

Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club Newsletter

March 2018



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

Winter is over, the weather is slowly improving, and our riding season is a matter of weeks away. It's now time to dust off your bike and prepare for another year of interesting runs. Your committee has debated over the finest places to visit and which of Shetland's roads are the best. You will find all the details in this newsletter and I do hope you will be able to join us for at least some of the runs. I always mark them on a calendar or diary, so I don't miss any. As always, the trophy will be available to the member taking part in the most club runs.

Our AGM was held in January at the Stoney Hill hall. Annette and Ian did a splendid job of organising the hall and refreshments. The premises worked well and were spacious and warm, although we did not manage to eat all the biscuits. Thanks to all that came for the excellent attendance. At the meeting, we had the usual discussion on what we had achieved last year and considered ideas for the future. Our club bank balance remains healthy and should comfortably allow us to achieve our aims. The committee is unchanged for the next year.

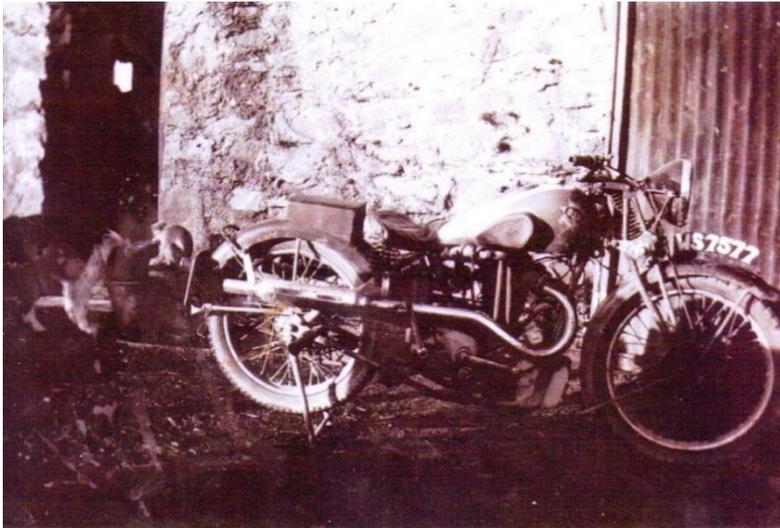
Our Winter program has now come to an end. We had the normal mix of social evenings, visits and talks. The social evenings have been a good opportunity to catch up with everyone's news during the dark nights. We visited Ocean Kinetics premises and had our eyes opened to what a modern engineering company is capable of with computer-controlled machinery. Frank provided the glowing warmth of his workshop to host the usual mince pie and mulled wine pre-Christmas night, and Lewie and Sean took us through their Vietnam experience. It's always an interesting and varied programme.

Preparations for the Classic Motor Show at Clickimin are progressing and it is exciting that several members have been working on new projects over the Winter. These should appear at the show, and perhaps more importantly also be on the road. The Motor Show has a website that is worth looking at, www.shetlandclassicmotorshow.co.uk. Show entries can now be made through the site, and it would be helpful if members could complete their entries using this method as it will help the organisers reduce paperwork.

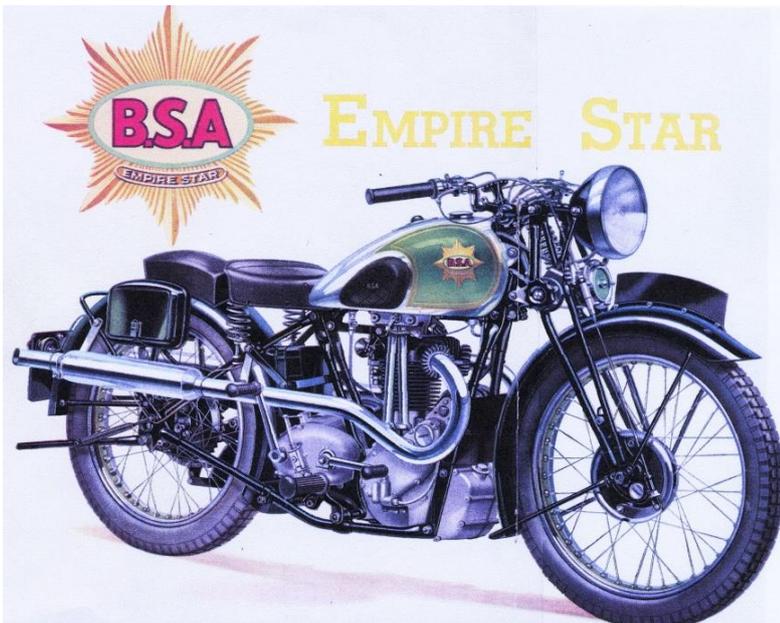
Looking forward to seeing you on the first run for some fish and chips.

