



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

Summary of the Year 2015

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

Mid-week Lunch Meeting - Bill Barnes and Malcolm White had occasion to visit The Fox & Castle in Old Windsor, when they took part in one of the Marston Sunbeam's quarterly runs arranged by Vic Youel, the Southern Region organiser. Thus it was that this was the venue chosen for our January mid-week lunch meeting.

Quiz Evening - Berkshire, Oxford and Chiltern joined the Cyclemotor Section for their quiz evening at the England's Rose pub in Postcombe, Thame on 20th January 2015. Chiltern led the way for a while, but the Berks 'A' team of Alan, Doug, Michael and Robin outstripped them towards the end to pick up the trophy with Chiltern and Cyclemotor, 2nd & 3rd, respectively.

Club Night - AGM (29 members) - Bill Barnes and Malcolm White were re-elected as Chairman and Secretary, respectively. Roy Headon was thanked for his contribution over the past few years as Treasurer and David Bryant was duly elected and welcomed into the post thus vacated. Vic Blake, Lorraine & Derek Carter and Bruce Spiller were welcomed back on to the committee.

February

Mid-week Lunch Meeting - The White Horse at Hermitage was the venue for the February mid-week lunch meeting.

Club Night - Guest Speaker (30 members) - Our guest speaker for the February club night was Eric Patterson, who came along to tell us about his world speed record attempts at Bonneville.

Apparently, the logistics of simply getting there are daunting, let alone dealing with the vagaries of the weather and the condition of the salt. Still, unlike many, Eric has most often returned with a record - 3 in the 1350 class in 2013 with a 1150cc V-Twin Brough Superior and 2 more in 2014 with a 1000cc Viscount. Wonderful achievements, with possibly more to come.

March

Mid-week Lunch Meeting - The Jack O'Newbury in Binfield was the venue for the mid-week lunch meeting.

Bill had arranged a special menu and the whole of one side of the restaurant was reserved for us. However, such was the wonderful turnout

of around thirty, we expanded on to additional tables and virtually took over the pub. It is understood from comments received that everyone very much enjoyed their choice of fayre.

Although it was a lunch meeting, quite a number took advantage of the dry weather and turned out on period transport. Vic Youel arrived in style in his 1929 Humber 16/50 horseless carriage, Tim Simkins from the Brooklands section on his cammy Velocette, Neil Kerr was on a shakedown run from Oxford on his Velocette Venom, Phil Winks on a Sunbeam and Allan Hummerstone on, it is believed, an A10. Derek and Lorraine Carter were on Suzuki and Harley Davidson, respectively (because they were the ones closest to the door). Bill Barnes, Tiger 100, and Malcolm White, T160, living as close as they do to the venue, found it necessary (arm twisted behind back) to ride out around Ruscombe and White Waltham to get the oil at least a little warm.

It was good to see a number of other section members at the meeting for a convivial chat, as an alternative to Jack's Cafe in Bagshot. Also past Chairman, Peter Mann and his wife Pat, who we haven't seen for a while.

Pioneer Run - Sunday 29th saw a few of members tackle the Pioneer Run, most made it without drama, but Vic Blake had an ungracious tumble having lost neutral on his 1904 Auto-Fauteuil, only his pride was hurt. Doug Ellis was doing well until metal fatigue on a valve spring took its toll.

Club Night - Bring & Buy Books (20 members) - Our annual book auction was held on the 31st and an eclectic range of books changed hands, a collection of books on sewing proved popular, so it is presumed that a number of partners are going to receive one for XMAS or members are embarking on new hobbies.

April

Mid-week Run - We were blessed with great weather for our first mid-week ride of the season on 8th April to Wheatley Mill, no doubt encouraging a decent turn-out of a dozen machines, including Alan Hummerstone's BSA three-wheeler. All managed to keep together for the route up into Oxfordshire to the restored Wheatley Windmill, meeting up with several of our people who'd arrived by car, where we were made very welcome by the volunteers there. We split into two groups for our guided tour. Tea and coffee being consumed when we'd finished. We're very grateful to the team there for enabling our visit outside of their normal opening times.

This was followed by lunch at a nearby pub, the three-wheeler suffering a bit of damage to its bodywork travelling over the extreme speed bumps in Wheatley en route. After lunch, we headed back to Pangbourne, some members heading off in their own homeward-bound directions on the way, and eight of us went for a brief visit to the Falklands Memorial chapel in the grounds of Pangbourne College. This is a very poignant, peaceful memorial to the fallen of the Falklands conflict, well worth a visit.

