



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

Summary of the Year 2014

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

January

January kicked off with a mid-week lunch meeting at the Jolly Farmer in Cookham Dean. 20 or so attended with a couple on two and three-wheeled transport to keep the side up.

Club Night - AGM (24 members) -It was all change at the AGM at the end of January with Allan Herbert stepping down as Chairman and Michael Bryant as Secretary. Both of whom have served in various capacities over the last decade or so. They were each thanked for their and their families' contribution and support over the years. Thanks, in addition, to Paul Richmond and Robin Strange, who also stood down from the committee after many years of service.

Bill Barnes was duly elected as Chairman and Malcolm White as Secretary. Roy Headon agreed to stay on as Treasurer for another year. Vic Blake and Lorraine & Derek Carter joined Bruce Spiller on the committee.

February

The Bull Inn at Arborfield Cross was the venue for the February mid-week lunch meeting, which was attended by 20 members and partners. Although somewhat unusual, but not unsurprising given the forecast, no-one ventured out on either two or three wheels. Fortunately so, since it bucketed down from midday and suitable riding attire would need to have consisted of a dry suit and snorkel.

Club Night - Guest Speaker (28 members) - Our guest speaker for the February club night was our very own Doug Ellis, who gave a practical insight into the mechanics of crank balancing for a single cylinder engine. His prop for the demonstration was the crankshaft from a 1915 293cc JAP.

Doug showed how one could weigh the necessary components with a common set of scales borrowed (with permission) from the kitchen and thus compare the balance factor obtained with the 65% factor usually attributed to a single cylinder engine.

It's then only necessary to either add or remove weight from the periphery of the flywheels to effect an improvement (less vibration). Recognising, of course, that 5% either way of the nominal 65% might be the balance factor for one's own engine depending on application. Thus it's truly a test of suck it and see. Many thanks to Doug for giving such an interesting talk.

March

The March mid-week lunch meeting was held at the Jack O'Newbury in the village of Binfield (nr Bracknell). There was a good turnout of 22 members and partners. Five of whom, tempted by the promise of a fine afternoon, arrived on bikes.

Club Night - Bring & Buy Books (29 members) - There was a good attendance for the Bring and Buy Book Sale on March 25th with a large selection of books and magazines to spark an interest in the gathered throng. Thanks to Doug for doing the auctioneering and to those who donated and bought the books. It was a successful evening for section funds.

April

Mid-week run to the Armouries at Fort Nelson (12 members) - A fantastic beginning to the riding calendar. The sun was shining and signs of spring were in abundance following weeks of torrential rain and floods.

The route chosen by Lorraine & Derek Carter, our gentle

organisers for the day, took us down to Fort Nelson along roads less travelled by, so arriving in time for the firing of the noon day gun (12 pounder cannon). The Royal Armouries at Fort Nelson is definitely worth a visit with lots to see.

Thanks to Lorraine and Derek for arranging the day and to all those who participated.

Calleva Gallop (15 members) - April showers were forecast, but, in spite of this, we had a good turnout for the annual Calleva Gallop and John Moore Cup run of 15 riders. Brian Sarney on his 1920 1000cc V-twin Indian was the winner of the John Moore Cup this year. Thanks go to Allan Herbert & Doug Plester for organising it.

Club Night - Video Evening (23 members) - Many thanks to Michael Bryant who yet again managed to collate a fantastic and amusing range of videos for our Video Evening. These ranged from some very early Esso ads, various early trials, scrambles and road racing clips from the 50/60s through to a recent MotoX series and to cap it all a very exciting run up Pike's Mountain Colorado in the US on a modern Ducati.

May

2014 VMCC National Relay Rally - Berkshire manned rally point #4 at Aldermaston Wharf for the bi-annual event in early May. Vic Blake and Malcolm White were in the throes of erecting the gazebo in time for the 9.00am opening when the first rider of the day arrived. Thereafter, there was a steady flow of riders signing on or passing through. On final tally there were 16 who chose to start at our rally point and 17 who visited.