Gordon

*** Rare Bikes In Shetland No 30 ***



BSAs were very common on the roads of Shetland in the 1930s; in fact, according to their advertising slogan, they were “the most popular bike in the world”. Well, the 1936 Empire Star featured here was, despite that claim, a rare machine. With the last of the OHV, forward mounted Magdyno engines, it was made for that year only. It was the top of the range sports model and, although it bore a fancy Empire Star tank transfer (to mark the Royal Silver Jubilee of 1935) and the tank was a lighter shade of green, it was virtually the same as the Blue Star model made from 1932 to 1936. The following year, the Empire star was completely revamped with new single down tube frame and the Val Page designed engine, which went on to sire the B31, B33 and of course the famous Gold Star singles that lasted into the 1960s.



This one belonged to Bertie Moar from Murister who kindly gave me this photo of his then pride and joy. This photo is also probably pretty unique, as there can't be many a Shetland bike with a little monkey sitting just to the left of the rear number plate!

Joe Gray

From 1936 BSA Brochure

*** SCMCC Visit to Ocean Kinetics 1/11/2017 ***

After an excellent summer season of evening sorties, Club members are now embarking on winter activities and the first of these got off to a grand start with a visit to the premises of local engineers and fabricators, Ocean Kinetics Ltd.

At the immaculate, light and airy reception area, with n'er an oily rag in sight, we were met by Paul Wilson and James Isbister who led us through a labyrinth of spotlessly clean corridors to the fabrication shops. There we found that the emphasis on tidiness continued with everything in its place, defined pathways through the work stations and an obvious emphasis on quality production and health and safety matters too.

While most people are aware of the company's marine operations I was unaware of quite the scope of work undertaken at Gremista. We were first shown examples of welded pipework being carried out for the oil and gas industry at Sullom Voe, which I thought at first had to have been done by machine but was assured was entirely by hand. The quality was astonishing and our guide Paul gave a quick demonstration just to prove the point! Beautiful work! Several members were

given an opportunity to 'try their hand' and while no-one disgraced himself it's safe to assume that their efforts were unlikely to have met oil industry standards. Needless to say, yours truly did not have a go!



Manipulating the Fleur



Our new trophy...?

Moving on to the plasma cutter, we were shown the somewhat ferocious process of cutting solid steel plate up to about an inch thick into predetermined (by computer) shapes. A noisy, fiery gaseous jet delivered an amazingly accurate replica of the image on screen. See photo of what may become a new Club trophy!



Frank and Joe witness the wonders of the sheet-metal bending machine



Rapt attention to an expert in action!

For oldies like me, the combination of computer technology and machine tools never fails to amaze. Once again the screen image is transformed, as if by magic, into faithful reproduction in the metal. Not only are the guys who operate these machines skilled engineers, they are obviously masters of the black art of computer technology too, and computer wizard Scott Nicolson demonstrated production of a sample of the delicate Fleur-de-Lys style 'variorums' currently being cut for Lerwick Town Hall on the CNC milling machine.

Meanwhile, we were being shown the production of cowlings on the sheet-metal bending machine where an appreciation of three-dimensional geometry appeared to be a distinctive advantage! Again, complex shapes produced with consummate ease...

