



Chronicle

Issue 1
Autumn
2021



The Talking Chair

Fellow members, I sit here writing to you in T5 Heathrow on my way to Milan. It's not "normal" yet but the departures board is full of far-flung destinations and the reality of how my life used to be has returned.

In many ways we are all returning to some sort of normality as the recent Salop Gallop proved. Yes, there were privations but by-and-large we enjoyed the ride and each others company in a broadly "Pre-Covid" style. If this situation continues – or gets better still – then I will be happy to see as many of you as possible in Tavistock and to fill out the V5 for The Club in the name of incoming chairman, Ben Matthews.

Until such time, this organ will continue to be one of our main communication portals. And we have a new name thanks to the results of our recent survey – welcome to the Club Chronicle. Other survey results show that we are, broadly, hitting the spot with 77% of respondents saying they like the content with a further 17% asking for more industry news. Frequency is a little more split with around 70% saying just about right or "more when you have something to say" and 27% preferring biannual. And, naturally, our male preoccupation with length is solved with a massive 93% saying "about right" – how many of us can honestly claim that!

As ever, heartfelt thanks to Hon Ed, Geoff (Scoop) Selvidge and resident "Tech Geek" Alan Halford who have toiled over the hot lead type trays into the night. I think they will join the NUJ soon and push for "concessions" – enjoy the read and let's meet in Tavistock and enjoy the ride! *Martin*

Simon has his Trike! *And he's called it Norman!*

When Falklands Veteran, Simon Weston, met our Norman a couple of years ago he expressed a desire to have a trike like the one Billy Connolly rode on the telly box some years before. Two years of crowdfunding, cajoling and general arm twisting by Norman later, Simon got his wish as



Norman and Trike Design in Simon's home town of Caerphilly, handed over the much-adapted trike to a delighted Simon; just a few days before his 60th birthday.

Norman writes 'Next year it is the 40th anniversary of the Falklands war. Since then, Simon has endured 97 operations & procedures

but still manages to continue with his wide range of charitable works. I would like to thank all members whose generous contributions helped to make this happen.'

Final word from the man himself 'This is a dream come true. I can't thank Norman Hyde and all the people who made this happen enough.'

Photos: Tony Smith

Calling all Members! *Scribe warns of content shortage, please panic write!*

The majority vote in the recent survey* was that this tome should appear quarterly and be additional to the Run Reports (good job your scribe's retired!). Accordingly, you can expect issues in January, April, July and October next year. To achieve that though needs your input so keep those stories, resto updates, favourite tool and my other bike bits and pieces coming! Copy deadline for Jan 2022 issue is December 10th. scribe@the-club.org.uk

* See the analysis of the survey on the club website.

Diary Dates: - Spring Run 22-24th April 2022 Autumn Run 16-18th September 2022

Chiltern Classics Gambol – 21st Aug 2021

Wednesday 18th, weather forecast for Saturday: 24°C, dry and sunny. With 8 attendees (including guests) on 'proper bikes' and your scribe as Tail End Charlie on a 'modern', all was set fair for Ian Kerr's experimental classic bike ride around the Chilterns.



Then, meteorologically speaking, the wheels fell off! By Friday teatime, the forecast had deteriorated so much that no one would have been surprised if Noah had joined us with his Ark! Thunderstorm warnings were in place, with rain scheduled to become ever more monsoon like as the day progressed.

Inevitably, this led to some withdrawals, concerned mainly with water ingress to ancient electrics and dodgy knees. Nick Hopkins also withdrew as his daughter had, unsportingly, held on to his imminent grandson for an extra two weeks and was now due to deliver on the day of the ride. And after all the work he had put into fettling his ex-Keith Blair B33 too! No, not that one, Martyn Roberts has it, this is another one. Shortly after 0900 hours I crunched across the car park at Chris's café where Ian, Nick Jeffery and Greg Elson were already tucking into coffee and, in Nick's case, the full breakfast. Stephen Burgess rocked up shortly after in the firm's van with his Velocette and friend Christopher who would be following as support and, with 15 minutes to spare, it was great to see Peter Meek arriving on his 250 Honda.



By departure the rain had started and the trundle through Stokenchurch and down off the Chiltern ridge to Turville (or Dibley if you prefer) was very damp. As

the roads narrowed, with grass and gravel abundant, we lost Christopher in the van and I wished I still had my old KE175 trail bike! Climbing back up onto the ridge by Christmas Common, the single-track road was little better than a farm track and with the overhanging trees, it was like riding at night but at least the rain had stopped and the roads were drying.

