

The Cotswold Section of the Vintage Motor Cycle Club



Newsletter

Issue 102 – June 2015



In the previous edition of the Newsletter, I apologised for not letting you know the name of the contributor of some of the images of Ariels I had put in. The rider's name is Rein Heerkens who runs a stable of Ariels. Rein rode his 1908 Ariel in the Pioneer Run this year but was forced to retire when the front down tube of the frame broke. Any offers of help welcomed.

Reg Eyre KOB1, 01242-870375 (before 9.00pm)

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.

August 2015 deadline is 20th July 2015

From the B190

My request for articles for this issue fell on barren ground, so this edition will be me compiling my thoughts. It was triggered by watching Henry Cole on Channel 42, the travel channel, and his *'World's Great Motor Cycle Rides'*. I really enjoyed his New Zealand programmes but got irritated watching his rides in the United States and Russia. It got me thinking about why some motorcyclists ride long distances, or adventure in isolated areas of the world while the brave, but foolhardy, ride alone. Please write in if you have images or stories of your *'Greatest Rides'*.

Reg Eyre KOB

Great Motor Cycle Rides

Why do some people take on long distance rides? I am usually limited to about 250 miles in a day but prefer about 150 to 200 miles each day when I rode around New Zealand. My limit is caused by helmet vibration on a sensitive but now nearly deaf ear. Some people prefer their own company and use a long distance ride to gather thoughts, clear the head or escape their usual surroundings. I can point you to people like Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and Craig Bourne, *Motorcycles and the Meaning of Life*, as examples of riders who philosophised while they were riding as well as a rider who enjoys riding in Cotswold Section events and usually has something to write about his experiences.

Other long distance riders like to discover new parts of the world, ride along difficult roads to gain a sense of adventure. There are the celebrity riders who like to have the back-up van driving nearby to carry some essentials like extra fuel, tyres, (or possibly a spare machine!) These rides can get translated into books or TV programmes. There are a few riders in the Cotswold Section who like to ride to foreign lands and meet friends from other countries for a camping weekend and test themselves and their machines. Breakdowns are treated as an excuse or challenge to test rider's expertise in problem solving and keeping the machine going using wire, bailer twine or curtain rails. A difficulty with long distance riding is keeping a log, especially an image log, to reflect on the experiences and emotions during the journey. Sometimes the sights and scenes are best enjoyed in the rider's heads and thoughts. I came to this thought while trying to ride past Mount Cook in the South Island of New Zealand. I kept stopping every 100 yards to take photographs when I realised that no-one else would really be interested in huge number of images. I was being over-awed and overwhelmed by the beauty on show and photographic images cannot show the width and whole picture that I was looking at. I now realise that this is why there are so few writings of heroes past that undertook these types of journeys.

p.s. I have just watched Henry Cole ride thousands of miles along a mostly straight road with a few miles of hardened clay and very few bends and where boredom is the thing to overcome, and he called it a 'great motorcycle ride'!

Anthony F. Wilding

Wilding was a New Zealand tennis champion before the Great War. Because New Zealand was a relatively small country, he had to play in Australia and represent Australasia. He also played in tournaments in Europe. Wilding had also developed an

interest in motorcycles and cars. In Christchurch he set up a motor cycle company and entered reliability trials and hill-climbing competitions around New Zealand. In the summer of 1909-10 he rode from Christchurch to Auckland in just five days. He also toured Europe and Britain extensively on a motor cycle. Some of these trips are described in his book *On the Court and Off*, published in 1912.

While he was entering tennis championships in Europe, he reverted to his hobby of motorcycling and he found that he preferred to travel to tournaments by motor cycle and send his luggage on to a venue by train. This gave him plenty of time to tour using his favourite 7hp BAT motor cycle. He also entered long distance motor cycle trials in the UK, including the Lands End to John O'Groats timed trial when he was awarded a gold medal and a special prize for not stopping during the timed sections.



What can be said about Anthony Wilding is that he was an accomplished athlete who enjoyed his motorcycling. It appeared to give him time to relax away from the stresses of tournaments and he preferred to journey alone. He did all this before 1913.

Sadly, he was killed in the Great War by a shell exploding near him in 1914.

This image shows him at Lands End with his 7hp BAT machine. It is one of only two images of him seated on a motor cycle.

“We had to average 180 miles a day with penalties of 1 mark per minute early or late at each check. I have vivid recollections of the weather through the highlands of Scotland; it was most appalling. On arrival at the overnight stop, I always found it necessary to play the garage hose over both myself and the machine.” After the trial he rode overnight down to London via Edinburgh to catch the morning boat to Dieppe for a tennis tournament. “Though I had covered some 2,000 miles in about ten days, my tennis was slightly better than before I had set out.”

He offers some advice about roads in Europe including, “Surfaced English roads are probably the best. France is excellent for long open stretches suitable for speed. German roads somewhat resemble the French, but in southern Germany every village is vilely cobble-stoned. Austrian roads are very bad. In Hungary metal has in most cases to be brought from great distances, so that only the main roads are metalled at all. Servia is extraordinary – a few miles of really nice going and suddenly you find yourself in the bottom of a hole in the middle of the road, or in a riverbed. In both Hungary and Servia I

have resorted to riding along the railway track, bumping over the never-ending sleepers.” In his book of 1912, he describes one 3,000 mile journey and often reports his frustration with people in authority such as customs officers or police officers.



Wilding riding on the continent – (source of image unknown.)

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

I guess that most of us have a copy of Richard Pirsig’s book on a shelf somewhere, or we have passed it on to a friend. How many of us have attempted to read it? It took me three goes before I could read it through and claim that I understood what it was about. The first attempt had me thinking “what has this got to do with motorcycling?” My second attempt, while at college and having read a fair amount of philosophy, had me wondering, “Why is this writer going on about the major thinkers in philosophy? It was only later that I understood that the purpose of his long journey across North America was not about his understanding and skill at looking after his motorcycle but rather to challenge his thinking and attempt to resolve various issues in his work and life generally. Unlike Wilding and many other long distance riders, Pirsig had a rationale for making his trip, and he puts this foremost in deciding to make this journey. For many people who bought his book, they probably thought that it was about motorcycles and would put a creative line under the art/action of maintenance.



Pirsig was facing various dilemmas at home and work and needed space to think through how this had come about and how he could resolve these issues. The action of taking his son, as pillion, is not clear until about halfway through the book. It is not appropriate here to go through his journey, or itinerary, but just to point out that a rider may well undertake a long motorcycle ride just ‘to clear the head’.

Maybe we have all used short journeys to unravel a cluttered brain?

I am mildly amused by the number of American books that have been published trying to examine or re-enact the Pirsig thinking and journey. *Zen and Now* by Mark Richardson follows the same journey and tries to meet Pirsig's family and friends to understand Pirsig himself, while Ronald DiSanto has written *a Guidebook to Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. These are just two books out of a huge number, which have encouraged others to copy and follow his journey.

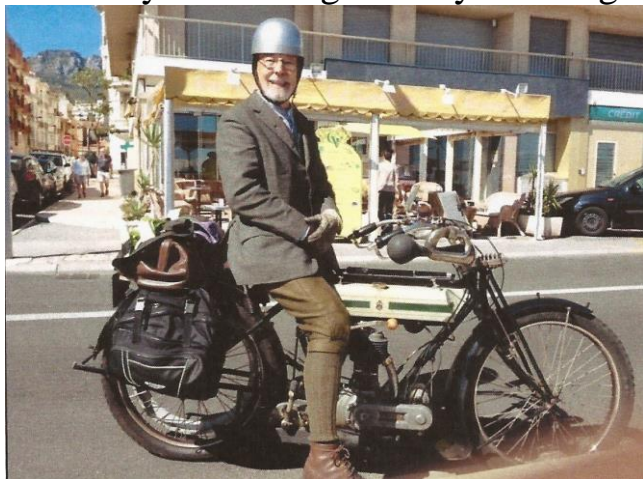
Noel Whittall

Noel has recently featured in the VMCC Journal receiving the John Griffith Salver on page 59 and on page 2 while riding his Triumph ahead of the 1902 Dreadnought on the Brighton Road. He has written two books about his long distance rides on his Model H Triumph, both of which have been reviewed in these pages. His first book, *A Stupid Thing to do*, describes his Leeds – John O'Groats – Lands End – Leeds journey and how it came about. The second book, *An Alpine Thing to do*, describes his journey across the Alps following in the tyre tracks of the Tours de France event.

The first book starts with his experience of suffering a heart attack at great altitude while flying a micro light and deciding that if he was going to undertake a long journey he ought to consider and plan various aspects such as booking hotels, getting a back-up crew and van, planning the stopping places along the route, etc. The point being that when he had thought about some of these issues, he concluded that none of this was applicable and therefore he could set off at any time. He knew his Triumph was reliable and in good fettle so off he set.

Compare and contrast this with the Boorman approach in 'The Long Way Round' in which our heroes would have accompanying attendant vehicles, meals arranged for them at each stop, etc. and the resulting film/book/story which came out after their journey. Noel set off, and although he called in at home after getting to John O'Groats to effect some repairs, the reader is treated to the rhythm and sounds of his machine and his thoughts on modern traffic and the state of roads.

The Alpine journey was nearly stalled when the belt rim began to fall apart, but his durability in wanting to carry on is a good read.



Noel lost in France,
Shown looking for Cols,
While on his hols.

If you have not read these two books, then I recommend them to you. They are both still for sale.

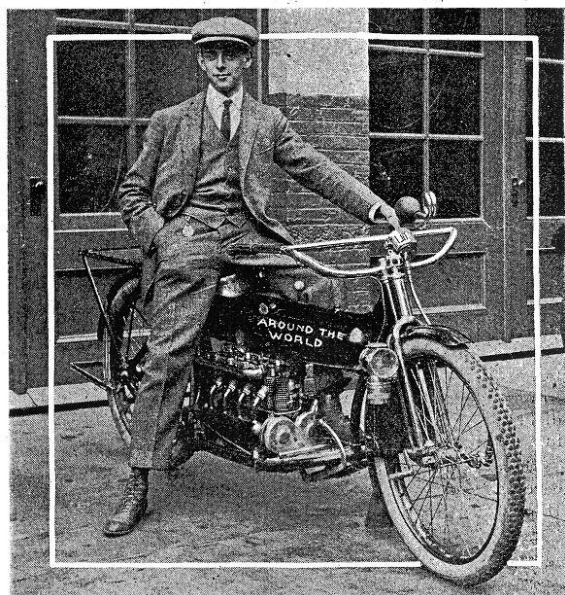
Carl Stearns Clancy

Clancy is reputed to be the first man to ride around the world in 1912/3. The first question might be why did he decide to take on this challenge? In his own words, reported by Gregory Frazier in his book *Motorcycle Adventurer*, “We are ordinary business men who are supersaturated with work and who have decided to invest a year’s time in something else than the everlasting chase for the almighty dollar. However, the year must pay its own expenses, our problem of how of how to use it to best advantage – of how to make the year the most effective and productive – was finally solved only by planning to make the first motorcycle tour of the world and to chart the first motor route around the earth. This plan alone solved our requirements of outdoor life, originality and educational value.”

The plan was for two men to ride around the world on Henderson four motorcycles; Walter Storey did not complete the journey so Clancy continued the ride on his own. They recognised that writing articles, taking photographs and compiling a book would also provide an income. They also wrote a series of articles for *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* as the journey progressed. One of their aims was to provide other American riders with details on their use of money, road conditions, motor laws, speed limitations, customs regulations, attitudes to motorcyclists, “and every scrap of information of value to motorists who follow our tracks in the future”. Plans were made to have tyres and fuel available at various locations as well as any other supplies that might prove useful.

