

Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club Newsletter

October 2019



*** Chairman's Chat ***

As we near the end of Summer it is time to reflect on this year's Summer runs. Our opening run to Frankies is always well attended, and despite being a little chilly was very pleasurable and it is always good to see folk back out on their bikes again.

We did our bit for the community at the Voar Redd-Up – it is always interesting to see what the mix of rubbish is, mostly fishing net, but over the years we seem to be picking up less, are we slowly improving our environment, hopefully?

I particularly enjoyed the run to see the Royal Observer Corps bunker at Walls. This involved climbing down into the bunker and we were entertained with stories of what life was like underground and how a constant check was made on air quality during the Cold War period.

Bressay was another fine run, the run up to the top of the Ward was good fun and we were rewarded by a fabulous view! We all enjoyed the tea and cakes that awaited us back at Theo and Hazel's house. Thank you to both of them for looking after us.

For the first time in several years, the club did a 'South' run. This was a tentative step and only to Orkney. Most of us went down on the Wednesday night boat and toured around. We went to Hoy and some of the Mainland sights, before spending a couple of days at the Orkney Classic Motor Show. The run seems to have been a success and there is talk of a tour next Summer, perhaps heading to Aberdeen and touring up to the Orkney Show.

The Shetland Motorcycle Charity Run saw over 200 motorcycles assemble on the pier and head out for a short run. Over £11,000 has been raised to help local charities, well done, Lewie, Rober and Ashlea.

I missed the Yell trip to see the Alternative Energy projects, however, I hear it was really interesting. The visit to David and Beatie's was very entertaining and as always the talk on the ferry on the way back was about the excellent food.

On the run to the Red Pool of Virkie we had a fine time. After a short walk along the coast, we were treated to a spectacular sight of a crimson red rock pool created by an algae bloom. It's in a cracking setting, well worth a visit.

I want to thank all the members who made these runs possible. The members continue to turn up new places for our runs and as a result it's been another good year on the road.

Gordon

*** Rare Bikes In Shetland No 33 ***



Well, just when I thought we were running out of subjects, this ultra-rare beauty has found its way to our northern shores. Velocette fans will have no difficulty identifying the 500cc, Velo, Venom engine and gearbox, but what about the rest of this delectable machine?

The name on the tank is Indian, a name usually associated with big American V-twins, but this Indian/Velo was conceived in 1968 by American entrepreneur Floyd Clymer and features mainly Italian cycle parts including a lightweight frame from the Italjet company, Marzocchi front forks with Grimcea front hub having twin-leading shoe brake, Borrani aluminium rims and quick detachable tank and seat. The above modifications shave some 45 lbs (20 kg) off the weight of a standard Venom.

Only 250 of the model were produced in Italy, before Clymer's sudden death and the demise of the Velocette firm put an end to the project. Some 200 were exported to America and the remaining 50 were purchased by London Velo dealer Geoff Dodkin, for sale in the UK.

The new owner reports that he will not have it on the road this year, but I'm sure we will all look forward to him joining us on the runs next summer. So then, with Ivor and Theo up and running, we will hopefully be honoured with three Velo-engined machines. Now that's a sound I look forward to hearing!

Joe Gray

**** The Long Way To The Orkney Show, August 2019 ****

It was brought up at our AGM that it was time the club gave a return visit to the Orkney Classic Motor Show and a show of hands decided it would be a good idea. My friend, Peter Barclay, a club member and an Ariel Owners Club member from Edinburgh was keen for us to do another trip together, so I suggested we plan a trip incorporating the Orkney show. So it was decided that we planned our trip to meet up with the Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club members on Orkney. My choice of bike for the trip was to be my 1946 Ariel 350 w/ng (Chugga) and Peter's was to be his 1947 Ariel 350 NH Red Hunter.

I had booked my ferry to leave on a Thursday night so as to miss the 14 hour trip and bypass Orkney, it was not to be. I set off with what I had thought was plenty of time to get to the ferry from Nesbister. On leaving the house, "Chugga" was not running well. Wondering how this could be, as I had fettled Chugga as much as I could, after the third plug change, each change showing a very sooted up plug (rich running?), time was running out so I had Birgit change my ferry booking to the Friday to give me a day to find out what was wrong. After getting out of the bike clobber, I went to start. It didn't even take five minutes to find the problem: I had caused it myself by putting a sheepskin on the saddle to help with sore bum syndrome, more like pain in the neck, this was the cause as it had got sucked into the carburettor. Remove said sheepskin and normal running was restored.

