

The Cotswold Section

of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club



Newsletter

Issue 86 - November 2012



Rob Dixon on 'the Rattler' somewhere in the Cotswolds.
I have someone who would like to ask him about the machine.
Can anyone contact Rob and I will pass on details

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the
officers of the Cotswold Section or the Editor:

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www.vmcc-cotswold.org or reg.eyre@tesco.net

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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.

January 2013 deadline is 20th December 2012

From the B190

Although this year has been officially declared one of the wettest on record, we have been fairly lucky for our competitive and social riding season and managed to not get too wet. There are some photos of the Levis Cup time trial and one of the fords which was not as deep as some of the fords used in the Cotswold week-end trial and the Flat Tank run.

Many of us have had good service from engineers and shops that help us with our hobby/lifestyle and I have agreed to put in recommendations from members who wish to let others know where good work, at reasonable cost, can be found.

I am aware that I have not included writings about ethanol in fuel. I feel that there are many authoritative writers in magazines and the VMCC Journal who have issued advice and members can read issues on fuel problems to be informed. I now see that the newspapers are warning that 10% ethanol is due to be sold from January 2013, or even before! Fuels containing ethanol should be served from pumps which are clearly marked E5 or E10. Have you noticed the increase in bike fires this year? I have seen bikes from 1910 to a 'modern' Honda scooter go up in flames and wonder about the volatility of such fuel especially if there may be a leak from the fuel system. Maybe that is why the current MoT testers check the petrol caps, tank and taps?

Email recipients of the Newsletter may wonder why they received an invitation to sign an e-petition about the EU rules which will mean the end of MoTs for pre-1960 machines. The reason was that hidden in the new rules were sections about type approval and testing of trailers and modifications to vehicles which do not use original replacements. Modifications would have to conform to a silhouette test!

Reg Eyre KOB

For Sale

Honda CB125 twin

Kate Rendell is selling Nibbler, her 1981 e-bay bike.

Nibbler has been extensively overhauled by Graham Weatherly and runs well. It's proved to be reliable, easy starting and lively, on VMCC events and in everyday use. The bodywork carries the proud patina of a 30 year-old learner bike with countless 'not so careful' previous owners - so don't expect it to win any conkers. Offers around £700

Ring Robert Rendell on 01452 863470, or try ear@globalnet.co.uk

Helen Hatton wants to sell her **1961 Royal Enfield Crusader Sports 250cc**

It is substantially dismantled but believed complete and it is currently in my shed.

Helen plans to advertise it on eBay soon.

The registration plate is 517 CLW. Helen has the registration document V5 and has owned the motorcycle since about 1980.

Please contact Peter Williams by email peter.j.williams25@talktalk.net or the Editor on 01242 870375.

News from Noel Whittall

Hi Reg, I am just back from doing the Route des Grandes Alpes, both ways, on the 1916 Triumph model H. I hope it will yield sufficient material for another slim volume, but it is early days yet as I got back only yesterday. The old bike coped very well with it all, including the 2,802m high Col de la Bonnette.

Similarly from **Tony Page**

VMCC Beamish Trial up in Durham and 1996, South Island, New Zealand.

Same bike... *(Is this a spot the difference competition? – Ed)*



Can you see which was taken in Durham, or New Zealand?

Another friend sent the following “The Cannon Ball Motorcycle Run arrived in our area yesterday. This goes from New York to San Francisco averaging about 300 miles a day. The image shows a 1929 Harley-Davidson and older motorcycles. Your editor was invited to do a similar ‘Iron Butt’ ride on a veteran machine such as the 1909 Triumph TT Roadster.” No chance!



Matters Arising

On reading the latest Cotswold Section Newsletter I came across a photo of a good friend of mine, Nick Jonckheere, on his 1914 Premier. He bought it from Geoff Davies, right from under my nose as he knew I was looking for a veteran with a gearbox. I didn't know that you were a previous owner. (*I bought the machine from Ray Newell and after some years sold it to Geoff – Ed*)

Nick had a 1913 3-speed hub model and it used to do more than just squeak when used. It really did sound like a bag of nails when he used it. Nick wanted to put a sidecar on it and I advised him not to, as I thought that the hub gear would explode. Hence Nick's acquisition of the gearbox fitted Premier from Geoff.