Everything was expertly described, machines explained and processes outlined. Good Health and Safety practice and housekeeping obviously feature large in the company's work ethos and we were all issued with welding masks, etc. when observing the fiery arts. Thanks are due to Paul, James and Scott for staying behind to act as guides and to Frank of course, for organising an excellent visit.

Geordie Jacobson

**** Runs Trophy 2017 ****



The 2017 Trophy was well and truly won by Shaun Fowles.

Shaun, who resides near John o Groats, joined the club at the AGM last year. He is a joiner to trade and was up here installing doors, among other jobs, at the new Anderson High School. He told me there were some 700 odd doors to fit between the school and the hostel. So my opening question when we met was always, "How many doors left now, Shaun"?

A keen biker, who has made many trips all over Europe

and been a regular attender in the Isle of Man for many years, he soon got up a couple of bikes and really enjoyed our runs, never missing one.

The Trophy as you will recall, is quite large and heavy, yet fragile and not suitable for travelling "overseas", so it was decided to present Shaun with a small plaque to keep as a memento of his time in Shetland. The trophy will of course have his name engraved on it and will be in the safe keeping of runner up, Davie Graham, for the next year. Davie only missed one run, so well done Davie.

Shaun phoned me before the AGM and asked me to convey his regards and thanks to everyone in the club who had made his stay in Shetland so memorable. He says he looks forward to joining us again sometime this summer. We look forward to that Shaun!

Joe Gray

**** Ariel KH500 United with a Previous Owner and Restored ****

When visiting the classic commercial show last year, I had the good fortune to meet up with well-known classic enthusiast Robbie Burgess. It wasn't long into our conversation before we were discussing old bikes. At that time, I had just finished restoring a BSA C12, and was thinking about looking for another project, so when Robbie mentioned that himself, Geordie Jacobson and Tom Jamieson were thinking to sell the Ariel KH500 twin they had owned since the early 90's I was immediately very interested.

I knew the bike's history well, having owned it myself briefly in 1973 when I was 16 years old. Myself and some pals were keen on tearing around the hills and parks around Burravoe on old British bikes such as 250cc or 350cc BSA, AJS etc. Bikes were plentiful around Yell, resting in sheds and garages when their owners lost interest in favour of cars. When I heard there was an Ariel twin lying in a barn in West Yell I got my cousin to come and look at it with me. The owner of the bike was Billy Morrison who had bought it in Leith when returning from the whaling in 1963. He ran the bike for a few years, then it was laid up while Billy was away working. A deal was struck and I paid the princely sum of £10 – a real bargain, although at that time it would have been half my week's wage.



We somehow lifted the bike into the boot of David's Mk4 Zephyr, and transported it to my garage in Burravoe. A couple of hours later I had my first run on it. It soon became apparent that the Ariel was not at all suitable as an off-road bike, so I sold it on to a man in Fetlar where it stayed for the next 15 years or so. The bike was spotted by Peter Tulloch while he was on a visit to Fetlar lying up along a dyke. Peter knew the bike well, as he had lived in West Yell at the time Billy was running it. He

contacted the owner and bought the bike. Over the next few years in Lerwick, Peter worked on restoring the Ariel, then decided to sell it.

Peter advertised the bike for sale at the ClassicMotor Show in 1988, where Robbie, Geordie and Tom discussed its purchase over a pint and decided to buy it amongst them, as a means of keeping the bike in Shetland. There was still a little work to be done to complete the restoration which they did, then ran the bike a little for the next few years. The bike was then displayed at the museum for a number of years as part of an exhibition about the whalers and the various vehicles they brought back to Shetland.

So, on a Saturday afternoon 43 years, almost to the day, since I last bought the bike I collected the Ariel from Tom's garage in Sandwick.

I left her complete for about a week, just nipping out to the garage at every opportunity, hardly able to take in that I owned her again!