Friday night, 14 hour sailing via Orkney in a sleeping pod, ear plugs in and blackout mask on, great night's sleep, I have since used one again and had another good night's sleep.

Off the boat on Saturday at 7.00am and headed down the coast road via Stonehaven to Edinburgh, first stop being an à la carte McDonald's breakfast in Arbroath, yum yum. Set off again across the Tay bridge, past the large concrete thing that looks like a boat and into Fife.

My original plan was to head to the Secret Bunker. Passing through St Andrews, I saw the signs for it and as I had made good time coming down, I decided I would go there. This bunker is big and well kept. I was only there for an hour, which is not really long enough. The entrance is by going into a building which looks like an old farm workers house. It belongs to a man called James Mitchell, who has managed to get most of what was down there put back as it was held in storage at RAF Lossiemouth. The bunker was used during the Cold War as a command centre to pull together information from around the UK. Even our own Royal Observer Corps would have had a phone link to it from the four bunkers here in Shetland.

On setting off, I thought I had better use the Satnav to help me get to Peters in Corstorphine. It was not to be, the battery died almost instantly, so to get onto the M8 for Edinburgh, I basically followed the coast of Fife, which took a while. Two or three miles from the Forth Bridge, the heavens opened. It is no fun sitting in a tailback in the heavy rain, and many of posh words were used to describe the rain. I decided I had had enough of crawling, so I took to filtering. Having never overtaken so many cars, I made it right through onto the bridge, the new bridge, such a feat of engineering. The next stop was coming up – a bikers cafe in South Queensferry. It was still raining when I got there but I got a good cheer from the people at the café which is run by bikers for bikers. After more à la carte food and enquiring after the directions to Peter's house, I went to set off. As I set off, the café owner came out with a bucket of soapy water and I enquired if he was going

to wash my bike. No, he said "I am going to put the soapy water on the drive, your bike is leaking oil." Oh well, situation normal.

Peter's house was five minutes up the road if I had gone the correct way. Needless to say, I did not, it took me more like twenty minutes, but I arrived there about 2.30 pm, "Chugga" never having missed a beat.



Glen Quaich

After a late night curry, the plan was to set off at 10.00 am and head for Daviot, a bikers B&B just outside Inverness. It was eleven when we finally set off in the still heavy rain, which was due to stop around midday, which as it happened did. We crossed over the bridge again and headed for Dunfermline, then eventually cut off and headed north on the A823 to Rumbling Bridge then onto the A822 for Crieff and a refreshment stop of soup and cake in a nice café in the center of Aberfeldy.

Heading for Aberfeldy, Peter took a left turn at Almuree which took us through Glen Quaich and over a stunning pass into Kenmore and the A827 for Aberfeldy.

Fully refreshed, we set off again via Tummel Bridge and the Queen's View and then onto the A9 heading for Aviemore and then eventually our B&B at Daviot. The A9 is a busy road and also very scenic, especially at the speed we were going. Where possible we would deviate onto side roads just to keep away from the speedy traffic.

Torguish House was to be our highlight of the trip. It is an old 18th century house which has been owned by some famous people, Alastair Maclean of "Where Eagles Dare" being one of them. The owners are also antique dealers and run a builders reclamation yard, buying up deceased estates, and buying or retrieving old building materials. Looking among the bruck, and I use this term loosely, can enthrall you for some time. On arrival, you are given a very warm welcome, shown to the gear room where you can hang up your bike clobber to store it or dry it. Then you are invited into the dining room for tea/coffee and cakes. The time you would like to be driven up to a local pub for your evening meal is asked also as they do not do evening meals and you are also picked up at a time that suits you. The means of transport to the pub was some kind of Russian personnel carrier with a missile on the roof. At the same time as we arrived, the son, Ben, arrived on his Rudge special with a sidecar fitted. It did not sound healthy and was running hot. We said we would take a look before we left the next day.

The interior decor of the house reflected the theme outside, motor bikes inside, a Stephens motorcycle in a glass case, a BSA Starfire on top of a side board in the dining room, a clock mechanism from a tower, a valve juke box which Peter fixed as soon as he got in the room, suits of armour and a waxwork waiter meeting you in the entrance hall, who looked so real he could have been alive. After a good night's sleep, which for Peter

was in a four poster bed, homemade breakfast was served in the dining room among all the described objects.