He had a basket made in Swansea to the same pattern as mine and I also supplied Nick with a drawing of my chair and enough tube to build the chassis. As you can see from the attached, it is job well done. Nick is in the sidecar and his dad rode the bike in this year's Oude Klepper Parade back in August. The bike broke down after two miles.

He's had a bit of leg pulling from me by putting the sidecar on the 'wrong' side. Now, the photo of the Percy Evans Sunbeam I found interesting, as Percy Evans 'beam, pictured in the photo, is actually in the David Plant collection in the Isle of Man. I know David and his wife Joyce quite well and saw Percy's bike when I was on the Island in 2010. I knew Percy quite well and actually gave him the double float chamber for the carburetor back in the 1960's but never knew that he had a cammy model as well. For sure the OHV bike was the one that Percy used in the 60's - so I look forward to hearing about the provenance of the OHC bike.

Bill Phelps

Photo Competition

Graham Rowcliffe will be presenting a bottle of wine, as promised, to John Ewart for "These Cotswold Sporting Trials get more exciting each year." John submitted over 25 captions with a threat of more to come!

Rebirth of an ABC

I have been tickled (and encouraged) by the interest shown by several Cotswold Section members in the progress of my ABC's restoration, in particular at the Midweek Rally at The Bell in Shurdington on 19th September this year.



Any blow-by-blow account of its renaissance, from a largish garage floor-full of dirty and rusty and apparently disparate lumps of tired iron, would be boring: suffice it to say that, 1½ years after its acquisition, roll-out is fairly imminent. Deadline is 27th October, the date of the ABC Centenary Celebrations to be held at Brooklands, in Surrey. FC3370 will be there, in (probably un-silenced) revvin' life! A brief report of this event is promised in due course, with public appearances of the machinery, after the Centenary date, if not before.

Paul Button

Question Time

I hope you will find the photo of my dad taken while he was doing his national service in RAF Kabritt in Egypt in 1952 interesting. Your readers' mission is to look carefully at the picture and work out what the bike/engine is.....let me know what you think. (*Please contact the editor.*)