“Our route covers fourteen European, one African and four Asiatic countries, besides including the Philippines, Hawaii and a new transcontinental route back from the Pacific. Our mileage in Europe will be about 5,500, in Africa 400, in Asia 5,000, in the United States and dependencies 3,500, all to be covered in a year”.

The Frazier book uses the text that Clancy had serialised, and the photographs taken.



The images in my copy of the book are not too good and this image, taken from Google, is in the book and shows Clancy before he and Storey set out on their journey. Many of the photographs, when they were riding together, show one or the other rider, near an outstanding feature, but once Clancy was on his own, the photographs do not show his machine, or himself, but rather some of the places visited. The book becomes a series of mini-travelogues and discusses the problems with customs and police officers and hoteliers and foreign guides.

There is enough reporting of road conditions to make the writings interesting and some interesting comments about the British views on colonial natives to highlight the differences between American and British attitudes toward others.

Some may feel that Clancy's idea of his trip 'around the world' is highly selective and I also query if he was really the first since I have read the efforts of an American motor car driver driving across many continents and lands, including New Zealand, about 1905.

Effie Hotchkiss

By 1915, a number of women were taking up motorcycling and achieving great distances. There were noticeable ladies from the UK, New Zealand and South Africa but I have decided to use this story from William Murphy's book, *Grace and Grit*. "Effie Hotchkiss was one of those rare people who possessed an ideal personality – an amalgam of optimism, happiness, intelligence, wit and a can-do spirit – that causes people like her to rise above any situation they encounter. Add courage, confidence, resourcefulness and fearlessness to this mix, and a truly unique individual is the outcome". Her father was displeased when he was told he had fathered a second daughter, but even he must have been amazed at the tomboy that developed over time. After owning several machines, she settled on a Harley-Davidson model 11-J with which she decided to ride from New York to San Francisco and return via a different route. To put this into context, several riders had attempted the single crossing but she was about to double the mileage, and, by adding a sidecar, make it even more difficult because she had never ridden a combination before.

Effie planned to take her mother on this journey but Avis would prove to be no more than ballast and of little use in helping with maintenance, pulling the outfit through mud or helping to push when that was needed. They set off on 3rd May 1915 and three days later, the Lusitania was torpedoed so the ladies were starved of publicity for their trip. The first part of the journey showed the need for blacksmiths to be available along the route since many pieces of the sidecar needed repairing to hold together over the rough surfaces encountered. Muddy roads and missing bridges over rivers were the main concern, but they had a fair amount of luck in finding abandoned wooden planks and occasionally railroad workers who used the planks to help ford the rivers.

Effie's journal details many instances of near-death disasters and experiences in deserts, muddy roads, overflowing rivers and dust bowls but in each case, she managed to pull through.

On arrival at Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean, she followed the tradition of pouring Atlantic water into the Pacific.



Having made it to Los Angeles, the women decided to take some time recovering and visited many interesting places saying to the press how much they appreciated the paved roads, mild weather and many scenic wonders. They still had to ride 400 miles to San Francisco before they could return to New York.

Avis and Effie followed the Lincoln Highway almost all the way back to New York. They had fewer major transportation issues on the return trip, although they did come across many interesting people and were involved in several memorable experiences.

They arrived home in October with all the colours of autumn and most of the family to greet them. A father and son duo undertook the same journey but arrived back at New York in December having travelled a bit further and faster.

The main reason for the adventure for Effie was to satisfy her personal desire for excitement and to see the West, and because it was a reflection of the person she was – a free spirit to whom the open road and open spaces beckoned. She also wanted to go on the ambitious journey because she loved riding motorcycles and wanted to take the ultimate trip.

