those not there, these included things such as repairing his clutch outside my house during a previous rally, when rather than park his bike in open space he lent against the garden fence and then trampled Ginnie's daffodils into the ground. When the associated displeasure was voiced to him he asked what daffodils were, and when shown said "Oh, I thought they were dandelions!" On his next visit the clutch was still playing up, apparently he had put it in the garage and expected it to repair itself!

But he is good at putting out bike fires, especially in Ireland, where he simply watches it and shouts "help!" and then waits for Chris Harvey to sprint 50 yards to put the fire out.

The picture of Bobby wearing the KOBI chain was taken at the recent South Durham Section Quaker Run (May 11th). He has with him his son Charlie who is obviously getting some early training in idiocy from his father; Charlie completed

the rally in his Granddad John's sidecar so the training continued; I am sure he is a third generation Idiot in the making.

Dennis Beale KOB

News from our Australian Correspondent

I never heard from Geoff Preece, which is a bit disappointing. For a time we jointly owned a 1927 Wallis and Stevens Advance steam roller. I kept it at Fourways Garage, Chalford Hill, which I owned and ran for a few years. We did quite a bit of motorcycling together.

What ever happened to Charlie Price, one time member of the Cotswold Section? He was into motorcycles, steam engines and all sorts. He lived in a caravan at Camp.

I believe his name was the last entry in the logbook of one of the cars used by the great train robbers. *Bob Main KOB*



(Note from editor – The shot on the left is how Bob Main KOB found the steam engine, the shot on the right shows it restored. As I understand it, Bob also restored the farm buildings in the background.)



These photographs came from a friend who got them from inside a book. Does anyone recognise the rider/collector? He could have been from the Collector's Club and possibly worked in the theatre.

Help Please

I noticed a picture of a Tredagh bike on page 9 of your January issue. Would you happen to know who the current owner of the Tredagh is? My grandfather owned the business that made the bikes and I'm doing some research on it for a local museum in Ireland. Replies to the Editor please.

COTSWOLD SECTION CALENDAR - JUNE 2014 to AUGUST 2014

June

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| 4th | Mid-Week Social Run | The Carpenters Arms, Miserden, Stroud |
| 4th | Mid-Week Rally | |
| 11th | Mid-Week Rally | The Half-Way House Inn, Kington, Cheltenham |
| 18th | Mid-Week Rally | The Rising Sun Inn, Moseley Green, Parkend, Lydney |
| 24th | Committee Meeting | Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown |
| 25th | Club Night | The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester |
| | Midsummer Madness Breakfast Run to | |
| 29th | Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum at New Milton | M&S BP Service Station, Barnwood Road, Gloucester |

July

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|------|---|--|
| 2nd | Mid-Week Social Run | The Butchers Arms Inn, Oakridge Lynch, Stroud |
| 2nd | Mid-Week Rally | |
| 9th | Mid-Week Rally | The Village Inn, Twyning, Tewkesbury |
| 11th | 26th Cotswold Weekend - Social Gathering | Tobacconist Farm, Tobacconist Road, Minchinhampton |
| 12th | Cotswold Section Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - Social Run and Luncheon | Chedworth Village Hall, Chedworth, Cheltenham |
| 13th | 26th Cotswold Weekend Cloverleaf Road Trial | Miserden Village Hall, Miserden, Stroud |
| 13th | DEADLINE FOR AUGUST 2014 NEWSLETTER | |
| 14th | Cotswold Touring Holiday | Tobacconist Farm, Tobacconist Road, Minchinhampton |
| 18th | | |
| 16th | Mid-Week Rally and Barbecue | Tobacconist Farm, Tobacconist Road, Minchinhampton |
| 18th | Veteran and Vintage Weekend – Evening Social Run | Tobacconist Farm, Tobacconist Road, Minchinhampton |
| 19th | Veteran and Vintage Weekend - Navigational Trial | Tobacconist Farm, Tobacconist Road, Minchinhampton |
| 23rd | Mid-Week Rally | The Greyhound Inn, Littledean, Cinderford |
| 27th | Summer Meeting | The Plough Inn, Ford, Cheltenham |
| 29th | Committee Meeting | Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown |
| 30th | Club and Curry Night | The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester |

August

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|------|--|---|
| 3rd | Sidecar and Three-Wheeler Run | The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester |
| 6th | Mid-Week Social Run | The Bell Hotel, The Green, Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucester |
| 6th | Mid-Week Rally | |
| 10th | Summer Meeting | The Bathurst Arms Inn, North Cerney, Cirencester |
| 13th | Mid-Week Rally | The Daneway Inn, Sapperton, Cirencester |
| 20th | Mid-Week Rally | The Gardeners Arms Inn, Alderton, Tewkesbury |
| 24th | Breakfast Run to Prescott Breakfast Club | M&S BP Service Station, Barnwood Road, Gloucester |
| 26th | Committee Meeting | Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown |
| 27th | Club Night | The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester |