

Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club Newsletter

September 2017



**** Chairman's Chat ****

As our summer runs season draws to a close, I have been reflecting on this year's activities. We have had a lot of fine runs with real variety, although sometimes the weather could have been kinder. One of the highlights for me was a rather damp run up to see Bruce Wilcock in action. Bruce is able to manipulate metal like plasticine, a really skilled blacksmith and interesting to chat to. The trip up to the Simmer Dim was not quite as well attended as usual, but it is always good to see the fun and games and browse the bikes, particularly the fabulous 1926 Indian 'V' twin in unrestored condition, a real beauty. Our annual run to Yell to visit David and Beatie was almost dry and the welcome received as warm as ever, they are fabulous hosts. Beatie makes some of the finest bannocks in Shetland and David always has a project or two on the go. It was interesting to see his progress on the Morris 8 and their new Shetland polytunnel, built to withstand a Yell winter. The Cancer Charities run saw over 180 motorcycles turn out for the parade and over £8000 was raised. It was good to see so many motorcyclists coming together to support the event. Well done to Lewie for helping to organise it. I think that this may become a regular feature on our calendar.

I managed to miss quite a few of the runs this year as I was touring some of Spain on a modern bike. I also managed to get to the VMCC's S&T Rally at Cultybraggan camp, which was great fun - see my separate report. I thought I had done well to get to Spain, but I wasn't the only one to go further afield, with Dean and Birgit having toured Germany and Lewie and Sean Gaffney currently on a trip in Vietnam. I am looking forward to reading and hearing about their adventures.

As most of you are aware, the Classic Show committee has changed and the new committee have been working away behind the scenes preparing for the next show. Among other changes, Colin Nicholson has taken over from Larry Irvine as chairman. I expect by the time you get this newsletter, the website will be in the final stages of preparation. We plan to use the website as the method of entering your exhibit to help reduce the amount of paper and postage, there will also be some other changes to make the show easier to manage.

We will shortly be moving to our winter programme and details of the activities are in this newsletter.

Gordon

*** Rare Bikes In Shetland No 29 ***



Something completely different this time!

As far as I am aware, this is the only one of its kind that has ever graced our shores and it is a Greeves/Triumph special, or what is sometimes referred to as a “Grump”, but I think that is a bit unfair.

I am not sure of the early history of the bike but my friend Geordie Mundie, from way back in our foolish youth days, acquired it several years ago from a man who was up here during the so called oil boom. It lay forlorn until a couple of years ago, when Geordie asked me if I would sort out the electrics and see if I could get it to run after it had lain neglected for so long.

As far as I could see, the bike had started off as a Greeves Sports Twin of about 1961 vintage. It has the nice finned rear hub and the standard front wheel has been replaced with what, to me, looked like one from a Greeves Silverstone racer with twin leading shoe brake and an alloy rim.

The original two stroke twin Villiers engine/gearbox unit has been removed and, shoehorned in its place, is an early 1960s Triumph 5TA unit Speed Twin engine and gearbox.

Other than the wiring, which took a bit of sorting out, I freed up stuck selector plungers in the gearbox, cleaned out the timing chest and the oil pump plus a few other odds and ends to get the bike in running order.

As it was not road legal, I was unable to check it out on the road but it did seem to run quite well and was light and responsive.

And finally, Geordie is open to offers, so call 01596 697121 if you fancy an interesting special!

Joe Gray

**** Gordon's Trip to the VMCC's S&T Regularity Run at Cultybraggan ****

The S&T Regularity Run is an event organised by the Stirling Castle Section of the Vintage Motorcycle Club. It is open to bikes over 25 years old and involves riding a given route of 100 miles through the Perthshire countryside while sticking as closely as possible to a pre-declared average speed. The route is only revealed on registration on the morning of the run. Below are Gordon's experiences from this year's event, held on 5th-7th August.

The S&T: They say taking part is the important thing.

Already lost at turn five and where is that sign for Aberfoyle? Why did I bother entering, oh well there is always next year.

For a number of years, folk had been inviting me to take part in the S&T Rally which is a VMCC event organised by the Stirling Castle section. It consists of a regularity run, a simple event, no show, no polishing required, no public, just riding your bike, sounds good to me.

The event was held at Cultybraggan near Crieff, at a former prisoner of war camp set amongst the rolling hills of Perthshire, where around 100 riders gather to test their skills against each other. Think of it as a slow race with a test of navigation skills. Trundling along at 30 mph should allow plenty of time to admire the countryside and check your route against the instructions. Unfortunately, I had made the schoolboy error of turning at the fourth instruction and then looking for the same junction again.



Regularity runs can be a frustrating business, get lost and it is a pain, do well and you are elated. In front of me, I saw a gathering of bikes, result, I had found the lunch stop! These events are designed to be social, sit and chat, eat, drink and an hour later focus on the remainder of the route. No errors this time, I got back safely and strangely my speedo showed the exact 100 miles that the route was listed as. I guess my turning back to look for the junction I missed gave me the correct distance.



The following day, a social run is on offer which uses an old regularity run route, but with the added advantage of the mileage being marked for each turn. I was not going to get lost this time and tucked in with another group of riders. This was real fun, we were not hanging about and on the quiet Sunday morning countryside roads made good time to the lunch stop for sandwiches and chat, before returning to Cultybraggan. Another 100 miles of Perthshire completed.

If you are looking for a well organised event where you can have a decent run on your bike through some of Scotland's best scenery, enter early for next year. See you there.

Gordon

*** *SCMCC Newsletter* ***

We are keen to receive newsletter contributions from everyone. If you've seen or experienced anything interesting and maybe taken some photos - do share!

Send texts, photos, for sale ads, etc. to info.scmcc@gmail.com or post to Sungaets, Nesbister, Whiteness, ZE2 9LJ if you don't have an electronic version.

*** Colin's Overseas Tour by BMW Boxer ***

Friday 11th August saw me pack up enough essentials in the panniers of my 1985 BMW R100RS for my first ever overseas motorcycle touring holiday, and head to Holmsgarth Terminal to board the MV Hjaltland. However, this wasn't the North Coast 500 or a pilgrimage to the Stelvio Pass, but a long-overdue trip to Orkney, taking in the County Show, participating in the Orkney Vintage Rally and catching up with many old friends. Once on board, and replete with the obligatory *Northlink* steak pie, I settled down with a bottle of sparkling spring water and a copy of *Classic Bike* to pass the time during the short journey to our neighbouring archipelago.

On arrival at Kirkwall, the evening was bright and dry, and with almost pole position at the bow door of the vessel (only pipped by "Ernie" the luggage trolley hauler), I made a sharp getaway, heading to a lodge at St Mary's that was to be my base camp for the next four nights. Having been a visitor to Orkney since 1972, the short journey along the Holm Road in the dark presented no navigational challenge, and I thoroughly enjoyed the run, with the lights of Flotta Terminal and its loading tanker reflecting in the still water of Scapa Flow. Truly a magical sight. However, the moths and other small flying creatures heading in the opposite direction and attracted to my Bosch headlight didn't have quite such a pleasant experience, as the front of the BMW and my visor were to testify once I parked up for the night.

Up bright and early next morning, my first task was to remove the aforementioned carcasses before they baked on in the bright sunshine and gentle drying breeze. I realised this is one of the drawbacks in having a white bike and white helmet, due to be on show the next day. Once clean, it was time for a run across the Churchill Barriers down to Burwick on South Ronaldsay. En route, I met another Shetland vehicle destined for the rally, the splendid 1965 Ford Zephyr 4 of Robert and Patricia Odie from Burravoe. The BMW was in its element on the smooth twisting roads that abound in Orkney, only marred by frequent blind dips and summits, and the plethora of John Deere's finest popping out from fields and side roads, generously depositing agricultural residue behind them!



The R100RS with Hoy in the background



Souvenirs

And so to the Vintage Rally on Sunday 13th. It had rained heavily overnight, so the bike needed a thorough going over with the chamois to get the water streaks off, before packing all that would be required for the day in the panniers. Arriving early at the showground at the Orkney Auction Mart on the Hatston Industrial Estate, the check-in process was as simple and efficient as the booking process had been a few weeks earlier. I was given my entry number, a neat little commemorative rally plaque and a thoroughly adequate programme, comprising two double-sided folded sheets of A4 paper. For the second time in as many minutes, I had the thought that less is often more!