Mid-week run (14 members) The run started at Mac's Cafe on the A4. By 10.30, 14 riders had been revitalised with tea and

butties and were assembled for the off.

Allan Herbert was our guide to a welcome favourite, The Flower Pots Inn at Cheriton, Hampshire. There was a brief stop in Tadley for fuel and then onward down the A339 and on to the B3046 which led through Old Arlesford and Arlesford to our destination.

The return run was along a reciprocal route, but finished at Allan and Jean's new bungalow in Tadley, where we were plied with tea and freshly baked, home-made cake. Thanks to Allan and Jean for the organisation and hospitality.

Owen Tyler Run (31 members) The annual Owen Tyler Run took place from the Scout Hut next to the Village Hall in Hurst, near Twyford, on Spring Bank Holiday Sunday.

Participants were treated to tea and coffee upon arrival and many had time for a chat while signing on and sorting out route sheets. There were two routes for the day. A longer one of 70 miles for bigger machines and a shorter one of 50 miles for smaller machines. The Rising Sun at Highmoor, Witheridge Hill (nr Stoke Row) was to be the focal point for lunch.

The Rising Sun proved to be a good venue, with a large seating area outside and plentiful parking for the bikes. Plenty of opportunity to have a leisurely sandwich or two and catch up in general.

Judging at the finish was conducted by Bruce Spiller and Vic Blake, co-organisers of the day's event and Chairman, Bill Barnes, who also presented the awards.

The Owen Tyler award winners for 2014 were:

Best Vintage – Bill Martin – 1930 Levis
Best Post Vintage – Derek Carter – 1941 Indian Scout
Best Post War – Keith Smith – 1973 Norton Commando
Best Sidecar – Dennis Beale – 1935 Norton ES2
Best Under 250 – Jim Martin – 1936 New Imperial (150 cc)

Special Awards

Tiddler Trophy – Allan Herbert – 1969 BSA Bantam
Most Original (Oily Rag Cup) – John George – 1956 James
Captain
Highest Combined Age Shield – Alan Hummerstone – 1932 BSA
TW3 Sports Special

Thanks to Vic and Bruce for organising the route and event and the supporting cast of partners who were instrumental in organising the administration and refreshments.

Club Night - Noggin & Natter (21 members). And so there was.

June

Mid-week run to Portsmouth Dockyard (10 members) - Yet again the sun came out and 10 riders plus partners set off from Mac's Cafe and headed down to Portsmouth. Suitably refreshed with Ale and Food in The Ship Anson pub we all set off for the Dockyard and were able to visit the attractions that we didn't have time for last year.

There was then a good return blast up the Meon Valley with the obligatory refreshment stop at Loomies to finish off the day.

Fawley Railway Visit & Static Display - 12 Berkshire members displayed their machines at the Fawley Hill Railway Museum on the 15th June. The museum is owned and run by the Hon. Sir

William and Lady Judy McAlpine and a horde of volunteer enthusiasts. Pride of place that day was, undoubtedly, the 0-6-0 1913 Saddle Tank engine No. 31, which puffed up and down the hill and through the park all day. Much to the enjoyment of those riding on the footplate and in the accompanying wagons.

Many thanks to Malcolm Bryant for arranging the visit with the museum.

Club Night - Girder Fork & Rigid Evening (23 members). Another good selection of bikes for this evening. Amongst which were three prewar Triumphs, T80, T90 and Speed Twin, a BSA M20 and BSA B2, a Scott and two New Imps.

Shuttleworth Military Air Pageant. Only two riders made the longish trip up to the Shuttleworth Air Museum at the end of June. However, although it rained at times during the pageant, they were still plenty rewarded by a wide ranging display of WWI and WWII aircraft. Not least of which were a Hawker Sea Hurricane, Supermarine Spitfire and replica Sopwith Triplane.