The following weekend, I stripped the engine down, which, as I had been forewarned, was in a pretty rough state. Over the next few months, the engine was rebuilt, and some of the paintwork redone, completing the job. I am now waiting impatiently for the fine weather to arrive so road trials can begin. No doubt a bit of fettling will be required to get her to my mind.

There are two men whom I must thank for the tremendous amount of help they gave me: Joe Gray for his invaluable advice and the many jobs he did for me throughout the project; and John Simpson for the incredible engineering work he carried out – probably saving me from having to get a new engine.

Anyway, I'm in the middle of another project – restoring a 1951 Velocette Mac which I was presented with on my 60th birthday – that is a story for another day!

Ivor Scollay

*** SCMCC Newsletter ***

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

Send texts, photos, for sale ads, etc. to birgit.wagner@shetland.co.uk or post to Sungaets, Nesbister, Whiteness, ZE2 9LJ if you don't have an electronic version.

**** A True Phoenix from the Ashes ****

John Peterson tells the story of his restoration of Bobby Mowat's 1938 Triumph Speed Twin, Registration JMP 60.

In 2014, my friend Erik Erasmuson first mentioned to me that he had inherited Bobby Mowat's Triumph Speed Twin and that it was in need of restoration. Erik suggested that I might like to take it on as a project and initially I resisted the idea because I wasn't really looking to restore another bike at that time. He mentioned it again though and I gave it some more thought and eventually agreed to take a look. We arranged to go up to Bobby's house in Sullom to take a look at the Triumph which was not so much a bike as a collection of parts. Before long, we were loading the various boxes of rusted components into the back of the van and the whole collection was taken back down to the garage at home. The next day, when I began looking through the boxes in daylight I really thought the bike was beyond restoration; it had been totally dismantled and had lain for decades in a damp shed which meant there was barely a part that had not seriously deteriorated.



A frame...



...lots of parts...

However, I began working through the boxes and over the next few weeks I loosely assembled what was there. It gradually started to take the shape of a bike and as the various parts began to fit back together, I could see that there was still some potential to rebuild what had become a very rare motorcycle. Triumph first unveiled the Speed Twin at the National Motorcycle Show in 1937 and it entered full production the following year, though it ceased in November 1940 after the Triumph factory in Coventry was destroyed by German bombers. When production recommenced after the war in 1946, the design was altered and the original 1938 model was never built again.

As I believe was the Mowat way, every bit of the bike had been totally dismantled, including the engine and the gearbox. Even the speedometer had been stripped and was lying in bits in an old tin. Though some parts were totally beyond use, there were other parts which could be restored. The girder fork had rusted through but was expertly repaired by Dean Mitchell of the Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club. Dean tacked the fork to his steel workbench to keep the alignment right then cut out and replaced the rusted tubes with very precise welding. Later on, Dean also cut and reshaped a rear stand which I had bought but which did not quite fit properly. I sent the frame, fork and various brackets to Malakoff for blasting and powder coating, and it was on the return of these powder coated parts that the rebuild really began.

Three dismantled gearboxes came with the bike so I used the best parts of these to make one decent gearbox and attached it to the frame. Among the boxes from Sullom were some new parts which Bobby had bought in the 1980s when he intended to restore the bike himself. There were two new main bearings, a set of piston rings, chrome handlebars, exhaust pipes and silencers. The chrome parts had turned rusty from poor storage but I cleaned them up and used them as Bobby had intended.



... and lots of hard work later

The engine was cleaned up and reassembled using the original components except for fitting Bobby's new main bearings and piston rings. All nuts, bolts and studs had to be renewed because the originals were all badly rusted. After some polishing and painting, the engine was reunited with the frame followed by the tanks and toolbox which were all professionally repainted by Kevin Hughson. The petrol tanks on the Speed Twin were originally painted Amaranth Red with chrome trim but the petrol tank was in such poor condition that it could not be rechromed. It was therefore repainted and refitted without the chrome. The original gear change lever, kickstart lever, pushrod tubes, girder fork links and a few other small parts were sent away to be rechromed while I began to source new parts to replace what was unusable.