Calleva Gallop - The annual Calleva Gallop kicked off from the Calleva Arms at Silchester on 26th April. Allan Herbert and Doug Plester were the organisers and 12 riders took to their mounts at a quarter to elevenish on a chilly day under leaden skies. We were, however, fortunate enough to miss the showers forecast for the region and the roads, over which we were routed, were - for the most part - dry.

The route took us out past the ancient walls of the Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum down to Sherborne St John and to Overton and Whitchurch via Malshanger. Returning to the Calleva Arms via Kingsclere, Wolverton Townsend, Baughurst and Tadley. A very enjoyable ride of approximately 50 miles, which gave us a good appetite for the typical Sunday lunch to be had at the pub.

In what has now become a tradition, the landlord chose the bike he most liked for the award of the John Moore Cup. This year the worthy recipient was Roger Prew with his 1962 Triumph Bonneville. Congratulations Roger.

Many thanks to Allan and Doug for organising the run.

Club Night - Video Evening (18 members) - As usual, Michael Bryant unearthed a varied mix of videos for our video evening - ranging from long forgotten advertisements, a super scrap between Dave Bickers and Jeff Smith, some stylish riding from Mike Hailwood's early winning ways and a video of the assembly of a modern BMW bike. Michael also showed some video snippets of members on recent runs. All in all a very enjoyable evening. Thank you Michael for putting it on.

May

Mid-week Run (11 members) - The run started at the Aldermaston Wharf and consisted of a run around the Surrey Hills.

Owen Tyler Run - There were 24 starters for our annual run on this bank holiday weekend.

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 (near Stoke Row) was again the focal point for lunch.

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 2015 were:

Best Veteran -The Owen Tyler Cup - Michael Bryant [1914 Premier Tourist 500cc]

Best Vintage - Chris Green [1926 New Imperial Model 8 680cc]

Best Post Vintage - Malcolm Bryant [1936 New Imperial Model 36 DL 250cc]

Best Post War - Jim Martin [1947 BSA B31 350cc]

Best Sidecar/Three Wheeler - Alan Hummerstone [1932 BSA TW 32-9 Special Sports 1021cc]

Under 250 - Eric Bailey [1949 Ambassador Model 1 197cc]

Special Awards

Tiddler Trophy - Roger Hunter [1969 BSA Bantam B170]

Most Original (Oily Rag) - Alex Taylor [1927 AJS H6 350cc]

Highest Combined Age (171) - Michael Bryant [1914 Premier Tourist 500cc]

Thanks to Vic and Bruce for organising the venue and the route. Thanks also to Laura Blake and all those ladies who helped and provided delicious savouries, cakes and tea to top off the afternoon's delights.

Club Night - Noggin & Natter (15 members)

June

Mid-week Run to Bletchley Park - Six members ventured out for a super run to and from Bletchley Park, very little traffic and just the right temperature after a somewhat coldish start. The facility at Bletchley is well worth a visit and one cannot fail to be in awe of what those very

clever people achieved. Despite the several very good interactive displays explaining the basics of encryption it's not certain that any of us would be suitable for the job.

Club Night - Girder Fork & Rigid Evening (30 members).

Mystery Run (8 members) - The Mystery Run started from the Aldermaston Wharf Visitors' Centre and, as the name suggests, was a mystery to us all, except for Bill Barnes, who was to lead, and Allan Herbert, who held the post of rear guard and sweeper.

Successfully circumnavigating an unexpected bridge closure across the canal 100 yards from the start, the group set off in the direction of Aldermaston and points southwesterly, passing through Stockbridge and along the A30 to Salisbury. There was quite a queue of traffic over the Avon, but fortunately there was sufficient room for us all to thread our way through it and make our way off down the A338 toward Ringwood and Bournemouth. An afternoon at the seaside? Not, perhaps, too tempting a thought, since the steady rain (despite the forecast) was now becoming uncomfortable.

However, we were soon to stop at the Bat & Ball Inn in Breamore about 8 miles down the road, where we met up with Jean Herbert, and had a very nice lunch, while drying out a bit.

After lunch, Bill guided us back a short distance up the road to Breamore House and Countryside Museum. One would need a whole day to take in both attractions, but the Countryside Museum was probably of more interest to us with an incredible range of farming and land management tools, early 20th century tractors and a number of nicely arranged displays depicting 19th century activities, such as the blacksmith's forge, cooper's shop, school room, laundry, dairy, etc. Very much worth a visit, if you're in that neck of the woods.