July

July mid-week run (14 members) - Fourteen bikes with riders and pillions gathered at Mac's Cafe, prior to venturing into the hinterland of Buckinghamshire in search of the windmill at Brill.

The route ran north through Beenham, Bradfield and Ashampstead to Aldworth and then in an easterly direction to Streatley and Goring. Much of this was familiar territory for a number who live in the area, but then we branched off northeast up the Icknield Road and Old Icknield Way through Benson and Berwick Salome and further to Thame, Long Crendon and finally Brill. Where we found the windmill at the end of the aptly named 'Windmill Street'. Lunch was taken at the Chandos Arms

in Oakley a mile and half from Brill.

Bedford Coach Trip - In part celebration of the Section's Golden Anniversary, Lorraine Carter organised a trip on a 1949 Bedford OB 29 seater coach run by Mervyn's Coaches at Micheldever.

We were a couple of seats shy of a full complement, but all going were assembled in good time for a prompt 10.00 am start. Destination: A circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight. First stop, the Red Funnel ferry at Southampton.

The ferry from Southampton to Cowes took about an hour, but disembarkation was swiftly accomplished and we were soon covering the short distance to the Folly Inn on the banks of the river Medina for lunch. The food was good and it was warm enough to sit outside and appreciate the scenery, albeit that the tide was on the ebb.

Lunch over, we headed in a clockwise direction down the A3054 and then onto the A3055 coast road, past Bembridge and through Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor and along the Military Road towards Freshwater, Yarmouth, Newport and back to East Cowes for the return crossing.

Arriving back at Mervyn's at about 8.30 pm made it a longish day, but one that was very enjoyable. Thanks very much to Lorraine and Derek for arranging it.

50th Anniversary - The Berkshire Section successfully celebrated its 50th anniversary with a combined BBQ and ride-in. This, despite a dire weather forecast which proved to be totally wrong, as we enjoyed sunshine for most of the day.

Some 40 riders paid us a visit and we were delighted to have the presence of some of the founder members of the Section.

Dennis Harris was on hand to perform the cutting of the celebratory cake. A truly incredible range of members' bikes were on display covering some 90+ years of manufacturing and many other interesting variants were also ridden in by our visitors.

The combination of Great People, Great Bikes and Great Food worked extremely well and many requests were received to repeat the event in 2015

A big thanks to Laura Blake who was pivotal in organising the catering side of the event in the hall and Bruce Spiller who arranged the BBQ.

Girder Fork & Rigid Run (16 members) - The Cottage Inn in Upper Bucklebury was again the starting point for the Girder Fork & Rigid Run.

There were two routes: A shorter one of 30 miles for low powered machines which missed out some of the steeper inclines and a longer route of 40 miles for those riding machines with a bit more oomph, but still with some consideration for their vintage and post-vintage nature.

In all there was a total of 16 bikes. 1 veteran, 2 vintage, 6 post-vintage and 7 post-war. A good selection for the day, which we're pleased to report remained dry throughout.

Many thanks to Roy Headon for organising the event and to the landlord and staff at the Cottage Inn for the excellent food and service.

Club Night - Car Park Concours (27 members). A good turnout of bikes. Paul Fenton's Triumph T110 was chosen by Chairman Bill Barnes for the concours award of a bottle of pop.

August

Mid-week run to Danebury & Old Sarum (8 members) - This was a nice run down to the Iron Age Hillfort at Danebury just outside Stockbridge and then on to Old Sarum and the Old Castle pub for lunch.

Popham Mega Meet stand (5 members) - Five members showed their bikes covering the VMCC eligibility range from Allan Herbert's early Sunbeam to the more modern Honda CB400 and CB900 of Roger Hunter and Bill Barnes, respectively.

Club Night - Ride a Bike Night (19 members). Sorry, no notes taken. Too much to see and people with whom to talk.