Tony Page

Tony thinks very little about taking one of his machines to far off places and riding huge distances. One amusing story from our Webmaster, who was on holiday in Egypt, asked the coach driver to stop when he saw two bodies laid out flat next to their bikes, including a bright yellow Norton Commando. He approached the prone bodies and called out, “You must be Tony Page and I claim my prize for recognising you!” It was indeed Tony recovering from a tiring ride near the pyramids.

Tony has sent me a thought, which keeps him touring.

“Yesterday, while riding about doing errands, I parked my 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 unwanted encounter.

It reminded me that on the way to Alaska some years ago riding my Vincent with John Gurney on his, we’d stopped in a place called John Day in deepest Oregon desperate for 7UP and a sandwich. Because it was a town called John, not Alice, and 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 1,000 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 Mk 3 Interstate with a Boyer and single carb.’ I asked what he wanted, seeking a mug, ‘Ten thousand bucks’. 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, lots.

After seeing his bikes, 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” tyre so off we went.

His name was Engo and he was a bit strange for sure. 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.

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 made the trip memorable."

Fred's Pioneer Run 2014 – continued

After coffee and cake we are off again to Lower Beeding and on to Cowfold, it's fairly flat and the Triumph is belting along so I slow down a bit and take in the day, waving back at the onlookers by the roadside. Henfield soon goes by and before long we are at Pycombe and on to the racetrack down to Brighton. Its four lanes of mayhem, so glad I am there early. I get over into the right hand lanes and pop across the roundabout at speed, the traffic here is fast.



Our Fred with Chris Read following on the solo Vindec near to the start at Epsom Downs.

The traffic slows into the single carriageway toward the town and we use the bus lanes where allowed to keep going with the traffic building up as we near the finish. We get stopped at nearly every traffic light on the way to the finish but weave through the traffic on the last roundabout, which is jammed solid, and on into Madeira drive. Ian Young, part way along Madeira Drive, welcomes us and we then park as directed. Oops! There are only a dozen machines in so far, look at the clock its ten thirty. It only took two hours including a coffee stop. Hope I don't get told off for going too fast as it is frowned upon.

I go and sign off and collect my medallion, another run completed. I wander off to get fish and chips, then sit and watch the finishers come in and wait for Bob.

Chairman Fred Smith

Some 'old' Cotswold Section photographs

Roger Fogg and his daughter Leah unearthed these photographs. If you know the stories behind them, please write in and tell the rest of us.



The late John Janes and 1923 BSA



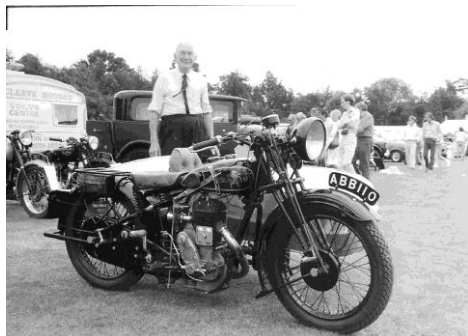
Ken and Viv Tilley with 1933 Norton ES2



Dick Davies and 1925 James



Bernard Wise and 1936 Ariel



Ernest Fletcher and 1933 Sunbeam



Les Cozens with 1949 Triumph

27th Cotswold Weekend – 11th / 12th July 2015

The Cotswold Weekend this year will comprise Social Runs on Saturday 11th July and a Reliability Road Trial on Sunday 12th July. Both events will be based at Chedworth Farm Shop, Denfurlong Farm, Field Road, Chedworth, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 4NQ where camping and caravanning facilities will be available.

The Social Runs on the Saturday will start at 1030 hours and will have a choice of routes of about 45 miles and 60 miles with a Lunch Stop.