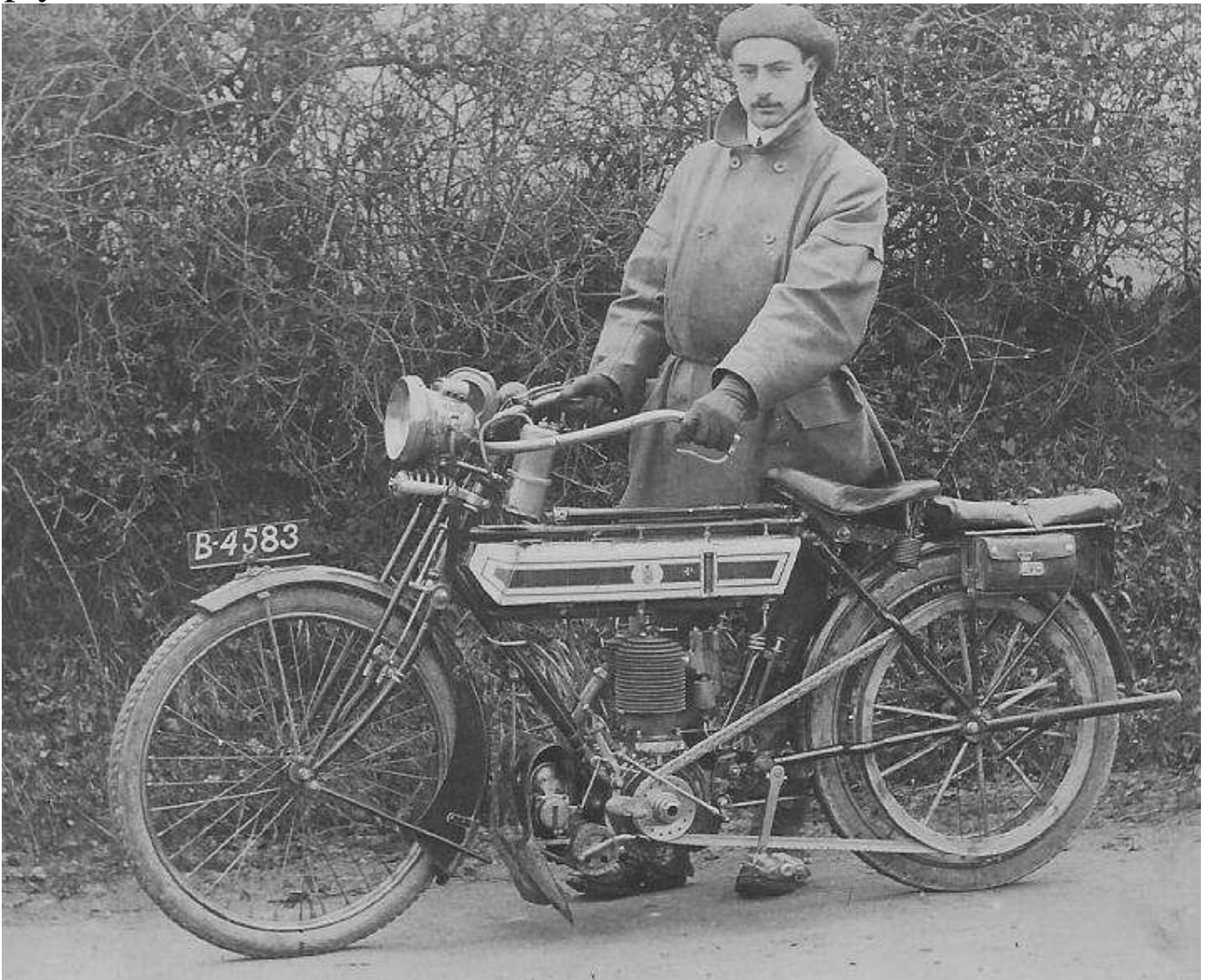


Is this one for Trevor at War Zone Speedway? -
Ed

Recommendations

1. The Bell Metal Fabrications establishment in the Chelworth Industrial Estate, SN6 6HQ, near Cricklade, make one-off exhaust pipes for old motorcycles (!) in stainless or mild steel. They prefer a model to work from, with a sketch in case the requirement deviates from the model. Phone:- 01793-751719
2. I've also had good work done by Pete Marks in the Ryeford Industrial Estate, GL10 2LA, near Stonehouse, in the matters of sand-blasting and powder-coating. 01453-827822. Pete also does quite a wide range of other finishes, in any colour of the rainbow! (*From Paul Button*)
3. Doug Taylor Metal Finishing plating in Copper, Nickel and chrome in Banwell, near Weston. 01934-820454 (*Mention VMCC membership*)
4. From 18th November you won't have to MoT your pre-1960 Machine. However, Peter Hammond's in Cirencester are offering a 'Road Worthiness' check for riders' peace of mind. Call 01285-652467

The following picture belongs to an old lady in Elkstone. Can anyone supply some details?



Gill's Long Way Across – Part 1 (part 2 in next issue)

Well, I left home on Wednesday 5th September and stayed with one of my sisters in Crowthorne overnight. I left for the Channel tunnel at about 09.30 and rode to Folkestone. On arrival in Calais I headed straight for the main road out and didn't stop until about 15.00 for Belgium's traditional Moules Frites. As I headed towards the Netherlands I hadn't accounted for rush hour traffic and didn't hit Antwerp at a good time. I filtered and queued causing my first and main problem, the speedo / odometer stopped working and started making a strange noise. I had already booked a night's accommodation in Veldhoven, near Eindhoven and found the town fairly easily. However with only an address and no SatNav I found that asking (regularly) was the only way to find my hotel. After I found the street I rode up and down, eventually parking in a car park and going to ask in the nearby Steak bar. The bar maid had never heard of the Hotel Heel Gewoon but asked her colleague and was told it was next door but one!

It was a very nice place on the main street of the small old town area opposite a church and above a Tapas bar. After a shower I decided I didn't want to wander too far and opted for the Tapas bar to eat. Sadly my Spanish is not much better than my Dutch so I was a little stuck on the menu, although I recognised enough to feed myself. I was looking forward to a good night's sleep but this wasn't to be as the aforesaid church's belfry was about 25m from my window and the bells continued to chime on the half hour through the night.

The next day I was up bright and early, had breakfast and headed for the bike, only to find I'd been blocked in by the local bakery and fish wagons who clearly resented my presence in their corner of the car park. However the fishmonger was very good about moving, perhaps kinder than they might have been to a man?