Torquish House



A friendly face

Before breakfast, Peter had been up early and had taken the carburettor off his bike as it was not starting and running as well as he felt it should. Points were removed and cleaned and the gap was checked. After breakfast, it was the turn of the Rudge. It turned out that the primary chain was too tight, which explained the heavy grating noise. The choke and the advance and retard levers were fitted on the wrong sides, and the owner had not been advancing the ignition, he had been retarding it. Peter was also not happy with the excessive movement in the throttle cable. His tool kit included a small gas soldering bolt, so the cable was duly altered and come lunchtime the bike was running well. We were invited in for lunch during which I said that we had still to pay our bill, but no payment was taken as they were chuffed to have the Rudge running well. We duly left at 2 pm to make our way up to Talmine on the north coast, 150 miles away.

About six miles out of Inverness, we filtered by a long queue of traffic, only to be held up by a policeman. There had been an accident which we could see, the officer pointed out a detour, but next thing I know, Peter has his bike up on the grass verge, and is proceeding to tear it to bits again. He was still not happy the starting and running. At this point, I phoned our B&B for the night just to let them know we were on our way and would maybe be a little late. By the time Peter had got his bike back together, most vehicles had turned and gone for the detour so we did the same, turning off the A9 at Alness to take a back road over to the B836 at Easter Fearn, then stopping in Ardgay for fuel and an ice cream as by now the day was quite warm. Suitably refreshed, we set off for the final leg of the day, continuing on the A836 which takes you through Bonar Bridge and on to Lairg. From then on it was a straight run right up the middle of the North of Scotland, past Altnaharra, the Crask Inn, which is really in the middle of nowhere and finally into Tongue. The ride up was stunning and every bit as good as the West Coast. The evening light at around 6 pm was good and we stopped several times just to look at the view. Arriving at Tongue, I got my direction wrong and we ended up having to turn back. We were heading for our B&B in Talmine which was over the causeway and I had trouble finding how to get to it.

Our B&B for the night was called Cloisters, as it was once the church for the area. An architect and his wife had retired to it in 1991 and made it into their home. Our room was in an annexe to the side of the church. The landlord, Billy, booked us a table for our evening

meal at the Craggan House Hotel, a five minute walk up the road and we sat outside with a pint, enjoying a splendid meal and the great view which made a fitting end to the day. Eventually, we had to go in though as the dreaded midges appeared. Inside, we met the chef who had cooked our meal and the young waitress who served us. She was from Galway in Ireland and just worked the summers to go travelling with her partner.



Our B&B in Talmine



The view

Next morning, breakfast was in the porch entrance of the church. Billy and his wife are quite elderly, him suffering from arthritis and her waiting for a hip operation. On finishing our breakfast, we were invited in to pay our bill. What a lovely space inside, a high roof and a set of steps up to a mezzanine bedroom area. There was a piano in one corner, which Peter asked if he could play, and then duly did, enjoying the excellent acoustics. Billy plays the clarinet in a local jazz band. High up facing us on the stairs was a beautiful pendulum clock in a glass case, ticking away at the wrong time, much to Peter's annoyance, so a step was found and he got the clock set up so they could restart it at the correct time when they came home from their shopping trip. There was another clock not working on a sideboard, that's when I said it was time we were going, as before you knew it, it would be lunchtime again.

Setting off at 11.00 am, we headed for John O'Groats. Stopping on the way at Bettyhill for fuel and an ice cream, we met a couple of lads from Manchester on two Kawasakis. They loved the old bikes and one told us a story about how his grandfather had dug a hole in the garden and buried his old bike. He said that when he got home he may go and dig it up as they still have the house.

We had lunch at John O'Groats, had a small walk about, then lay down just under the pole that people take photos at for a souvenir. We must feature in a view as it was only afterwards that I said to Peter, look where we have had our kip. From here, we set off for Dunnet Head. It was quite misty on the way but cleared up once we got there and you could see the south end of Orkney in the distance. Here we met an Italian man and his family, he was a biker and proceeded to show us pictures of his various Motor Guzzi motorcycles. Our stop for the night was to be in Scrabster, so we made our way back again the way we had come past Dounreay. The Ferry Inn was our bed for the night, a great place with good food in the adjoining restaurant. An aperitif of a pint or two before our evening meal was had sitting outside as we had good weather. We had been very lucky with the weather for our trip, no rain since leaving Edinburgh.