After a welcome coffee stop at The Old Fisherman in Shabington, it was a pleasant mix of largely quiet (and still dry!) roads as we rode via Islip and Bletchingdon, across the north of Oxford to the ride's end at the Oxford Bus Museum where we were finally reunited with Christopher and the van. Luckily his recovery



service was not required as, other than a minor clutch adjustment on Nick's Brough, all machines performed faultlessly over the 65 mile route.

Whilst mooching around the excellent bus and Morris Motors collections, the rain started in earnest promising a very wet ride home but as Peter succinctly put it, "It won't be the first time, and it certainly won't be the last." Very true!

Grateful thanks are due to Ian for his organisation and excellent route; Nick for buying the coffees and Stephen for van support, sponsoring the lunch butties and museum entry. Thank you; gentlemen all!

Attendees:

Ian Kerr, 1960 Matchless 650 G12

Nick Jeffery, 1928 Brough Superior SS80

Greg Elson, 1974 Suzuki GT380

Stephen Burgess, 1961 Velocette 500 (factory hack!)

Peter Meek, 1991 Honda CD250U

Geoff Selvidge, 2016 Kawasaki Versys 1000 GT

See more pictures from the day on the Club website.

Salop Galloped - The Chairman recounts a fine weekend in Shropshire...

Meeting Andrew at 08-00 on the Friday morning of September the 17th at our base, the Mercure Shrewsbury Albrighton Hotel, the two of us made ready to retrace our steps on what was broadly the 2018 Spring Run with coffee at Lake Vyrnwy and Lunch at Tywyn. A great reconnoitre ensued with only a small error, one set of road works and that was about it. We counted ourselves as ready and awaited the incoming hoard. Dinner on the Friday was taken in the Oak Room; friends making ready to ride, enjoying wine, good food and good company – it was hard to reconcile this was NOT a Club Run ... it bore all the hallmarks.

Saturday dawned fine if a little sharp and we set off using the courier system with me as TEC, a role I performed across the whole trip. Put crudely, we rode due north then pushed almost directly west from



Myddle towards coffee at Lake Vyrnwy which was as splendid as ever. Our great friend Maurice Knight (who was driving with Ray

Battersby as “ballast”) made it to the hotel just in time to see us ready to leave... four wheels good – two wheels better! The run to Tywyn was a curate’s egg, good in parts: great roads, obviously, but a veritable rash of cyclists. I know the MCIA in Starley House days doffed its cap generously to “pedallers” but, like wasps, they seem to get everywhere and are no less annoying!

Tywyn was as remembered, a great stop for lunch and plenty of time to recall the ride as each meal (splendid though they were) appeared to be cooked one at a time. Then, with a loud report from Nigel Bosworth’s illegal Ducati “silencers” we were in the stirrups and off. The afternoon diverged a little from the past Club Run but was no less appealing. (Special mention to the coffee stop where a local tramp helped himself unnoticed to some of the cake laid on by the Café..... that says all you need to know about motorcycle clothing!)

Being a lad with local knowledge, Andrew never let us spend too long on boring A roads and the gallop back to the hotel was conducted with relative ease but for a drop off for Dave Martin on a roundabout near Shrewsbury that would even put the wind up a Kamikaze pilot.

Afternoon libations on the lawn were welcome and the hotel staff did all they could to help despite their number being ravaged by Covid in that so many had left during lock down.



Our evening meal was once more in the Oak Room and another fine selection of food and wine was proffered.

Our numbers on Sunday shrank to six yet we still maintained the courier system to some effect... but for Alan Halford who sped past a stop and was lost for a short while. Actually, we did misplace a small group on Saturday too but that was more due to the thimble sized fuel tank of Kevin Howell’s Yamaha and some “under-zealous” marking by Andy than any real nav oversight.

Sunday’s destination was Llandudno via Devils bridge thence the Elan Valley and back through Knighton and Newtown. Despite a light shower on the way up it remained broadly dry. Fish and Chips at lunch (we didn’t want to waste away did we), was followed by a glorious afternoon ride down through the guts of North Wales and my, what views! Which left Monday’s mere 220-mile jaunt for the die-hards and those with no job pressures – lucky sods!

No major mishaps, no tempers frayed, no mechanical breakdowns and even a splendid curry in Shrewsbury town thrown in for good measure – why can’t we do this every weekend? Humble thanks to Mr Smith for such great organisation and a knowing nod to fellow “gallopers” – an honour to ride with you gentlemen.

Salop Gallopers: (would female riders be called Salopettes?)