I got back on the road to Grevenbroich in NW Germany, stopping only for petrol and a cup of coffee. I reasoned that Schloss Strasse was likely to be in the original part of town, that it was probably near the river and that I might even be able to see a castle if I got close enough. I rode up one dead end but was surprisingly close. I was told to take the third exit off the roundabout (left because we were going round roundabouts the 'wrong' way) and take the first cobbled street on the left. As I rode past an industrial gateway I spotted a line up of about five Vincents and slowly backed up. I had forgotten the Rally was to be held in the grounds of an old flour mill, right on the river and so I had arrived.

Over the next few hours many familiar faces appeared, some I'd seen as recently as the GCM (General Committee Meeting- where I was taking the Minutes- but that's another story) on 2nd September and some I hadn't seen for months. There were also, of course, many Germans whom I had never met and some faces I recognised from International Rallies.

Many camped in the grounds but I had opted for a hotel and had a single room within 100 yards of the Flour Mill. I left the bike in the grounds and went off to change out

of my leathers. There was a barbecue in the grounds the first night and the beer flowed as we talked and laughed the night away.



Gill found a twin Vincent to put alongside her Comet – to cuddle?

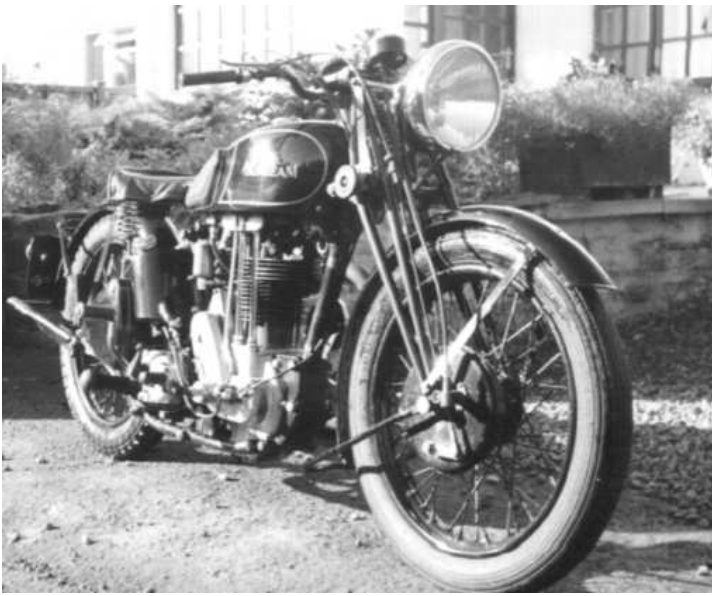
On the Saturday we had a run out to Max Planck's Institute and Radio-telescope where we had a talk by one of the world's leading physicists. We were joined there by many more Vincent owners who had apparently taken a short cut. There was a large dinner in a local restaurant that evening and then it was back to the mill for awards and rally prizes, and of course, more beer.

On the Sunday some people began to leave, some back to work, some off to Austria and some off to Prague (on the way to Austria!) Of those who remained some had a quiet day and evening meal and some were going to a Son et Lumiere Event at Schloss Dyck, which was basically a woodland walk through the castle grounds with music, sound effects and stunning atmospheric light effects, a really great show. 78 people attended the rally and there were 28 Vincents of all shapes and sizes, two or three sidecars, two or three Comets and the rest were twins, Arthur's Series A and the rest B, C or D Rapides or Shadows.

One Man's Motorcycles – An interview with Tom Davis – Part 2

(Continued from Issue 85)

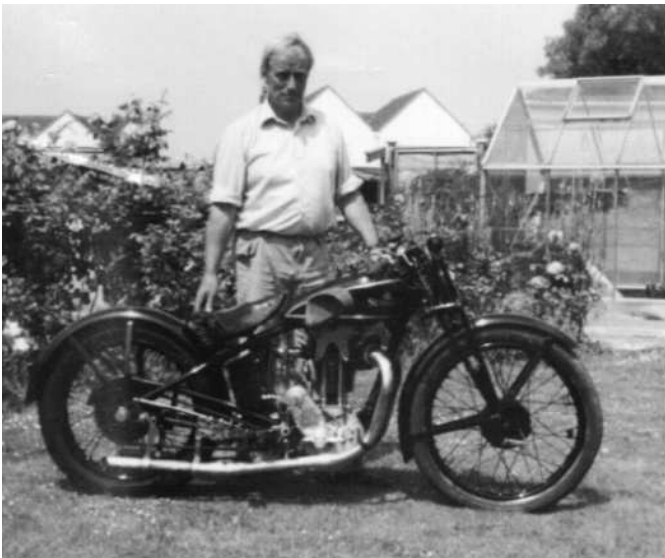
Seymour-Smith asked me to get his 1928 Sunbeam going again and I kept it for a long time. Through knowing Nigel, I got to know many people who had old bikes, including Sunbeams. I was finding old bikes at the rate of about one a week, including the James that ended up with Tony Windeatt. I was told about a lovely Model 8 Sunbeam which was hung up in someone's daughter's bedroom which I bought for £350. We took that one racing at Pembury where Malcolm rode it and it was probably the finest handling bike Sunbeam ever made. I finally sold it to Johnny Johnson in Scotland.