Bucklebury Run (14 members) - The annual Bucklebury Run on August 31st set off from Aldermarston Wharf Visitor Centre for a really enjoyable run through the best of Berkshire countryside to our lunch venue of The George Inn at Vernham Dean. The route took us through Bucklebury, Hermitage, Hungerford and Great and Little Bedwyn.

After an excellent lunch in glorious sunshine we all headed back to Roger and Maryan Hunter's via a plethora of country roads for a superb range of cakes duly washed down with copious cups of tea. Many thanks to all the partners for supplying the cakes and tea and Allan Herbert for setting out the route.

September

Cumbria Tour (8 members) - September 14th saw the Boys and Girls from the Berkshire Section heading north up the M6 for Cumbria for their annual touring holiday. Three hardy souls on the bigger Japanese bikes rode the 300+ miles, while all the others trailered their steeds and passengers. Our base for the

week was the excellent Biker Friendly Wheyrigg Hotel near Wigton where we were treated to super hospitality and food which really contributed to the success of the holiday. The steeds for the week were a CB900, CB400, CB/G125 and Suzuki 550 from the early 80s, two 60s Triumph Trophys, a Yamaha FJ and Rob on his Velocette LE.

Monday commenced with a run to Cockermouth with the intention of traversing the Whinlatter Pass. However, slightly dodgy map reading resulted in us doing the Honister pass instead. We then headed on to Dacre to visit the Cumbria Clock Co., where we were made most welcome and treated to a fascinating tour of the workshops.

The next few days saw us traversing all the major passes such as Kikstone, Whinlatter, Hartside x2, The Langdales; amazingly the little Velo LE managed all of them albeit with a steady cloud of steam on the tougher climbs. I doubt LEs were ever designed to cope with such road conditions, but it certainly attracted a lot of attention/admiration/amazement at each of our rest stops.

On Thursday we were the guests of the Lakeland Section and having met at the Filling Station Bikers' Cafe at Keswick we headed off into the unknown in hot pursuit of Dave Weeks (Chairman of the Lakeland Section) who was riding a pre-war Pride & Clarke 250 Panther. After the morning run we met up with other Lakeland members for lunch at the Lakeland Motor Museum having parked directly at the museum courtesy of Bill Bewdley the proprietor and local VMCC member. A super lunch in glorious sunshine was followed by a tour of the Museum. What a super collection of vehicles including some 80+ bikes which include many of Bill's Vincents.

Having feasted our eyes on the many exhibits and reminisced about bikes we had owned it was time to set off for the

afternoon run in company with many of the Lakeland boys again headed by Dave on the Panther. Again we traversed many minor roads to reach Coniston all the time marvelling at the glorious scenery while trying to pass nervous motorists on what seemed to be 8ft wide roads. All too soon we were heading up alongside Thirlmere lake heading back to Keswick where we bid farewell to Dave and continued back to Wigton shattered, but elated with our day's riding. What a great example of VMCC Sections helping each other; many thanks to Colin Steer, Dave Weeks and Bill Bewdley.

All too soon it is Friday our last day and we cap off a super week of riding by taking a 130 mile round trip to Hadrian's Wall and the Roman Fort at Birdoswald, then onto Haydon Bridge where we joined the A686 for an exhilarating ride up to the Hartside Cafe for a well earned tea break before swooping down to Penrith and back to Wigton. Poor old Keith got caught speeding whilst trying to catch up with the LE; that has to be a first!!!

So in summary, 600+ miles of super riding in magnificent countryside, weather and great company, roll on next year.

Club Night Inter-section Quiz (40 members) - Four sections: Stonehenge, Oxford, Chiltern and Cyclemotor made their way to join Berkshire at Englefield for the annual Inter-section quiz evening.

Michael Bryant was our inestimable quiz master and it wasn't long before there were quizzical expressions on faces around the room.