Up early the next day for breakfast, before heading off to get the ferry from Gills Bay, it started off drizzly but cleared up. It didn't seem logical, I know, to stay in Scrabster and get

the ferry from Gills Bay, especially since there is a ferry that leaves from Scrabster to Orkney, but then I am not logical and the Gills Bay ferry is cheaper and quicker. It is a high speed aluminium catamaran.

We arrived in Saint Margaret's Hope at about 11.00 am and headed over to Kirkwall to fuel up. What to do now? We decided we would go and see Maes Howe. The setup for viewing it was different from what I remembered from a previous visit, the visitor centre is about a mile up the road and you have to be bused to the site as it is deemed too dangerous to cross the road, which as it happens you still have to do. The old visitors centre was in an old mill but it is situated close to a fast straight piece of road. While waiting for our tour, we walked down to a local ice cream maker shop/cafe, very good ice cream, homemade cakes and coffee.

The young girl who led our tour was very good and was obviously enjoying her job. She mentioned a new dig that was taking place near the Ring of Brodgar and that was when I remembered that my nephew, Brydon, was doing a summer placement there, so our next stop was the dig. It took a while to find him but find him we did. He seemed to be enjoying it, I think you would need a lot of patience for that job, I would be tempted to use a digger. Lunch was to be at the Skara Brae visitor centre and on the way we stopped to take a look at the Ring of Brodgar and to take some pictures. After lunch, we thought we would go to the falconry but it was closed, so we decided we would go back to the Ring Of Brodgar for some photos of the bikes in the view as the bus tours would be gone. This we never got done, forty miles later we came onto the main road for Kirkwall, such fun when you are lost, I never knew Orkney was so big.

Our bed for the next four nights was to be the youth hostel, which took a bit of finding. We got a good look at the new hospital, a semicircular building, every day as the hostel is behind it. We met one of our group there, John Shaw from the Borders, who had taken a small Rudge up in the back of his van. Out for a couple of beers before our evening meal in an Indian restaurant.

The hostel had no breakfast provided unless you cooked it yourself so we frequented the Pamona cafe on the high street, an old-school cafe that serves a good breakfast and as we went there regularly, we were soon considered regulars. When the owner overheard us wondering what we were going to do for breakfast on Sunday as the cafe wasn't open, he said "boys, come to the side door and I will make you breakfast as I have to get breakfast for my guests in the B&B".

So after a good breakfast, we set off to meet up with the rest of the Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club members. There is more to tell about the trip but I'll leave it to others to fill you in on the rest.

Dean and Chugga

** The SCMCC's Adventures in Orkney **

We left Lerwick on the boat on Wed 31st July. On Thursday, apart from myself, all the others went to Hoy and had an enjoyable day (see insert). I had been to Hoy for a full week previously so opted to go to Rousay instead. I did a leisurely circuit of the Isle and visited the archaeological site being excavated at the Knowe of Swandro and was given a personal tour of the site. The ferry stopped off at Egilsay and Wyre on the way back.

On the Thursday we met up with the rest of the gang - Peter and Dean on their Ariels, John Shaw on his Rudge and Shaun from Caithness on his Swiss Army Condor. We took the ferry to Hoy and went the Longhope lifeboat museum, where we were shown round by the current coxswain's wife. She did not allow us to do a launch which was a bit disappointing.



On the Ferry to Hoy



The Longhope Lifeboat

We also visited the Martello tower. The guide was an interesting chap who also has a few bikes, including a Royal Enfield. He kept us entertained with stories about the tower and John, whose family bought the tower and its building to run a chicken farm. I had met John on a previous trip and he is now in his nineties and keeps discovering more of the tower's artefacts, most recently the original front door key.

Lunch was at a fine cafe on our way to Rackwick beach, it was recommended by the guide at the Martello tower. We spent far too long socialising and I thought we had just enough time to get to Rackwick. I had not realised the short route was initially on road but the remainder was a track. This required a bit of a diversion past the Dwarfie Stane. There was a wedding going on at Rackwick, but we did not disturb them, we just scrambled about on the rocks, although the drinks table was tempting.



Rackwick Beach



The Beneth'ill Café

We had to open things up to get back to the ferry in time, which was good fun.