Having been pointed in the general direction of the bike display area, I rode off expecting to be parked on grass, and had even taken a piece of aluminium treadplate with me to put my centre stand on. But I shouldn't have worried, the bikes were all to be parked on an area of hard-standing. Setting up on either side of me were two "overseas" visitors like myself. Robert McKay from Dingwall had a beautiful 1921 Rover 500. Despite having a mechanical set-back on the way from St Margaret's Hope the day before, he was showing the bike undeterred. On the other side was a long-distance traveller, John Wilford all the way from the Isle of Man, with an equally rare Honda GB500 TT. For those not familiar with this great looking modern Japanese classic, think of it as an easy to start and oil-tight BSA Goldstar.

I was later chatting to John Foster from Deerness, who was displaying his 1979 R100RS, when I heard an unmistakeable rumble coming along Gainshore Drive, towards the entry to the showground. Suddenly, not one, not two, but three Vincent twins hove into view! Wearing appropriate open-faced helmets, I was even more surprised to recognise the riders of the first two. Roy Buchan was on a 1953 Rapide, his brother Andy was on a 1949 Black Shadow, and Chris Stewart was at the rear on his 1949 HRD Rapide. I have known the Buchan brothers since the early 1980s, when we were all employed by Shell and at college in Aberdeen, and we have all followed career paths in the oil industry. I hasten to add, I am not currently in a position to buy a Vincent, nor am I ever likely to be!



1921 Rover 500



The three Vincents

In total, 38 machines were listed in the Motorcycle section, and these ranged from the aforementioned eye candy, to the more mundane commuter bikes of the 1960s and '70s, such as Honda's CB and CD 175s, and even a diminutive BSA Ariel 3! But that's what made this bike display, and the Vintage Rally in general, so rewarding to wander among. Exhibits of every shape and size. Some restored, some just as they had been found. Quite literally, from the sublime to the ridiculous.

As to the rest of the event, the big feature this year was tractors, and in particular, recognising 100 years of Ford and Fordson tractors. Due to a huge effort by Stevie Ross and his team of helpers, 145 Ford/Fordson tractors were on display, and with other makes bringing the tractor total up to 210! A truly astonishing achievement, and one that would have taken days to look at and photograph properly. As a bit of a self-confessed Fordson geek, (I grew up driving Fordson Majors at Kergord), I was in my element, and eventually flattened the battery of my GoPro, with half the show still to capture!

Cars also had a good presence on the show field and ranged from 1911 to 2016, with a total of 68 on show, and like the tractors, included 3 examples from Shetland.

To sum up, for those who have never yet sampled the Vintage Rally, and the Orkney hospitality in particular, you really need to try it. For lapsed attendees like myself, you already know what you are missing! Perhaps we can drum up a better showing of bikes from Shetland next year?



Some of the bikes



And some more, including the orange BSA Ariel 3

To close, I come back to the odd-ball that is the BSA Ariel 3. The “Bushfire Orange” example shown by Colin Ross was in excellent condition, and looked like it had been transported straight from the early 1970s. However, another one much closer to home has more recently been dragged out from long-term storage in Dunrossness and has found a new home in Lerwick, where a complete strip-down has already commenced. But who has taken on this “granny killer”, and more importantly, why? All will be revealed in a future issue of your favourite club newsletter!

Colin Nicholson

P.S. I'll be posting some more of Colin's photos (including ones of tractors!) on the club website under "Galleries".

*** Winter Club Nights Programme ***

2017

- 4th October Social evening with a chance to peruse Frank's collection of bike-related magazines and books from the 1910s and 20s at Clickimin Loch Bar (not Bowlers' bar!)
- 1st November Tour of Ocean Kinetics facilities. Note earlier start of 6 p.m. Frank's Emporium in Market Street will be available between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. for anyone wanting somewhere comfortable to wait after work - feel free to bring a takeaway.
- 6th December Xmas meet with mulled wine and mincemeat pies at Frank's Emporium in Market Street.

2018

- 10th January AGM in the Staney Hill Hall, Ladies Drive
- 7th February Slide show by Bob McGeady on his trip to The Gambia. Venue to be confirmed
- 7th March Slide show by Lewie Tulloch and Sean Gaffney on their trip to Vietnam. Venue to be confirmed.

N.B. All the above will commence at 7.30 p.m. unless stated otherwise.

*** SCMCC Committee and Contacts ***

Since a recent incident, where someone appeared to have cloned a committee member's e-mail address for fraudulent purposes, we will no longer publish personal e-mail addresses. We have a new club contact address which is info.scmcc@gmail.com. Most of you will have a note of individual e-mail addresses, but if not, and you want to contact any of the committee, you can use the general address and your message will be forwarded appropriately.

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