60 questions later (an abbreviated set, because of a South Midland Area meeting to follow) and it was time to tot up the marks. Stonehenge were this year's clear champions with a score of 46. Followed by Berkshire (42), Chiltern (35),

Cyclemotor (33) and Oxford (19). Berkshire Chairman, Bill Barnes, was on hand to pass over the trophy Tankard to John Guy of Stonehenge.

Many thanks to quiz master, Michael, and Roy Headon for organising the refreshments and, of course, to the participants and supporters of the Sections who came along to the evening.

October

Mid-week run to Empress of Blanding at Copythorne (3 members) - Unfortunately, the weather forecast for the day was so dire that only three riders braved the elements to the start at Aldermaston Wharf where they decided that it was a lost cause.

Castrol Evening - A 20 strong group of Berkshire members were treated to an extremely informative presentation on lubricant oil technology by staff at the BP Castrol Technology Centre facility at Pangbourne on Monday, 27th October..

Club Night - Bring and Buy Hardware (19 members) - A very successful evening for the Section and Section funds. Many thanks to Doug Ellis for once again being our auctioneer.

November

Mid-week run (5 members) - Five intrepid souls braved the damp conditions to ride over to Aldermaston Wharf for the start, in the hope that it would brighten up as the day progressed. Thankfully, when we departed the warmth of the cafe, the rain had stopped and apart from many large puddles we had an uneventful, but very pleasant, ride to the Four Points Inn at Aldworth. Our timing was also pretty good, as the four wheeled contingent arrived at that time to swell our numbers to 24 or so.

Oxford Section Quiz Night - Berkshire fielded three teams, including our ladies' team of Laura Blake, Denise Bryant, Lorraine Carter and Liz Ellis. Unfortunately, there's no record of the score except that it's known that the Berks 'A' team won and the ladies' team placed third. Well done to all.

Club Night - Noggin & Natter (17 members) - And a noggin and natter it was.

December

Mid-week lunch at the Longbridge Mill, Sherfield-on-Loddon. There was a good attendance of some 24 members and partners at this, the first of the winter lunch meetings.

Chiltern Quiz Night - An accident, which blocked the M4, prevented Doug Ellis from making it to the venue. The Berkshire team were thus at best at half strength with Robin Strange and Malcolm White. Nevertheless, they were able to put on a reasonable showing finishing only a point and a half behind third place Chiltern on their own turf. Bedford Section took the honours with Cyclemotor just a half a point behind.

Christmas Dinner - Held again at the Fox & Hounds at Theale on December 13th was a very enjoyable evening with 36 members and partners in attendance.

It was with sadness that we had to report that John Chapman passed away on 14th December 2014. The funeral is scheduled for 7th January 2015 at the Basingstoke Crematorium.

Club Night (13 members) - Our last club night of the year, falling as it does between Christmas and the New Year, is a social gathering. An opportunity to spread the calories received as gifts or created with love in the kitchen workshop, in the vain

hope that one is able to dispense with more than one receives.

Featured artists of the evening were Doug and Liz Ellis on melodeon and violin, ably accompanied by Derek Carter on a phonofiddle (a single stringed instrument with a phonograph type reproducer box) dating back to the early 1900s. A cat on a hot tin roof comes to mind.

In retrospect it was a very good year. The majority of our runs took place on dry days and we managed to shoe horn in a couple of additional events for our 50th anniversary year.

The new Committee met on five occasions to discuss the arrangement of forthcoming events, ways in which to maintain the viability of the Section's finances and how to get non-active members in the Berkshire catchment area to participate in Section activities.

A mail and email shot to approximately 200 local VMCC members was initiated in March. The enclosed letter and calendar elicited about a 10% response and has resulted in a few newer faces at Club Nights and runs.

In addition, the Berkshire website was given a facelift in 2014 and appears to have gained some acceptance among members, that this is a good way to find out what's going on in the Section. There is also a facebook page for those inclined to receive information in that manner.

For full details of Section activities
please see our website.

email: info@berkshire-vmcc.org.uk

website: www.berkshire-vmcc.org.uk