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Fishtail



Velocette

Owners' Club

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Our collection is regularly updated with new items, so take a look—you might discover the perfect present for a loved one, or even for yourself!



Simply scan the QR code to explore!

velocette-owners-club.teemill.com

If you have any queries please contact:
regalia@velocetteowners.com

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FISHTAIL

69th year of publication

Magazine of the
Velocette Owners' Club
November 2025
Number 512

COVER **Rhys Hardisty** on the Phil Price 500 crosses Parliament Square in the Senior Classic TT

FEATURES

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68 **How I first met Ralph Seymour - Alain Le Bec** and a heartwarming story

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Lucien Days
Gran Premio la Bañeza
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Copy and Small ads ***as emails please, if possible,*** to:

Editor: **Peter Turnill** **07774 649 644**
editor@velocetteowners.com

Postal address - see 'Officers' inside back cover

Trade ads to:
Trade Ads Secretary:
Eric Bushell **07860 812 272**
trade-ads@velocetteowners.com
'Milestones', 6 Cedar Court,
Langley Park, DURHAM **DH7 9FG**



Peter Turnill
editor@velocetteowners.com **+44 (0) 7774 649 644**

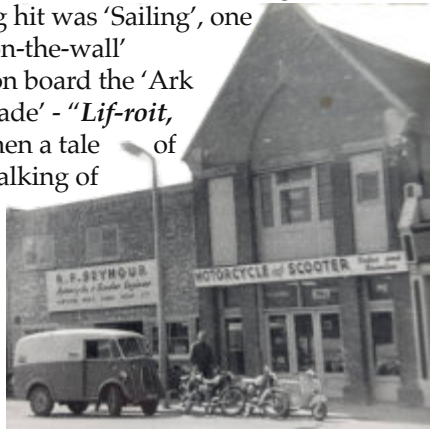
Editorial

A good edition for Francophiles! I suppose it's inevitable when both the Editor and the Public Relations Officer are fans of the French lifestyle. The other key theme is Ralph Seymour with a lot of material arising from the exhibition on his life and works at the Thame Museum, organised by his grandson, Andy Barrett. But, wait a minute! Here they come again with Alain Le Bec (page 68) providing a touching reminder of how Seymours was much more than just a business.



For my sins, I spent several weeks based in Thame in 1976, working, but in between times living it up at the 'Spread Eagle'. This was in the days when there was just the one telly in a big room and we joined the crowd to watch David Wilkie's medal-winning performance in the pool at that year's Olympics. I don't know if that was the only medal we won that year but they showed it over and over (and over!) again.

The other big hit was 'Sailing', one of the early 'fly-on-the-wall' documentaries, on board the 'Ark Royal'. I particularly enjoyed 'Defaulters' Parade' - "***Lif-roit, Lif-roit, Lif-roit, atten-shun, Caps-orf!***" and then a tale of woe, usually ashore and involving drink … Talking of which, at that time the main street of Thame (about half a mile long?) boasted 17 pubs! One night we decided to pass the time by taking a drink in each and every one of them … even drinking halves, we failed. Perhaps that's to our credit? Happy days!



This was, of course , some 35 years before I joined this Club and acquired my first working Velo (we won't talk about the LE …), so I was blissfully unaware of Mr Seymour's presence.

I've had a good response to my plea for more material but that's no excuse for the rest of you to rest on your laurels … Keep up the good work!

Peter

Fishtail 513 will be on your doormat in early January. **Copy deadline: 2nd December**
For dates for later editions, see: ***www.velocetteowners.com*, 'Fishtail magazine'**

Roger Franklin
chairman@velocetteowners.com



Chairman's Scrapbook

At the recent Executive Committee meeting the Club's Charity account was discussed. This account has monies donated to the club over the years, some large, some small and is to be used entirely at the discretion of the committee. It was felt that this money should be put to better use than it is currently, therefore we decided that the money should go to charity and who better for a motorcycle club to support than the Air Ambulance. The sum of £10,000 has been sent to **Air Ambulance UK** who will distribute it equally to the various local air ambulance charities of which there are 21 around the UK.

Jane and I were very pleased to be able to visit the exhibition commemorating the life and work of Ralph Seymour in Thame, Oxfordshire which has been organised by his grandson **Andy Barrett**. There was a display of Ralph's bikes outside and a further display inside the museum of smaller items and photographs. It brought back a lot of memories for us as I am sure it did for other visitors. We were frequent visitors in our early Velocette days when we lived in Stratford upon Avon. It has also brought a lot of custom to the excellent museum which is all about the history of the town. On the day we visited there was a group run from the Thames Valley and Woburn centres as well as others who travelled from further afield. One enterprising member came on the train from Shropshire. Well done Andy, it was a worthy tribute to your family's heritage.

I am pleased to say that this year's Bob Foster Run went well thanks again to **Sandy Saunders'** hard work. Thanks also to **Sally** and all those who worked very hard on the day. I thought numbers were good with just under 50 bikes joining the run and of those 90% were Velos. The weather was dry and clear and the new lunch stop excellent. A great day all round as always.

October saw the last **Shropshire Velo Riders** meet of the year in a pub just outside Bridgnorth. Excellent food and great company. Many thanks to **James Bowen** for another year's meetings. I know you are hoping that someone will step forward and help next year and I certainly hope so as well.

We were unable to have a stand at this year's Classic Mechanics show although I did go on the Saturday. It was pretty busy with plenty of Velocette interest in the Bonhams auction. I met up with members from the **North London and Herts Centre** at the British Owners 'stand. Thanks for your hospitality and especially use of the chair.

This will be the last magazine before Christmas so Jane and I wish all members around the world a Happy Christmas and don't forget to leave some space under the tree for those Velocette goodies you need. Safe riding

Roger



Jeff Whitworth
membership@velocetteowners.com

Welcome!

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP totals are as follows:	
UK:	2,828
Europe:	280
Rest of World:	247
Life:	35
Total:	**3,390**

The Velocette Owners' Club welcomes the following **44** new members who have joined us since the previous issue.

UK

Bristol: Leslie Thorne.
Cambridge: James O'Connor, Michael Garcia, Paul Ashley.
Chelmsford: Tim Milbank, Martin Lay, Dave Botterell.
Chester: David Hands.
Devon & Cornwall: Matt Clements, Edward Brooke, Andrew Turner, Leszek Delag.
Dorking: Dave Taverner.
East Midlands: Stephen Lismore.
Kent: Ian Wheeler.
Lancashire: David Westmoreland, Alan Oversby, Gino Kerekes, Stephen Lord.
Norfolk: Nick Allsopp, Andrew Osborn.
North Lincolnshire: David Mercer, Charles Andrew, Timothy Dixon, Mark Macadorey.
North Yorkshire: Barry Burton.
Northumbrian: Alan Fortes.
Oxford: Jonathan How.
Scottish: Peter Forsythe, Peter Dolderson.
South Hants: Laurence Neal.
Staffordshire: Lee Shipley.
Welsh: Nigel Bond, Jonathan Fairbairn.
West Midlands: Alan Taylor.

Our new UK members are encouraged to be kept aware of Club activities in their vicinity by contacting the Secretary of their local Centre; meeting and contact details in "The VOC near YOU" section of this and every Fishtail.

OVERSEAS

Australia: Ian Lambert. **France:** François Chatelus, Jean Michel Paulik, Flavien Baster. **Ireland:** Derek McGuire. **Mauritius:** Didier Rosine. **New Zealand:** Stephen McPhee. **USA:** Mark Woodard, Cole Cabler.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following members who, according to our records, have recently achieved the stated periods of continuous membership:-
25 years: John Mercer, Ken Straw, Laurie Sparrow, Ray Creek, Gordon Brooks, Gary Sleeman, Peter Thomas, Bruce Moore, Martin Dixon, Steve Coward.
35 years: Francis Smith, D R Snellgrove, Jim Romain, Geoffrey Ellis.
40 years: John Hastings. **45 years:** Bob Higgs. **50 years:** David Walker, Rosemary Wilkinson.
Those who have achieved 25, 40 or 50 years will shortly receive our specially-commissioned Fishtail lapel badge marking their achievement.

WE ENCOURAGE our UK members to save their money and our time by setting up a Standing Order for the reduced fee of only £20 per year to **30-18-55**, **00340850**, including their **membership number** in the payment reference. Both UK and overseas members can renew by visiting our website and using a debit or credit card.

AND, OF COURSE, if you have a genuine and practical difficulty in renewing your membership, I urge you to get in touch with me; my contact details are inside the back cover of this and every Fishtail.

Jeff



Items for the Club Diary should be forwarded to me, please.

Mike Williams
pro@velocetteowners.com

Events Diary

VOC events listed below are covered by the Club's public liability insurance
The events calendar for the whole year can be viewed on the '**News & Events**' page of the Club website: ***www/velocetteowners.com*** where you will also find links to websites operated by several individual VOC Centres.

Note: routine Club nights are listed in the *'VOC near YOU'* section.

DATE	CENTRE	DETAILS OF EVENT
		NOVEMBER
14 Fri	Lancashire	Club Night Astley Green: Talk: "Magnetos" Speaker Andrew Guttmann, Priory Magnetos 8:00 pm
16 Sun	1066	Meet at Brian's Barn 9:30 am for Breakfast Run
19 Wed	Cambridge	Meeting at the White Swan PH, Conington, **CB23 4LN,** noon
19 Wed	East Midlands	Pizza and film night at Thrumpton Village Hall, **NG11 0AX** 7:00 pm. Showing "Love, Speed and Loss", film about Kim Newcombe. Bar open.
19 Wed	Northumbrian	Ride or drive in for lunch 12:00 noon at the Langdon Beck Hotel, Middleton in Teesdale **DL12 0XP**. Eric Bushell ***eric@ericbushell.co.uk*** or **07860 812 272**
19 Wed	North Yorks	Easingwold Market Place, **YO61 3AB**. 11:00 am onwards
		DECEMBER
3 Wed	East Midlands	Pie Night. 8:00 pm at the Rancliffe Arms. Homemade pie meal provided by your Centre. Book (Member & guest) with Mike & Yvonne **01636 525 596** or ***te457ssa@gmail.com***
6 Sat	Wye Valley	Centre Christmas lunch. 1:00 pm at The Anchor, Tintern
7 Sun	Scottish	Centre Xmas Lunch, Crown Inn, Biggar. Raymond Albeson on **0131 669 9219** or ***velscotsec@gmail.com***
7 Sun	Lancashire	Centre Christmas Lunch at Farington Lodge noon (tbc)
12 Fri	Devon/Corn	Centre Christmas lunch at Strawberry Fields, Lifton, **PL16 0DE** from 12:00 non. Booking essential; contact Mike Williams by 5 December latest. Partners most welcome.
12 Fri	Lancashire	Club Night Astley Green: Christmas buffet 8:00 pm
16 Tue	1066	Centre Xmas Social Meeting at Brian's Barn from 1:30 pm

17 Wed	Cambridge	Meet at the Hare & Hounds, High St, Harlton, **CB23 1ES** noon
17 Wed	Northumbrian	Ride or drive in for lunch 12:00 noon at the Langdon Beck Hotel, Middleton in Teesdale **DL12 0XP**. Eric Bushell ***eric@ericbushell.co.uk*** or **07860 812 272**
26 Fri	1066	Boxing Day run to The Plough. Meet Bowship Roundabout at 11:30 am

JANUARY 2026

9 Fri	Devon/Corn	Dinnington Docks Nr. Hinton St George, **TA17 8SX** 7:30 pm or earlier if eating.
9 Fri	Lancashire	Club Night Astley Green: voting for "Clubman of the Year" and "Dennis Igoe Award" 8:00 pm
15 Thu	Isle of Man	New Year's Party (supper and raffle) at The Creg
28 Wed	East Midlands	Carvery Pub Lunch at The Greyhound, Swadlincote, **DE11 7BU** 12:30 pm Booking essential. Yvonne & Mike **01636 525 596** or email ***te457ssa@gmail.com***

FEBRUARY

4 Wed	East Midlands	Talk at the Rancliffe Arms, 7:30 pm
13 Fri	Devon/Corn	Lunch meet: Claycutters Arms, Chudleigh Knighton, **TQ13 0EY** 12:00 noon

ADVICE AVAILABLE ...

K Series	Peter Miles, 20 Millview Road, TRING **HP23 4ER** **01442 826 206** ***mr.petermiles@ntlworld.com***
M Series	Eric Bushell, 6 Cedar Court, Langley Park, DURHAM **DH7 9FG** **07860 812 272** ***eric@ericbushell.co.uk***
Military	Roger Franklin, 12a Hampton Close, NEWPORT, **TF10 7RB** **01952 403 897** ***roger.franklin@blueyonder.co.uk***
Electrical	Peter de Kremer ***peterdekremer@gmail.com*** **01572 724 873 or 07973 326 796**
AMAL Carburetters	Jim Plant before 7pm. Single cylinder Velocettes only **0121 709 4906** ***jimplant.velocette@gmail.com***
Thruxtons	Ray Thurston 7 The Laurels, Bletchley, MILTON KEYNES **MK1 1BL** **01908 641 149** ***norricia@talktalk.net***
GTP	Tim Simkins 9 Maplehatch Close, GODALMING **GU7 1TQ** **01483 424 121** ***two-strokes@velocetteowners.com***
Two-stroke, over-hung crank	Dave Masters, 6 Fairlight Close, Bexhill on Sea, **TN40 2PT** **01424 211 873** also other veteran products: 2½, 3½, etc.
Scrambler & Endurance	Peter Pares, Cregneash, 16 Vancouver Ave', Spondon,Derby, **DE21-7GB 07875 778 684** ***peterpares@hotmail.com***

Noticeboard

HUNCOTE BRING AND BUY

15th February 2026 - 9am to 1pm

Organised by the East Midlands Centre.

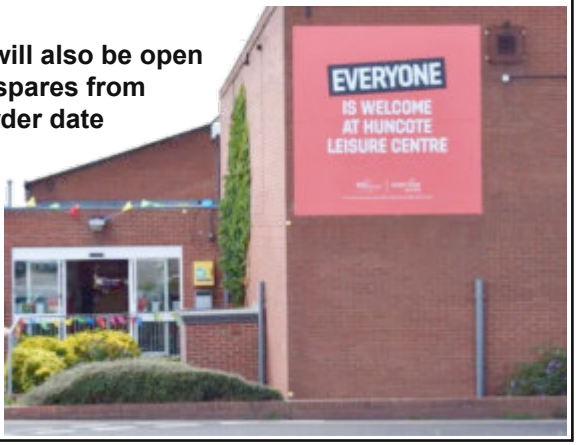
Huncote Leisure Centre, The Pavillion, Sportsfield Lane, HUNCOTE, Leicester LE9 3BN.

Traders admission - 8am. Public admission – 9am

Public admission is free, but a charge will be made for Traders' tables.

Please bring your own tables/chairs. Drinks/snacks will be available from vending machines.

Please note, The old Chapel will also be open for collection of pre-ordered spares from 10.30am to 12.30pm. (Last order date Wednesday 11th Feb)



For more information, please ring

John Hales on **07940 534 888.**

To book a table, email ***j.l.hales@btinternet.com*** and also **leave a contact number. (Pre-booking is preferred)**

BORDERS RUN 2026

Portpatrick Hotel, Heuch Road, Portpatrick DG9 8TQ

https://portpatrickhotel.co.uk/

Tues 5th and Wed 6th May 2026

Close to Stranraer and the A75 allowing us to enjoy the tranquil scenery and unspoilt roads of this part of Galloway. In addition to the runs on the two days we have the usual **Early Bird** get together on Monday evening and **Dinner** on Tuesday night. For bookings ***alison.r@compasshospitality.com*** mentioning the event.

Camping is available at the **Galloway Point Caravan Park** Portpatrick.

https://gallowaypoint.com/

Entries should be submitted before 20th April 2026. Cost is £10.

For further details and an entry pack

Raymond Albeson on **0131 669 9219** or ***velscotsec@gmail.com***



Jeremy Hobin ... from VSL
spares-sec@velocetteowners.com

Spares News

Overseas Orders

Unfortunately there is no progress towards having a clear understanding of the US tariff levels and how they will be charged. So, for the time being, we are still unable to accept and process orders from our American members. As soon as we understand the process and and have a definitive mechanism for processing US bound orders we will let all those interested know asap.

Our volunteers at Huncote continue to receive overseas orders most weeks which involves producing an online customs form which can take a considerable amount of time especially where there are numerous different items all requiring numerical identification for each type of item (up to 10 differing items!). We therefore must ask that overseas customers place orders on the system by **Tuesday evening** to allow time for our personnel to process the customs forms on the **Wednesday** in preparation for the **Thursday** picking and packing activities. Your assistance with this would be much appreciated



MAS37/2
£155

Stock Items

We now have what we think will be the last of the swinging arm triangular shaped toolboxes which are due to be painted. Shortly however we will be listing a limited number of these in natural finish to allow for those who wish to paint their own items,

Christmas Closing Dates

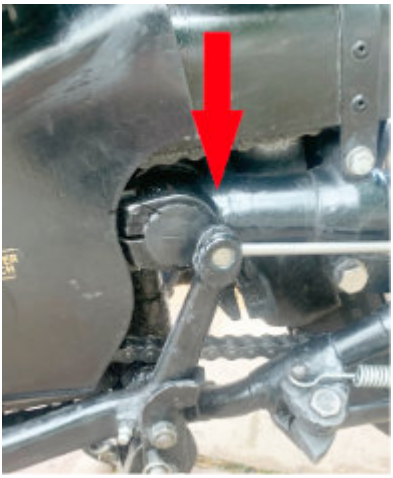
Once again Christmas is rolling round towards us and the Huncote elves are preparing to have their well-deserved break for the Christmas period. So the stores personnel will be processing orders for the last date before Christmas on **Thursday 18th December 2025.** We will be **reopening** for order processing on **Thursday January 8th 2026.**

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members. We look forward to receiving your orders in 2026!

Fishtail Mail

REAR BRAKE FAILURE ! John Booth

This is the story of a scary experience I had recently when about to ride over the Machynlleth Mountain Road on my KSS RS special. To my alarm, I suddenly lost my back brake completely without any warning.



What had happened was that the Rear Brake Rod **MAS41** had pulled out of the Rear Brake Rod Trunnion **FK 43**. These two safety-critical components were probably original and 70 years old. It seems this threaded connection had fretted over the years, considerably reducing the rod major diameter. Pressing down firmly on the rear brake pedal subjected this connection to a considerable force, enough for the threads to fail.

My recommendation is that everyone carefully inspects these connections on their Velos and if there is any doubt, replace. The brake rod and trunnion are readily available, costing me just over £30, delivery next day.

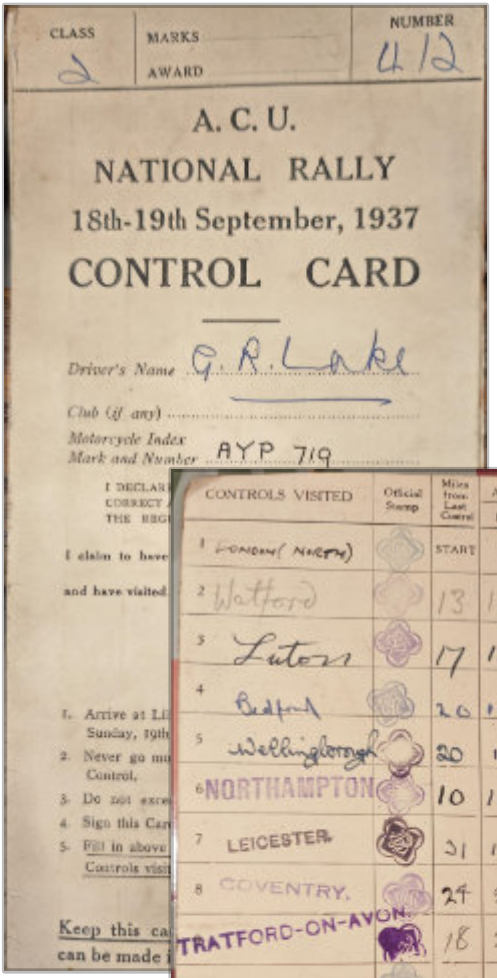
A SPANISH CENTRE ? Mark Turner

In the relatively short period that I have been an (overseas) member of the VOC in Spain, I have noticed the appearance in Fishtail of several new members here. Due to the requirements of data protection and quite rightly so, the club cannot publish any additional information other than names, so most of us probably exist in glorious isolation of each other. However, given this apparent increasing membership on the Iberian Peninsula, this leads me to wonder if it may be worth trying to setup a '***mutual assistance and support group***' to stave off the loneliness or at least arrange one or two unofficial 'meets' south of the Pyrenees?

As a starter, are any other members in Spain interested in an initial meet up? I intend to visit the **'XXVIII Feria del Vehículo Clásico de Alcañiz'** on Saturday 13 December (***https://autoclassicalcaniz.com***). I understand that it is one of the largest multi-day classic vehicle fairs in Spain, and there will be a fair number of classic motorcycles. So, if you're thinking of attending, please contact me, and we could arrange to meet up at the show. I live just south of Barcelona and don't intend to go on my Velocette this year, so if you're somewhere between there or Alcañiz, I could pick you up on the way. I would appreciate some company for the drive. So, for future possible meetups, I can be reached on **+34 603 43 72 28.** As a minimum, maybe we could instigate an Iberian Velocette ***WhatsApp*** group?

NATIONAL RALLY 1937 …

Jon Graciano



CLASS 2 | MARKS | AWARD | NUMBER 412

A. C. U.
NATIONAL RALLY
18th-19th September, 1937
CONTROL CARD

Driver's Name G. R. Lake
Club (if any)
Motorcycle Index Mark and Number AYP 719

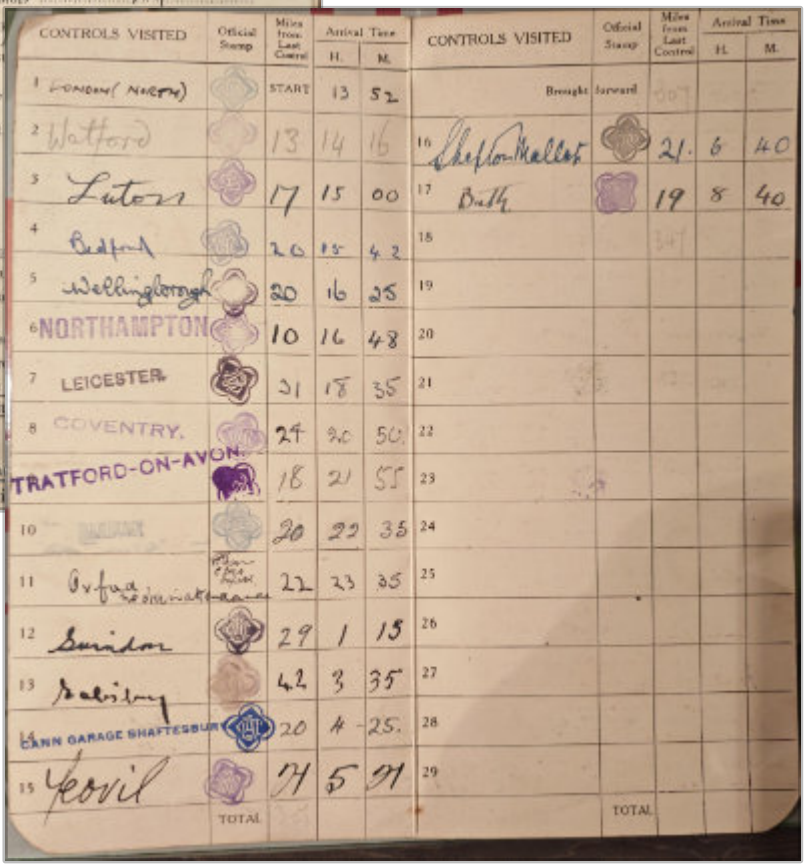
I DECLAR… CORRECT … THE REG…

I claim to have …

and have visited …

1. Arrive at Li… Sunday, 19th …
2. Never go mu… Control.
3. Do not exce…
4. Sign this Car…
5. Fill in above … Controls visit…

Keep this ca… can be made i…



CONTROLS VISITED	Official Stamp	Miles from Last Control	Arrival Time H.	Arrival Time M.	CONTROLS VISITED	Official Stamp	Miles from Last Control	Arrival Time H.	Arrival Time M.
1 LONDON (NORTH)		START	13	52	Brought forward				
2 Watford		13	14	16	16 Shepton Mallet		21.	6	40
3 Luton		17	15	00	17 Bath		19	8	40
4 Bedford		20	15	42	18				
5 Wellingborough		20	16	25	19				
6 NORTHAMPTON		10	16	48	20				
7 LEICESTER		21	18	35	21				
8 COVENTRY.		24	20	50.	22				
TRATFORD-ON-AVON		18	21	55	23				
10 [illegible]		20	22	35	24				
11 Oxford		22	23	35	25				
12 Swindon		29	1	15	26				
13 Salisbury		42	3	35	27				
14 CANN GARAGE SHAFTESBURY		20	4	25.	28				
15 Yeovil		71	5	71	29				
	TOTAL					TOTAL			

I have come across a piece of history dating back to 1937. It is in the form of an A.C.U. National Rally control card dated the 18th - 19th September 1937. It looks like the gentleman that took part was G R Lake riding a Velocette MOV registration number AYP719. It does appear that this motorcycle is still registered, and I thought it would be nice if the owner had this piece of the history of their bike.

I have attached some photos of the card and require no money for it. I am hoping that you might be able to publish this information in your magazine in the chance we might be able to locate the owner and motorcycle.