Andrew Smith, Martin Lambert, Frank Finch, Adam Kelley, David Martin, Nick Jeffery, Tim Albone, Alan Halford, Rick Parish, Dan Sager, Graham Goodman, Simon Hill, Steve Callaghan, Kevin Howells, Maurice Knight, Ray Battersby, Nigel Bosworth.

See more pictures on the Club website...

Knigh sacks Sheene! Barry ruins his French fries for the sake of a prank: or was it?

After Ray Battersby's story about Mike Hailwood riding Barry Sheene's Suzuki in the 79 Senior TT, it got your scribe thinking that Maurice Knight's stature, in marketing folklore, must rank close to that of the man at Decca that turned down the Beatles: albeit in Maurice's case positively rather than negatively!

Maurice recounts the events that led to a decision that shocked the racing world...



As the Marketing Director for Heron Suzuki back in the early seventies, I decided that if we were going to sell motor cycles in any decent quantity, we had to get properly into racing; win on Sunday sell on Monday was still the watchword then. Our late friend, fellow Club Member and my Gaffer, Peter Agg, agreed and I was duly tasked with setting the wheels in motion.

Suzuki's then Technical Manager Rex White and I decided to go to Brands Hatch looking for talent and we were impressed by this fellow Barry Sheene, so much so we visited his tent in the paddock (no motorhomes in those days) to invite him to Croydon for negotiations. We had a spare bike which had been previously raced and this was offered to Barry free of charge. He

and his dad Franco did a great job with the preparation of the bike and there we were, into racing and, thanks to Barry, doing well thank you very much!

With success coming on the domestic front Barry, as to be expected, wanted to talk money now. We agreed contract terms and set out to be world champions with the support of Suzuki Japan, which was a great help. Forward Trust also came on board with sponsorship and that helped to finance the plan.

The first argument came when Barry, who had cottoned on to the personal financial benefits of sponsorship, started putting his personal sponsor stickers all over the bike (I still can't see a bottle of Brut without retching) which was not acceptable to us. This was soon followed by arguments over his refusal to wear Suzuki gear when meeting his fans and signing autographs at the race meetings. He would make all manner of excuses like "It doesn't fit properly".

One time, prior to an event at the Lyceum Theatre, Barry greeted me by shouting "What do you think of my new T shirt Maurice?" And there he stood in a Yamaha branded shirt given to him by a grinning Robert Jackson, then Yamaha's Racing Manager. I warned him, to the delight of those who were there, that if he wore that to the event, it would be the most expensive T shirt he would ever wear. He did wear it and ultimately, it was!

Barry was by now quite famous and was becoming increasingly difficult to handle. So, I asked for a Board Meeting at Heron House to discuss this and it was decided that if Barry persisted with his requests and antics that we terminate his contract and that job would fall to me. About a week later Barry came to the office to propose new terms to me. Regrettably, they were unacceptable and I fired him there and then. He was very surprised! It was a pity that we parted company but sadly, it had to happen.

Ed's note: *It strikes me reading Maurice's account that the final straw was the prank with the Yamaha T shirt. It begs the question; did RJ deliberately set Sheene up for a fall? After all, wasn't it Yamaha who signed him on the rebound? Now, I don't know Robert Jackson, never met him, but a VERY reliable Yamaha source tells me that he was 'very cavalier' with loaning bikes and spending budgets he may, or indeed may not, have had! This ultimately led to Yamaha's Ray Ross suggesting that he too should seek alternate employment...*

My Other Bike is a... *Jet Provost!*

Steve Male tells us of his passion for all things aviation and fast jets in particular...



There seems to be a correlation between pilots and motorcyclists, most of the high-performance pilots I know also ride motorcycles and as a flying instructor, I have found that one of the easiest groups of people to teach to fly has been motorcyclists.

I first started learning to fly in gliders at the Long Mynd in Shropshire (*Ed: base of a couple of Club Runs*) back in 1979 and since then have gone on to fly a wide variety of aircraft, this one is a Jet Provost Mark 5(A) 2 seat, side by side, all weather jet trainer. These aircraft formed the backbone of RAF pilot training from the 1960's through to the introduction of the Tucano.

I flew the aircraft for several years, alongside a number of other ex RAF aircraft, as part of the Delta Jets display team run by Andy Cubin MBE (Sqn Ldr RAF Rtd) based at Kemble, a former Red Arrows base. Andy is a hugely experienced pilot including 2 years as the RAF Jaguar display pilot and 3 years with the Red Arrows.



With Andy Cubin after my first solo on the aircraft

I can't really describe learning to fly this aircraft with Andy it was a truly amazing experience – I guess it would be like attending the Valentino Rossi motorcycle racing school: if there were such a thing!

This particular aircraft was one the final versions of the Jet Provost, being built in 1977 by BAE for the RAF. It's powered by a Rolls Royce Viper 202 axial flow gas turbine, developing more than 1900 pounds of static

thrust at sea level (We don't measure jet power in horse power but it's roughly equivalent to 1 hp per pound of thrust at sea level).

Performance of the aircraft is roughly similar to a late model Spitfire or a P51 Mustang: take off at 95 knots, rate of climb 4,000 feet/minute at best climb speed of 200 knots. Max speed 420 Knots, cruising speed (at 85% power) 240 knots (4 miles/minute) at sea level. Final approach is at 115 Knots with 60% power and full flap.

I'm not exactly sure what the maximum operating height was, as I never flew higher than 20,000 feet and only then for long transit flights. Most of my flying in this aircraft was at low level i.e., +/- 500 feet through Wales and the Lake District and yes, I've flown the famous "Mac Loop" - more than once!

Max "G" loadings are speed dependant but to give you some idea, 5 G at 240 knots for the loop was considered normal.



'In the Loop'

Part of our operations at Delta Jets was attending air shows: transit flights were undertaken by the team in formation as per all the best display teams!



In formation with a Folland Gnat, flown by Andy Cubin, en route to a display.

It is safe to say, this aircraft certainly was the pinnacle of my flying career!

The Fastest Gun is the Best – Tuning a Vintage TT Fuel Filler Nozzle

This seems a very apt time to be sharing with you Ray Battersby's tale of rapid refuelling...

During the 1979 TT races, Suzuki's race manager, Rex White, was keen to speed up Mike Hailwood's pit stop. It was refuelling the machine that took the longest time and whilst Rex focussed on the pit-crew practicing the operation, I suggested we should try to increase the fuel flow.



*Tim Hunt refuels his Norton
In the 1930 TT*

In the early hours of a practice day, Rex and I quietly drove to the pits. We lifted three filler systems - those with new-looking hoses - off their posts. We took them to our garage at the Majestic Hotel and started by finding the hose that flowed fuel the fastest. To do this we removed the guns from the hoses and put a gallon of fuel in each container. Rex clocked the time for the fuel to pass through the open hoses. We took the fastest hose and fitted each nozzle in turn, testing the flow time of each with its trigger fully squeezed. This identified the fastest fuel kit of the three selected.

Next, I dismantled the fastest filler nozzle which was a very simple design as used on most fuel pumps until around 1970. Although it was highly polished, the interior of this sand-casting was extremely rough. The amount of gunge inside suggested that this was its first service in fifty years! I cleaned it out before using the team's porting air-drill to smooth and polish the fuel port and valve. I adjusted the trigger to remove free-play and ensured the poppet-valve opened at least 25% of its diameter when the trigger was fully squeezed. Then I carefully reassembled it.

We attached the fastest nozzle to the fastest hose to produce the fastest fuel rig. Rex checked the time for the newly tuned rig to pass a gallon of fuel. It was faster and over a full fuel dump our 'tuning' and service had saved over four seconds. Not much, but easier than a rider gaining four seconds on the track!

The TT rules allowed only the use of the antiquated fuel rigs already provided for each of the Glencrutchery Road pits. According to Rex, these had been used since Shell donated them to the TT organisers in the 1930s.

Cheating some may say. I disagree; making your kit work more efficiently is hardly cheating. And it had barely taken an hour's effort which must be a record in terms of the tuning effort per race-second saved.

I marked the gun so that we could find it at future TTs and we replaced all three rigs in the pit lane, attaching the fastest kit to Hailwood's allocated pit.

Ironically, later that week, the TT organisers allowed teams to use their own fuelling systems...



1980, midnight refuelling rehearsal, Crosby's XR34M on the drive of the Majestic Hotel in Douglas. The team was allowed to use its own faster kit using aircraft fuel connectors for speed. (L to R) Dave 'Junior' Collins, Martyn Ogborne, Mick Smith, Rex White, 'Radar' Cullen.

The Scribe's Last Word

Well, there you have it, the first issue of **The Club Chronicle**, I do hope that you enjoyed it.

As (probably) this will be the last communication of the year I'll (probably) be the first person to wish you and your families a very **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

Let us all hope that the crazy 2 years that we have just lived through are now behind us and we can get back to normal – whatever that now is.

All the best and ride safe friends!



END