



Membership of the Motor Cycle Industry's Executive Club is restricted to invited Senior Executives of the Motor Cycle Manufacturing and Importing Industry including components and accessories

Starley House, Eaton Road, Coventry, CV1 2FH  
Telephone Number 0203 27427  
Telex 31590

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 1985

These paragraphs are published many, many weeks later than I would have preferred, but, as so often happens in this industry of ours some busy Spring trading through May and June meant there was too little spare time to commit all these happenings to paper whilst they were still fresh in the mind: then, as so often happens in this industry of ours July and August trading went sluggish and the additional effort required during a sluggish period took care of all the editorial spare time ..... so, my sincere apologies to all Members.

### 1. THE AUTUMN RUN AT BLANDFORD, OCTOBER 1984

Participating Members and Guests (35 in all) spent a grand weekend in Blandford, a mellow Georgian town of great character in the Dorset heartland. In spite of catering for the Dorset Law Society on the same evening the hotel management ensured that Friday's Dinner was of superb standard, and it also provided a good base in the pit of the stomach for the lubricants that followed in a highly convivial Saloon Bar session which continued, under private sponsorship, no less, until the wee hours. Nevertheless, by 8.40am Saturday, all the engine oils were a-warming and our "crocodile" setforth exiting the town across the magnificent bridge that spans the flood-prone River Stour. (Until a few years ago all the stone bridges in Dorset, over the Stour, incorporated cast iron plates that proclaimed anyone found defacing said bridge would be deported to Australia. These plates have now all been transferred to the safety of museums and so on - one of the reasons, apparently, was that groups of modern day Dorset yobboes kept defacing these bridges in the hope that they would be sent to Australia!)

Our route took us through Charlton Marshall, past Bradbury Rings, to Blandford Camp. Just by the by, I was actually incarcerated at Charlton Marshall in a prep. school from 1945 to 1951. The school buildings no longer stand but our ride on that day took us right by the church which I attended, compulsorily, on at least 400 occasions. Don't tell the Bishop of Durham but whenever I was in that church I was always thinking about motorcycles, in the outside world, on each of those 400 occasions! But on the day I rode through Charlton Marshall on a motorcycle all I am thinking about is that church!! Life deals some interesting twists! Bradbury Rings has a motorcycle connection, incidentally, which would likely horrify the environmentalists of 1985. Up until the Second World War the Rings were used for scrambles. I think I am right in stating that the great Perc Simon (after whom the famous Ringwood National Trial is named) was actually killed whilst competing here in 1937.

The purpose of our visit to Blandford Camp was to inspect the Museum of the Royal Signals, followed by a gentle tour of one and a half laps of the famous old race circuit. The Army work in predictable ways whereby

the key to a nostalgic trundle of this nature (in what is a high security military zone) could only be sanctioned provided our group had been through the Museum motions, if you see what mean. In the event, the Signals Museum was extremely interesting, particularly as it contained some very topical stuff from the recent Falklands skirmish. Only one of our Members present on this weekend, suprisingly enough, had actually raced at Blandford and that was Wilf Harrison. A pre-run of the actual circuit had not been feasible, so, when we set off on our nostalgic lap and a half it was very "hit and miss," because the whole nature and lay-out of the Camp have been so drastically altered since the late 1940's. Neither, on this morning, did any of us know that races had been held at Blandford in both clockwise and counter clockwise directions. It soon became obvious that the circuit I'd remembered watching, as a nipper, ran in a contrary direction to the races in which Wilf had done his stuff. Needless to say a lot of us soon met each other coming the other way!

From Blandford Camp we wended our way to the Coffee Stop by way of picturesque Rushmore Park, which is also the traditional home of the Pitt-Rivers family. It now operates as Sandroyd School and the head beak had kindly said we could trickle through, provided we did not stampede any of the 150 odd small boys or the 20,000 sheep who are resident there! And neither we did. We partook of Irish Coffee at the 15th Century Crown Inn, Alvediston which although run by two elderly and sensitive, er, bachelors they made our particular m/c group very welcome. (Some 5 weeks later the Crown Inn suffered a very serious fire and the 2 old boys have subsequently moved on. Ironically, the macho new proprietor is very opposed to motorcycle folk!) Duly fortified we zoomed off accross the downs towards the lunch stop over the border in Wiltshire. Close by Wardour Castle, near Tisbury, some of our group may have noticed a couple of pre-war Riley shooting brakes, festering away on the verge outside a semi detached cottage. It was odds on even that Peter Agg would snap these up for his collection, but the bloke riding immediately behind PJA at that moment said that Peter was simply unable to write the cheque and maintain pace at the same time, though he was sorely tempted!

We drank our lunch at the Old Ship Hotel at Mere and then (after a 45 minute delay) they brought some food!! Suitably refreshed we then cantered along to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, in Somerset. An enlightening experience but one is left with the feeling of wanting to visit again at a more leisurely pace. Some of us know little enough about areoplanes but the technique for determining the ones of British manufacture was to look for the oil trays! I noticed how David Dixon was inexorably drawn towards the Aermacchi plane, whilst a group of observant school children asked "Wing Co" Peter Britton for his autograph. When we returned to the Car Park members of the public were asking if Norman Hyde's Missile had, perhaps, escaped from the Museum. And so on.

From Yeovilton we took off for Tea at Bulbarrow. Riding our of Sherborne the front half of the crocodile became separated from the rear. The two halves met up again, quite by accident, going in opposite directions on the top of Ibberton Hill - but we needn't dwell on that here. At least we all swept into Bakers Folly Tea House from a single direction! Ralph Venables had joined us for tea, by arrangement, and he and

Bert Perrigo and other contemporaries in our group enjoyed a wonderful reminiscence. It was, incidentally, the first time that Venables had missed the West Of England Trial for 44 years! And so back to the Hotel, with alternative routes for "scratchers" and "cruisers". Neither need we dwell here upon how the best handing machine on this Run (one of those ever so nimble Morinis piloted by the Chairman elect) chose to go temporarily horizontal on a gravelly right hander. Maybe, momentarily, our new Chairman was still back at Engineers corner. Fortunately, rider and machine were unmarked and rejoined the hunt immediately - within a few minutes all the "scratchers" and all the "tourers" were safely back in the car park of The Crown. We had enjoyed a very full day which, from the Clerk of the Courses' viewpoint, was marred only by a washed away bridge that occurred 3 days before the run. This happened close by Yeovil between the Fleet Air Arm Museum and the Tea Stop and it meant that we had to forego a ride up the drive of Lullingstone Manor. It's the sort of drive that would have had Members asking why there'd never been a Hill Climb in these grounds. I know not why - however, Lullingstone happens to be HQ of the World Wide Butterfly Foundation so they are not exactly that closely connected with motorbikes, speed events or matters engineering. Doubtless some well informed wag will now reveal that this is where they are developing the world's first multi coloured reed valve.

Saturday's Dinner was both relaxed and convivial. Our 120 mile ride had taken place under a cloudless sky; we had consumed enormous quantities of fresh air and other wholesome substances, and for many of us that night it seemed that peace had broken out with a vengeance! Martin Lester from Shell was our Guest and he sang for his supper with the first showing of the Anniversary Run film, which he diligently produced in video form. This was a fine bonus to end a pleasant day and whether one retired to bed post video, or post video and bar, the Crown Hotel, Blandford didn't seem the worst place in the world to be on that mellow October night. (And a little bird tells me, one year later, that there are just a couple of these videos left for sale.)

The usual Members Meeting convened on the Sunday morning and in constructive vein the old chestnut concerning eligibility of new Members (Rule 5) was finally laid to rest, thanks to some very precisely constructed paragraphs - text drawn mainly from Harrison's Thesaurus! This pellucidly clear masterpiece will be reprinted on the new Membership Card (so kindly produced by Tim Wassell) that should be accompanying this Newsletter!

The Meeting then approved the appointment of a new President to succeed dear Bert Perrigo, who served in this position from the date of his acceptance letter until his sad demise just a few weeks later. The recommendation to Members of our second President was not a difficult task. Your Committee was unanimous in its endorsement of Bill Smith; and Bill, who is a perfect example of an evergreen "Mr Motorcycling" was, indeed, enthusiastically elected by all the Members present.

The other main topic discussed at the meeting was slightly more frivolous, and concerned whether lady Members (or Guests) would ever be considered, especially in view that Kawasaki's current senior Sales person happened to be a female. At the same time somebody from the back piped up to ask whether one could share with the Member or Guest of one's choice, or pay extra for a single room. It struck me at this point that a future occasion might arise where a Member had obtained leave from his wife (with some difficulty, and only on the basis that he was spending 2 bachelor nights away) to find himself sharing a room with a female motorcycle executive. The mind boggles, but these situations could do wonders for new Membership applications! Babs Ryan, of course, needn't take these remarks lying down!

With these thoughts the meeting was wound down, and we all went home.