The rebuild continued with new mudguards and stays. The original wheel centres were saved but the wheels were rebuilt around them with new spokes and rims and fitted with new tyres and tubes. The cables, chain and several other smaller parts were replaced and the magneto was professionally rewound and rebuilt while I fashioned a new wiring loom from 7 core cable. Because the 1938 model was in production for such a short time, replacement parts were difficult to come by and it became a case of hunting far and wide; I eventually sourced a front brake rod mechanism in Australia and the dynamo bearings came from California.

When it came to rebuilding the bike, I was very fortunate to have another one to look at for reference; the late Drewie Laursen, who sadly passed away in 2017, had spent many years restoring the exact same model to an exceptionally high standard and I was able to study his bike to see how things fitted together. Drewie was a great help to me and made several otherwise unobtainable parts for me in stainless steel on his lathe. He would take no payment for the work though we eventually agreed on a system of exchange that suited us both.

I had the original registration number for the bike though there was some difficulty in getting it registered with the DVLA because it had been off the road for so long. I took pencil rubbings of the serial numbers on the frame and the engine and sent them to the Triumph Owners Club who were able to authenticate the registration for the DVLA.

In 2016, Bobby Mowat's 1938 Triumph Speed Twin was finally back on the road after a break of some 55 years!

John Peterson

*** Summer Runs 2018***

April:

Wed 4th Evening run to Frankies at Brae - note earlier start at 6.30 p.m.
Sun 29th Voar Redd-Up - run to arrive at Spiggie at 2.00 pm (or depart
Islesburgh at 1.30 pm)

May:

Wed 2nd Evening run to Catpund soapstone quarry, Cunningsburgh
Sun 13th Unst. Visit Tony Mouat's "museum" and the Unst Boat Haven. All-day
run with early start at 09:00 a.m. to catch the 09:45 ferry from Toft.
Sun 20th Run to Grobsness and over the Gonfirth Alps

June:

Sat 2nd - Tue 5th Classic Show and runs
Sun 17th Yell run including visitation to Beatie and David
Sat. 23rd Afternoon run to Simmer Dim, Ollaberry

July:

Wed. 4th Evening run and visit to Staneydale Temple
Sun. 8th Run and walk to Hogan (Culswick). Early start at 11 a.m. Bring a picnic
lunch
Sun 29th Fethaland*

August:

Wed. 1st Evening run to Levenwick, visit Jimmy Thomason's garden
Sun. 12th Barbecue at Hams of Muckle Roe*
Sun. 26th Run to Ollaberry, see the "Walls boundary fault" and visit Kit and Ewan
Mowat

September:

Wed. 5th Shetland Open Doors evening run
Sun. 16th Run to Scatness, see Italian POW memorial and walk to Ness of Burgi

October

Sun. 7th Sunday Teas

And here's a date already set for next winter:

December:

Wed. 5th A.G.M. followed by Mulled Wine 'n' Mince Pies at Frank's Emporium

Please note:

We will send reminders and further details / changes for all runs by email and text message a few days beforehand.

Unless otherwise stated, evening runs leave Islesburgh north car-park at 7.00 p.m. and afternoon runs leave at 2.00 p.m.

* Denotes a run that may have a length of unmade road or hill track. Members take part in such runs at their own risk. For those not wishing to drive on such tracks an alternative continuation route will be arranged where possible.

*** SCMCC Regalia ***



Metal pin badge: £3.00



Sticker: £1.00



Toorie: £8.00



Fleece snood: £8.00



T-shirt, various sizes and colours:
£10.00



Hooded sweatshirt, various sizes
and colours: £18.00

Sweatshirts without hoods now also available in various colours.
For regalia please contact **Russell Black**: 01950 431495.

*** SCMCC Committee / Contacts 2018 ***

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Runs Co-ordinator	Lewie Tulloch	01595 692326
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Newsletter Editor / Webmaster	Birgit Wagner	01595 840627
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