07782 758 023 *jonnyg31@hotmail.com*

TYRED OUT … from George Sampford

Fishtail 510 contained an interesting and important article by Leif Magnusson about tyres. A few years ago I received info that some insurance companies were refusing to pay out on some claims because the tyres were old, out-of-date, despite having adequate tread. I wrote to OBM relaying this story, were other riders aware of this, etc? I thought it would generate some discussion, some concern, perhaps inspire owners to check their tyres to see if they were indeed, roadworthy, despite the obviously good-looking tread. The amount of vitriol published in the following issue was quite baffling! I was accused of scaremongering etc. Unbelievable!

It must be said, however, that the law regarding tyre conditions seems a tad vague. Even after talking with various tyre specialists, they all seem to have slightly differing views. Nevertheless they all recommended that tyres should be checked and changed regularly, despite your vehicle's tyres having a good tread and having a current MOT even. I was advised a time scale for each of the vehicles that I had at the time (since lost!), which were for my classic car, motorcycle, van, trailer. I tend to veer on the side of safety and peace of mind anyway, so my VW T5 day van, which I also use as the tractor unit for my Lunar Lexon caravan and my Clubman-ised Venom have all been re-shod, at vast expense, as was my 3-bike trailer which had plenty of tread - but were cracked.

Alan Millyard has made a lovely V-twin Velo which it is claimed wears very old stock, never used tyres. If that's true, I personally would be very worried about riding it, or even riding near it! I just cannot comprehend why anyone would take such a risk with the only means of keeping a vehicle in contact with the highway. I firmly believe my life is worth more than a price of a new tyre or two …

from Karl Barlow

In addition to my beloved 1939 MOV, I own a 1986 Honda XBR 500. I rarely ride it because the Velo is so much more pleasurable to ride. I bought the Honda for when the MOV was off the road. However the Honda always had me on edge, as I didn't trust it to grip on corners and, on uneven roads it felt like I was on ice. As a result I found I was riding it less and less, but nevertheless took it along to a recent club night.

I mentioned this lack of traction to Alex Wood, our Secretary, and he suggested that it may be a tyre problem despite them both appearing to be in good order with plenty of tread. He said they could be out of date, and upon inspection found that the rear one was old enough to know better and the front one was so old that it pre-dated the convention of putting dates on tyres!

I replaced the tyres despite feeling that it would only make a difference if I was scraping the footpegs in the corners. But I was stunned by the transformation. It is a completely different riding experience and now holds the corners reassuringly well. Though I never doubted Alex's advice, I expected that some of the problem would be down to the bike itself, and the tyres would only slightly improve the situation.

I feel there could be riders, like me. who don't do enough mileage on their Velo to wear the tyres out, and have good looking, but out-of-date tyres on. As a result, they may not be getting the best riding experience and putting it down to some other cause.

YOUTUBE APPEARANCES …

from Rodney Wildsmith

A fellow MGP marshall friend of mine sent me an e-mail to say my Velo was on ***YouTube*** … never having used it before, l had to ask him how to get onto it!

The piece is done by Lee Johnston who had parked a two stroke Langen next to my Thruxton in the underground car park of the hotel in which l was staying in Douglas. The ***YouTube*** piece was about this two stroke but after a look round the Langen Lee Johnson says he can't go out for ride without looking at the bike parked next to it - you've guessed it, it was my Velo. He has a rather patronising but complimentary look around my bike for several minutes. Have a look at: ***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YW_5Ew3J-MQ***

From Gilles Tocanne

I enclose a picture of my son, Francois, and our 1932 MK IV KTT. They won a prize from the **Fédération Française des Véhicules d'Epoque** at the 2025 'Grand Prix des Remparts' of Angoulême. There were two other Velos: a 1932 KTS (Yves Sgubbi) and a 1937 KSS MK II (Bastien BOUCHU). The next day, Francois rode the bike on the historic track, in the city's centre and, on the last bend of the last lap, he broke the front brake cable! He has recorded a video on YouTube at: ***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEBDsQPtzJs***.

There was an exceptional guest: Philippe Monneret, the youngest son of Georges Monneret who, in 1949 finished second on an AJS 7R while his oldest son, Pierre finished 4th on a KTT MK VIII. This year Philippe had been permitted to use his replica four cylinder Gilera - look out for it in the video!

The first **'Grand Prix d'Angoulême'** took place in 1939 (without motorcycles) then from 1947 to 1955. It was stopped because the organising club was in financial difficulties but also because of a catastrophe at the Le Mans 24-hour race, as with many other races on public roads.



Georges Monneret was , of course, heavily involved in the two Velocette 24 hour record attempts.

PRESS BIKE … Ian Young

I recently joined the Club following the acquisition of a 1962 Venom, which had been in storage for 20 years or so. The original buff logbook came with the bike and the first registered keeper is Veloce Limited the second being Associated Iliffe Press. I wonder if the bike has been a staff machine or perhaps a long term test bike, and would welcome the views of other members. As acquired, the bike has a BTH magneto and chronometric rev counter. .

Registration.: 695 EOV
Engine no.: VM5462
Frame no.: RS17422
Gearbox no.: 12-10313

As an aside, I now have the engine apart and the rockers, inlet and exhaust ports, as well as the flywheel appear to have been polished. I don't know if this was regular Velocette practice, although of course it could have been carried out during the life of the bike.


MAY NOT BE THE LEGAL OWNER OF THE VEHICLE. PROSPECTIVE PURCHASERS ARE WARNED, THEREFORE, THAT THIS REGISTRATION BOOK IS NOT PROOF OF LEGAL OWNERSHIP.

Name and Address of the Person registered with the Council whose Date Stamp is affixed hereto, as the Person keeping the vehicle, the particulars of which are given on page 8.

Full Name (IN BLOCK CAPITALS) VELOCE LTD.,
Address YORK ROAD
HALL GREEN
BIRMINGHAM 28.
28 DEC 1961
Usual Signature

1st CHANGE. (SEE NOTES 10–13 ON PAGE 7)
Full Name (IN BLOCK CAPITALS) ASSOCIATED ILIFFE PRESS LTD.,
Address DORSET HOUSE,
STAMFORD STREET,
LONDON, S.E.1.
Usual Signature

2nd CHANGE. (SEE NOTES 10–14 ON PAGE 7)
Full Name (IN BLOCK CAPITALS) ANTHONY COLIN MANWARING
Address 129 KNOLLYS ROAD
STREATHAM

Colin Goodwyn, our Registrar and Archivist, comments …
RS 17422 doesn't make sense, but 695 EOV - that's Dixon's bike. Ian's first port of call - if he hasn't got it already - is ***Classic Motorcycle Legends*** no.31, 1994 p.12. Then ***Motor Cycle*** for 15.2.1962 p.202, which explains how much of it was instantly non-original. I think the restorer undid much of Dixon's mods but didn't replace the fairing. Also see ***Motor Cycle*** for 21.6.62 p.798, 28.6.1962 / cover, 19.6.62 p.70 23.8.62 /cover etc etc. The bike was reported to the VOC Register by its owner(s) a few times, but over ten years ago. The frame number was always RS 17411, which I see the logbook shows too.

KUBOTA ALTERNATOR CONVERSION … Ian Lacey

Regarding the recent article of adapting a Kubota alternator to a Velocette. I did this, and used the Kubota rectifier/regulator that worked well, but needed a switch in the feed to stop the battery discharging.

I had a power supply from a scrapped desktop computer, so I cannibalised the diodes that were on a heat sink. I used one in the feed from the regulator, used the diode function on a multimeter to get it the right way round. It acts as an electrical 'non-return valve'. Worked fine, and I believe is still ok, though I have sold on that particular bike.

THE HAUNTED VELOCETTE ? Colin Jenkins

In 1967, my late father asked me to go and check out a Velocette motorcycle for sale. I did so, and reported back that it seemed fine for the asking price. Dad went ahead and bought it. He used it for commuting to his job on shift work, but later on left it to one side in favour of a new MZ Trophy, which was much lighter and easier for him to manage. At this time, my Triumph Twenty-one was stolen, so I had no wheels. I started to run around on the Velocette, an MAC. My initial impressions were that it was old-fashioned, heavy, slow, oily and noisy compared to the Triumph. Despite these youthful opinions, I bought the MAC off Dad as I was using it all the time. It turned out to be totally reliable in all weathers and conditions, day and night, and always a first-kick starter, even when there was an audience. As the memories of the Triumph faded, the quality, reliability and the easy-going nature of the Velocette became more apparent.

The Velocette has remained with me ever since, mainly as back-up transport when required. With the extended passage of time, the machine eventually became rather temperamental about re-starting when hot. This is usually caused by the electrolytic capacitor in a Lucas magneto drying out and becoming ineffective. My decision was to remove the magneto and send it away for a well-earned full refurbishment, then sell the bike as I only use it infrequently these days and I need to create some space in my overcrowded garage. To tackle this job I lifted the Velocette up on my motor cycle maintenance lift; this just has two rails to lift the bike up from under the frame, not a wheel-on solid platform.

There is a fifth dimension to our universe; one of its entrance portals exists on every single-cylinder Velocette – it's the black hole between the engine and the gearbox. If anything drops into there, it will never be seen again. There is no point in trying to retrieve whatever it was that dropped in there; it no longer exists in this universe, it has gone forever. Jim Plant seems to know about this and on page four of his excellent '***Amal Carburetters***' guide advises us to carefully plug the black hole entrance with an old towel before carrying out any work above it. Wise words, surely borne of hard-earned experience.

In my haste to revive the MAC's magneto I foolishly neglected to plug the black hole on my Velocette … and the last of the three magneto fixing nuts to be removed dropped into the black hole. I grubbed about in the evil black morass in vain. I got a torch and repeated the search, still in vain. Logic suggested that if the nut was not in the black hole, it must have dropped onto the garage floor, directly below the black hole. On my hands and knees, I looked underneath the maintenance stand on the garage floor – nothing there. I searched again with the torch and I swept it clear with a fish-wire. Still on my hands and knees, I searched the garage floor all around, in case it had rolled away. Still nothing. I then returned to searching the black hole again with my powerful magnetic probe and … apparent success, out from the black morass

came a nut. "It must be my lucky day" I thought, until I found that this nut was not the magneto nut I had dropped; it was a different size and it must have belonged to something else that had fallen off the Velocette years ago and not been missed, whatever it was.

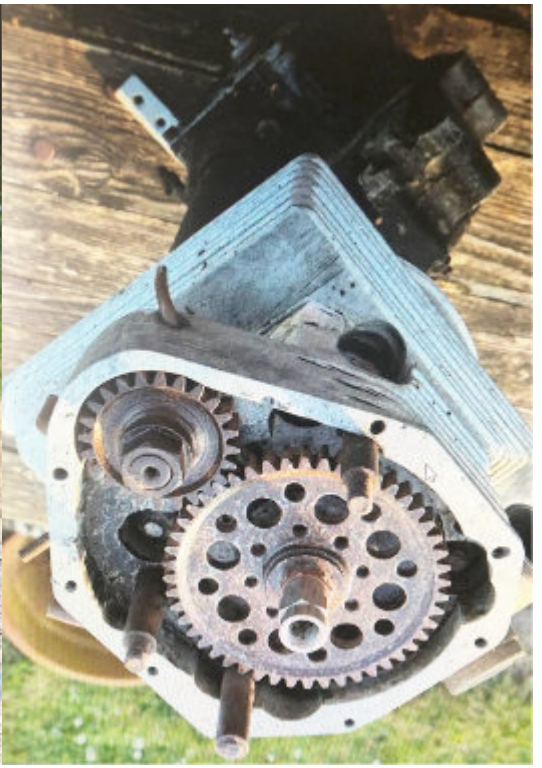
Now facing defeat by the Fifth Dimension, I then checked the thread as 5/16" Whitworth, found I had no spares of that size, and set about ordering a replacement pack of ten nuts. Ha! Ha! The pack of nuts arrived as requested, but it was only then I realised that Velocette had used a reduced-flat nut size for this restricted-access application. I then ordered the correct reduced-flat size nut from a Velocette specialist and refitted the refurbished magneto. On completion, I lowered the maintenance lift, moved the bike away and started to clear everything up. And there, on the garage floor right below where the black hole had been, was the original reduced-flat magneto nut …

Perhaps my Dad had something to do with this; he probably doesn't want me to sell the bike. OK Dad, I'm listening – the Velocette is still here.

MYSTERY ENGINE ? — John Mundey

These photos were sent to me by a friend in Germany. Any information please?
northlincolnshire-centre@velocetteowners.com





NOTES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT — Jim Plant

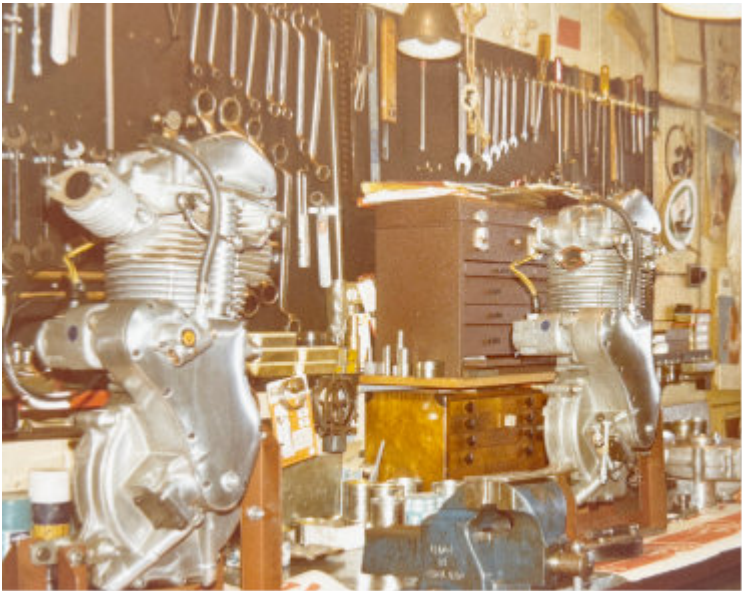
My wife's disability and other family commitments have restricted my Velocette activities this year but I have managed to get out on the trusty MAC regularly and attended several 'organised' events in parts of the country we would not normally visit. A particular high point was the visit to Kelso in early May where Raymond Albeson had found an excellent hotel for Mrs P to relax in whilst we explored the superb Borders countryside. So quiet after the hectic West Midlands roads.

Another enjoyable event was the Annual Rally organised by West Midlands Centre. Sadly, the numbers attending continue to fall; we probably had as many from West Midlands involved in putting on the event as other Members who bothered to come on Sunday. Putting on a rally like this is time consuming and expensive. I meet up regularly with Brian Coldicott and we discuss whether all the effort is worthwhile and both agree things have reached a tipping point. It really is an enjoyable day out. The Scott Owners were so pleased to be invited they sent Brian double what he asked them for the day.

I previously mentioned that my new bar end mirror was stolen outside the hotel in Kelso. The swine followed me home and stole another outside my house whilst I changed into my riding gear. I'd bought two mirrors at the Stafford Show, attracted by the price and Union Jack meaning they were made in the UK. They are also stainless steel and do not rely on a bit of bent tin to keep them in place.

This will be the last Fishtail in 2025 so I wish everyone a happy Christmas and joyful New Year.

MEMORY LANE … — Peter Cox



A Velo owner's dream. A perfect way to while away the time on a cold winter's evening, all the time being warmed by the coke burning stove in the middle of the workshop … Ralph Seymour's workshop in the '70s - an engineer's delight!

News

Andy Barrett

THE R. F. SEYMOUR EXHIBITION



On the 6th September, the R.F.Seymour exhibition officially opened at the Thame Museum, something myself and the family have been working on for the last 3 months and all came about due to a close friend, Adrian Ward, suggesting the museum might be interested in having a small exhibition in honour of my grandad, Ralph Seymour.

What happened next was over 300 people attending the opening (the biggest opening in Thame Museum history, beat that, Beegees …), coming from all over the country to see the Velocettes on display, memorabilia, photographs and trophies. It gave people the opportunity to meet fellow Velo enthusiasts and catch up on old times, share stories and of course share wisdom on issues with their Velos.

On display were five of Ralph's pride and joys, the most important being 'Katie', the Metisse Mk VIII which had sparked so much interest throughout the years and countless inspiration for enthusiasts. Also on display were his Thruxton, KTT Mk VIII, MSS and the prototype side valve (which I'm in the slow process of rebuilding and putting on the road). We were blessed with absolutely scorching sun and the perfect day for a ride-out with the whole pavement taken

up with Velos (leaving of course their famous oil mark much to the chagrin of one neighbour …).



The next open day, held on the 28th September, was another day of over 200 people attending and another chance for myself and the family to hear stories about Ralph and the business that we'd never heard before.

The exhibition is now closed but I wanted to personally say thank you to every single person that attended and made the whole exhibition a resounding success, it meant a lot to myself and the family that even though Ralph has been gone for over 30 years, he is still revered all these years later.

from Chris Webber

These days Thame – a sleepy market town in Oxfordshire – is probably best known as a major source of locations for the filming of the T.V. series 'Midsomer Murders'. For many Velocette enthusiasts and riders it will better be remembered as the setting for the ***Hawthorn Works*** of Ralph Seymour, T.T. and short circuit racer and mechanical master of Velocettes in the second half of the 20th Century. And the subject of a display by the local Town Museum.

Thanks to the generosity of his grandson, Andy Barrett, who inherited a collection of Seymour Velocettes, several machines were displayed on the opening day as an additional attraction for visitors. The exhibition itself consisted of a large collection of memorabilia including picture albums, trophies, programmes and a picture wall featuring the man, his machines and family (including 'Katie', the famous KTT race Velo and Liz Barrett, his daughter who ran the shop after his



retirement). These created a wide-ranging display celebrating one of Thames' past residents, a commendable approach by the small band of volunteers and their fascinating Museum.

To mark the occasion, Mark Lomas of the local Thames Valley Centre arranged two runs from nearby Benson through the twisty back roads and small villages of Oxfordshire to arrive at Thame, arriving before 11 on both occasions. Over a dozen members and friends took advantage of the opportunities to visit and socialise with the many other Velocette and classic vehicle enthusiasts who came to see the display. As seems to be traditional on such occasions an afternoon visit to an excellent nearby hostelry concluded the day.

There were a number of interesting machines on display along the roadside as well as the Seymour machines, which included;



Liz Barrett

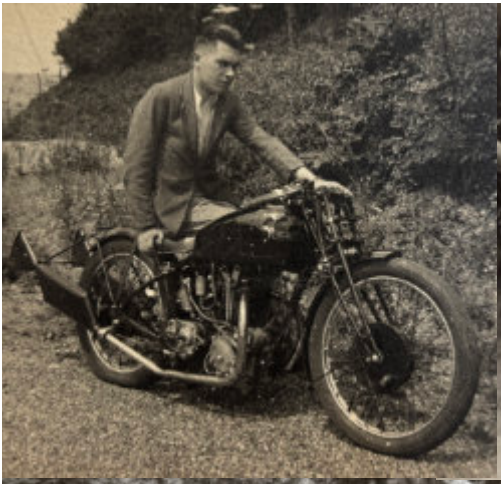
- 1967 Thruxton prepared for the 1976 Production T.T.
- 1956 MSS, used by Seymour and family as a commuter and general run-around, sometimes with sidecar attached before undergoing restoration in the 21st century.
- 1966/1939 Rickman Metisse-framed KTT – the famous 'Katie' purchased in 1939 by Seymour and raced by him up until 1952 and subsequently by others.
- Another 1939 KTT purchased in 1982 and used for vintage events in the UK. IoM and France; fitted with various works items. Finished first at the 1993 Vintage Southern 100, ridden by Bernard Guerin.
- Model M prototype replica undergoing development (as part of the interior Museum display).



Model M - stillborn precursor to the MOV

Details of the display, which ran from 6th September through to 25th October, were announced in Fishtail. Partially as a result of that, just over 500 visitors were recorded at the opening – a record for the small volunteer run museum – helped no doubt by the perfect weather on the day!

Ralph Seymour



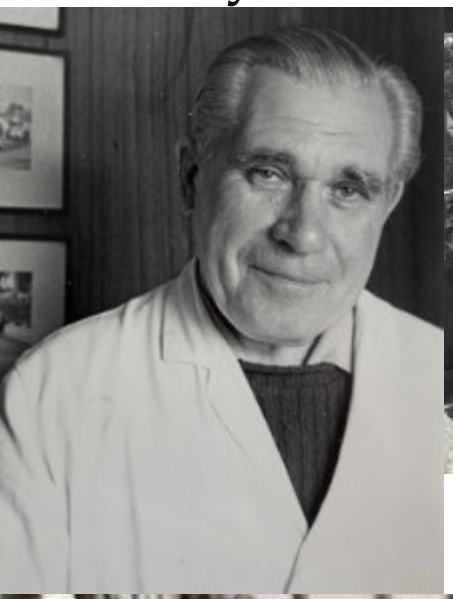


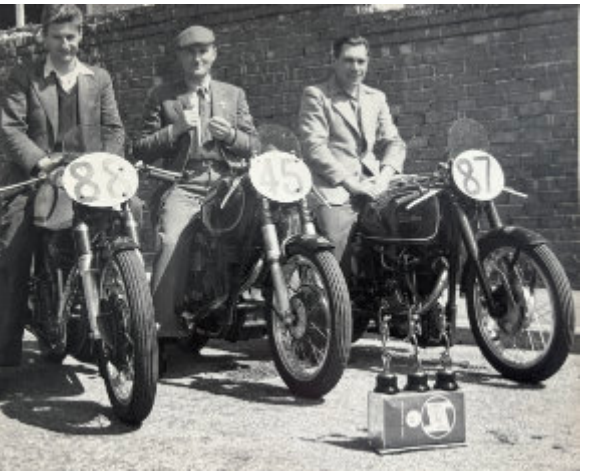






Gallery





As part of this Seymour celebration we have included an account by a French enthusiast of his first encounter with Ralph. *See page 68.*



John Foster

BOB FOSTER RUN 2025

It's a long way from Perth Western Australia to Crossways near Dorchester UK. I received my motorcycle licence in 1966 in Glasgow. I purchased my first Velocette in Perth Western Australia in 2016 some 50 years later although I had been aware of the marque for most of my life. Retirement from the power industry gave me the time and wherewithal to finally achieve this. Bob Foster won his 350cc World Championship the year I was born.

I ride as often as I can, our weather in WA certainly helps this. I am particular about when I ride and the routes I take, avoiding busy times and major roads. I realise that my remaining riding time is finite until eventually I am a danger to either myself and/or other road users.

My journey to the Bob Foster Run involved about 22 hours of air travel then a hire car and a hire bike plus some assistance from my sister who lives in Shrewsbury. The planning for this adventure commenced about six months ago with confirmation from Sandy Saunders that my entry on a modern bike would again be accepted. Normally machines must be no newer than 1970. I was not looking forward to the M3 Friday ride from Woking (RoadTrip Motorcycle Hire) to Dorchester, we do not have many comparable roads in WA. To make this worse a wet day presented itself. However, I survived, leap frogging the lorries in the 'slow' lane at a speed which suited my abilities. My hired machine was a black Triumph Bonneville T100 which did not look too out of place amongst the various Velocettes present.

The Run attracted about 51 entries this year, the last time I attended, in 2019, there were about 75. The reasons for this decline are not obvious other than the advancing age demographic of the participants. Perusal of the programme reveals that the majority of the participants are 'locals' most of whom were probably able to ride to the event.

This year's route was different from previous with the aim to reduce exposure to muddy surfaces and to generally reduce the overall mileage. This run totalled about 65 miles.

The weather for the rest of the weekend proved to be perfect with coldish starts and warmer afternoons, I did not need the full wet weather gear again. My programme allowed for a bit of 'float' and on the Saturday before the run my sister and I explored Weymouth and the Swannery at Abbotsbury. We were also able to visit the Spire Hill Farm Café; the chosen venue for the lunch stop. While there we noticed that the Run marshals were carrying out a recce for their next days' duties; riding the full route and placing arrow markers at the nominated locations. Impressive attention to detail.

My sister and I stayed at the Frampton Arms, Moreton, about 3 miles from Crossways village hall, where the Run traditionally starts from. On Sunday 5th October the coffee and bacon butty faculty was in full swing by the time I arrived just before 10:00am. The quick briefing was held and the run

commenced at around 11:00 with an orderly 'Le Mans' type get-away from the village hall car park. As usual the route was marshalled by the **Bournemouth & Wessex Advanced Motorcyclists** (the BWAM; organiser **Yvonne Moors**). For me this makes the Run stress free with no need to carry and refer to route sheets or maps on what are new roads for me. Again, they did a terrific job and are to be congratulated for their ongoing support. Without their involvement the Bob Foster Run would be a poorer event.



Crossways Village Hall – the riders gather

Prior to the event Sandy Saunders had circulated morning and afternoon route maps so riders were not starting 'blind', if they bothered to look at these. Again a nice touch. The event programme also included maps of the morning and afternoon routes. The morning run of 44 miles ran through Moreton, Tonerspuddle Heath, Warren, Lane End, Bere Regis, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Whitechurch, Higher Whatcombe, Winterborne Clenston, Winterborne Stickland, Hedge End, Turnworth, Okeford Fitzpaine, Manston, Hartgrove, Guy's Marsh, Stour Row, Todber, Walton Elm, then to Spire Hill Café Stalbridge for the lunch stop.

The café handled the lunch requirements of 51 riders and some 25 marshals over the next hour or so and it was warm enough to eat in the courtyard which was a bonus. After leaving a suitable time for the marshals to take up their return journey positions we headed off passing through Lydlinch, Kings Stag, Hazelbury Bryan, Stoke Wake, Bottom Ground, Green Down, Milton Abbas, Milton St Andrew, Affpuddle, Briantspuddle, Moreton and on to Crossways. A return run of some 23 miles.



Lunch time at Spire Hill

At the Village Hall a generous afternoon tea awaited and the trophies were awarded to the following worthy winners;

Trophy	Recipient	Model
Best Vintage 1/1/19 to 31/12/30	**Colin Bentham**	Model 'K'
Best Post Vintage 1/1/31 to 1/12/45	**Simon Davey**	1937 Mss
Best Post War 1946 - 1970	**Tony Mortimer**	1959 Venom
Best Non-Velo	**Lynne Prithard**	1960 Dominator
Dave Cox Shield 'Specials''	**Doug Ochiltree**	1960 Triton
Best Velo - Bob Foster Trophy	**John Hurst**	Venom
Jeff Clew Best Little Engine	**Charles Beney**	L.E.

Machine model breakdown (as given in the event programme)
VM - 14, MAC - 7, MSS - 6, Model K - 6, VR - 2, VMT - 1, L.E - 1, Norton - 3, BSA - 2, Triumph - 2, Honda - 1, Total; 45 There were about 6 others that participated but did not appear in the programme.

Conclusions;

- The back roads of Dorset provide a great venue for senior riders and their corresponding Velocettes. Scenic villages and breathtaking views.
- The event has a well proven format and a very reasonable distance to be covered.
- The event is very well organised by Sandy Saunders and his team.

For me, worth the effort and expense, many thanks Sandy. I might be biased, I'm sure my Uncle Bob would approve!



A club within a club? You need a rigid MSS to join.



Phil Price

NZ VELOS AT THE CLASSIC TT 2025

"***Shrivel up in a corner and disappear***" was the phrase I think Nick later used to describe his feeling when we first heard our 500 had stopped at Greeba Castle on the first lap of the first practice session of this year's classic TT. He was not alone, we all felt it. How could this be? News somehow came back from our rider, Rhys Hardisty, who was stranded for a short while at the close of the evening, "***The engine has done on the other side what it did last year.***" If that were the case then we had achieved one of the two things on our 'not to do list'. The first was to not be remembered by what we'd forgotten, and the other was to not fall on our faces … it was looking likely we had achieved the latter.

What 'it' had done last year on the first of a one lap dash race was to begin a steadily increasing vibration which became unbearable at around Glen Helen where Rhys had to stop. "***Surely not***" we said, "***that engine is bullet proof***" we said. But there it was in the post race dead dark of that late August night, glistening behind a liberal film of oil. A distinct horizontal crack right across the drive side case above the main bearing below the barrel square mouth.

Theres nothing more brutal than the truth, and in a strange way that is the attraction of the Manx. One's desire to learn the truth, to see it, understand it, and test against it. As difficult as that may be and so often is.

There are of course many other attractors to the Isle of Man: it's not just a pursuit of science, for there is often luck or at least hope involved as well. For any student of road racing history there is no other circuit that matches it. All European Grand Prix circuits have fascinating history but there is only one TT course. Still an old-fashioned feeling of a slower pace of life where folk take the time to be interested in one another. That magical sense when rolling around, even in a van with the light filtering through the trees, at times forming a complete canopy above. The flickering dotted white lines either side of the TT course rising and falling, snaking side to side. Much of the 37 and a half miles lined with hand laid stone walls, some covered in blackberries, ripe in August. All somehow a record of the many talented men from times present and past putting their heart and soul into showing the combined skill of man and machine at one. Always pushing the possibility to better what has been



before, history as the constant measure of truth.

Rhys has propped up the 500, footrests sitting atop two metal fuel cans in the pit tent, and disappeared. Everybody in our eclectic crew wanted to disappear that night. We spend a huge amount of life building these bikes, travel as far away from home as is possible to compete in the most demanding race in the world, thinking that within that bubble of interest we can make a difference and possibily add another notch in the Velocette belt of achievements. This could be our year we said, there is somehow a good feeling about everything this year we said, all with an understanding we have long learned that you can never make any claim without following through here. A breakdown in the first ten minutes of the first practice … how should one feel?

Somehow, I am there alone in the tent in the dark, phone torch, can't see a crack, engine still turns over, it's in a high gear but in first there seems to still be compression, a glimmer of hope … There is no crack, Nick and Pat dismantle and remove the head. A small piece of the protrusion on the piston, central, carb side of the inlet valve cutaway has broken away, about the size of a child's front tooth. It's been a bit hot too, that much is clear and the piston has been peening the head in the areas of squish. It's a tall engine, could it have got hot enough to expand more than the millimetre allowed perhaps?

In Germany a week previously, having recently received a package from Ngaio, Wellington, of two 1936 double overhead cam Velocette engines, laid down looking all the world like the mechanical gems they are. These we soon reunited into their rolling chassis which had sat incomplete amongst the good company of an extraordinary collection of road and race bikes, classic, vintage, and veteran, all in usable condition, unbelievable. This is the cellar of Cord Warneke's four storey Bauhaus 'shed'. So much more than a shed, a veritable living museum of proven capability, passion, and lives lived. We tested both machines at the long disused Nazi built runway of Oldenburg, Cord has a mate, Ralf, with a key - of course he does. They were both good I thought, pulled well, gathered speed as



Rhys, Bill and Nick with the 350



they should, and delivered better exhaust readings than the dyno, we thought. Although it was queer in hindsight that the 500 did not seem to mind on the lambda meter going leaner one click on the Gardner, then another, and another.

One of the main reasons to do this testing - apart from it seeming to us antipodeans that the chance to run the bikes at such a place was far from anything we thought real, and therefore had to be done - was to test the front end of the 350. In the early North German spring Cord had undertaken an important and critical task to change its steering geometry. That is to say open out the steering head angle by 4 degrees, effectively increasing the trail to 100mm. That proved an instant success especially at speed as both myself and later Rhys did not notice anything at the front, which was the sign to be looking for.

With a lucky find from last year's spares, a secondhand piston is fitted back into the 500, we are back in business, albeit a bit on the back foot. From that scary experience a conservative approach was agreed as wise with a slightly rich mixture set for the remainder of practice and then a call based on this experience for the race. However, sadly, no matter what we told ourselves the problem was, the power we had previously seen on the 500 did not return. Suspected poor quality island pump fuel came into question so we changed to 100% avgas as previously run, that was not it, neither was the cam timing, nor the usual suspect – the dreaded old English remote float bowl. In hindsight was the inlet valve just a little bent, not enough to show up when cold?

As is now all too familiar we struggled to get a clear steer as to the best state of tune for the race. Due in part to a rider who needed to run his more modern two stroke 'classics' in the shared sessions, poor weather coming at the end of the week when the races were due to start, and more questions than answers. We were due to start these races with sub-optimal machines with settings more of a guess and best bet than anything we had proved beyond doubt. Our 350 also was less than it had been in the past too. "Rich and slow" were Rhys's comments coming in from the first practice lap out on it. Poor thing would not even pull sixth gear anywhere other than on long downhills. We were surprised and saddened to hear it change late into top coming out of Ballagarey and along the straight section of Glen Vine and Crosby, that surprise later turned to mortification when we learned he wasn't changing into top he was changing

into fifth! We had another big problem too, with our 500, in so much as it breathes oil, heaps of oil, when it gets hot it's pumping out. It's now clear there is some kind of violence in the crankcase that is not allowing the frothy blancmange of oil to be scavenged efficiently, instead pumping itself into the breather pipe, oil tank, breather bottle, and sooner or later if not big enough then spills over onto the back of the bike. This problem was evident in 2024 but had not been properly understood nor solved. Virtually everyone who came into the knowledge of this problem had a suggestion for the solution but in truth having chosen to run a very heavy and therefore physically large flywheel there simply is not enough room in the case for the oil to return to the bottom as a liquid and becomes an aerated and expanded, not properly doing anything we hope it should. No new paddock plumbing arrangement was going to fix this so a 'big' breather bottle was fitted. We had even agreed that if the race was three or more laps we would stop the bike after two just to check on matters, empty or replace the bottle as there was no chance we could risk an overflowing breather bottle.

Nothing we wanted to believe or promised ourselves could hide the truth which was that we were rolling up to the start of these races with much less confidence than we had arrived on the island with.

And so on our fifth visit to compete at the Isle of Man from New Zealand we did get a finish in both the Classic Senior and the Junior with our essentially hand-made Velocettes. Something to celebrate, or are we slow to learn. Eventually disappointment turned to an acceptance this was something to be at least mildly proud of.

In 2014 with the Eldee 250cc DOHC Velo, Bill Swallow onboard, the ignition drive gave up at Ballacrane. In addition the rear hub got very hot from the rear brake which caused the bearings both shouldered on the axle to be strained from the growth of the hub, retirement on the second lap. 2018, we came with the 350 for the first time, especially built for Chris Swallow to ride on this course, and the Eldee, father and son Swallow's onboard. The 350 which had shown some promise was really altogether too new and untried, had an exhaust bracket failure on the first lap. The Eldee ran out of fuel on the last lap with a badly overflowing float bowl, Bill amazingly achieved a 92mph lap essentially one handed turning the fuel on and off with his left. On reflection a marvelous achievement and best ever speed for a 250 velo, and 350 for that matter.

2019 with 350 only, the crankpin breaks on the first practice lap due to a minute machining error. Chris was lost in the senior race so all seemed lost, devastated we returned home forlorn. 2024, with new enthusiasm and the new 500 DOHC, the repaired, tested and proven 350 DOHC, and a recently acquired AJS 7R for good measure, terrible weather, Junior and Senior combined to a one lap dash, the 500 splits its drive side case at Glen Helen, the 350 remained untried but broke its piston in Germany within around 5 minutes of use due to hydraulic-ing oil in the crankcase.

Speed and lap times for 2025 overall not at all where we wanted to and should be, with an average of 92-93mph for both junior and senior. Not far off

previous pace for the 350 but just not strong. On the little bike going down a tooth on the final drive from 23 that it had pulled previously. to 22. It is however important to take the view that a finish is just that, a finish, and build from there.

Finishing is not easily achieved in this race especially with such ambitious builds as these bikes are, there just isn't anything in the paddock as extensively hand made. It does however slam home an altogether respect-worthy truth which is that the factory achieved just short of 90mph average laps pre and post war when the races would have been 5-7 laps on much rougher roads much, inferior tyres, suspension, and four speed gearboxes. We would have no chance of surviving this length of race. A sobering fact in reliability let alone speed that we have not come very far in our lifetimes compared to what Veloce achieved between 1926 and their retirement in 1953 with a world war taking up nearly a decade between.

It does need recording that ours is not a complete tale of woe. We had a number of things on the plus side of our ledger. No gearbox or drive train issues. The front end with its changed girder arrangement giving mostly steering head parallel movement of nearly 90mm of travel fully damped has proven to work very well with added trail from the standard KTT set up the front is settled at speed and tracks nicely, well suited to fast and bumpy work of the TT course. Nick's cam roller followers have been a total win, most especially on the overhead cam bikes as we need a lot less oil upstairs. Generally the engines are strong and capable.



Rhys at speed on the 500

Photo: Baylon McCaughey

Probably the most unexpected win we feel is the support the old Velos have gathered at the Manx Grand Prix and now Classic TT, we have a real following mostly I believe because we are punting proper old classic bikes from a truly great period in road racing, looking back with respect you might say. Something fast being forgotten as the organizers

commit more and more to post modern classics. With these two bikes especially, the only girder forks out there and with the 500 the only unfaired machine, looking for all the world like a special pre-war sight and sound. All too often we were told onlookers would cheer and clap as they came around, and many times we heard phrases along the lines that "***these are my favourite bikes of the entire event***". Sadly the other realization is that these are likely to be the last Velocettes to ever be raced with anything like anger on the Island. That all happened quicker than even I had imagined. I'm just very glad we made this push while the passion and capability is there, and while the opportunity still exists to run and try for a new truth from our chosen brand at this extraordinary and unique historic place.



The victorious Norton team

More importantly than anything else we achieved one big thing from our 'to do' list - that being to enjoy ourselves. At times of challenge we had to remind ourselves that we all agreed that having a good time was to be our driving force. Some very long and all very dear friendships centered around our common interest in these old bikes, building, tinkering, and using them. Some of life's most enduring memories of good times, laughter and a sense of inclusion in the arena of the pursuit of an idea.

Mention must be made of our partner team from New Zealand, Peter Lodge and his extraordinary ES2 Norton. Winning the Senior was very well deserved and we are delighted and grateful to be pitted alongside such a finely tuned bike and team. In the Kiwi camp we shared many wonderful moments, laughter, and a free exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experience. This alongside multiple visitors from multiple countries, a very warm and friendly atmosphere.

As for 2026, we are keen, a better result still the goal. One big motivator is the upcoming centenary of the first win for a K style Velocette, the beginning of the history we all love and pore over so much. We must celebrate this so please keep the date open for the Classic TT 2026, and watch this space.

With utmost thanks and gratitude to our 2025 team Velo. ***Nick Thomson, Rhys Hardisty, Pat Clancey, Cord Warneke, Cordula Claussen, Udo Von Der Bey, Ralf Schroder.***



Ivan Rhodes

UPDATE FROM FELLSIDE

First of all, I have to tell you that our friends the Kiwis and their German colleagues called on us on their way to the Manx Classic event in the Island with the latest Velocette ongoing projects. Phil Price, world-renowned sculptor, and Nick Thompson, brilliant innovative engineer, carrying on the development of Percy's overhead cam design of 1925. Or, perhaps better described as the continuation of the 1936 DOHC works bikes which Harold chose to put to one side in favour of the Frank Aspen rotary valve device. This promised so much but left him with no room to prepare the new fully-enclosed 350 intended for the 1937 season, which failed to perform.



Nick's projects are based on the 1936 design yet incorporating many changes e.g. bore and stroke ratios, splined vertical bevel drives, heavy-duty main bearings, and six-speed gear cluster and supporting outriggers, plus rollers on the cam followers and so on.

Phil Price, Nick Thomson, Cordula Claussen, Jeanette & Ivan, Ralf Schroder, Udo Von Der Bey, Cord Warneke. Missing in action - Pat Clancy and Bill Swallow



I was given the chance to look over the 500 and photographed sat on the bike. Everything felt good, including clutch and brake controls and suspension with their version of girder fork, with the use of a belt driven primary drive too. I like the one piece exhaust system with a gradual taper throughout which reminded me of a similar set up I've seen on a Tiger Moth aeroplane with Gypsy Major engine. I bade them farewell and wished them good luck.

As usual, the weather played havoc with the Classic, I believe usually run after the Manx GP proper and I understand both bikes finished the limited laps permitted in the time.

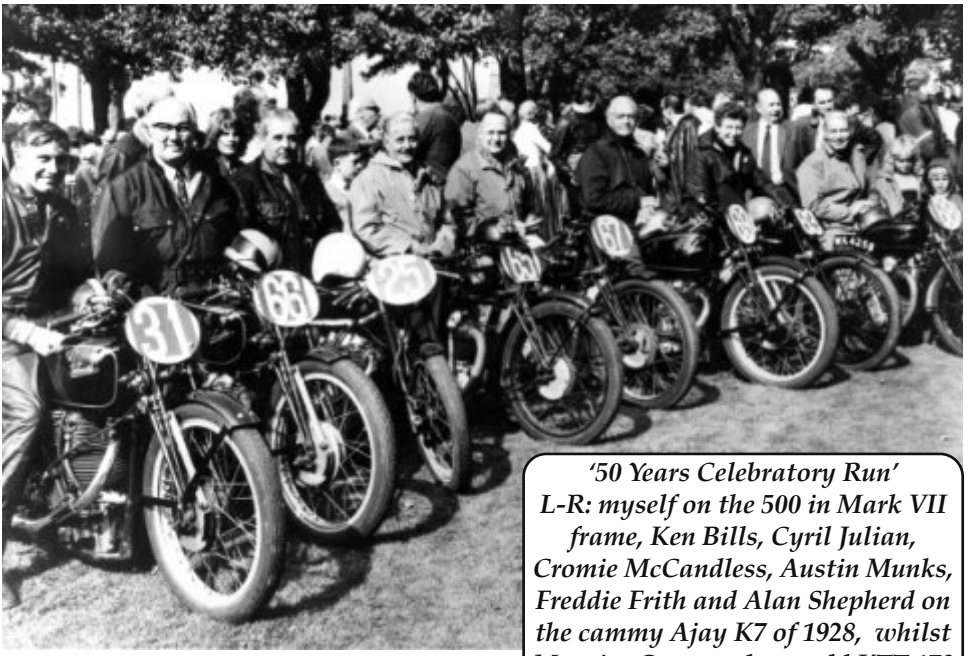
Now additionally I promised you an account of our wonderful holiday in the magical Isle of Man made possible by the kindness of friends within our club who were aware of my wish to visit the Island since the last time we were there was to lead the celebratory lap of the first mountain course of 1911, 14 years previously. I was representing Stanley Woods for the day, riding what we call his old 500 (see pictures in '***Passion of a Lifetime***', page 113).

Some advanced preparation arranged by Rupert Murdon representing the VMCC, the Velocette Owners' and Manx clubs. We agreed to take three bikes out of store i.e. the 1938–9 works 350 on display in the museum and the Beasley 250 Velo I had used in the 1965 TT from Dennis Bunning's wonderful museum plus a very early OHV AJS which I had cobbled together over the years, since the engine was one of eight special machines designed and built by Harry Stevens in order to win the 1920 TT, which they just managed. This is historically important being the first OHV engine to win a TT and it's well known that Howard Davies (HRD) won the 1921 Senior riding a 350. Dennis Bunning is a retired businessman who has moved across the water and who has, inside the drawing room of his house, one of George Beale's Honda Six replicas looking resplendent.

On our first trip round the course I couldn't find 'The Highlander', probably no longer a hotel, from where one of our VMCC members (I cannot remember his name now) recorded speeds through the trap. The Beasley 250 registered 99 mph, since we had been told by Don Crossley, who took us new recruits on a coach training tour way back in 1955, that one can hold full bore until you see the red telephone box at the bottom of the hill on the right hand side - which is no longer there!

There was no sound of the foghorn which woke us at around 4 am on our first practice lap on Don Whelan's old 7R way back in 1955. Nonetheless when we arrived at 'The Gooseneck' on this occasion, the mist was well and truly out on the top of Snaefell and only cleared as we dropped down to 'The Bungalow' as has been normal throughout history. We did six laps in both the Junior and Senior Manx in those days and the bike finished in fine shape. Also find enclosed a shot of Robbie Longman who, experimenting with a modified fork arrangement, didn't quite make it at 'Signpost' which is now in a built-up area.

We were booked into the Douglas High School lecture theatre to give a presentation relating to our past experiences such as finding sufficient rare bikes to enable old riders to take part in a 50 years celebratory run on behalf of the



'50 Years Celebratory Run'
L-R: myself on the 500 in Mark VII frame, Ken Bills, Cyril Julian, Cromie McCandless, Austin Munks, Freddie Frith and Alan Shepherd on the cammy Ajay K7 of 1928, whilst Maurice Cann took our old KTT 179 which was originally his late brother Tom's bike (see page 250 in 'Passion of a Lifetime').

Manx Grand Prix in September 1973, riders starting from 'The Bungalow'. Having helped in providing machines on this occasion we were therefore required to repeat the service and providing Stanley and Bill Lomas a 500 apiece for the full celebratory in 1979 and so on.

We ran a bit of old black-and-white film which Stanley had given me which I felt was important historically. We see much normally unseen footage revealing old names and faces, in jocular mood in some cases. From Veloce - Percy Goodman, Harold Willis, Charles Udall, Tommy Mutton. Mobil Oil representative, Bert Perkins, Mellors, Pope, Craig, Frith, Daniell, Tyrrell Smith, Jock West, Ernie Knott, Rusk, Ginger Wood, Foster, Frank Mussett, Phil Irving and a cheeky chap named Charlie Manders - just about everybody connected at that time and much of it filmed by Mildred Woods over the period 1937, 8, 9.



I wore my Manx GP tie on this occasion and took the opportunity to honour the achievement of my son Grahame having won the 2005 Senior Classic Manx TT riding his Seeley Matchless G50 amongst stiff opposition at an average of over 102 mph at that time. Two years later he was with me when we celebrated the Centenary of the TT when Geoff Duke set us off one at a time from St John's for a lap of the original course. Grahame, due to the ongoing development of muscular sclerosis was now unable to ride a bike and I had a ride on Alec Bennett's 1928 Junior TT winning Velocette which, following a major top overhaul, proved an extremely willing performer with the first Harold Willis foot change, which considerably helped his success way back in 1928.

Our friends took us to see Bob Taylor and his bikes in the small Leece Museum in Peel and on to Glen Maye where we would stay with the Qualtrough sisters at Mallmore many years ago. Then a trip over the 'Fairy Bridge' to call on Peter Murray in his wonderful museum continuing that which his father set up all those years ago. I recall the pleasures of visiting his shop and viewing the exhibits at Atherstone before he moved over to the Island. We were taken for a ride on the horse trams and on the mountain railway.

Back to the presentation - our second session ensued in a Douglas car dealer showroom where he moved out his stock of Porsche motor cars in order to accommodate us. Our bicycles encouraged much further discussion amongst another good turnout of our friends. All good and pleasant company which concluded the overall event.

Many thanks to Rupert and his team, the VMCC and Velo Clubs, Iain, Norman, Les and company. I was pleased to find Harold's seat in good fettle at Ballaugh. It was good to be able to meet up with Bill Bennett again, a stalwart of the Manx club. We met granddaughter of Manxman Tom Sheard who won the 1922 Junior for AJS and the 1923 senior for Douglas in pouring rain. Also, once again to meet up with Frances Thorpe, Secretary of the TTRA over the years and organiser of the '38th Milestone Social Club' in the pits.

On this occasion, 14 years after my last trip, a wonderful magical trip shared with my lady Jeanette who had never been before, made possible by the kindness and generosity of my good friends within our club who gave us the full treatment truly the icing on the cake for which I'm extremely grateful. Thank you all, with best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Ivan and Jeanette.





Doug Lyon

BASIL GAMGEE RUN 2025

Basil always liked to take us out in the autumn for some proper dirty roads riding, and it's a tradition I like to maintain. After some very pessimistic weather forecasts for Sunday 14th September, it was decided to move his memorial ride to the following day, Monday 15th as, given the demographic, it seemed that there would still be sufficient participants to make the previous route planning worthwhile.

I was contacted by a stranded Channel Islands member Steve Rogers to see if he could do the ride as his ferry had been cancelled, so I figured I would have at least one rider along with me. In the end there were five of us, but sadly not Steve as the run instructions had gone to his email spam folder. The foul weather actually blew in after the run would have finished on the Sunday, which was a shame, and many things had been cancelled that day that could perhaps have gone ahead.

We set out on the Monday from the Flower Pots fully expecting trees down, branches and mud in the narrow roads etc., which are historically characteristic of this run. Major roadworks on the A272 at West Meon Hut meant that a longer eastward leg was required to get to the interesting going, and a 30 mile lap of the backroads was negotiated. Bombarded by conkers and acorns now and then, we rode the hilly lanes, negotiated the many pot holes, coped with occasional grass down the middle of the road, beaches of shingle washed out of the banks, chalk and field slurry on the bends, all without any problems.

After a few "navigational errors" by myself - the route card saying things like "TR No SP" where I'd forgotten which TR that was - we were treated to some interesting views. We also startled some oncoming motorists who didn't expect to find five motorcycles on 'their' road on a Monday lunchtime!



Arriving safely back at the Flower Pots, we sat down to lunch and a pint of their own ale, and were accosted by the local 'Ladies wot Lunch' who thought we might be "Lads from the village" - which was fitting end to a great ride!



Mike Williams

YET MORE FUN IN FRANCE!

You will, no doubt, have read Jeannie Medd's report of the early summer gathering hosted by the Velocette Club de France. This year we were doubly fortunate in that there was a second bite of the cherry in September. This time the rally was a smaller affair, much like the others we have enjoyed in recent years. The big difference was the location, which was at ***Champagnac le Vieux***, in the Auvergne some way south east of Clermont Auvergne. The club had organised accommodation at a campsite in the forest, with a somewhat depleted lake in front (they had it warm in France too this year). What a great location it turned out to be!

There were just the four Brits attending this rally, perhaps because the earlier one was also in the Auvergne. Ian and Jeannie Medd went on their modern Triumph, turning it into a slightly longer holiday, while Pat Clancy and I went in Pat's van with his recently completed green MAC and my MSS. We took an overnight ferry from Portsmouth to Caen on the Wednesday night, giving us a nice early start on Thursday, avoiding most of the traffic on the ring road. It was a longish drive down (over 400 miles from the channel ports) so we split the journey over two days, stopping at a delightful chateau on the outskirts of ***Nogent-sur-Vernisson***. We avoided tolls, but used a fair bit of motorway, especially on the second day, down the A71 and A75 which are toll-free and a good route to the south of France.

Once we left the autoroute near ***Brioude*** we were soon into the ***Parc Naturel Regional Livradois-Forez*** and climbing gradually up through wooded countryside to about 900m. It looked promising for the ride-out! We arrived mid -afternoon on the Friday and had plenty of time to relax before the rigours of aperitifs with our French hosts, followed by dinner in the on-site restaurant.

It was a fairly early start on Saturday, with a planned departure for 9am, and the thirty or so Velos and other marques were all ready to go on time, although a pre-war KSS proved rather obstinate. However, we set off on beautiful roads through the forest, with some lovely sweeping bends and some wigglier bits to keep us entertained – and barely a pothole anywhere. It was quite a chilly start and there were a few damp patches in the shadier areas, but it warmed up as



we approached our morning stop at the **Museum of Energy** in ***Ambert*** (where the cheese comes from!). This was an eclectic collection of religious rosaries and their manufacture, steam engines, and the evolution of agricultural mechanisation!

Then it was on to lunch at an excellent restaurant with tables outside and delicious food. Bikes all appeared to be running well and, as usual, we had a very leisurely time before heading off on the return leg back to the campsite. This did not go entirely smoothly, as several of us got separated and had to navigate our way back. Despite the detour, it seemed that all roads were equally scenic and pleasing, passing through charming hamlets and lovely countryside. Once back at camp, all the bikes were gathered for photos and refreshments!

The evening saw us treated to yet more super French food – you get the picture, I'm sure – accompanied by the usual musical entertainment, courtesy of local musicians, and some pretty energetic dancing from some of the assembled guests. Not sure what time I got to bed, but I didn't need much rocking!

Sunday morning was another bright start and, having loaded the bikes the previous evening, Pat and I were able to set off north again, leaving Ian and Jeannie to continue their tour of chateaux and our French friends to disperse gradually. We had quite a distance to cover back to ***Blois***, so couldn't hang around, but we didn't need to go mad either, and arrived in good time, even managing to catch a bit of French rugby on TV.

We returned to the UK on Monday afternoon on the Cherbourg to Poole ferry, arriving in Exeter just before midnight and Pat getting home to St Austell a couple of hours later. Another great trip to France, full of interest, fun, fellowship and good food. Met some new people, renewed and furthered existing friendships. Must do it again soon!

Huge thanks to our French hosts for organising the rally and to Pat for doing all the driving. Apologies for the fuel leak suffered by the MSS when the corks in the fuel taps failed, causing petrol fumes to fill the van most of the way to the rally. Fortunately I remembered that I had spares in the MSS toolbox (doesn't everyone?) and we were able to stop the leak and avoid a potential no show for the ride out.

Keep your eyes open for notice of next year's French rally!





David Prismall

TWO-STROKE RESCUE UPDATE …

You will remember that, recently, I sent you a story about two 2-stroke Velocettes that my friend Graham and I extracted from the cellars of their long-term elderly owner, David Hamer (see FT508). They had been there for the best part of forty years and were in desperate need of careful renovation.

Today, I caught up with their new owner, Geoff Nuttall, from Preston. Geoff rode the 1923 B2 two-speed to Fairhaven Lake, Lytham, where the East Lancs and Blackpool sections of the VMCC met up.

Geoff decided that the 1924 three-speeder would undergo a more thorough and cosmetically perfect rebuild, whilst the two-speeder would





A work in progress - the three-speeder in the workshop

be put back on the road in original condition.

He still had to bring his engineering skills to bear, however, as a +20thou rebore and new piston and rings were required, along with new mainshaft bushes and a new big-end. The gearbox was rebuilt, as were the carburettor and magneto. One of the alloy footboards was cracked but the other supplied a pattern from which a new one was cast. New tyres and chains were fitted, plus a few cosmetic items such as handlebar grips, but essentially the machine looks its 100+ years but goes very well.

At the end of the morning, I followed Geoff (riding my green 1955 MAC with its new magneto and refreshed top end) and can report that the narrow little lightweight 2-stroke two-speeder negotiates traffic with ease and has a most pleasant exhaust note. I really look forward to seeing the results of Geoff's further efforts in producing a factory-fresh three-speeder.



Geoff on board the B2



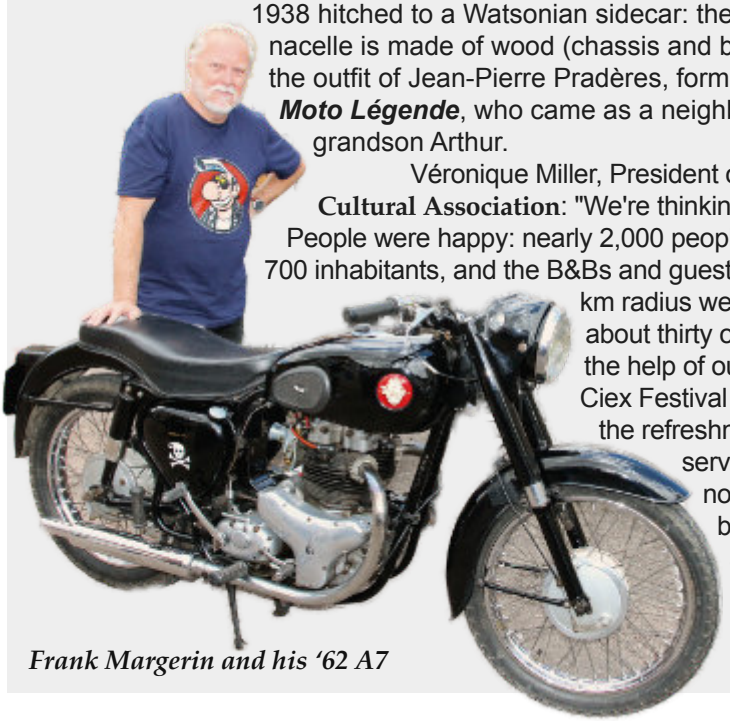
Jean Pierre Pradères



My MSS outfit featured in a recent edition of '***La Vie de la Moto***' when I attended an event inspired by a character in a ***bande dessinée*** created by Frank Margerin who recently moved to the village. Here's what they say …

Following last year's success, the "***Journées Lucien***" (Lucien Days) returned to Entrains-sur-Nohain on August 2nd and 3rd. Bikers, moped riders, vintage car enthusiasts, Frank Margerin fans, and passing tourists enlivened the village in a friendly atmosphere. While the quiffs were rare on the balding heads, they were countered by the hundreds of happy faces. On this first weekend of August, the small town of Entrains-sur-Nohain once again became, for this second edition, the centre of Frank Margerin's comic book universe.

The oldest motorcycle of the weekend, was the Velocette 500 MSS from 1938 hitched to a Watsonian sidecar: the VG21 whose entire nacelle is made of wood (chassis and body panels). This is the outfit of Jean-Pierre Pradères, former photographer of ***Moto Légende***, who came as a neighbour with his grandson Arthur.

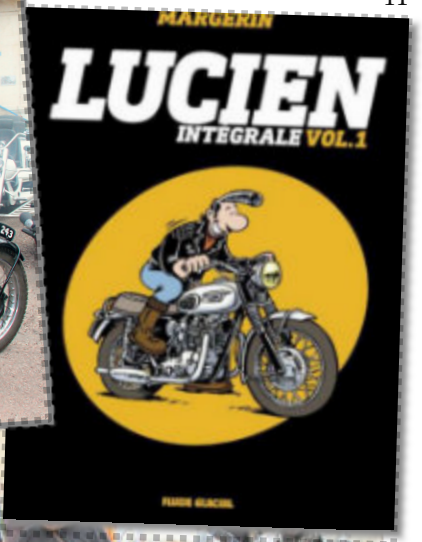


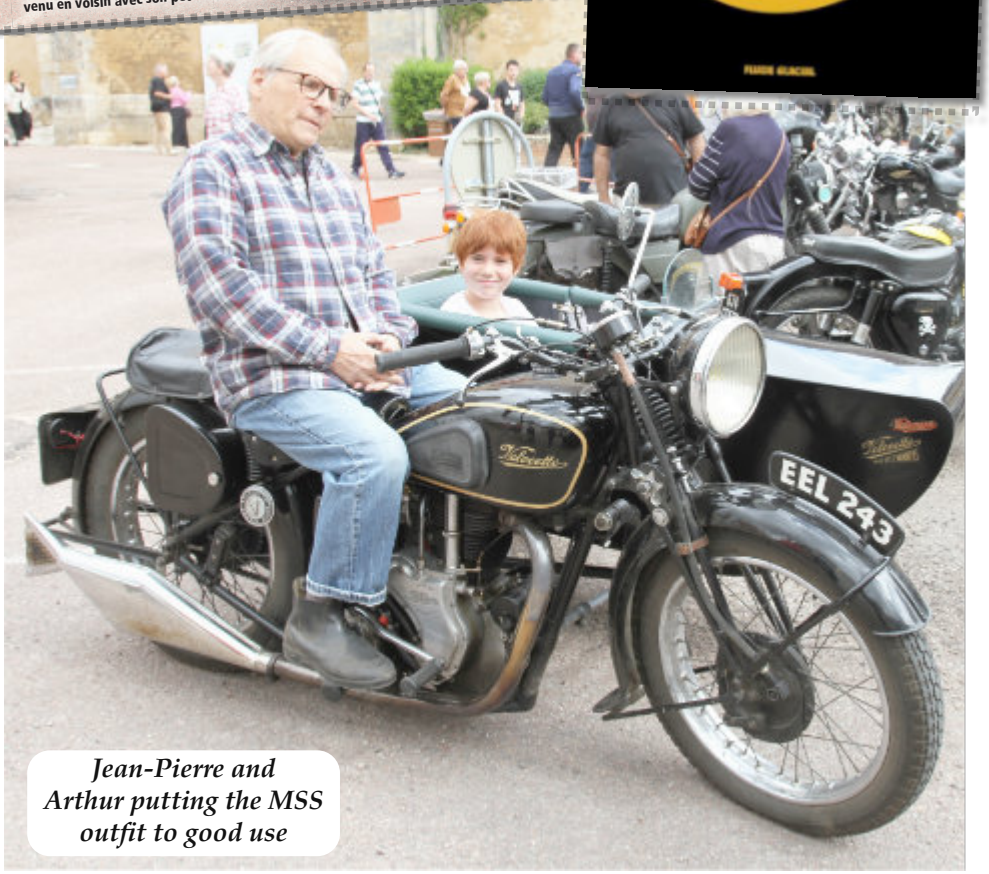
Frank Margerin and his '62 A7

Véronique Miller, President of the **Intaranum Cultural Association**: "We're thinking about a third edition! People were happy: nearly 2,000 people visited our village of 700 inhabitants, and the B&Bs and guesthouses within a 15-km radius were full. There were about thirty of us volunteers, with the help of our neighbours from the Ciex Festival Committee, who ran the refreshment and catering services: without them, nothing would have been possible.We're already thinking about a third edition with new events, at the same time of year."



Plus ancienne moto du week-end, la Velocette 500 MSS de 1938 attelée à un side Watsonian VG21 dont toute la nacelle est en bois (châssis et panneaux de carrosserie). C'est l'attelage de Jean-Pierre Pradères, ancien photographe de *Moto Légende*, venu en voisin avec son petit-fils Arthur.





Jean-Pierre and Arthur putting the MSS outfit to good use

Sounds a great event! Our thanks to **Marc Bertrand** *and the publishers of* **'La Vie de la Moto'** *for the story and the pictures.*



Mark Turner

CLASSIC RACING IN SPAIN
Gran Premio La Bañeza

A significant item of international news during the summer of 2025 concerned the wild-fires in Europe. One of the more ferocious fires broke out to the south of a small town called ***La Bañeza*** in the north west of Spain. This town of 10,000 people has a mythical status in Spain, not for surviving possibly the worst fires in living memory, but for its annual urban classic motorcycle races, which took place this year, days before the impending threat from uncontrolled wild-fires.

One weekend every August, La Bañeza welcomes approximately 50,000 motorcycle racing aficionados to the '***Gran Premio La Bañeza***'. This year, 2025, was the sixty-fourth time that the town has closed its streets to host possibly one of the last urban motorcycle racing circuits in Europe.

The weekend's racing takes place around a 1.75 km circuit that passes bars, shops, houses and flats whilst negotiating tight bends, fast straights and a chicane, through often-narrow streets. The riders pass within touching distance of the trackside spectators, who are secure behind bales of straw and plastic barriers, a recently added safety measure from about 2015! Practice and qualifying takes place on Saturday afternoon with warm ups on Sunday morning. Racing gets underway Sunday mid-morning, finishing early afternoon.

The racing is currently divided into four classes. There is a classic two-stroke class for bikes manufactured between 1945 and 1972, mainly from Montesa, Bultaco, Ossa, etc. These can be sports or replica machines, but modifications or 'improvements' are strictly controlled. There is a classic four-stroke class for bikes larger than 250 cc, similarly restricted to machines manufactured between 1945 and 1972, mainly from Ducati. There is a Eurotwins class for European production twin machines manufactured prior to 1984. Machines in this class tend to be Moto-Guzzi V-twins or similar. Japanese bikes are excluded from these three classes. However, the fastest racing is usually provided by the 125 GP/Moto 3 class, which principally consists of Hondas.



Although the classic four-stroke class consists predominantly of Italian machines, machines of British origin do well in the right hands. The legendary **Pepín San Millán** was a seven times winner on his BSA based machines prepared by AF Manx.



In 2000, San Millán persuaded his friend **Phil Read** to race at La Bañeza. But Read's BSA suffered a mechanical failure whilst leading, and San Millán went on to record his fourth win. In 2002, Read came in second, but in 2003 returned on a BSA B50 and recorded the first of two consecutive victories, the only wins in La Bañeza by a non-Spanish rider.

Frank Melling also made a number of notable appearances (also on BSA derived machines) during this period, recording a highly creditable fourth place in 1999. Melling is quoted as saying "***La Bañeza, the home of the best street race in the world***". Phil Read is remembered affectionately by many due to his tussles with San Millán and Juan Martín. Read was fondly commemorated in the 2023 race programme, following his death in October 2022. Phil Read is not the only world champion to have raced and won in the streets of La Bañeza. **Ángel Nieto** won the 125 cc class in La Bañeza in 1968.

From 1977, some races counted towards the Spanish national championships, but from 1986, the racing has generally consisted of the four classes described above. In 2025 the classic four-stroke class was won by **Francisco García** racing a very fast Seeley 500 BSA, followed by two Ducatis with a nicely turned out Manx Norton finishing in fourth place. The racing is always very competitive, although there are riders who turn up every year with no realistic hope of winning, but who really enjoy just participating. Another of the attractions is the freedom to walk through the pits and to see the bikes at close hand. All of this contributes to the relaxed, friendly and thoroughly enjoyable atmosphere that is evident throughout the weekend.

So, what has this to do with Velocettes? Not a lot, yet. I have never seen a Velocette competing at La Bañeza. Chris McGahan was entered in 2022, and he was listed on the race card with his Velocette 350, but unfortunately, at the last minute he was unable to attend. But I live in hope of seeing a Hall Green machine battling exotic Italian bikes through the streets of a small Spanish town. Maybe another Velocette-mounted racer aspires to follow in Phil Read's exhaust fumes?

For spectators, if you are looking for an extended weekend break, La Bañeza is a four-hour ride from Santander ferry port, initially through the very scenic Cantabrian mountains. Accommodation is scarce around La Bañeza, so the town council sets up a temporary campsite in a local park. However, this being Spain in high summer, temperatures can be in the mid-thirties celsius, and there isn't a great deal of shade trackside. But the quality of the racing and the atmosphere definitely makes '***Gran Premio de La Bañeza***' well worth attending. Ear plugs are recommended!



Malcolm Kervell
MALCOLM'S RUN
A Tour of Fife & Perthshire's C-Class Roads

Again we used Tesco's in Cupar, north-east Fife, as our base. Tesco's cafe is now closed but Costa was near by. The starting group consisted of six Velos and one BMW. We started south to Ceres, but Raymond and I noted three riders ahead of us missed a right turn but as they all had maps and routes we decided to just carry on in the hope that they would rejoin us. We went south then westward to Perthshire via Glenrothes and Leslie to Loch Leven, which has an island castle in which the Scottish Queen Mary was imprisoned, but was later to escape. I noted the B-road along the south of Loch Leven was so uneven that I thought that the bike's suspension was faulty. After crossing the M90 motorway, we continued west beside the Cleish hills , turning north near the Knockhill racing circuit, to the quaintly named Yetts of Muckhart, In Scots Gaelic ***Muc*** means pig, cart yard or enclosure, and ***Yetts*** indicates the entrance to a narrow valley.

We travelled onward to our lunch stop at Dunning Golf Club tea room, by way of eight miles of Highland winding roads. On arrival at Dunning we found local Velo rider, Peter Oram, waiting for us. After a short while Tony and Lisa arrived, with the news that Duncan's bike had a loss of chain drive from his gear box. This was caused by the nut on the chain sprocket working loose allowing it to damage the chain sprocket. With the help of a local tradesman's battery grinder the damaged drive was de-burred and drive restored, new parts to be ordered. After this news we were able to enjoy our lunch.

After lunch, Peter returned home and the remaining five of us drove southerly, over the hills towards Milnathort, then on a C road running parallel with the M90 towards Bridge Of Earn. Turning east over the Ochil Hills we re-entered Fife, crossing the A91 to the edge of the Lomond Hills and eastward to Cupar. Near Falkland we happily passed our lost sheep on their way home.

Now it's up on the local hills, above the Howe of Fife, back into Cupar and Tesco's. On checking later, our lost sheep got home to Stirling area OK. On the run were Maurice and Duncan (Stirling) , Tony and Maurice (Aberdeenshire), Raymond (Edinburgh) and Lisa and Malcolm (Fife). We enjoyed good company, fine weather and roads, about 85% of which were country roads, maybe too many! The total mileage was about 88.



Peter Oram and Lisa Urquhart



John Booth

SOUTH HANTS CENTRE WALES TRIP 2025

This area of Wales must rank among the best motor cycling country in the UK. The roads are well surfaced, fast, slow, twisty, narrow, steep, sometimes scary and pass through a rural landscape of ancient woodlands, heather-clad moors in late summer flower and giant oaks, ash and sycamores with just a hint of autumnal colouring resulting from the dry 2025 summer.

The routes, devised and led by Colin Morris on the Friday and by David Jarvis on Saturday, were outstanding. Our Friday group photograph was at **Llyn Clywedog Reservoir,** home of nesting osprey, before our climb to Rhiw Fawr Summit and a continuous 6-mile descent of 1600 feet down to our pavement cafe lunch stop in the High Street of Owain Glyndŵr's capital, Machynlleth.

The following day, crossing the almost as high Berwyns, we were treated to outstanding views across a sea of mountain tops extending to Snowdon, 30 miles away to the northwest. The bikes, of course, behaved themselves impeccably with the exception perhaps of the writer's KSS, which lost its back brake alarmingly before the descent from Rhiw Fawr. This unusual failure of the 70-year-old brake rod trunnion FK43, was sweetly solved by the roadside assistance of none other than the very recently retired Director of Criterion Engineering as well as the Chairman of the New Imperial Owners' Club!

Back up crew, award winning Karen & Jane, carefully negotiating the challenging lanes in an SUV and an large trailer, saved the day with emergency petrol supplies, the last of which, 5 miles from home to a strangely thirsty Venom.

Our base, the outstanding Tynllwyn Farm, is my yard stick by which all bed and breakfast places are measured. It has never yet been beaten. The garden with its outstanding views is the ideal place to relax and chat with a beer after the day's ride, before getting ready to go out for a convivial dinner at an interesting nearby hostelry. Our last breakfast before going our separate ways home featured the favourite choice of smoked haddock or kippers.

This super, highly recommended VOC short break, now in its fourteenth year, owes its success to the skilled and efficient management of Jane and the creative, challenging and so enjoyable routes devised by David and Colin. Long may this highlight of the Velocette calendar continue.



Tony Mortishire

THE GENNEL RUN 2025

This year's Gennel Run from our house was held on what turned out to be a fabulously clear, warm and sunny day at the end of June. Early Mark 1 Velos turned up along with a handful of rigid MSSs a '50s MAC as well as brace or three of RS-framed machines. The obligatory BMW and Harley was ridden also.

After tea and bacon rolls freshly produced by our ladies we headed off towards the coast, passing over the ***Cairn O Mount*** which has some great views as you climb higher but as you head over it and down the other side it warms up your brakes just a little! One route diversion at Laurencekirk, then over the main A90 to the coast at ***St Cyrus*** turning left then right into ***Johnshaven***. Or "Johnna" as the locals call it. We all managed to park up in a big huddle on the quay checked over our bikes, then headed into the Anchor Hotel for lunch. The chat around the table was amazing as everyone caught up on various stories then silence once lunch was served.

The afternoon's route then headed up along the coast and with the sun on our backs it felt great to be out riding your favourite bike. We turned left just after ***Inverbervie,*** continuing on straight open roads, crossing the A90 once again. Onto and through ***Auchenblae*** riding in the foothills of the ***Fettersso Forest***. This road is the old main road to Stonehaven, endless views with outstanding scenery, just like most of the roads in this part of the world with little or no traffic.

Once back at the Gennel it was afternoon tea and cake time and to reflect on the day's ride and just relax before heading home. Thank you for all that turned up on the day and joined in the fun, especially the helpers. Thank you. See you all again next year for more of the same.





1066

1066-centre@
velocetteowners.com
Jeff Hubbard
07724 016 737

In September we visited the Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway during a very pleasant ride across Romney Marsh, led by Dave M along some of the lesser used lanes and as you can see the sun was shining as well. The only hiccup was Paul's valiant Valiant using more fuel than anticipated keeping up with the other higher capacity bikes, a quick fuel transfusion from Robin's Venom soon had the wheels turning.

We also joined up with the VMCC on two 'wrinkly runs' in September and another in October.

Also in October we met up at the Hastings Bike Show, an informal gathering of about 130 bikes, 4 of which were Velos, I left the Velo at home and rode my Triumph for which I paid the penalty of a puncture, I had to use the van of shame to return home.



As daylight hours reduce, the number of ride-outs also decline, and our monthly evening meetings change to the afternoon, our focus changes to organising the Xmas Buffet.

ALCESTER

alcester-centre@
velocetteowners.com
www.alcestervelo.uk
Richard Adams
01789 763 153



By the time you read this all of our 2025 mid-week runs will have been run. The majority of them have been to the west of Alcester where it is all a bit more rural and nice motorcycling roads – when they are not 'Road ahead Closed'. We have had two of them this year with quite long, confusing diversions.

This winter's project is to finish unfinished projects and clear the decks a bit! Don't forget if you are a new member to the Alcester Centre, send your email contact to me so that you go on my list – you will then get notifications of future Alcester events. Your address does not get sent to me when you join the Club. Have a nice winter – see you all in 2026.



BRISTOL

Paul Thomas 07504 247 889
bristol-centre@velocetteowners.com

Our Avebury run on the 21st of September was blessed with better than anticipated weather and saw three of us taking a 35-mile cross-country route starting from The Compass Inn at Tormarton. New member Noel popped along to say hello before our departure; nice to meet you. We met up with another two VOC members at (a very busy) Avebury and had a good chat and a beverage in the sunshine. Four Velos made the trip, two Cammys, an MAC and a Venom, and after parting ways we completed another 35-ish miles back to the start by an alternative route. A good day out in wildest Wiltshire...

Our recent AGM saw a changing of the guard; Keith Phipps and Paul Stewart resigned from their respective Secretary and Treasurer's roles, and I'd like to express my personal thanks to them for their service to the Club over the years. I stepped down from the Chairman's role to take up my crayons as scribe, Dick has kindly volunteered to be Chairman, and Terry stepped in as treasurer. Thanks chaps.

I will be emailing the Bristol Centre members shortly, to get your feedback on what you would like your local Centre to be doing, in the hope of promoting more engagement with the club. We try to arrange varied runs and meets to cater for all tastes, but the turn-out is often disappointing. If you haven't previously sent us your contact details, you won't be getting a say!

Please do send me your email address if you have not already done so. We also have a ***WhatsApp*** group, which is great for keeping abreast of local events and meets. That's it for now, all the best.

CAMBRIDGE

cambridge-centre@velocetteowners.com
Peter Tibbitts 07768 365 850



First, a warm welcome to our latest new member Chris Chapman. Hope to see you at one of our gatherings, accompanying a Velocette is not compulsory!

I was away on holiday for the September Bees in the Wall meeting and gather from the barman that there was zero attendance. Perhaps every one else was away too? Next up was our third Wednesday lunchtime meeting at the White Swan Conington. It was a bit wet, but Bill Hardman braved it on his bicycle. The rest of us were on 4 wheels and comprised Mike Anthony, Ray Spreadbury, Peter Wickham, Ebber, myself and Dave Hartley.

A good turnout on machines at the October Bees. Ian Stimpson, Bob Southall, and myself all on Venoms. Peter Wickham, Bill Hardman and Rob McCretton, on 4 wheels. The third Wednesday Red Cow Chrishall attracted three riders from the Chelmsford centre, Ian Hayes on Venom, Jeff Duffey 850 Commando and 85-year-old John Allen on his MSS. All on kick-starters and the Venom even had LED lights. Home attendees were Ebber and Dave H in a car. From the Suffolk centre were Richard Merryfield on an R100RS and Mike

Anthony on his Desert X. I was again out of the country for this one and am very grateful for Mike taking the register.

Our next meeting will have been at The Bees on 2nd November, followed by another visit to Conington on the 17th, by which time you may be reading this.



CHELMSFORD

chelmsford-centre@velocetteowners.com
https://vocessex.wixsite.com/chelmsford
David Bardwell 07984 653 151

Saturday 6th September saw eight of us assembled at The Sugarloaves pub in Sible Hedingham for a ride to join the Norton Owners club in Suffolk. It started off well until the first right turn when half of the group went straight on. Still, it allowed time for Nick to resolve his petrol tank vibrating on the frame of his Clubman until the wanderers returned and we started off again.

It was a very pleasant ride through, what are now becoming for me, slightly familiar lanes through Essex to the Shepherd and Dog pub at Onehouse on the outskirts of Stowmarket in Suffolk. We met the Norton owners in glorious weather. There was an interesting array of old and newer Nortons amongst several other bikes. We had a slightly disjointed ride back via a 'short cut' to the A12 led by Peter who managed to lose most of us at a set of traffic lights but we all eventually found a route back and got home safe.

Sunday 14th was a small turn out of our regular attendees for our monthly meet at the Horse & Groom on Galleywood Common. We are still looking forward to seeing some of our new members on the second Sunday of every month to join us for a chat and a beer. You will be very welcome.

Most of our usual group met on Tuesday 16th for our scheduled September ride out. Unusually and for a change we met at a different location, the Barge Inn at Battlesbridge (see right) to be led by Nick and Julian.



According to our chairman and chronicler, Peter Merrick, the club ride outs started from here in 1964! Not many of us were old enough to ride a bike then much less be interested in Velocettes but obviously our older members will have been amongst the riders on the run then. Nick took us through what must have been every lane in south west Essex towards Shoeburyness. In the middle of what appeared to be nowhere we met a very long traffic jam due to roadworks. It really tested the clutches and fortunately all the bikes survived without problems. We passed through some very quiet places including Canewdon which was infamous for its witch hunts in times past. Finally we arrived at the RAC (Royal Artillery Corps) Museum in Shoeburyness. It has a small but interesting collection of military items and stories of its history as the gunnery training and munitions centre as part of the Army from the mid 1800s. It's very close to the river Thames estuary where you can see the remains of a foundation for one of the very large calibre guns as part of the defence of England during the Second World War. You can also see the munitions ship sunk in the Thames which is still fully loaded with its deadly cargo! The museum has an excellent café and a good lunch was very welcome.

About eight of us gathered at Sunday 12th October for our usual Sunday lunchtime meet which included, encouragingly, about five Velos. (I'll be one of those soon since I have, after too many years, started the rebuild of my 1947 KSS).

By the time this is published we will have had the last ride out of the year on 20th October. It has been an amazing year for biking weather, with I think most, if not all of our meetings and ride-outs occurring in good weather. I hope you've enjoyed yours.

Just a short one this issue, because I'm in hospital. Welcome to Reggie Crennell - please get in touch.

Just our regular monthly meetings since the last issue, but these have been lively and interesting as usual. Keep the revs up!

CHESTER

chester-centre@velocetteowners.com

Alex Wood 01691 610 357





DEVON & CORNWALL

devonandcornwall-centre@velocetteowners.com

Mike Williams 07724 006 123/01392 877 666 (evenings)

Welcome to the several new members who have joined in recent months. Please do let me have your contact details if you haven't already done so. I can then add you to my mailing list and ensure you get the Centre Events list.

More elsewhere on the Velocette Club de France rally, but I must apologise here to Pat Clancy for having to endure a very petrol scented trip out to France in his van. It turned out that the "fuel problem" I reported last time was due to the MSS' fuel tap corks breaking down and allowing petrol to drip out. Sorry, Pat!

Another excellent gathering at the Skylark on the edge of Dartmoor. I took the MSS, accompanied by Martin Bishop. Martin had planned to be on his usually very reliable MAC, but it decided not to play that morning, so he was on

his 310cc BMW. A glorious ride across the moor, despite a few cyclists on a big organised ride. Great to see plenty of other people present too, and we were well looked after by the pub. Coming back we thought we would take a different route, via Dartmeet, but it turned out to be a bit slow following cars through the lanes, so won't do that again!

Congratulations to Sandy Saunders for his efforts with the Bob Foster. We were blessed by decent weather and the new route used super roads free of maize muck. One or two interesting corners with a liberal coating of acorns from this mast year, but generally great, with wonderful views across north Dorset and, once again, great marshalling to guide us safely on our way. A good turnout, just shy of 50 bikes, and plenty of old 'uns too. Simon Davey and I were both MSS mounted and there were another two to go with them – one with the coveted push-pull throttle. Lovely!

Lots of you came along to our Appledore meeting and I know Mike Kidd was pleased to see you all. Plenty of chat in good company and a few Velos too. Another pub where we are made very welcome – and the food's good too.

No more Sunday meetings until next year, but we will continue with Friday lunchtime meetings in November and December. The latter is, of course, our Christmas lunch at Strawberry Fields on 12 December. If you haven't already done so, please let me know you are coming as I need to give numbers to the venue in advance. Partners are most welcome too.

Hope to see some of you at the Sidmouth Arms, Upottery. It will be a change to go in daylight! Enjoy your Velos!

DORKING

dorking-centre@velocetteowners.com

Peter Thomas 0208 658 1552

velocettedorkingcentre.btck.co.uk



Jon Hill writes …

Our delayed ride out to Biggin Hill airport took place mid September and 5 members rode out to visit the museum. In January 2019, Biggin Hill Memorial Museum opened its doors to the public for the first time. The museum protects, gathers and makes known the stories of RAF Biggin Hill during the Second World War. It showcases the remarkable stories of men and women caught up in the Battle of Britain through the lens of four themes – Early Years, Station Life, Community Life and Remembering. A wealth of objects including letters, photographs, paintings, uniforms and flying jackets, a Browning machine gun, 'scramble' and 'victory' bells, brings these personal stories to life. It was a very interesting visit at which all the members showed due reverence.

The last Wednesday in the month is where we have a lunchtime meet. Previous to the meet some members have an early ride out and 6 members, led by Peter Read, had a pleasant ride to the Milk Churn cafe. Due to roadworks there were a few diversions on not the best of roads, but all members arrived safely. After tea and coffee and the normal banter they rode back to the Stepping Stones to meet up with 10 other members and their partners for lunch.

The weather was kind to us for this year's Pioneer event, a bit nippy but ideal conditions for the old boys to cough and splutter their way down to Shoreham airport, the bikes fared better! Due to reduced entries this year, the organisers included pre-1930s bikes, which is a good idea as it opens up the event to include vintage bikes.

Roger and Dave Catt entered their 1914 Triumph 4HP ridden by Dave's son Dan and a 1929 Triumph ridden by Roger. The veterans departed and once they were on their way the vintage bikes departed. The scheduled stop was at the coffee shop at Leonards Lee garden centre which had to be got to via a narrow diversion caused by the inevitable road works. Back up was again carried out by Barrie James and his van. The rest of the group followed on, all meeting up at the coffee stop.

Both bikes were running well, and we thought we were in for another successful run. Fuel starvation problems with the 4HP caused a couple of stops with the bike, which finally arrived just on tick over and Dan pedalling for all he was worth! The '29 made it with no problems. We all agreed that it was another very good day out.

If Vintage bikes are to be included again next year, are there any Velo members interested in making the trip? If so, get in touch and we will see what can be arranged.



A warm welcome to our new East Midlands Centre members, Chris Thomas and William Stephens. Hope to meet you soon at The Rancliffe Arms. Due to GDPR restrictions, I don't receive your contact details, so please contact me by email so I can add you to my confidential email list. You will receive information on what we are doing, including events calendars well in advance of being published in Fishtail. This also applies to any existing members who have not already done so!

Our final evening ride for the year, the 'Twilight Chip Run' was on 3rd September. It had been wet day, but the sun did appear before we met. Just four Venom-mounted riders set off on a 20-mile scenic route to Ruddington, where we enjoyed the most excellent chips with pie/fish/sausage. Then, following a short ride to the Rancliffe, we enjoyed a beer and banter with the other members there.

For the following social evening I rode the Venom, as I could get there before dark at the new meeting time of 7.30pm. It was surprisingly quiet with only six members present, two on Velocettes, but as usual the conversations were engaging.

Our annual visit to Wymondham Windmill was on the 24th September. 19 members and partners enjoyed lunch in a dedicated room. The staff ensured that proceedings ran smoothly, mainly as we had to

pre-order our food via Yvonne, a bit of a pain, but we got there in the end. Thank you Yvonne and to all that eventually checked out the menu and advised her of their choices. It was also good to see a new member Mike and Yvonne attending. Hope you enjoyed the occasion, and that we will see you again some time.

The social meeting on 1st October was much better attended and lively! Each time we have a different choice of beers at the Rancliffe Arms. My mode of transport was the Speed Triple with it's twin headlights as I am not prepared to ride the Velo both ways in the dark.

I could not attend the last October meeting due to picking up a cold, which I did not wish to share, but I am told that it was a good crowd there.

Happy riding and keep off those wet leaves!



ISLE OF MAN

isleofman-centre@velocetteowners.com
Iain Griffin 07624 224 401



Sunday 12th October was Steve Woodward's run, our last-but-one for the year - after our early-November run we take a break over the winter. The weather was kind, if cool, seeing 9 of us - 6 on Velos - set out from St. John's in excellent riding conditions. The 35-mile run took us a few miles up the west coast before riding east over the hills to Brandywell to briefly join the TT mountain road, exiting at Bungalow, then over the northern hills, to the northern coast road to Bride and on to Ramsey swimming pool café for a well-earned warm cuppa and piece of cake! A good run, enjoyed by all!



KENT

kent-centre@velocetteowners.com
Simon Wynn 07980 450 586



I met with Richard last night who gave me a copy of a letter from the Dover Transport Museum. It concerns Martin Dixon's Viper which has been donated to the museum by his family after his death earlier this year.

Martin's bike was currently being displayed as bike of the month. I have attached a copy of the letter.

[Dear Dick]
Nice to hear from you and I hope that you are in good health when so many of us are getting increasingly rickety.
Thanks very much for sending us a copy of "Fishtail" with the picture of Martin astride his Viper. We will certainly make use of it. In fact, it is nice timing as we intend to use Martin's bike as our "Bike of the Month" in September. Our 2025 bike show raffle draw and bike auction is on Sunday 21st September, so if you are to come to that you will see the Viper prominently displayed. As usual riders of classic bikes will have free entry that day though we may ask for a small donation to keep the roof on. Hope you can make it.
Best wishes,
[Signed] Brian

LANCASHIRE

Henry Tindell
Secretary: John Booth
07827 796 609
lancashire-centre@
velocetteowners.com



September club night featured a well-received talk by David Simmons on the Avro Arrow, a remarkable story about the rise of the Canadian aero-space industry and its' demise at the hands of USA politics (sounds familiar.?).

The October meet enjoyed the 'Fish & Chips night', whilst receiving a most instructive presentation by Julie Emmitt of **Biketrac**, on bike security – rather like insurance, an industry of our times, being fortunate enough to play with rather valuable toys.

It seems a long ago summer that spawned some fine rides, such as John Booth's '**Derbyshire Dawdle**' which, unlike last year's scheduled attempt postponed due to awful weather, enjoyed superb late-summer sunshine for the bash around the south-western part of the Peak District, filling in much of the best parts of the Peak not visited on the earlier '**Peak Tour**' by our fellow VOC Centre. Nine started (and finished faultlessly) from the Unicorn Inn, Wilmslow,

shortly out to the Peak via Bollington and Blaze hill to Errwood reservoir and up the time- limited hill to Derbyshire Bridge, then past (sadly closed) Cat and Fiddle and down through the Dane valley, to Congleton, past the 'Cloud' to a welcome lunch-stop at the NT Tittersworth Reservoir. On to Leek, past the ever-popular Roaches, to the fine market town and thence to the Staffordshire Moorlands and the afternoon coffee stop at the delightful hamlet of Hollinsclough, at the brilliant, locally-run weekend cafe.

Well off the beaten track, Hollinsclough provided a long rocky gully used in national trials as a tough section. The location, for me, is one of the finest parts of the Peak, near the source of the rivers Dove, Manifold and Dane, and features the whaleback Hollins and Chrome hills. And so back to Cheshire, thanks John!

The last official ride of the year was Stan Woolley's '**Bikes into Bowland**' (16th October), to the heart of Lancashire, starting at the Duckworth Arms, Bury – with four, soon to be joined by several others en-route, through Clitheroe and Waddingtonn, from Nic O' Pendle and Sabden (infamous witch trials) to the heart of Bowland fells and Slaidburn. At Longridge coffee stop, several from the LE club joined the fun. Onwards to north Bowland – Bentham and Caton (in the Lune valley). Returning through the Trough of Bowland. Sights of Heysham Power Station, Morcambe bay and Blackpool Tower, albeit with difficulty through the mist, from the Jubilee Tower. Down to Dunsop Bridge, coffee and exit from Bowland at Whalley and a fast return on the A56 to complete the 106 official miles (although up to 180 miles by some). Well done Stan!

The riding season all but done, we still have club nights of 14th November (Macc Magnetos talk) and Christmas lunch of 7th December at the Faringdon Lodge, to which we look forward. Plus the irrepressible LE Owners Club of Lancashire have a full programme, available from John Booth.



*One of the photos from the '***Bikes into Bowland***' run, this sad memorial, out on the moors, made me jump! We recently met* **Ray Goulter,** *editor of '***Fishtail Downunder***', over here on a visit, so the name caught my eye. I immediately sent it off to Ray who believes this to be one of his relatives. -Ed*



NORFOLK

norfolk-centre@velocetteowners.com

Rolly Field 01508 578 090

Our monthly rides started with a run down to Stowmarket to meet up with the Norton Owners' Club and Chelmsford Velocette Centre at the Shepherd and Dog pub. Four of us met up at Seastar at Newton Flotman, and had a good ride down on very quiet roads. It was good to meet other owners, and some old friends and have a good lunch. Mid-afternoon we set off for home, another good day's ride, with great company, planning to be back again next year.

September's meeting was low in numbers, probably due to the heavy rain forecast for the afternoon, but it was good to meet a new future member Nick and his wife Nicky. He has just joined the world of Velocette, and has brought a 1959 Clubman. He has other bikes, but this is his first Velocette and he is keen to learn more about them, so over coffee there was a lot of questions and answers. Another good meeting, and everyone got home before the rain came.

Another run organized by Bill, who met up at Seastar Motor Cycles with George, and Jim - good to see him back on his bike again, after his disagreement with a Yarmouth Taxi. Then onto Harlston to meet up with Gavin and the Suffolk Centre, then onto Long Shop Museum at Leiston, where they had a Motor Cycle day, lots of bikes, and lots to see in the museum.

The next week we did a ride up to Morston Quay, it was an enjoyable ride, with perfect weather, and a bacon roll and coffee at the end, great day, great ride.

NORTH LINCS

John Mundey 01652 655 675

northlincolnshire-centre@velocetteowners.com

South Yorks - Jim Gregory

jimannang@blueyonder.co.uk

07890 635 429



Our last run of the summer ended up a bit of a damp affair, windy too. Unlike our previous run, that was on the hottest day of the year. Well done to those who made the excursion to Scooby, hope the rain didn't seep too near to the skin.

Our Centre is again putting on the Velo Club stand at the **'Winter Classic Bike Show'** at Newark early January. Machines from the vintage period through to the last of the springers. Everyone welcome to come along and have a chat about things Velocette.

There won't be a meeting at the Butcher Nook in December, the last Wednesday is New Years Eve. Happy Christmas everybody, see you at Newark.



SCOTTISH

scottish-centre@velocetteowners.com

Raymond Albeson

0131 669 9219

velocettescotland.weebly.com

KSS to the Manx Robbie Bull decided to take his KSS to the Manx Grand Prix this year. It survived 825 miles round trip from Stewarton without missing a beat. Opposite a pic of him setting off .

Malcolm's Run 10th September Another enjoyable event. See earlier in News.

Gennel Run Tony Mortishire has written a report on this year's run - see earlier.

Moto Piston Rally September In September, Maurice Chandler and Duncan McKinnon went to the Moto Piston Rally in Spain. Both were Velo-mounted. There were over 500 bikes at the rally including a few other Velos. They had a great time, and in over 1100 miles the bikes never missed a beat. Photo below.



Christmas Lunch Crown Inn, Biggar, Sunday 7th December. The festive time of the year is fast approaching, so time to tell me if you are coming along to the Christmas Lunch. After giving us such a warm welcome last year, we are returning to the Crown Inn, High St Biggar **ML12 6DL**. Please get in touch as soon as possible so I can confirm number and get your menu choices. Look forward to seeing you there.



Borders Run Portpatrick Tues 5th and Wed 6th May 2026

We already have a dozen participants signed up for next year's run based at Portpatrick Hotel. Come and join the fun. Contact me for more details. Entries should be submitted before **20th April 2026**

SOUTH HANTS

southhants-centre@velocetteowners.com
Alistair Grundy 02392 466 196



Club night in October was well attended with around 24 members. I had an interesting discussion with Philip Fleming who has recently returned from completing Route 66 with his friend. They enjoyed it and agreed that although long it really is the road trip of a lifetime. They were able to navigate it successfully with the aid of a specialist app downloaded from the web. The thing that surprised them most was how hot it was even in September, 35 to 40C. Other topics overheard included M17/7 cam wheels to soften up a Venom and talk from our Wales trip last month, please see the article by John Booth.



The Rowlands Castle run in the middle of October was unfortunately washed out for the second year running. Paul led two of us on a gentle jog through the rain and countryside to the cafe in Compton, where we enjoyed their coffee and homemade cakes. We also marvelled at the sizes of the large breakfasts enjoyed by some of the other patrons, enough cholesterol for a week!

SUFFOLK

suffolk-centre@velocetteowners.com
Mike Anthony 07523 718 144



Suffolk Centre is alive! We have details of 21 people on our list. We meet on the first Sunday of each month at the **WoodFarm Business Centre** just south of the western end of Stonham Aspel village. Postcode **IP6 9TH.**

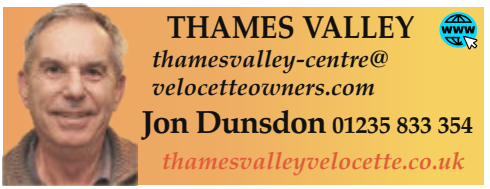
Six Velos from Suffolk Centre were joined by two and a BMW from Norfolk centre on Sunday 28th September and the group rode further to the Longshop museum in Leiston. This was the first purpose-built flow line assembly building erected in 1852 as an assembly hall for steam engines. Garretts were also manufacturers of various agricultural machines, fire engines, railway locos, tractors and fire engines. In WW1 they made 60 FE2B aircraft. During WW2, they even had an assembly line making radio sets for the military. Manufacturing was carried out over 200 years ceasing only in 1980. Members

present were Gavin Murrell, Malcolm Robinson, Richard Merryfield, Angus Taylor, Robert Clarke, Mike Anthony on 500cc Velos, Bob Hartley with Andrew as ballast in a Lomax kit car powered by a 2CV engine; from Norfolk were Bill Cousins and Jim on Velos and George on a BMW.

The meeting on Sunday 5 October was attended by Richard Merryfield, Robert Clarke, Bob Hartley, Jon Foster, Pete Vearey, Ray Peacock, John Bacon, Mike Anthony and 5 of us went on for a ride round the lanes to visit the aircraft museum at Flixton.



Your scribe was in Europe recently and visited one of our German members Alex Richter at the Bodensee. Last year he took away a Venom from Suffolk and that is in the final stages of a gearbox rebuild. Gear teeth have been reclaimed using a laser welding technique adding metal of the same hardness as the original and the gear not needing further heat treatment. He has recently purchased a 1928 350cc Motosacoche. These quality machines were made in Geneva from 1899 until the 1930s. We visited the Motosacoche museum in Switzerland where about 30 examples of these machines are exhibited. Note the Sturmey Archer 3-speed hand-change gearbox and MAG engine.



September/October has been a busy month with four runs and Kop Hill Climb. Seven Velocettes, one Norton and one Morini met at Benson on 6th September to visit the Thame Museum's opening day of the Ralph Seymour exhibition which also had some of Ralph's bikes on display. I was very surprised when we arrived to see so many bikes outside the museum. The museum had put on an excellent display and Chris Webber has written up a more detailed account of the visit. On leaving Thame we returned via Bledlow to have lunch at the Lions of Bledlow pub where we had a very warm welcome.

The Seymour bikes were originally scheduled to be on display on the 6th September only. However, this was so successful the bikes were on display again on September 27th and Mark Lomas again led a run to Thame.

On 14th September we had our Seymour run to the Chearsley classic vehicle meeting. The run goes through Thame, past the old Seymour works and on to Chearsley. The weather forecast wasn't good with heavy rain expected early afternoon. Most of us left early to avoid the rain which was a shame as it is a good meeting and we got home with ten minutes to spare. Mark who led the run won best bike at the show.

Kop Hill Climb took place over the weekend of 20th/21st September and we had five Venoms in our display area. There were a lot of Velocettes running the Hill this year. Many thanks to Mark for getting the gazebo to Kop Hill and Robin for the excellent cakes.

On October 5th Mark, Norman Bailie and I set of from the Rising Sun to the classic vehicle day at Cookham Dean cricket club. We hadn't been to this event before and it turned out be a very good event with lots of interesting vehicles and good facilities. It was a very relaxing event which we thoroughly enjoyed. With the temperature dropping and the weather getting less predictable this will probably our last run of the year.



WEST MIDLANDS

westmidlands-centre@velocetteowners.com
Brian Coldicott
07432 237 570

I know, I know, it's been a while since my last update, but don't worry we're still here and happily Velocetting away. Anyway, catching up after my last report …

Mike Bostin (our Centre's apprentice) and myself managed to get to the Scottish Centre's Borders Run, with Mike actually getting there on his MSS following two previous failed attempts. This was either due to me riding up with him or that, between us in the Centre, most of his machine has now been rebuilt. Mind you, I can't get him to stop whining on about the various noises emanating from his machine, whilst trying to keep up with me, a case for denser earplugs methinks or if wearing 'aids' like Rod Fuller, remembering to turn them off! We had a great time, with haggis for breakfast, plenty of tea stops, a folk music evening and expensive malt whiskey at the hotel. Our journey back was punctuated with a stop at Mike Barry's motorcycle collection near Carlisle, an overnight stop with much cheaper malt whiskey and a sightseeing tour past the Ribblehead viaduct. I only had to start Mike's bike for him once (he's now much better at starting it) and as a word of warning, if the Vice President/Overseas Secretary (to mention no names) offers to reward you with a beer, make sure he's got the ability to pay for it before ordering the round. Thanks to Raymond for organising it and I'm sure we'll be up there next year.

You'll have seen my Annual Rally report in FT 510. The thing that impressed me was the fine turnout of machines in the Pre-'53 class, especially as we were celebrating the centenary of the OHC models, well done to all that brought the ol' bangers out. I was pleased to be able to bring along the finally finished, three year rebuild of the MkI and reunite it with its stablemate, owned by Jamie Linwood, both machines having been tailored by hill climb competitor

Ken Edwards and registered at the same time. Thanks to all that helped out and those that attended, especially as the weather forecast hadn't been promising. Hopefully, same again next year including the Scott Owners.

Next on the 'official' agenda was the Wye Valley Centre's camping extravaganza at Talybont on Usk. From the West Midlands Centre, Rod Fuller and I were joined by Mike and Tracey Boston together with Tyson the staffie. This year, I wasn't the only camper in the village, as Mike had sent an advance party down to set up their tent whilst he and the now trusty MSS managed to make their own way there. Once again, another great few days were had, with evenings spent 'socialising' and some great company with the Wye Valley members. Many thanks to Rob Jones for organising the event, we enjoyed some nice rides, including a visit to the Newport Medieval Ship where we were given a very informative tour by the curator Dr Toby Jones. One thing we did discover, whilst sitting around the camp fire, was the source of the lingering scent of petrol, all I can say is that Mike is now on his third (or is it fourth?) petrol tank.

At the beginning of October, Rod and I made our way down to Dorset, for the Bob Foster Run. As always a great day out and nice gathering of Velo's. We trailered the bikes down on a very grim Friday, with the weather being driven by one of those storms coming in from across the Atlantic. Saturday was spent at a leisurely pace, using the car to hunt out the 'best Dorset apple cake' (my request). Rod had spent his time diligently researching the location of the 'best to be had', only to find that they hadn't got any! Anyway, now joined by John and Molly, from the Wye Valley Centre, we did manage to fulfil my hankering with a decent slice of cake and a cuppa. The run on the Sunday was blessed with decent weather with a new route and tea stop. The marshals did a great job of guiding us around and, as always, a big thank you to Sandy Saunders for pulling it all together – Sandy, if you organise it, people will come.

On the Monday, following the run, Rod and I extended our trip with an incursion into Devon. My only request of Rod for the following four days was to sample the best Devon cream tea available. After once again diligently researching the subject, Rod found us the quaintest little riverside tea stop, with the best cream teas available and five star reviews, but unfortunately they'd closed down! Anyway, in advance of our trip, Rod had already planned a couple of routes for us and wishing to help out, I'd transferred them across to my sat nav. Since upgrading my navigation system I've never really mastered getting it to follow pre-planned routes/tracks. So, on the Tuesday our plan was to head in a westerly direction, across Dartmoor and pay a visit to the Dartmoor Prison Museum and with the route laid into the sat nav, off we went. After about three quarters of an hour we ended up down a little green lane, with all possible exits marked up as no through roads. At this point, feeling very frustrated with myself, Rod mentioned that we'd been travelling north on our second planned excursion to Lynmouth! Not to worry, I dispensed with the planned route and reprogrammed the thing straight for Lynmouth and off we went. I can report that we had a lovely day's motorcycling with a mooch around Lynmouth followed by a Devon cream tea at the picturesque Watersmeet National Trust property.



Wednesday was a 'car day', spending a very interesting few hours at Castle Drogo and Thursday was a back on the bikes day. Having seen the error of my sat-nav ways, I managed to master the beast and accomplish a perfectly routed round trip across Dartmoor and back to our base at Crediton. I'd like to thank Rod for planning our itinerary and booking the accommodation, his reputation as our 'cultural' secretary remains intact.

If any of our newer Centre members want to get in touch, please feel free to do so and you'd be welcomed if you want to join us at one of our informal weekly meeting (details in this journal).

As this will be the last edition for this year, can I wish you all a happy Christmas and best wishes for a Velo'ing New Year.



WOBURN

Patricia Thurston

woburn-centre@velocetteowners.com

www.woburn-velocette.org.uk

Secretary: Matt Bujok 07742 926 269

Wishing you all a great and merry Xmas. Enjoy!!

We have had a really good year. Many Club Runs to new places and some repeat runs to favourite spots. Club nights have been very good also. We still have events coming our way so perhaps we will see some more new faces at our meetings again. You should receive this Fishtail in time for you go to the next meeting at the Rose and Crown, when we will have a 'talk'. It's called Secret War Lysander. Our talks are well attended and the Committee Members are normally there too. Ask anyone



FROM WOBURN CENTRE

there to point out one of the Committee Members and have a word with them. We are a very friendly club and welcome new members to join us.

We are sorting out when and where we are going to have our Annual Dinner. It's time to perhaps change the venue for a different place. Maybe a lower key but we will see what happens soon.

Our last Club Run would have been the other week to Dutton Bugatti organisation. A detailed talk would have taken place as well, so hopefully our members would have enjoyed that. It's a large site with much to see.

Our last club night will take place on Wednesday 17th December. We will have some food and snacks during the evening. Please NOTE that this meeting is on the 3rd Wednesday and not the 4th as that one will be the 24th December. Apart from a good chat and food there will be the Raffle and also a QUIZ. See you there. Have a wonderful Xmas.

WYE VALLEY
wyevalley-centre@velocetteowners.com
wyevalleyvoc.wales
Rob Jones 01685 877 212



We had a very good turn out of members for our September meeting plus some lovely, unexpected guests. Ray and Julie Goulter from Australia decided to drop by on their British holiday. They spent the afternoon meeting us and enjoying the chat and the exchange of tales on riding Velos.

Our Shobdon ride was cancelled due to bad weather but our ride to the Brecon Beacons Visitors' Centre, in glorious sunshine, was well attended. Some 15 members, most of whom enjoyed the ride on their bikes.

The Bob Foster run in Weymouth was another event which saw four of the members in attendance. Rob, Malcolm, Martin and Tim rode with Dave and Gary from Cirencester and thoroughly enjoyed the run. The new route took us inland, for a change, through pretty villages and over some hills with great views. I know that Tim, who brought his bike down by van, enjoyed himself and is planning to come back next year. Our thanks go to Sandy and the Advanced Riders for all the effort they put in. It's a great event and one that should be on your calendar.

Our final ride in to Tintern in early October was a bit overcast. But four Velos, 3 Venoms and 1 MAC, arrived to chat with others who came by car. It was great to see Garrant and also to catch up with Keith Mounty who came by car. Also visiting was Dave from Cirencester and his son James.

Our final event for the year is our Christmas dinner so as this is the last Fishtail before Christmas, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. ***Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.***



Left to right, standing: Gareth Thomas, Brian Baker, Ray & Julie Goulter and Hugh Phillips. Sitting: John Parry-Jones, Chris Benallick, Tony Forster and Dave Francis

The VOC near YOU

DORSET 9

dorset-centre@velocetteowners.com

Clive Hammond 01202 685 146

NEW ZEALAND

Warwick Darrow

waktrish@gmail.com

NORTH LONDON & HERTS 17

northlondonandherts-centre@velocetteowners.com

Roy Wood

NORTH YORKSHIRE 18

northyorkshire-centre@velocetteowners.com

Stuart Thomson 07916 966 374

NORTHERN IRELAND 19

northernireland-centre@velocetteowners.com

Erik Coleman 07801 731 745

OXFORD 21

oxford-centre@velocetteowners.com

www.velocetteownerscluboxford.wordpress.com

John Gardiner 07872 502 500

STAFFORDSHIRE 24

Arthur Muller

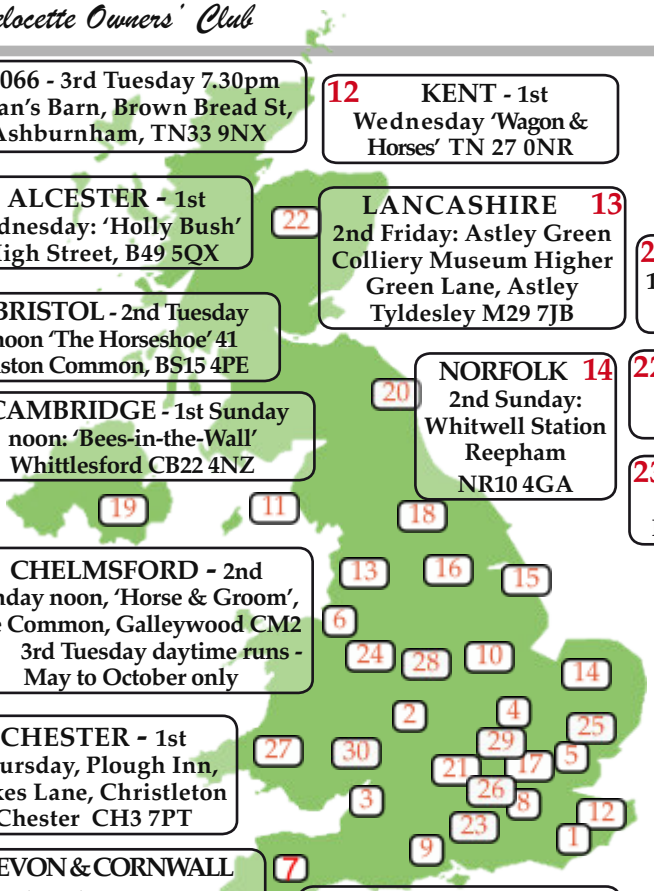
staffs-centre@velocetteowners.com

Roy Gimbert 07963 399 120

WELSH 27

welsh-centre@velocetteowners.com

John Richardson 01646 695 396



1 1066 - 3rd Tuesday 7.30pm Brian's Barn, Brown Bread St, Ashburnham, TN33 9NX

2 ALCESTER - 1st Wednesday: 'Holly Bush' High Street, B49 5QX

3 BRISTOL - 2nd Tuesday noon 'The Horseshoe' 41 Siston Common, BS15 4PE

4 CAMBRIDGE - 1st Sunday noon: 'Bees-in-the-Wall' Whittlesford CB22 4NZ

5 CHELMSFORD - 2nd Sunday noon, 'Horse & Groom', The Common, Galleywood CM2 8PJ 3rd Tuesday daytime runs - May to October only

6 CHESTER - 1st Thursday, Plough Inn, Rakes Lane, Christleton Chester CH3 7PT

7 DEVON & CORNWALL 2nd Friday - Various: contact 07724 006 123 / 01392 877 666 (evenings)

8 DORKING - 2nd Monday 8 pm: 'Stepping Stones' Westhumble Street RH5 6BS

9 DORSET - 2nd Wednesday noon. The Dorset Soldier, 117 Wareham Road Corfe Mullen, BH21 3JZ

10 EAST MIDLANDS 1st & 3rd Wed. 7.30pm 'Rancliffe Arms' Loughborough Rd. Bunny NG11 6QT

11 ISLE OF MAN 3rd Thursday: 'Creg-Ny-Baa Hotel'

12 KENT - 1st Wednesday 'Wagon & Horses' TN 27 0NR

13 LANCASHIRE 2nd Friday: Astley Green Colliery Museum Higher Green Lane, Astley Tyldesley M29 7JB

14 NORFOLK 2nd Sunday: Whitwell Station Reepham NR10 4GA

15 NORTH LINCS - Last Wednesday: 'Butcher Nook Club' 2 Dawnhill Lane Hemswell DN21 5UH

16 South Yorks Meet - 2nd Tuesday 10:30 - 'Nags Head' Stacey Bank, Loxley S6 6SJ

17 N. LONDON & HERTS 1st & 3rd Wednesday 7.30pm 'The Owl', Lippits Hill, High Beech, Loughton IG10 4AL

18 N. YORKSHIRE 1st Thursday, 'Blue Bell Inn' Kirby Hill, Boroughbridge YO51 9DN

19 NORTHERN IRELAND 3rd Sunday (even months) noon, Balloo House, Comber Road, Killinchy BT23 6PA

20 NORTHUMBRIAN Last Tuesday 12.00 noon 'Crown Inn', Humshaugh Northumberland NE46 4AG

21 OXFORD - 2nd Monday, 10am 'Kingsley Café' A40 at Eynsham, OX29 4EF

22 SCOTTISH See Club Diary or contact Lisa Urquhart 07742 539 158

23 SOUTH HANTS 1st Tuesday - The Flower Pots, Cheriton SO24 0QQ

24 STAFFORDSHIRE 1st & 3rd Fridays 7.30 pm: Village Hall, Aston STONE ST15 0BJ

25 SUFFOLK Various: contact *suffolk-centre @velocetteowners.com* or 07523 718 144

26 THAMES VALLEY 'Rising Sun' Witheridge Hill RG9 5PF 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 12 noon

27 WELSH - 1st Thursday 7.30 pm: 'Station House' St. Johns Street WHITLAND SA34 0AP

28 WEST MIDLANDS Wednesdays 8 pm: Aldridge Club, High St, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 8LZ (access off A454 Little Aston Road)

29 WOBURN - 4th Wednesday 7.30 pm 'Rose & Crown' 89 High Street Ridgemont, BEDFORD MK43 0TY

30 WYE VALLEY - 2nd Thursday,: 'Anchor' A466, Tintern NP16 6TE



Julian Wright-Williams
librarian@velocetteowners.com



IN THE LIBRARY …

An opportunity to chat with Ivan Rhodes is an excellent reason for getting out of The Library and even parking the Velo for a day. And recording the conversation for all to hear also seemed a promising idea. With the potential to make a full video on a smartphone, the concept developed, and committee support and advice was obtained. The 'opportunity' became a project, an amount of preparation followed and with Ivan's kind agreement, me, video cameras, and an assistant descended on Fellside to conduct an '***Interview with Ivan Rhodes***'.



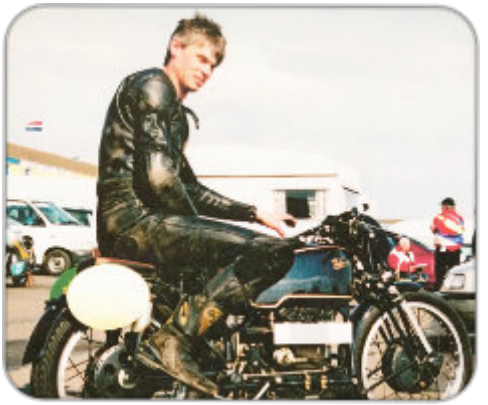
Experiences, knowledge, anecdotes, and humour covering 80 years; motorcycles, the characters, and the passion. A walk-in appearance by Bob Higgs and subjects as diverse as wartime smokescreens and baked beans.



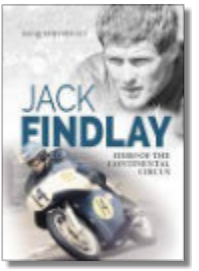
Special motorcycles, events and key motorcycling figures, are featured along with a fair sprinkling of humour. Detailed coverage of the re-birth of the Velocette Roarer including rare footage of first tests of the restored machine.

The video, the copyright of which belongs to the Velocette Owners Club, will be added to the Club's Library. But, to make the video freely accessible to members, it has been agreed that the Club will cover the cost of producing a memory stick (flash-drive) copy to be sent to each Centre Secretary, allowing them to lend-out or perhaps organise a large screen showing on their club night.

And for everyone with a computer at home who can access our website, there will be a link to watch via ***YouTube***. Based on demand we will look at offering, at minimal cost, memory stick copies via VSL for those that would like to have their own, bearing in mind that most modern television sets have a USB port and the facility to play a video directly. Ivan is an engaging interviewee and I hope you will find a suitable opportunity to enjoy his Velocette passion in this format.



A GOOD READ ? John Carter



'Jack Findlay Hero of the Continental Circus' by **Jacques Bussillet**. (2025) Veloce Publishing £25

This is a biography of one of the better-known participants in the Continental Circus who was involved for 20 years, 1958-1978.

Jack Findlay was born in the Australian state of Victoria in 1935 and became involved in motorcycle racing whilst employed as a trainee accountant. In 1958 he, his new wife, and a 350cc Manx Norton arrived in England and based themselves in Birmingham. Jack began entering race meetings and found the British short circuit stuff pretty hectic. He also rode in the Isle of Man TT, and continued to do so until 1978. A journey was also made to take in two events in Europe, and the winter was spent working in Birmingham factories. A 500cc Manx Norton was added to the Findlay equipe for the 1959 season and more European events were contested over that year and the two subsequent ones. The circuits were mainly on closed public roads with the hazards you would expect, and were widespread from Spain to Sweden as well as eastern Europe. However, with Start Money, for each machine, and if you were good enough, Prize Money too, expenses could just about be covered. At the end of 1961 Mr & Mrs Findlay plus an infant son returned to Australia to visit relatives, but Mrs Findlay decided she was not going to return to England in 1962.

A somewhat troubled Jack Findlay did return that year, but made his base in France, (later Italy) and used a French racing licence. The following chapters follow the fortunes of his motorcycle racing career to 1978, winning the 1973 Senior TT and the 750cc World Championship in 1975, together with the remainder of his life after racing. It is a story of tremendous determination both on the track and away from it. Over these years there were low points too, some quite serious crash injuries, several times to Jack's head, the legacy of these affecting him in much later life. There were also times when certain decisions he made, and his views on circuit safety did not meet with his fellow competitor's approval. Also, on occasions, the failures of what was expected to be more superior machinery, and finally during 1978, the theft of his racing machinery and transport until a ransom demand was paid.

The book has an extensive range of photographs covering Jack's racing career. It is noticeable how neat his riding style was. Quite possibly it was why Francis Beart chose him to ride his Nortons in the 1967 TT, but Jack was injured in practice.

If there is some human interest in a book, I think it makes for a better read and more than a fair amount is present here. A chapter is given to Jack's lady companion, Nanou, who supported his racing efforts for many years. I was left with the impression that Jack Findlay was a very independent, extremely self -driven and perhaps at times a solitary character, something the book's author seems to acknowledge too. Perhaps these traits were the reason Jack did not receive more factory support than others did.

I found it a very enjoyable, informative book, as I began following the racing activities of Jack Findlay from when I began reading the motorcycle press.

Alain Le Bec

WHEN I FIRST MET RALPH SEYMOUR …



Alain recalled this in one of his series:* 'Les belles histoires de l'oncle Bertie' - *see right.

June 1980, with Carole (my future wife) and Pascal, my friend, who had also found a Velocette (of dubious provenance, broken and in pieces), we decided to go to the famous Tourist Trophy, which took place on the Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea, the first week of June.

On June 1st, we set off, two of us on the Thruxton and Pascal on his Venom ... We had an address in England, for a Velocette specialist:

R. F. SEYMOUR LTD, Motorcycle Engineers - Hawthorn Works - Thame 2277

We easily found it and met Ralph, Eileen, and their daughter Liz, as well as Vern Walis, the workshop manager. We bought a few bits and pieces, but the road was still long, and we set off again for Liverpool. Perhaps 70 km later, Pascal's motorcycle exploded, and it stopped. Immediate observation: the piston has exploded. Disassembly, debriefing. I decide to go back to Thames with Carole, who speaks English. We arrive at night; the store is closed, but we chance upon Vern. Carole explains the situation. Vern, with a big smile, tells us to "***get into the Bedford van***" and we head back to meet Pascal, who, not seeing us return, had pitched his tent. We load everything and head back to Thame. We sleep in Vern's house, which is half-built "***for refurbishment …*** "

The next morning, after an English breakfast, we go to see Ralph. He examines the bike. The verdict is in: the engine is OUT, and needs to be completely rebuilt. Cold shower, even ice cold. The T.T. races start tomorrow; and then … First miracle. Ralph comes back to us and tells us that Vern has just finished an engine for a contract. Check in with Vern - in the future showroom - ***"Take your engine apart yourself and put this new one back together. And in a week, I'll have rebuilt your engine …".*** It's euphoric, we quickly get to going, and the next day the bike is operational again.

We set off again, Liverpool, the boat, and a magical week passes over the water. But it's time to go home. On the way back, my Velo starts making a funny noise and finally dies upon arriving in Thame. Ralph, once again scoffing, confirms: engine is out. Gasp! This is getting complicated. Plus, Ralph hasn't had time to rebuild Pascal's engine ...

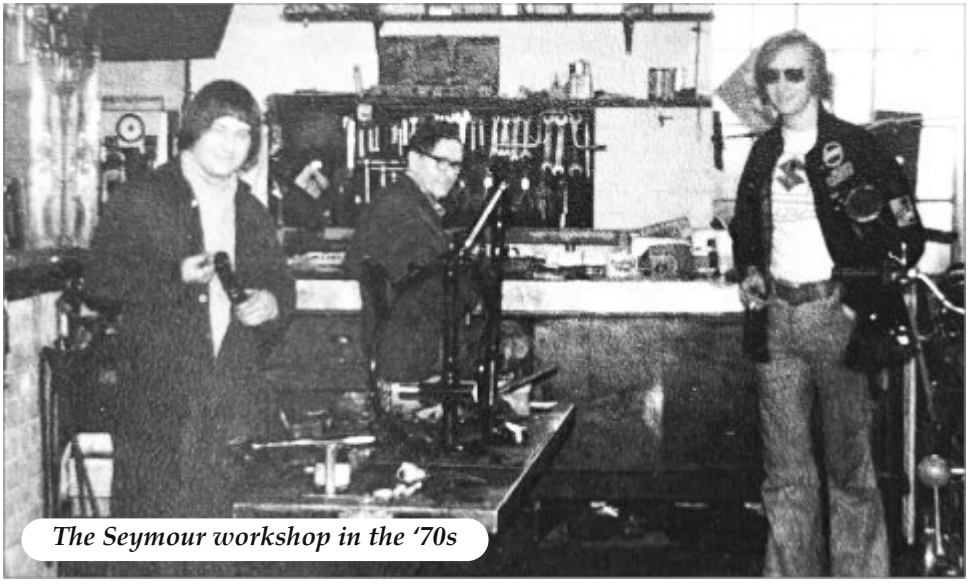
And then, the second miracle: he offers to let us stay at Vern's (which is 5 metres from the garage), dismantle the two engines, and rebuild them. A crazy week is about to begin. Mechanics all day, with trips back and forth to see Liz upstairs in the shop. Liz is a fantastic warehouse worker who knows the parts by heart. Vern is in the workshop for specific needs (crankshaft press, metal lathe, etc.). Ralph is here for (many) technical questions!



A moving photo, taken by Ralph in 1981. Left to right: Guitou Grandsire, Roy Barrett, Liz Barrett, Vern Wallis, Carole Le Bec, Alain Le Bec, Denis Grandsire

And every evening, we're invited to Ralph and Eileen's house to eat, drink beer, look at their trophies and photos, and chat. Then back to sleep at Vern's with stars in our eyes. After a week, the engines were reassembled and adjusted by the Master himself. We clearly still had a lot to learn.

The bill arrived, it was reasonable BUT we had no more money!!! "***No problem, you'll pay by postal order when you get back***," he told us! And the third miracle: Pascal, who really had nothing left, was offered money to get home. INCREDIBLE! This welcome sealed our unwavering friendship with the Seymour family, whom we would visit every year and spend many Christmases with!



The Seymour workshop in the '70s

John Foster

BOB FOSTER – MOTORCYCLE RACER

This document has been assembled to collect as far as possible information about Alfred Robert (Bob) Foster who was a successful motorcycle racer in the 1950s. I do not claim that this a definitive or complete record. It was produced for my family tree.

Bob Foster effectively stopped racing about the same time as I was born and so I never actually saw him race. My father, Noel Foster (Bob's brother), passed on a few items of memorabilia including some photographs of Bob's early racing at tracks around where they lived. Bob was not one for keeping a detailed record of his accomplishments and was known to be modest about his successes. He accepted bad luck and mechanical failure as an integral part of racing.

The various motor cycling magazines of the time in which raced have provided much information. This was at a time that races were broadcast live on radio such was the public interest. Bob took part in the very start of what is known today as 'MotoGP'.

Bob was born in 1911 and died in 1982 aged 71. His motorcycle racing career occurred in two distinct phases; before and after WW2. As a result of this global conflict there were eight years during which formal racing did not occur. When racing ceased in 1939 he was 28 years old, probably at the peak of his racing years. When serious racing resumed in 1947 much had changed; the war had prevented him achieving much more but for many others it had shortened their careers completely. So, his career was effectively in two parts.

Part 1; The pre-war years.

Alfred Robert Foster was born at Upper Swell, near Stow-on-the-Wold in rural Gloucestershire on 19th March 1911. His father was an agricultural estate manager and a farmer. At that time the family residence was the Manor House in Upper Swell. Later the family moved to Greenfields Farm located on the A424 (the Evesham Road) about 1.5km out of Stow-on-the-Wold, within walking distance of Upper Swell.

Bob had two sisters and four brothers and was the middle child in this family. The family consisted of

William Wheeler Foster - father
Marion Foster - mother
William John
Ada Marjorie
Edwin Phillip
Alfred Robert
Aubrey Noel (my father)
Mary Winifred
Richard Norman



Bob Foster furthest left, Joy Foster (Bob's wife) furthest right (seated) at Greenfields Farm, Stow-on-the-Wold in 1937

Bob attended secondary school in Chipping Campden and would have cycled there and back most days. The 9-mile route was hilly and a story exists which reveals that Bob injured his arm while hanging onto the back of a lorry to make his homeward journey quicker up one of the hills.

It was traditional that the eldest son would continue the family farming endeavour and so Bob looked elsewhere for employment when he left school as William (Bill) Foster was destined to continue farming. However, the great depression occurred around 1929 and this would certainly have also affected his employment opportunities.

Bob was 7 years old when WW 1 finished and he would have completed school around 1928. He eventually left the farm in 1933 to work at a motor cycle dealership in Shipston-on-Stour. His role appears to be Salesman and Mechanic for Arthur Taylor, a few miles from Stow on the Wold. By then Bob was already heavily involved with motorcycles as explained below. Arthur Taylor was also a significant sponsor of up-and-coming riders.

Following WW 1 the motorcycle industry expanded rapidly and for most they became the most affordable means of personal daily transport. In the United Kingdom, Birmingham was the location of most of the motorcycle manufacturers, the necessary engineering skills and raw materials being readily available. The exact nature of the start of Bob Foster's exposure to motorcycles is unclear other than the proximity of the expanding industry and the high probability of them being used in an agricultural, non-urban setting. Bob's father rode horses throughout his entire life and as far as I know never owned a car.

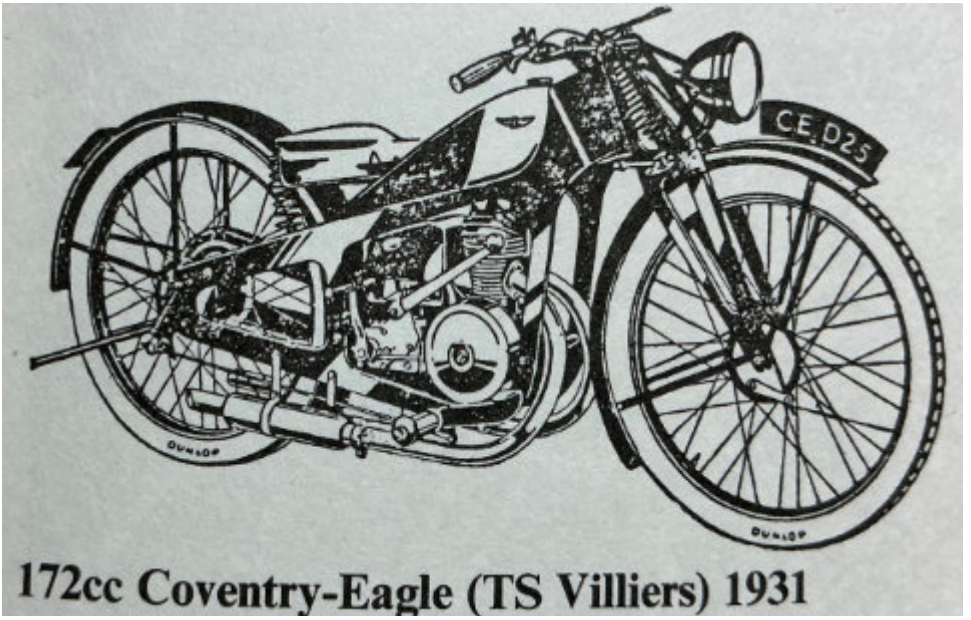
Early motorcycles required the rider to have some mechanical ability in order to keep them running. By modern standards the technology was primitive and materials used for construction far from optimum. Additionally, living on a farm would have provided Bob much exposure to varied mechanical devices and their maintenance.

The motorcycle industry realised that success in competition was an essential means of advertising their product both in terms of outright speed but also endurance and reliability. As a result, competitions started around the Birmingham area in the late 1920s and 1930s. These took the form of road racing, grass track racing, off-road trials, hill climbs and reliability (endurance) events. Bob participated and was successful in all of these. Stow-on-the-Wold is only about 65km (40 miles) from Birmingham. Manufacturers would provide machines and support for successful riders to further demonstrate their ability.

While still working for his father on the farm he acquired his first machine, a 172cc Villiers powered two-stroke 'Coventry Eagle' at an auction. He would have had ready access to farm fields to form his grass tack racing skills plus country roads with not much traffic and no such impediment as traffic police!

Bob's first race was on 6th July 1930; at a local event at Stow-on-the-Wold at which he won his handicap event. He was nineteen years old. This was a simple grass track event. Probably around a circuit marked out by wooden pegs in a suitable field.

Early events meant riding the competition bike to the race venue, removing unwanted items (to save weight), riding the machine in the competition



172cc Coventry-Eagle (TS Villiers) 1931

and then riding it home after making it 'road-worthy' again. Any damage incurred in racing could have a serious effect on being able to get home! At this time, he was accompanied by his brother Noel who had unsurprisingly also captured the racing 'bug'. He also met fellow competitor George Holdsworth who later became his brother-in-law when he married Bob's sister Mary. At one time George Holdsworth ran a Royal Enfield dealership in Birmingham.

This early success no doubt kindled the desire to continue. Bob participated in many forms of racing, his skills honed on grass and dirt surfaces providing a solid footing for later racing on asphalt. Throughout his career he was known an 'all-rounder' who competed successfully in all forms of motorcycle competition. Riders who are competent off-road seem to make better on-road riders.

From the Coventry Eagle he moved on to an S.O.S. machine and then onto a 250cc New Imperial which he used for Scrambles and Grass track events as well as herding cattle on the farm.

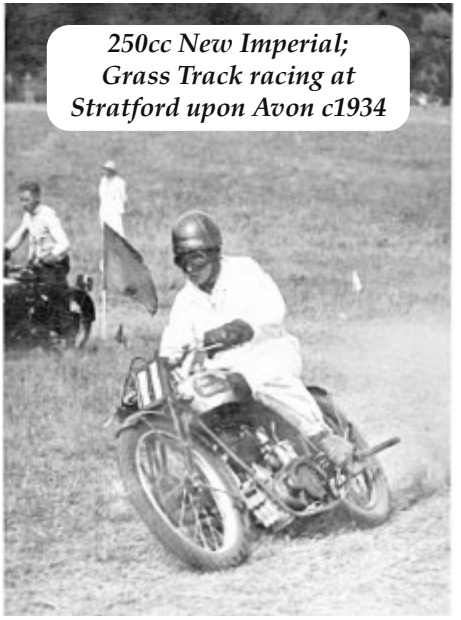
As mentioned already, initially, he received support from Arthur Taylor a well-known motorcycle dealer based in Shipston-on-Stour. He later worked for him in 1933 as a mechanic.

He started to travel further afield to attend races and his reputation grew. In 1932 he travelled to the Isle of Man (IOM) for the first time as a mechanic for a friend of his who was competing in the Manx GP. After this event he became the owner of the 350 cc Grand prix New Imperial and he then used it to progress up the racing ladder. At this time the New Imperial company, located in Hall Green Birmingham, started to provide support as a result of his success on their machines. This relationship would pay dividends a few years later.

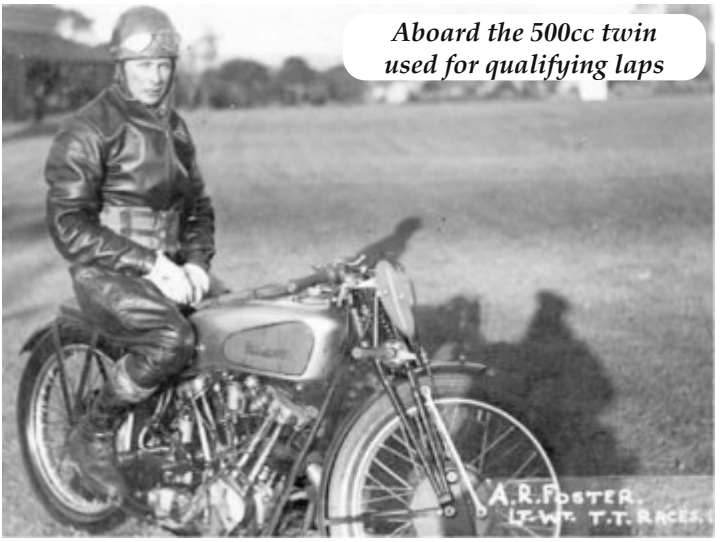
He again travelled to the IOM in 1933 to race his own New Imperial now fitted with factory 'special bits'. He struck a wall during practice and ran out of road at the 'Mountain Box' during the race and retired with a funny shaped wheel. Not the best of starts for his TT career but no doubt character building.

He then left Arthur Taylor's employ and started with Jack Williams father in Cheltenham. Jack Williams was a well-known trials and scrambles racer in the 1930s.

In 1934 Bob gained sixth place in the Manx GP aboard a Sunbeam and was second in the Lightweight event on a new Imperial after having been told to slow down by his pit crew, unfortunately he had backed off too much and lost by 34 seconds having led the race up until that point.



250cc New Imperial; Grass Track racing at Stratford upon Avon c1934



Aboard the 500cc twin used for qualifying laps

By 1935 Bob was riding for New Imperial as a 'works rider' and while waiting for his 250cc Lightweight TT mount to arrive on the IOM he qualified on a 500cc twin and joked that even then he couldn't make the fastest lap. When his 250cc unit construction machine arrived he practiced it 'to death' and as a result had to use one of the older separate gearbox models in the race.

Unfortunately, he then went on to fall off on the first lap of his first TT at 'Signpost' when he misjudged the road surface condition. The unit construction machine was later rebuilt, it initially had a lubrication problem and then Bob teamed up with Les Archer and "Ginger" Wood to race the Ulster's 'Grand prix of Europe' meeting. There he was just beaten by German rider Geiss on a DKW.

In June 1936 Bob married Joy Hallett and was on his honeymoon when he won the 1936 Lightweight TT on a 250cc New Imperial. His race average speed was 74.28mph nearly 3mph faster than Stanley Woods' Moto-Guzzi the previous year. The race lasted 3 hours, 33 minutes and 22 seconds.



Aboard the 250cc New Imperial used for the race

He was 5 minutes ahead of the next finisher.

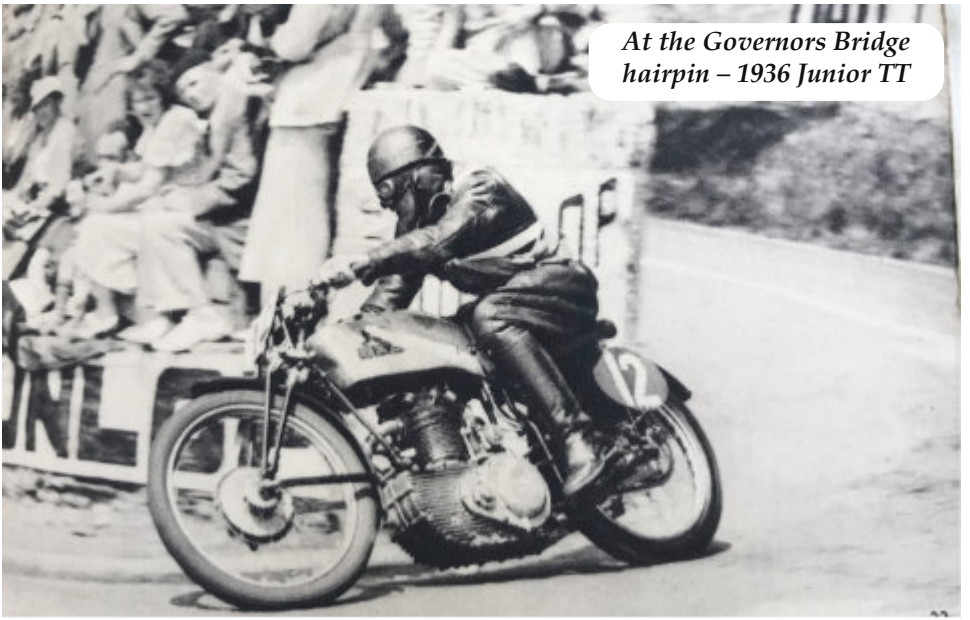
Stanley Woods on a supercharged DKW led for the first two laps but Bob overtook him on lap three. Woods was fastest on the fourth lap and by the fifth lap



1936 Left to right; Mr. Horton of New Imperial, Noel Foster, A Williams (father of Jack Williams and his employer), Bob Foster, Joy Foster, and extreme right A.R Taylor (former employer) his entrant and pit man

Woods was fourteen seconds ahead. On lap six Bob overtook Woods and drew ahead by some 35 seconds. Stanley Woods retired on lap six leaving Bob to claim the lightweight trophy for Britain. This was the last time that a British rider and machine won the Lightweight TT. New Imperial had won six in total.

New Imperial had been in financial trouble for some time and unfortunately their Lightweight TT success was not enough to turn things



At the Governors Bridge hairpin – 1936 Junior TT



Bob on a New Imperial 500cc twin at the Red Marley hill climb in 1935

around. They subsequently withdrew their official support from racing. However, Foster, Archer and Wood formed themselves into a syndicate and borrowed a set of machines for the remainder of the season along with the services of Matt Wright who had been in-charge of the engines at the works.

At the Ulster GP they had apparently decided in advance the order that they would finish in; such was the confidence they had in their machinery. However, this was not to be; Les Archer struck trouble and retired, leaving the other two to finish abreast. Ginger Woods was awarded the trophy being deemed 1/5th of a second in front by the time-keeper …

With the demise of New Imperial, the last 3 years before WW2 were spent road racing works AJSs. Bob did use New Imperials for grass track racing and trials. The TT records show that Velocettes and Nortons were dominant over this period.

Matt Wright, upon the demise of New Imperial, had joined the AJS Company and his influence had started to take effect. Engine development at this time, by all manufacturers, became spectacular.



Aboard AJS machines …

Before the start of the 1938 Junior TT it was looking like a promising result was possible. Three minutes after the start he was sipping beer in the Quarter Bridge



… In 1937

Hotel having run foul of the road camber there!

Bob rode the AJS air cooled supercharged four-cylinder machine in the 1938 Senior TT. This was a period of significant technological advance as manufacturers tried multi-cylinder engines and supercharging. However, the AJS was prone to overheating and resulted in another retirement. After that AJS turned to water cooling to address that problem. While powerful this machine was difficult to ride.

Bob also raced abroad and the first signs of a world championship series began to take place. At this time British manufacturers and riders were dominant.

Bob again rode an AJS in the Senior TT held on June 16th 1939, the last one for eight years. This time his V4 AJS mount was water-cooled, He finished in 13th place; some 22 minutes behind the winning BMW of G Meier and about 10mph slower in average speed. Along with the other AJS rider Walter Rusk who finished 11th, this was the first time four-cylinder bikes had completed a TT. He also rode the same machine at the "North West 200" in Portstewart Northern Ireland where he retired with a blown cylinder head gasket while leading, and also retired in the Ulster GP where he suffered fouled plugs.

In 1939 World War 2 stopped all forms of motor sport and in the UK. In the registration (census) carried out in late 1939 Bob is listed as an aircraft mechanic living in

Waiting for the start of evening 1937 Junior TT practice (Bob Foster on AJS #29)

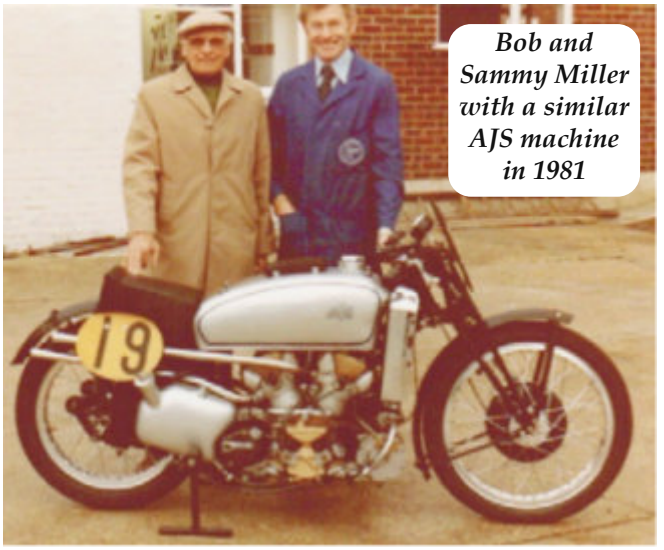




1939 water cooled AJS V twin – note plug spanner in his boot!

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. At this time there were a lot of aircraft manufacturers based in that area and Bob's skills would have been readily transferable.

His on-going bronchial health problems would have probably ruled him out of active military service. He worked for Rotol, a company which designed and manufactured propellors amongst others and was involved in testing functions. His brother Ned joined the Royal Artillery and served in Italy and Greece. His brother Noel became part of the RAF serving in the UK and later the Middle East. Bob's youngest brother Richard (Dick) was killed in France while flying a Hawker Typhoon in January 1944



Bob and Sammy Miller with a similar AJS machine in 1981

... to be continued



Brian Agnew

VELOCE TWO STROKES - Part 1: Introduction

To many motorcyclists their image of a Velocette motorcycle is that of a high quality and high performance four-stroke single cylinder machine of 350 cc or 500cc capacity. The company 'Veloce Ltd' produced arguably the best four-stroke 350cc racing machines from 1925 to 1950 that gave them eight TT wins and two world championships (Frith 1949 and Foster 1950) The overhead cam KTT range of racing machines and their production counterpart, the KSS are held in very high esteem by engineers and riders alike. During the period from 1945 to the close of the company in 1971 the production of Velocette motorcycles focused on the pushrod overhead valve 'M' series singles and the twin cylinder LE range of bikes.

It is not so well known or appreciated however, that up to 1925 Veloce produced a range of two stroke motorcycles that established the Veloce tradition of high quality, purity of purpose and integrity of design.

The purpose of this work is to examine the Velocette two-stroke motorcycles from a technical point of view, to present them to an interested reader and to ask the question "What made Veloce change their direction to develop their four-stroke range at the almost exclusion of the two-stroke range".

In doing this we must set our mind on the circumstances that existed in the 1920s. It must not be forgotten that many things that we take for granted today were unknown then when Veloce were producing exclusively their two-stroke range. High strength aluminium alloys (Duralumin) had been developed by Alfred Wilm in Germany as recently as 1906 and may not have been generally available in the UK. Knowledge of gas dynamics was very rudimentary, computers did not exist, all calculations were done with log tables and slide rules. Mathematical analysis and simulation were very limited by the relatively crude analytical techniques then available. High strength steel alloys were not available until after the 1930s as their development was stimulated by the dawn of the gas turbine era of aircraft propulsion. Fuel and lubrication technology was in its infancy, Midgley had not started investigating the anti-knock properties of tetraethyl lead until 1921 and plant based lubricating oils were the norm. The 1920s was a time without mass communication, few people owned telephones, there was no internet, academics relied mainly on publications in learned journals, the dissemination of information and new ideas was at a snail's pace. Car ownership was reserved for the rich and well-to-do with the bicycle or motorcycle being the mode of transport for the majority of the working population.

The safety bicycle as we know it today had been invented by John Starley in 1885 (the 'Rover') and quickly became the dominant design world-wide eclipsing all other designs (the Polish word for bicycle is Rover). The development of the bicycle offered the opportunity to travel further afield than previously possible and soon bicycle clubs became socially acceptable for women as well as men. The demand for cycles stimulated a new parts and equipment suppliers business and also resulted in racing events on public roads and specially built velodromes became fashionable.

The development and popularity of the bicycle trade subsequently resulted in important family run businesses being established that added greatly to the engineering expertise of the country. For instance, the Plastow bicycle business in Grimsby eventually became a car retailer and produced in the third generation Sir David Plastow who became the Chairman of Rolls-Royce Motors and of Vickers Plc.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Birmingham became established as the powerhouse of Britain's industrial heartland. This was brought about by the abundance of raw materials locally in the form of coal and iron ore that led to the concentration of metal working industries there. The development of the national canal system placed Birmingham in its heart thus establishing a convenient means of transporting raw materials and finished goods throughout the country. The arrival of railways in the mid-19th century further strengthened this position.

Birmingham became known as the city of a thousand trades specialising in the production of high quality finished items. It attracted many migrant workers from the United Kingdom and Europe working in the arms factories, the silver and jewellery trades and watch and clock making. Business flourished in Birmingham because it was not subjected to the restrictions that were imposed in London by the City Guilds. This encouraged entrepreneurs to seek their fortune in Birmingham.

It was this hive of industrial and economic activity that drew a young Johannes Gutgemann from his hometown ***Oberwinter am Rhine*** to seek his fortune in Birmingham. He was quite successful establishing several different enterprises and must have been well regarded in the Birmingham business community, as he was able to secure backing from like-minded associates to set up his own firm of Veloce Limited with the intention to produce cycles and related products and services. The term related products included cycle parts, roller skates, rickshaw wheels and a nickel plating service.



A motorcycle business soon became established and succeeded by producing four-stroke and two-stroke machines that featured, for the time, some very well designed and innovative features. Eventually, like many manufacturers of the time the product range coalesced around a range of lightweight two stroke motorcycles that were the main output until the development of the overhead cam 'K' series from 1925 and the later overhead valve 'M' series of engines .

The following parts of this series will examine two stroke engine development from the early work of Clerk and Day until that of Walter Kaaden and attempt to establish the contribution to this that was made by Veloce and what led them to develop their four-stroke range.

The two-stroke cycle

To begin our understanding of the Veloce two-stroke motorcycles it is perhaps useful to consider the operating process of the two-stroke cycle as this will give us an insight into the problems that faced the Veloce drawing office staff when they were working on their engine designs. The two-stroke cycle is one of a number of thermodynamic power producing cycles that largely follow the same processes. The most well known of these thermodynamic cycles is the Otto cycle but all thermodynamic cycles follows the same sequential processes of induction, compression, ignition (heat addition) and exhaust. In the Otto cycle, combustion occurs at constant volume in the combustion chamber but in the Brayton cycle (gas turbine) this process is at constant pressure, the Diesel cycle can have a combination of constant pressure and constant volume processes. There are also other details that can be varied in order to change the power characteristic of the cycle, for instance the compression and expansion process may not necessarily have the same volume ratios. A typical theoretical Otto cycle is depicted in figure 2.1 on a pressure (P) volume (V) diagram, other cycles, Brayton, Diesel, Atkinson and Stirling can be depicted in a similar way. In the case of the Otto cycle shown in figure 2.1 the compression process occurs between points 1 and 2 followed by a constant volume heat addition process 2-3. The expansion process then follows, 3-4 followed by heat rejection 4-1.

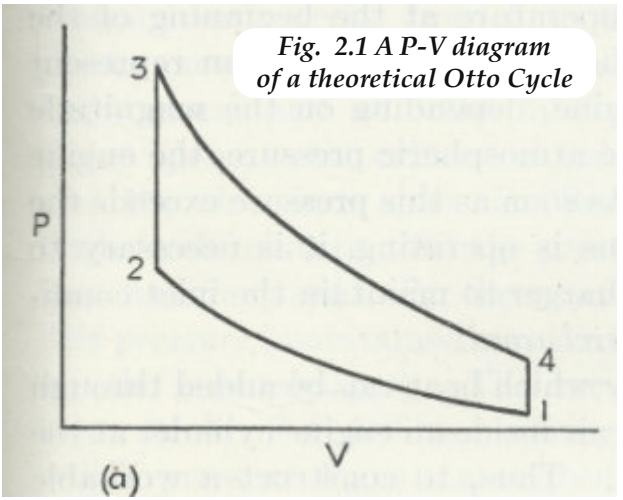


Fig. 2.1 A P-V diagram of a theoretical Otto Cycle

The theoretical thermodynamicists of the 19th century had established the basis of the power producing cycles, possibly based on studies of steam engines but it took engineers like Karl Benz, Gustave Otto and Dugald Clerk to bring these to a practical reality. The first practical cycle was developed by Nicolas Otto following a long period of experimentation and development initially based on a gas engine developed by Lenoir that began around 1861. The successful engine, which was produced from 1876 employed a piston engine in which the cyclic processes of the working fluid took place in a closed cylinder. The compression and expansion were performed by a piston that moved within the cylinder and was connected to a rotating crankshaft. The complete thermodynamic cycle was achieved by two revolutions of the crankshaft (four strokes of the piston) which led to the Otto cycle also being known as the "Four-Stroke Cycle". The P-V diagram of a practical Otto cycle is shown in figure 2.2, it can be seen to differ from the theoretical cycle by the

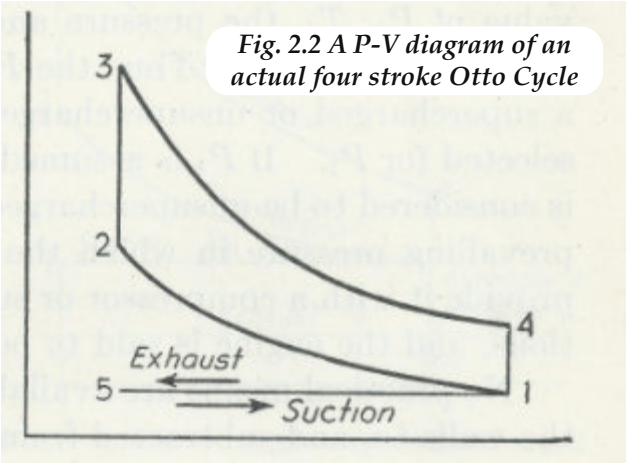


Fig. 2.2 A P-V diagram of an actual four stroke Otto Cycle

addition of the pumping loop 1-5-1 that facilitates the induction of the fresh charge and the exhaust of the products of combustion.

The operation of the cycle can be described as follows: starting with the piston at the end of the stroke with the free volume at a minimum (top dead centre t.d.c.). The fresh charge of air and fuel is admitted into the working cylinder by way of an inlet valve as the piston moves away from TDC and reduces the pressure in the cylinder. This is process 5-1 in figure 2.2. As the piston approaches the end of its travel at bottom dead centre (b.d.c.) the inlet valve closes and the compression process 1-2 begins. When the piston has returned to t.d.c. the fuel air mixture is ignited which increases the temperature and pressure in the cylinder producing a positive pressure difference across the piston that drives the piston back to BDC. This is the power stroke of the engine that produces the positive work output of the cycle. As the piston approaches b.d.c. the exhaust valve is opened and the exhaust gasses are expelled, 1-5, as the piston is returned to t.d.c. The exhaust valve is then closed and the whole cycle is repeated. The induction and exhaust processes (1- 5 and 5-1) are known as the "pumping loop", the work expended in performing these operations is subtracted from the gross work produced by the expanding gasses to produce the network output of the cycle. The work produced by an engine is proportional to the area of the P-V diagram. In actual cycles the work produced is less than the ideal cycle because heat addition does not occur at constant volume which causes the sharp corners of the diagram to become rounded reducing the area. Engines based on the Otto cycle are now the dominant form of power for the majority of passenger cars and motorcycles as continuous development over more than 100 years has resulted in engines that are efficient and economical to run, very powerful and compact and relatively quiet.

Compared to the engines that were in use in the mid-1800s the Otto cycle was a huge improvement as it enabled small engines with relatively large power-to-weight ratios to be produced that would eventually lead to the development of the first motorcycle and motorised carriages by Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz 1n 1885.

This work was of course not taking place in isolation; many other engineers were working on oil and gas engines that were of the atmospheric type that did not employ a compression process. Otto realised the benefits of the

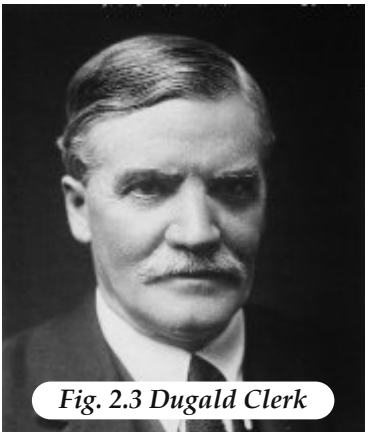


Fig. 2.3 Dugald Clerk

compression process followed by heat addition as a high temperature expansion process can create more work than that needed in the low temperature compression process. Many of the atmospheric engines used the two-stroke cycle such that a power stroke occurred at each revolution of the crank shaft but they omitted the compression process to the detriment of power and economy. The difficulty of including the processes that make up the Otto cycle in a single cylinder to produce a power stroke for each cycle difficult to achieve was a major obstacle.

The first practical two-stroke cycle was devised and created by a Scottish Engineer called Dougald Clerk (figure 2.3) in 1878. He was the Technical Director of the National Gas Engine Company for over 40 years but he also held other directorships of several companies including the munition manufacturer Kynochs. In 1888 Clerk entered into partnership with Lord Mark offering services as Consulting Engineers and Patent Agents.

His initial experiments with a Brayton ready motor in 1878 led him to make improvements that would eventually result in the development of a commercial engine operating on a two-stroke cycle at the end of 1880. Clerk claimed that his engine was the first to succeed in introducing compression into the cycle combined with ignition at every revolution. The new engine, shown in figure 2.4 had two cylinders, respectively pump and motor, driven from cranks placed at almost right angles to each other, the pump crank leading. The purpose of the pump cylinder was to provide fresh charge to scavenge the motor cylinder. The pressure produced by this cylinder being just enough to overcome the losses in the connecting passages between the two cylinders. The compression process occurred only in the motor cylinder.