Model 9 Sunbeam

Many more bikes came and went. For example, one evening a bloke knocked on the door and asked if I wanted his bike which he kept in the bedroom, but he was told to get rid of it before he got married on the Saturday! It turned out to be a very nice 500cc ohv Sunbeam which I paid £400 for.

Nigel knew of a shed in Filton where a 1934 racing Sunbeam was kept. This was the Les Newman bike which I paid £45 for. I then researched Les Newman who had raced the bike and found out that he was a retired printer living in Swindon. We became friends and he told me his story and was thrilled to see his old bike restored and running again.



Tom Davis with Newman Sunbeam



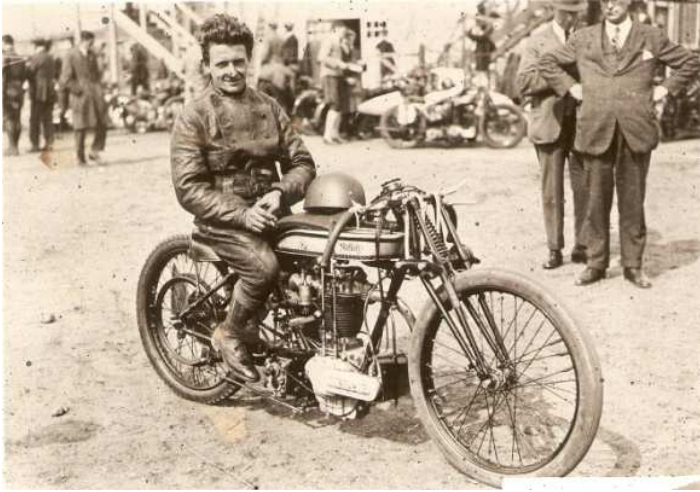
Les Newman re-united with TT mount

I was told about an old bike that had been ‘bricked up’ in a house in Gloucester, by the arches. I bought it, (a Sunbeam Model 90), from a mechanic who worked for Williams for a couple of quid. This bike ended up with Verralls.

Apart from the Sunbeams and AJS machines, I was not very interested in other makes which I restored and passed on. My main interest was getting machines working well mechanically and solving mechanical problems. An exception was a 225cc Royal Enfield which was great except for the belt rim brakes.

I once went into a shed in Coleford with 40 old bikes in. These were balloted for by members of the Bristol Section because I could not cope with so many bikes although I did have 32 bikes at one time. Bikes just came my way.

I enjoy following up on the history of bikes such as the Driscoll-Norton which came from Malcolm Seymour-Smith, Nigel's brother. This had been disposed of by the police at an auction as unclaimed stolen property and found at Cheltenham race course. Malcolm said I was to have the Driscoll-Norton and his Manx Norton after I had restored them.



Bert Denly on Driscoll Norton
in 1927

(There then followed a geography lesson of the locality while Tom and his wife told me of places they had driven to in pursuit of various machines.)

I guess I became a dealer but I was always looking for the ultimate motor cycle, preferably a Sunbeam Model 90 or the excellent handling Model 80. I eventually had a collection of racing Sunbeams because I although I was sort of dealing, I kept the bikes I liked most such as the Driscoll-Norton which had been ridden by Bert Denly, but still not as good as a Sunbeam.

Since my stroke, I have parted with my bikes except for the Inter Norton and the Driscoll-Norton which I have given to my sons. I still enjoy talking about old bikes but I know I can no longer ride any more, however, I have really had a lot of fun for a long time.”



Evocative shots of Nigel Seymour-Smith riding in the 1947 TT

A Grand Day out

I joined the Croydon Motor Club principally because it had a strong group of trials enthusiasts but it also had a thriving social side, with monthly runs to places of interest. Our competition bikes at that time were more or less converted road machines so the trials boys always supported the social side and the social side observed at the trials.

