



**Berkshire Section
of
The Vintage Motor Cycle Club Ltd.**

Summary of the Year 2008

We meet on the last Tuesday of every month
from 7:30pm at

The Englefield Social Club
The Street
Englefield, nr. Theale
Berkshire
RG7 5ER

The Bristol Classic Bike Show was held at the West of England Showground near Shepton Mallet. We did not have a Berkshire Section stand but several of our members were on some of the one-make club stands, we had representation on the New Imperial, Berkshire British Bikes and AJS & Matchless Club Stands. A good event which this year saw many new entrants, which are needed to prevent the show from stagnating. The VMCC is well supported at this event by several of the western sections who tend to send the more unusual bikes which made a change from the usual post war classics.

The Bring and Buy books evening brought in a useful injection to the section funds. A motley collection of books and magazines kept Doug busy for a long time.

The Pioneer Run went off very well. All of our section who started made it to Brighton safely, even if a little effort was expended in LPA or the odd bit of pushing was required when one member had a puncture. Although the start was quite cold the ride soon warmed us up. Another good day out at the seaside eating fish and chips in the Spring sunshine and the day was finished with a well earned pint.

The March midweek lunch meeting was at the Flower Pot Hotel, Aston near Henley. A nice large friendly pub with good food and more importantly, good beer. The decoration around the bars reflected its closeness to the river. After lunch we walked to the river and watched the ducks go by.

The first midweek run of the year was a short trip through the country lanes to the Longbridge Mill at Sherfield on Lodden. An interesting old water mill that has been changed into a pub. We were able to visit somewhere that also served good beer and food. The weather was good enough for us to have another short run in the afternoon. We ended up at Henry Street's Garden Centre for afternoon tea.

The skittles evening was the usual good event. A new prize, a wooden spoon was awarded for the lowest score.

As Doug Plester is now to organize the John Moore Run in June we were left with an advertised event in the VMCC calendar. The new landlord at the Calleva Arms was more than happy for us to return to his pub and resurrect The Calleva Gallop.

The day started with a thunderstorm which miraculously stopped sharp at 10:30 to enable us to emerge from under the umbrellas and ride out with freshly washed roads. Twelve bikes set out to ride some very quiet lanes with several long straight roads to allow us to speed up. A good ride that ended back at the Calleva Arms in time for lunch.

May started with the Founders Relay Rally. We ran a checkpoint at the Canal Trust's information centre at Aldermaston Wharf. A dozen Berkshire section members started from Aldermaston and rode to various other sections. A fine start turned into a downpour later.

The May midweek run was to the Tilford Rural Life Museum. A beautiful day allowed us to enjoy the trip much more than the last time we went there and we were able to see the exhibits much better. We stayed until closing time before leaving.

The Owen Tyler Run had a very good turn out which we needed after last year's washout. The Owen Tyler Cup was Awarded to Dennis Harris on his Scott, Dennis also won the Best Vintage Cup and the Highest Combined Age Shield.

Derek and Lorraine Carter tied for the Best Veteran Cup, thankfully as they are married it did not cause the

committee any problems. They can argue over polishing it.

The Best Post Vintage machine was Brian Kettle's Sunbeam Model 9, the Best Post War bike was Tony Mortimer's Velocette, The Best Sidecar was Vic Blake's Matchless V Twin, The Most Original (Oily Rag) was Doug Plester's Royal Enfield and the Under 250cc Award went to Lorraine Carter's 116cc JES. This year we were able to award the Tiddler to a new recipient, Roger Parkins' NSU Quickly, the smallest bike on the run.

The Mystery Run had a good turn out for a trip through the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire countryside. As usual this was a follow my leader event where the only one who knew the route was the leader. A nice sunny day whetted the appetite for a good long lunch break in Wheatley with some great beer and then a slightly quicker return to Pangbourne.

The June midweek run was renamed The John Moore Run. Doug Plester took us around some of the venues made famous by TV series such as Midsomer Murders and the Vicar of Dibley. We stopped in many places where Doug was able to point out the places of interest. Another good day for motorcycling with many stops to see the sights. We stopped for lunch at the Bull and Butcher in Dibley (Turville to the locals), a village used in many films and TV programs.

The Velocette Club's Day at the Plowden Arms was supported by seven Berkshire Section members. (Why were they all Triumph owners?).

The Banbury Run saw a few of us riding in the gale force winds. One low powered Berkshire Section machine was seen being pedalled downhill! It was a good day out riding around some unfamiliar deserted country lanes culminating in a shot at Sun Rising Hill.

The Girder Fork Night produced some bikes not often seen at Englefield. A nice evening for standing with friends amongst a collection of old motorcycles.

The Two Pete's Run was their usual good day out through the Buckinghamshire countryside over the Chiltern Hills and down into the Vale of Aylesbury. A great sunny day made for enjoyable riding. We had a stop for lunch in the Rainbow Inn in the village of Middle Assenden.

After lunch we had a shorter run to the Dew Drop Inn near Burchetts Green where we stopped for tea. Many thanks to the two Peters for their hard work organising the event.

The ACU National Road Rally Checkpoint at Tothill services went off very well. Unfortunately some of the usual suspects were away on holiday, so it wasn't quite such a large picnic as we often have in the evening. Another long night but if people like us do not give our time the event could not happen.

The July Midweek run was a total washout. The weather was so bad nobody wanted to spend a day on the beach so we went for a long lunch in The Longbridge Mill.

Quite a few of our section went to Mallory Park for the 1000 Bikes event. A good time was had by the hardy campers.

The Founders Day event at Stanford Hall was unusually hot but it was worth the trip. A nice day out with

plenty of bikes to look at in the static displays and in the arena. There is also a very good autojumble.

The Car Park Concours was held on a pleasant evening which attracted quite a few motorcycles. This year we had a very diverse collection but the committee did not have too difficult a task, the winner was a very nice vintage BSA Sloper.

The midweek run this month was organised by Lorraine. She took us to a church in Goring by Sea that has a beautiful ceiling painted like the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican and then on to Wiston House. This 16th century grade 1 listed building is not open to the public and we were afforded a unique opportunity to have a guided tour by Lorraine's brother. Thanks to both of them.

The day started off badly, thick fog turned into a downpour as we got the bikes out of the garage. Do we go back to bed or go on the Bucklebury Run. As we approached the start the rain stopped, the gods of motorcycling must have been keeping an eye out for us.

After the usual coffee and chinwag we set out on drying roads for one of the best runs for a long time. The weather must have kept most of the cars off the road giving us a great run.

The lunch stop was at the Shepherds Rest near Wanborough. Suitably refreshed we set out on the return leg along the old Roman road, with nice wide empty B roads we made good time back to the start and could then attack the cakes. After the bad weather just before the start it was a very good ride with a great run back. As usual the Bucklebury turned out to be a good day and a fitting end to our organised runs this year. Many thanks to Jean and Allan for planning the route and providing the hospitality. This is very important as I think most of the riders come for the cakes and chatter after the run as much as for the run itself.

The September run was a five day trip to Rhayader in mid Wales. The hotel that we stayed in was an old Victorian Workhouse situated just outside of the town. The food and service was very good and they had a nice draft bitter.

The weather was poor on Tuesday so we split up and went to various places such as the National Cycle Museum in the morning. Some of the ladies found the quilting exhibition very interesting. After lunch we had a ride around the Elan Valley reservoirs to Devil's Bridge for tea.

Wednesday was much better for a ride over the Devil's Staircase to Tregaron. After lunch we retraced our steps with a diversion to Llyn Brianne, a wonderful ride. The landscape may not be as rugged as northern Wales but there are more narrow roads over the hills for us to enjoy.

On Thursday we split up again and rode various mountain roads that were free of other traffic, there just weren't any tourists about. We could see why this area was chosen for the International Six Days Trial so many times.

What a great place to ride, even though it is known as one of the wettest places in Wales, we were fortunate that the little rain we did have did not dampen our spirits.

The quiz team went to the Stonehenge Section for their inter-section quiz and came away without disgracing themselves, coming in second place. A well organised event that is worth travelling to Woodfalls, south of Salisbury for.

This year we only had four visiting teams for our inter-section quiz. I think most people enjoyed the evening even though the Berkshire team won. This was the fourth year running which must prove we have a wealth of knowledge in the section.

The October midweek run was a pleasant ride via Kingsclere, over Watership Down and through Whitchurch to Andover where we visited the Iron Age Museum. A small local museum that was well presented with a good collection of iron age artefacts.

Afterwards we had a short run to The Mayfly pub on the River Test for lunch. A nice sunny day to sit out and enjoy lunch beside the river. To shake down our meal we then went to the Danebury Hillfort where we expended the calories that we had just consumed by walking around the site.

The October guest speaker was your Secretary who gave a presentation on magnetos, their history, theory of operation and servicing.

The November midweek run was a fairly short run through some pleasant Berkshire countryside. The weather wasn't too bad for the time of year but unfortunately not as nice and sunny as some previous November runs. Autumn is a nice time to ride through wooded lanes when the leaves are changing but before they fall making the roads dangerous. We started as usual at Aldermaston Wharf and meandered through the lanes to the north of the A4.

We stopped for a long lunch at The Four Points in Aldworth and then rode home before the day cooled off. A nice end to our riding year.

The quiz team was on form again, winning the Oxford Section's quiz. Two wins and one second this year shows we still have the odd brain cell working.

December was the first of our midweek lunch meetings. We went back to the Duke of Edinburgh, near Ascot Racecourse. A good turnout for a second visit this year to this nice pub.

In the evening we went to the Chiltern Section for their Quiz. Beer twice in one day inevitably dulled the brains and we only came third.

The Christmas Dinner was held in a new venue, the Lands End Pub beside the ford in Charvil. We had the largest gathering for many years. A nice pub with plenty of room for us to move about. The food was excellent and the service good. We were not rushed and had nice breaks between courses. I think we all enjoyed the evening.

The December club night was the family evening. We brought along our partners and a selection of nibbles. Allan and Doug also brought some games to keep our brains in working order. A nice social event to round off the year.

Michael Bryant