The Reliability (timed) Road Trial on the Sunday will start at 0931 hours, again with a choice of routes of about 60 miles and 75 miles. Average speeds of 18 mph and 20 mph can be chosen on the short route and 20 and 24 mph on the long route. There will be a coffee stop on the routes at about half distance and lunch will be available at the finish. The Road Trial was last run as a timed trial in 2007 and has since had a variety of formats such as Observation Trials, Navigation Trials and last year's Cloverleaf Rally. This year the event will be somewhat different to previous Cotswold Section time trials in that the continental route marking system will be used. This system involves the use of markers placed on the near-side of the road to indicate the direction to be taken at each junction (where there is a change of direction) as follows:-

Square – turn LEFT, Triangle – keep STRAIGHT ON, Circle – turn RIGHT

The Regulations are unfortunately very late this year, but should be available soon from the Cotswold Section Website (www.vmcc-cotswold.org) or by post from Jenny Hart on 01684 276610 or jenny@hart1246.plus.com.



Paul Button demonstrating what is meant by a water cooled Scott at Kinton Ford at the recent Cotswold Road Trial where he won the Felix Burke Shield by a clear margin.

Photograph taken by Dave Hoskins

Cotswold Section 26th Signpost Rally Report

Dave Hoskins arranged a new venue at the AV8 café on Kemble Airfield for the event. He got the weather right with mild but almost sunshine and a gentle breeze. 27 people set out to find the 12 signposts pictured and answer the three questions at each signpost. This was a new area to explore and many riders were satisfied or enjoyed their run. Reg Eyre KOBİ was the overall winner with Peter Fielding and his 'gutless' 250 BMW as runner-up. Paul Button and John Webb won the best brace award on their Scotts, Robert Rendell won the 'Gutless wonder' award on Kate's Honda C50 and Bob Ashwin got the restoration Cup.

Thanks Dave for a good day out.

Flying Pig

COTSWOLD SECTION CALENDAR - JUNE 2015 to AUGUST 2015

June

3rd	Mid-Week Social Run	The Old Neighbourhood Inn, off Midway, Chalford Hill, Stroud
3rd	Mid-Week Rally	
10th	Mid-Week Rally	The Carpenters Arms Inn, Miserden, Stroud
17th	Mid-Week Rally	The Rising Sun Inn, Moseley Green, Parkend, Lydney
23rd	Committee Meeting	Churchdown Club, Church Road, Churchdown
24th	Club Night	The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester

July

1st	Mid-Week Social Run	The Farmers Arms Inn, Birts Street, Birtsmorton, Malvern
1st	Mid-Week Rally	
8th	Mid-Week Rally	The Village Inn, Twyning, Tewkesbury
11th	27th Cotswold Weekend Social Run	Denfurlong Farm, Chedworth, Cheltenham
12th	27th Cotswold Weekend Reliability Road Trial	Denfurlong Farm, Chedworth, Cheltenham
13th	Cotswold Touring Holiday	Hayles Fruit Farm Campsite, Winchcombe, Cheltenham
17th		
15th	Mid-Week Rally and Barbecue	Hayles Fruit Farm Campsite, Winchcombe, Cheltenham
20th	DEADLINE FOR AUGUST 2015 NEWSLETTER	
22nd	Mid-Week Rally	The Drum and Monkey Inn, Newbridge Green, Upton-upon-Severn
26th	Summer Meeting	The Plough Inn, Ford, Cheltenham
28th	Committee Meeting	Churchdown Club, Church Road, Churchdown
29th	Mid-Week Rally and Curry Night	The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester

August

2nd	Sidecar and Three-Wheeler Run	The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester
5th	Mid-Week Social Run	
5th	Mid-Week Rally	The Red Hart Inn, Blaisdon, Gloucester
9th	Summer Meeting	The Carpenters Arms Inn, Miserden, Stroud
12th	Mid-Week Rally	The Farmers Arms Inn, Guiting Power, Cheltenham
19th	Mid-Week Rally	The Red Lion Inn, High Street, Arlingham, Gloucester
23rd	Breakfast Run to Weston's Cider Cafe at Much Marcle	M&S BP Service Station, Barnwood Road, Gloucester
25th	Committee Meeting	Churchdown Club, Church Road, Churchdown
26th	Club Night	The Haw Bridge Inn, Haw Bridge, Tirley, Gloucester