Anyway, in 1954 or thereabouts, I had decided for some reason that I needed a sidecar outfit. At that time, I was running a 1934 Red Hunter Ariel which I had purchased for the grand sum of £12 from another club member. It wasn't much to look at, finished in red primer all over (even the plug lead) but it went well. I found a sports sidecar dumped in someone's front garden...free, of course. It was well rotted and the three ply body was developing into three separate layers but it was bolted onto the old Ariel and prepared for the monthly run which was to climbing rocks south of East Grinstead.

My passenger was my old trials riding chum, Nigel Lee. As usual, we were late for the nine o'clock start but we knew that the coffee stop was at a pub at Nutley on the A22 so off we set – flat out of course – to try to catch up.

Going through Purley, I felt a bump on my left leg – the battery had departed – but as it made no difference to the performance, we pressed on. Near East Grinstead, there was a hell of a clatter. The sidecar mudguard had come adrift, caught on the wheel and was now acting as a skid on the road. Once again, this was considered a mere trifle so the mudguard was slung over the nearest hedge and on we went, even faster than before. The bike was becoming lighter by the minute.

At last, Nutley came into sight. “We are nearly there!” shouted Nigel so I jammed on the rear brake. There was an almighty bang, the rear wheel locked up and we left a 50 foot skid mark. “Good brakes” somebody remarked, not realising that the rear brake anchor arm had snapped, locking the wheel. Not to worry, the engine was still running so, after coffee and a bit of spanner work, we were on our way minus back brake.

On the way to the rocks, there was another violent bang and I looked down to see that Nigel (and sidecar body) was about 50 yards behind, skidding down the road. The bolts had ripped through the plywood floor. No problem – a few bits of string and the body was back in situ. The rest of the ride was uneventful but what an unforgettable, grand day out!

Len Ore, KOB

Dave Pritchard writes that assistance is still required with the organisation of the **15th Anglo-Dutch Reliability Trial for pre-1915 Machines to be held from 22nd to 27th July 2013, South Cerney, Cirencester, Glos.**

Although this is not a Cotswold Section event, if you think you would like to help, please contact Dave Pritchard KOB, 56 Oakwood Drive, Hucclecote, Gloucester, GL3 3JF, or telephone 01452 618248, or email dave@pritchard56.freeserve.co.uk

Lionel Spiers lived in Redditch, Worcestershire and joined the Army as a despatch rider at the outbreak of war. The family story goes that as a keen motorcyclist he saw that the Army would take over the hire purchase payment on his Royal Enfield if he joined up and took it into the Army with him as they were so short of bikes! Would anyone know if this is correct or just one of those family stories? Shortly after joining up, he found himself in France with the British Expeditionary Force on despatch rider duties, presumably on his Royal Enfield. With the fall of France he was ordered to make his way to Dunkirk on his bike when a shell landed near him on the edge of the town blowing him and his bike into the ditch. Lionel lost most of his uniform in this incident and had to leave his Royal Enfield burning in the ditch. We never found out if he got compensation from the Army for the loss of his bike! He walked into Dunkirk and managed to get home on one of the ships.

The photograph shows him later in the war with a Matchless. He was about to become a glider pilot but crashed on Bodmin Moor whilst on despatch rider duties and seriously broke an ankle. This incident could well have saved his life as he may have ended up at Arnhem as a glider pilot. As a result of his accident he was invalided out of the Army towards the end of the war.

Hope some of this may be of interest.

Paul Cooper



Cotswold Section Calendar for November 2012 to January 1st 2013

November

7th	Bring and Buy Sale	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
14th	Annual General Meeting	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
18th	Winter Wandering	The Woolpack Inn, Slad, Stroud
21st	"Travels in the NW Canadian Wilderness" - Dave Minton	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
27th	Committee Meeting	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
28th	Club Night	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown

December

5th	"Bristol Aircraft at War" - Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
12th	Christmas Party	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
16th	Winter Wandering	The Greyhound Inn, Littledean, Cinderford
18th	Committee Meeting	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
19th	Club Night	Churchdown Club, Church Rd., Churchdown
20th	Deadline for January 2012 Newsletter copy	
26th	Boxing Day Gathering	The Royal Oak Inn, Andoversford, Cheltenham

January 2013

1st	New Years Day Gathering	The Daneway Inn, Sapperton, Cirencester
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