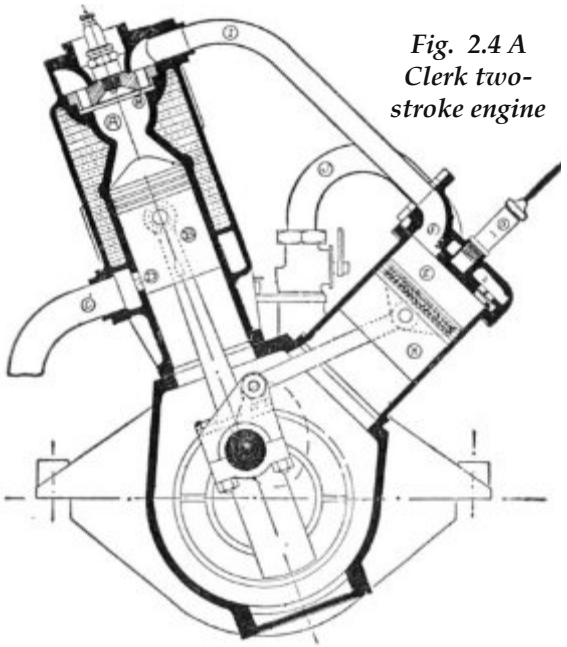


Fig. 2.4 A Clerk two-stroke engine

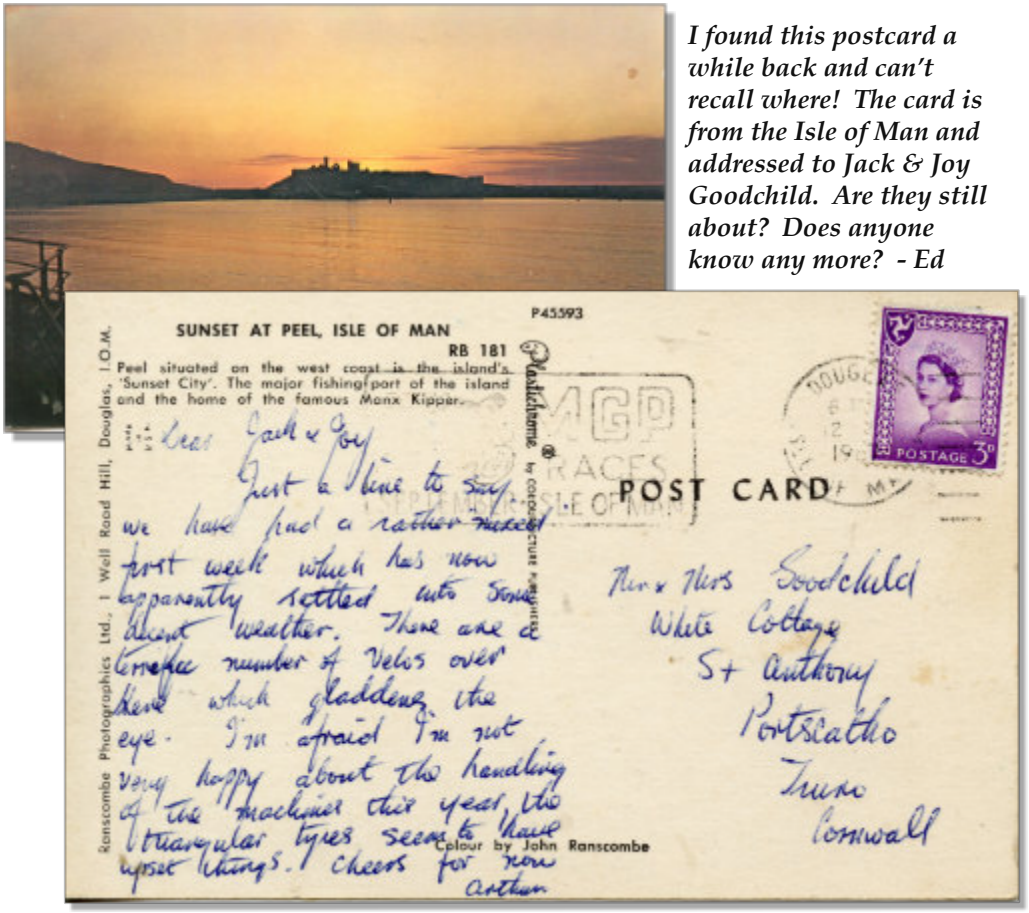
The cycle of operation is

as follows; the pump takes in a charge of gas and air, the motor piston opens an exhaust port in the side of the cylinder at the end of its stroke allowing the exhaust gases to escape. When the pressure in the motor cylinder has fallen to atmospheric, the scavenge charge is admitted into the motor cylinder through a check pushing the remaining exhaust gases through the exhaust port. The motor piston then returns, compressing the contents of the cylinder into the combustion space where the charge is then fired and the piston performs its working stroke. This is the 'Clerk cycle'.

As the displacement of the motor cylinder is considered in the same way as a four-stroke engine, i.e. stroke multiplied by cylinder area the two-stroke engine is at a disadvantage because the effective stroke is smaller than the geometric stroke by the extent to which the exhaust port extends above the piston crown at b.d.c. The ability to produce a power stroke at each revolution of the crankshaft is however a distinct advantage.

To be continued …

POSTCARD FROM ARTHUR LAVINGTON



I found this postcard a while back and can't recall where! The card is from the Isle of Man and addressed to Jack & Joy Goodchild. Are they still about? Does anyone know any more? - Ed



Rob Drury

RIDING INTO THE GOLDEN SUNSET - PART 2

Rob continues a theme raised in FT509's Fishtail Mail

Making correct choices.

If you are retired or approaching that happy state of affairs, then you are one of the most fortunate generations in the history of the world. If you still enjoy riding a motorcycle, you should continue to enjoy it for as long as you reasonably can, there's room for optimism! In part one, I discussed health, agility and balance and alluded to choices that can be made to extend our riding years.

We often see a bike advertised for sale where the owner declares that it can no longer be managed and that they will be giving up riding. The decision to sell that particular bike might well be well-founded but it doesn't mean that they couldn't continue to ride if they then chose something more suitable. The general proposition is that a lighter bike will make life easier but it's about ergonomics really. For example, a Guzzi 500cc GTV is quite a heavy bike but the combination of low centre-of-gravity, low saddle height, wide handlebars and the roll-on, roll-off centre stand make it easy to manage.

I have sold other bikes whose weight, saddle height and riding position was starting to make them a liability. They have been replaced by lighter bikes with low saddle height and a comfortable 'sitting-up' riding position. I choose to ride pre-war bikes because they are what I like best but there are a raft of modern bikes that meet all of the criteria for ease of use. I will put these to one side for the present.

It's well understood that even a heavy bike is easy to manage once it's moving, balance largely takes care of itself. However, moving a heavy bike about as we lose some strength and agility is another matter - putting it on the stand, for example, can be difficult. Lighter bikes are usually smaller capacity, easier to start and if the correct choice is made, relaxing to ride. The advantage of light weight is particularly noticeable when manoeuvring the bike in and out of the garage.

Even lightweights are not always free from difficulty. For example, keeping a MkI OHC Velo upright when moving to the rear of the bike to pull it onto the rear stand is not easy - in common with all rear stands. By comparison, pre-war Moto Guzzis have centre stands that make light work of it. Kick starting is easier and safer with the bike on its stand if the bike can then be rolled off without too much effort. Most rear and centre stands have very poor ergonomics.

Low saddle height not only makes mounting and dismounting easier, it is very helpful when coming to a halt and manoeuvring the bike whilst still astride it. A low centre-of-gravity makes a bike more manageable and a tractable engine makes a bike easy to ride. A bike should have good manners: a light clutch, easy starting and fuss-free neutral selection. It should tick over reliably in traffic. Any bike that meets these criteria has a good chance of being a suitable candidate. I have a suspicion that I'm loathe to admit - that some very ordinary 'ride to work bikes' that are not held in high esteem might be the easiest to ride.



Moto-Guzzi Airone - light, lively … lovely!

Lastly, almost any small modern bike will possess all of these attributes, with an electric starter thrown in. They might not be what we want to ride but if the choice is a modern bike or to not ride at all, many will choose to carry on riding. Poor balance associated with foot problems brought the riding days of an old friend to a close. I suggested that he try one of the three-wheeled banking scooters that lock themselves upright when they come to a halt, he would never have to put his feet down and I'd been assured that they are great fun. He chose not to try one and we don't know what we would do in the same circumstance. I think that he had already lost the confidence to ride.

Riding in safety.

I have written previously about the good qualities of 'underpowered' machines, where the inability to go fast can remove the desire to, promoting a more relaxed mentality. Though riding more quickly might not be the cause of accidents, it does exacerbate matters in dangerous situations.

The most common danger is the car waiting in a side road for the optimum moment to pull out in front of us. Though I wear a 'hi-vis' jacket over my riding gear, I'm not convinced of its utility. Similarly, I'm not convinced that riding with puny 6 volts lights on makes any difference. Riders on modern bikes with powerful daytime running lights experience drivers pulling out from side roads in front of them too. The problem is not visibility but a failure to look properly. We can protect ourselves by doing their thinking for them, slowing down, moving out to the crown of the road and being ready to brake but travelling more slowly helps to protects us.

Since we rarely ride for any other purpose than for pleasure, sitting upright at moderate speed gives us the opportunity to enjoy the scenery better and to recapture the sensation of motorcycling that is like none other. There's time for reflection too on quiet country roads. I have found that when riding a rigid frame/girder forked bike, riding speed is principally governed by the road surface and

that whatever I ride, I usually end up doing about 40/45 mph.

Few things spoil a ride more than anxiety about the bike. It should be in good mechanical condition. A routine check of oil and fuel levels, tyre pressures etc before setting off puts these things to rest and allows us to enjoy the ride with peace of mind.

The road surface presents a regular threat to our safety, we need to be vigilant for potholes, raised manholes and other hazards. Maintain a road position that allows you to move left or right to avoid hazards, even if drivers fail to understand the reason why and show signs of impatience. If we allow drivers to push us into the side of the road, the options for avoidance become limited. Police motorcyclists advise riding two thirds out into the carriageway - about where a driver sits, so that if they wish to overtake, they have to make a proper passing manoeuvre.

I believe that a most important factor in riding safety is a good field of vision. Seeing a potential danger in good time allows for preventive action before there's any drama. A good quality full-face helmet will provide optimum protection in the case of an accident but at the cost of reducing the field of vision. It's generally not possible to perform a rearward glance with a full-face helmet, leaving rearward vision solely to the restricted view in our mirrors. I am inclined to think that for my style of riding, an open-face helmet and goggles provides the optimum balance between protection and all-round vision, it's still possible to glance backwards over the shoulder for an all-round perspective. I always ride with my goggles in place to protect my eyes. Even at low speed, rain is painful, so it's wise to carry a scarf or face mask.

Good riding gear is not only a matter of comfort but also of safety. Any suit that is too cheap will not be capable of what it's supposed to do. They should keep us warm when it's cold, dry when it rains and have ventilation for when it's hot. Good suits are abrasion resistant and have body armour for protection in the case of an accident. It is ridiculous when, with the onset of rain, riders actually stop to put a waterproof suit on top of their 'riding suit'. Good riding gear is essential for a stress-free ride. On a ride earlier this year, I was under-dressed and became very cold. I should have carried an extra layer and better gloves. As I became colder, I realised that my discomfort had become a distraction, so must have had implications for safety.

Hand signals - many younger drivers have no idea about what a hand signal means and many older ones seem to have forgotten, so it's unwise to assume that our intentions are understood. Travelling more slowly means being overtaken more often on the busier roads. It is unwise to assume that our right of way will be respected, even if it is very clear, so we again assume responsibility for our own safety. Last year, I was making a right turn off a main road, signalled clearly and early, moved out to the crown of the road and was overtaken just as I was about to make the turn. A sixth sense made me pause and saved me from a terrible incident. We're riding for pleasure, so should have the time and inclination to observe caution.

To conclude, I think that with reasonable fitness and agility, a sensible choice of motorcycle and by using our experience to keep us safe on suitable roads, there is no reason why we can't enjoy our hobby into our golden years.

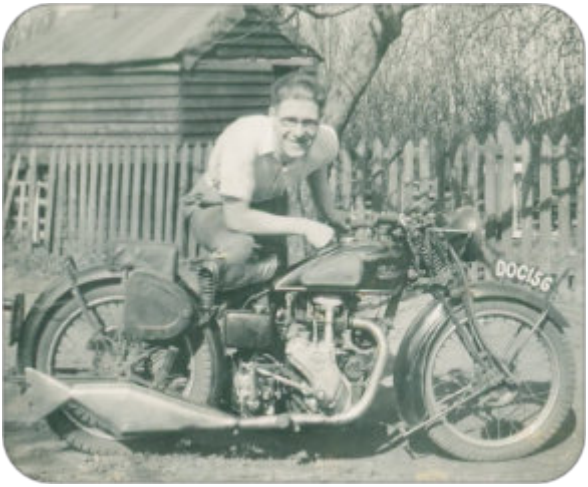


WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

1960 VENOM CLUBMAN 436 TTW
JIM ROGERS

I am trying to trace my father's bike, bought in around 1962 in Bristol. If anyone knows its whereabouts, please get in touch I would be hugely grateful. **07565 965 627** or ***jimrogers72@gmail.com***

DOC 15 G
Mark Judson

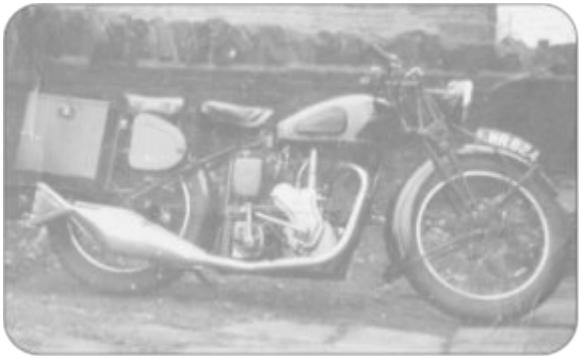


Having just lost my mother at the grand old age of 94 I've been sorting through some old photos and have come across a photo of my late father with his Velocette. I was wondering if it was still alive and owned perhaps by one of your members? Any information would be gratefully received.
07469 191 904
judson947@btinternet.com

VENOM KHA 474 E — Martin Perks

I purchased this motorcycle new in 1967 and sold it (pressure from a woman), a decision I have always regretted. Does anybody know the present owner? If he/she wants to sell it I would love to be the buyer. **07926 210 742** ***martinperks1947@gmail.com***

LWR 624 — Peter Coates



It was owned by my father when he lived in Clayton, Bradford. If anyone has any ideas about it I can be contacted on **07957 939 935**. The photo was taken possibly in the early 1950s when he moved from Guiseley to Clayton on changing jobs from Spooners of Ilkley to Hoover. Any information at all will be much appreciated.

GOING SPARE

Club members may place adverts in 'Going Spare' at no charge. All adverts should be sent to the Editor. Only 'For Sale' adverts are accepted from non-members.

FOR SALE ...

1961 VENOM CLUBMAN, with Geoff Dodkin half faring (damaged), alloy wheels and stainless steel mudguards, plus some spares (including fishtail silencer). Needs some restoration. Offers invited. David: **01799 550 291**, (Saffron Walden)

1959 VENOM CLUBMAN. Very good condition. Off road for approximately four years. Restored, it just needs recommissioning. Frame and engine details as originally dispatched from the factory. Contact Gary for photos (***WhatsApp***). £4300 ovno. **07860 860 594** (Clwyd) ***100gh1@gmail.com***

THRUXTON 1969, Coil ignition. Not used since the early 2000's, however, a recent refresh. One family owned since 1969 and just over 5000 miles from new. The recent refresh including paint, powder coating, stainless spokes and chrome, wiring harness, cylinder head clean, and coil valve springs (by Kevin Thurston) . Lots of documented history. Confirmation from Ray Thurston as being correct numbers on the Thruxton Register. Some spares including original fork tubes and a set of TT racing gears. Lightened flywheels and polished conrod by Geoff Dodkin in the early '70s .£16000 or near offer. Andrew Harrison **07510 664 928**

1934 KTT Mk V. Dispatched direct from the factory to the I.o.M. for New Zealand rider, Allen Bradley, to race in the 1935 Junior TT. Bradley did not feature in the race, the suggestion is that he crashed in practice and the machine was returned to Velocette. It was purchased by John Cansfield from a dealer in Birmingham in1939. Complete history from 1939 to present is known. All major components are original. Matching engine, frame, and gearbox numbers, original, rewound, TT magneto and Amal TT carburettor. Original wheel hubs and brakes, now on 19" and 21" rims. Converted by McCandless to swinging arm rear suspension in approximately 1947. Has been in regular and very reliable use for the last 18+ years. For more detailed information please email ***f.allinson10@btinternet.com***

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PLEASE NOTE: ***The Velocette Owners' Club does not under any circumstances guarantee the authenticity of any Velocette motorcycle. Anyone intending to buy a Velocette should make their own enquiries before purchasing the motorcycle in question.***

VW TRANSPORTER LWB 2001. Mostky kept garaged. TDI 5-cyl turbo diesel, overdrive, torsion bar suspension. Recent transmission overhaul by G-Tech. Mechanically sound but some damage on nearside sliding door. 160,000 miles. The best vehicle I have had, cruising at 80, comfortable, good fuel consumption and a pleasure to drive. Has towing bracket, will carry 4 bikes. Now surplus, on SORN with new MOT. £3500 ono.

NORTON INTERNATIONAL 500cc 1957. Engine No. 77675/11N. Frame No. 73849 (Replica Manx type). V5 present. Good all round condition. Now surplus to requirements. Offers or exchange for a good sound Morris Minor 1000 or similar, cash adjustment if nice. Derby. Tel: Sam Rhodes **07901 788 606**, Ivan **07802 237 374/ 01332 673 658**.

VELOCETTE GEARBOXES, series 12 and 14. Cylinder Heads, Venom and Viper. Rocker Box. Crankcases. Flywheel assembly. Phone or email for further information. Oliver **07973 429 206**. ***o.presswood@btinternet.com*** Prefer collection from Bath, where you can view other items which need to go, or I can post at additional cost.

THRUXTON Fairing screen. Unused. £70 John Lucas: ***johnlucas996@btinternet.com***

VENOM, Alton starter, belt drive,KTT crankcases, BTH electronic mag, stainless wheels. Good runner £4500. Dennis,***denwood181@gmail.com***, **07984 957 279 (**Lancs).

1938 KTS MK II Reg. No. VV7183, rigid girder forks, starts and runs well, history, photos and technical details available on request. £6,500 ono **07802 887 465** ***jj.pearce@btinternet.com***

HEINE GERICKE motorcycle leathers Jacket and zip on trousers. Very good condition with all the protective inserts. Can email photographs, if required. ***george.taylor100@btinternet.com***

BMW F700GS. 2016. 17,300 mls. Only 2 owners. Owned by me since May 2018. Lots of BMW extras. ESA suspension, panniers, grips, info computer, TP monitor, Sat Nav mount, rad guard, hand guards, centre stand.Choice of low or standard seat. Fastidiously maintained and serviced. I can send pics and more detail on request. £4500. **07867 904 777** or ***cliffbriggs2@outlook.com*** Notts.

1958 VENOM. In storage since 1975 following an engine overhaul at Geoff Dodkin. A recommissioning this year (magneto refurb, new SS mudguards, and new seat were the main cost items) got it running with the original electrics and brakes etc. working fine.Alloy rims, TLS front brake and rear sets. I have video of it running, and photos of course; I can take more, just ask. Any questions or viewing welcomed, in North London. Sensible offers. I've been following recent forum discussion about prices and it's definitely not concours, but not far away from a good running Venom. ***j.wood@efc.co.uk***

VENOM part of deceased estate, in need of rescuing. Located in North Bristol. It is on the DVLA website but not as a historic vehicle. It has a 1957-ish engine, awaiting frame info, and is K reg 1972 suggesting a rebuild back then. Last tax disc 1976. Late style tank Thruxton seat and TLS brake, clip-ons sport style. Tacho and drive missing, oil tank not yet located. If you are interested or further information - Jeff Falkner: ***jfalkner@tiscali.co.uk***

BMWR100RS. 1980 21K miles immaculate. BMW R80 30K miles. Excellent. Supplied new with RS fairing which is available FOC. Velocette KSS 1938.3265 miles since rebuild twenty plus years ago. Very correct but not original. All alloy motor. Original mudguards, (rare). Runs and rides beautifully. **1937 MOV** 2015 miles since rebuild from a scrap machine. Rides very well. Both bikes immaculate. **VELOCETTE MODEL K.** 1927. All matching numbers. Part restored. Owned nearly thirty years. Very correct machine for 1927. Original seat!. Set of very special possibly works strutted forks. Bike came from a man with a large quantity of works bikes and parts. Wheels, tank and magneto restored. Nothing else. **KSS 1938** 95% assembled from parts. Frame and matching logbook so registration should be straightforward. Wheels and petrol tank restored. New tyres. **MOV** lightweight project part assembled. Late frame perfect condition. Forks rebuilt by R.F. Seymour. **ENGINE PARTS**. Large quantity of Velocette MK1 OHC MK11 OHC MOV-MAC. Examples. MK1 OHC cast alloy chaincase. MOV racing piston and alloy barrel NOS. Ring David **01935 816 323** or ***majorscope@gmail*** for details.

TIGER CUB 1960, scrambler type with lights. VO5 log book on sorn. Heavy weight forks. New wiring, head work done, new wheels/tyres, stainless spokes, powder coated hubs. Easy starter. VGC. £3,200 ono. Steve **07980 405 480**

VARIOUS PARTS Lucas Altette horn, complete with horse shoe mounting bracket (off Viper?)£30 Clear Hooters 12V HF 180A with mounting bracket £30 (car?) Lucas Altette look alike horn, with bracket 6V (100Phons) £30. All work when flashed on battery charger. Prefix 9 gearbox shell complete with 16t sleeve gear, partial selector mechanism and clutch thrust cup. £50 Iron MAC flywheel assembly with rod and +40 slipper piston £60 Original VM/VR fork stanchions, may need re chroming £ 30/ pair. Various damper rods and tubes for above £10 each. All above plus post and packaging, or available at Chelmsford VOC meeting. For further list of spares please contact Peter **07884 939 785 petermerrick@hotmail.co.uk** or

1939 MAC. Rebuilt and was running but will require re commissioning. This machine has not been registered so will require application for "Age Related" V5 documentation. £3250 Also **1937 AJS** 250cc Nice looking bike with high level exhaust. Will require re commissioning. V5 registration as Historic Vehicle. On SORN. £3500 Also **2018 MASH 400**cc single. (TT40) Extremely low mileage. One owner from new. Clubman style with low bars and large single front disc brake and twin exhausts. Battery flat so not currently running. V5 in owners name. On SORN £3000. All bikes are in Danbury Essex, but please contact Peter on ***petermerrick@hotmail.co.uk*** or **07884 939 785** in the first instance

1959 VENOM fitted with electric start. Very tidy condition but reducing collection due to age and too heavy for me. Can send photos. £5000 or best offer. (Sheffield area) ***raycarr@raycarr.co.uk***

1974 VENOM - ex-works, one of the last. Gas shocks, Borrani alloy rims, coil ignition. £6,900 ONO Geoff Smith. **07716 165 743** (Birminham)

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WANTED ...

'Wanted' ad's are only accepted from current VOC members. Please remember to include your membership number with your ad'.

MEGAPHONE for a KTT Mk7 or dimesions for making one. Also Parts List for k7 or Mk8. Patrice ***patmomo91@hotmail.fr***

FOR 1968 MSS, Petrol tank 4 1/4 gal . Pickup in the UK possible. Klaus: ***Kl_gerhard@gmx.de***

FOR1932 GTP. B14/3 kick starter cam for 3 speed box. Also looking for petrol caps with 3 slots on the inside. Thanks. Brian Wilson ***brw9450@gmail.com***

PRE-WAR MSS or CAMMY VELO. Oily rag runner preferred but needing work would be acceptable. Would like to trade for my 1936 Ariel Red Hunter 350, in excellent running condition. Rebuilt wheels, electronic regulator, good chrome, paint etc. and a very easy starter. Original transferable reg number and current V5C in my name. Needs nothing, ride away. A nice light bike and ideal for older knees! Email pics available on request. **02392 428 462 or 07530 661 545**. Please leave a message as I don't always get to the phone in time. ***kevin.sandford@ntlworld.com***

FOR A 250cc 1924 G3 two-stroke model. Rear stand in any condition. I would even take the two lugs that bolt it to the frame. John ***mcaloran1@aol.com***

FOR1934 KSS 4 speed gearbox or housing BK2/4 and end cover BK1/5 wanted by German member to get my bike back on the road. Good price paid. **0049 1511 4748 527 / *dirk.trott@t-online.de***

A CLASSIC VELOCETTE wanted in any condition I would also consider any other make of British bike at all, nice rough tatty etc good price paid can collect call Tony **07961 560 860**

FOR MAF: set of crankcase-halves that are matching and restorable (!). Another part that is missing is the luggage carrier as well as the parts to mount the pannier racks. If you have other typical parts for the MAF I would also like to hear from you if you want to sell them. If you are unsure if the parts are from a MAF, please ask me. As usual, if you live in one of the countries around the Netherlands (including Ireland) I am happy to come and pick them up.Peter Lenaerds. ***lenaerds@icloud.com***

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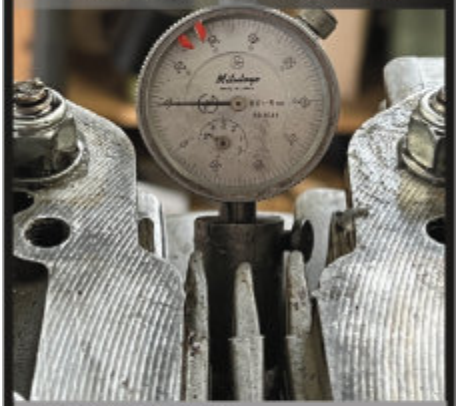
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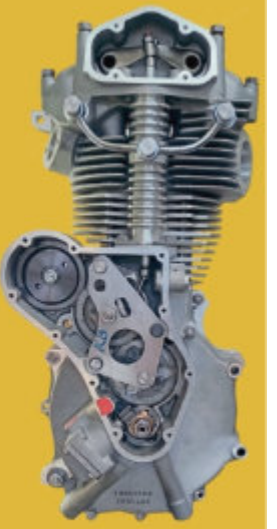

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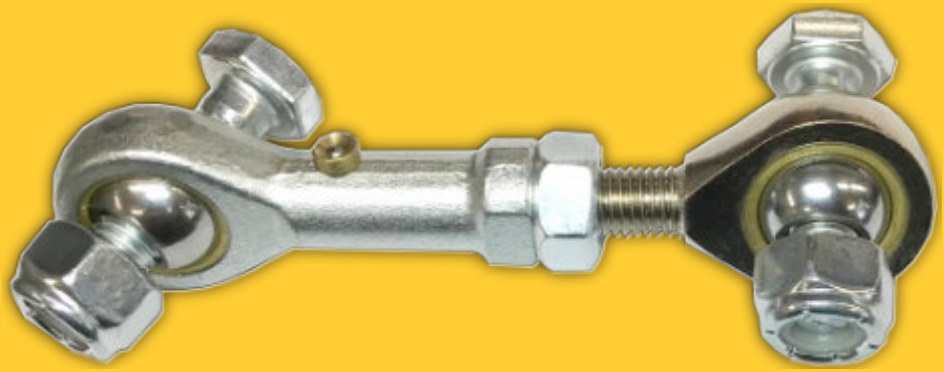

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