Gordon (photos by Dean)

At night we had a meal at the Italian restaurant, Lucano in Kirkwall.

On Friday we went to Stromness to see the wartime gun battery but unfortunately it was closed. Our main objective was to go on to see the Twatt Airfield which was surprisingly intact. The control building had been prepared for demolition but was given a reprieve at the last minute. The meal at night was at the Kirkwall Hotel.



The control tower at the Twatt Airfield



Former cinema at the Twatt Airfield

On Saturday we went to the show. The show was celebrating the 80th anniversary of David Brown Tractors (70 at show) and 60 years of the Mini (35 at show). The Orkney & Shetland Aviation Research group were commemorating 80 years of Hatston Aerodrome with an indoor display of military memorabilia. Saturday was mostly for the exhibitors and Sunday was when the public visited. There were 80 motorbikes and quite a lot of them were Japanese classics. I was impressed by the military display from Aberdeen. The big 2 storey trailer unit with a lift in the photo, was used for accommodation and a kitchen during the show and all the display items were transported in the trailer. The 2 Tanks were transported in another trailer. The trailers act as storage for the display and when loaded, they are ready for the next show. When we were sitting outside on Saturday night waiting for our meal at the Ayre Hotel, the 2 Tanks came roaring up the street around the roundabout and back again, quite a treat!



The military display



Inside the trailer

Another of the items John Peterson and I were taken with was the Bond 3-wheeler. The Villiers engine looked to be taken straight from a motorbike, with the kick start still usable as a last resort but as you can see there is plenty of room in the engine bay to perform the act.



Bond 3-wheeler



The engine bay

On Sunday, the main day, we had plenty to keep us occupied with, parades in the show ring and a threshing mill and silage cutting displays. After the show we parked our bikes at the ferry terminal and got a mini bus out to the Merkister hotel for our meal. All the meals we had were very good and could recommend all the places. There were a few spits of rain on our way back to Kirkwall but our bikes were dry when we got back there. The weather for the whole trip could not have been better, a very enjoyable trip.

Lyll

**** Get Involved ****

Upcoming SCMCC Committee vacancies

As you will know, we are coming to the end of the three years of Gordon's chairmanship. We will therefore need to appoint a new chair at the upcoming AGM. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please let any of the current committee members know.

We are also looking for a new newsletter editor as I will be giving up this position.

Help needed for the 2020 Classic Show

The Classic Show Committee is looking for a minute taker. The committee meets around once a month, usually at Clickimin on a Tuesday evening.

Some support is also required to help Theo with the advertising for the programme. This is an important role as it brings in a substantial part of the show's income.

If you are interested in any of these roles and would like more information, contact Gordon.

*** Winter Club Nights Programme 2019/2020 ***

2019

October:

Wed, 2nd Slide show on Geordie's Grand Tour of Germany with the Shetland Classic Car Club - Staney Hill Hall

November:

Wed, 6th Slideshow by Joe on the Motorcycling through the Ages in Shetland - Sound Hall (Trebister Neuk)

December:

Wed, 4th Mulled Wine and Mince Pies - Frank's Emporium in Market Street

2020

January:

Wed, 8th AGM at the Staney Hill Hall

February:

Wed, 5th Visit to Shetland Heat Energy and Power (SHEAP) - Lerwick's District Heating Scheme

March:

Wed, 4th Frank's Medical Frequencies - Frank's Emporium in Market Street

And to kick off the 2020 summer runs season:

Wed, 8th April: Run to Frankies in Brae for Fish 'n' Chips, note earlier start at 6:30 p.m.

NB All the above will commence at 7:30PM.

*** SCMCC Committee / Contacts 2019 ***

Chairman	Gordon Stark	01595 695497
Secretary	Annette Shewan	01595 840283
Treasurer	Dean Mitchell	01595 840627
Membership Secretary	Frank Johnson	01595 695177
Runs Co-ordinator	Lewie Tulloch	01595 692326
Regalia	Russell Black	01950 431495
Newsletter Editor / Webmaster	Birgit Wagner	01595 840627
Committee Members:	Joe Gray	01595 693266
	John Peterson	01595 840797
	Colin Nicholson	01595 696120
	Gibbie Fraser	01595 809203

To avoid spam, we are no longer publishing members' e-mail addresses. To contact the committee by e-mail, use the club contact address: info.scmcc@gmail.com.