The trip home, as Bill admits, was also a mystery. As much for him as it was for us. All in all, despite the early rain, everyone had an enjoyable day. Thanks to Bill for organising it. Also, a warm welcome to John Campbell, who joined us for the first time on his BSA.

July

Mid-week Run (14 members) - This run started at the vintage Shack café on the A30, near Hook - a real blast from the past as a traditional transport café, in a little wooden hut, plastic gingham table cloths and

good basic food – super.

Ten bikes and bodies assembled for the run, including two new folk – Alan and Terry – which was very heartening – the section is doing well for newcomers of late. We set off for Guildford, and were soon free of the busier roads until we hit the outskirts of the city, which was only to be expected. We were greeted at the Spike Heritage centre by our host for the morning, John, an ex-biker who loved our machines.

The Spike is an old workhouse which has gone through several changes of use in its lifetime, and is now open as a museum and educational facility. We were given tea and biscuits whilst John told us about the origins of workhouses generally, and that one in particular, followed by a short film, then tour of the buildings. It is a very interesting place, but we were running out of time to get to our lunch venue, so there were still areas that we didn't see, most of us planning to return another time.

We then set off down some fairly small lanes initially, skirting the back of Newlands Corner, and on to our lunch stop at the Bricklayers Arms at Shamley Green, which welcomed us warmly, and was enjoyed by all. Lots of chatting meant that our time schedule to visit the Farnham Sculpture Park was fast flying out of the window, so we decided to follow the intended route past the venue anyway, but keep the visit there for another time.

All in all, we had a great day, missing the few showers around by being indoors when they happened, and cruising around a lot of super minor roads.

Chairman's BBQ & Ride-In - After a successful 50th Anniversary event last year, we followed a similar format and staged another ride-in at the Hurst Air Scout venue this year. From all reports, this was equally well received with over thirty bikes ridden in from various locations, including Gosport.

Many thanks to the Air Scouts for the use of their facilities. Also to Maryan, Jean and Muriel and others, who supplied cakes and sundries and dealt them out with copious quantities of tea and coffee during the day. Not forgetting Bruce and Simon who slaved over the BBQ grill and anyone else who lent a hand in making it another successful day.

Club Night - Car Park Concours (24 members). The threat of rain resulted in lower numbers of attendees than usual, but the quality was there with good examples of late 70's Japanese exotica, a really nice 30's New

Imperial and many 50/60's machines. The eventual winner was Pete Turner with his beautifully restored LE Velo.

August

Mid-week Run (15 members) - Excellent turnout for the Girder Fork/Rigid/Low Powered run, which was postponed from its usual date, due to decidedly nasty weather conditions. Machines ranged from ITOM powered Cyclemotors upwards. Courtesy of Malcolm White the routes were run in reverse this year which seemed to flummox some half of the riders who disappeared in the opposite direction. They all eventually made it safely back to the Cottage Inn having added a few miles to the original route, but everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Popham Mega Meet - A very enjoyable day with considerable interest from a number of old and potentially new members. Many thanks to all who turned up on their bikes for display on the stand.

Club Night - TVAM Assessment Evening (15 members) - 6 Thames Valley Advanced Motorcycle (TVAM) observers kindly volunteered to take our members out for an assessment ride and to provide appropriate feedback. During a break from the torrential rain 6 hardy members took part and thoroughly enjoyed the process. Most of them were judged to be very smooth, as they should be after many years of riding, but some work was needed to improve road positioning to make their riding a little safer. A big thanks to the TVAM team and Bruce Spiller for arranging it.

August Amble (previously known as the Bucklebury Run) started from Brightwells Cafe at the Holiday Inn just off the A4 at Padworth. The cafe serves tea and coffee and lunchtime snacks and is conveniently located near a Shell filling station.

There was an excellent turnout of 17 bikes for this popular event ranging from Chris Green's 1926 680 New Imperial V Twin to Tony Wright's 1986 Ex-Police Norton Rotary. The first, I believe, we've ever had on any of our runs.

Allan Herbert was our route master and he drew on the knowledge gained from organising the Bucklebury Run for many a year to put together an equally enjoyable jaunt through the West Berkshire countryside.

The outbound route took us through Whitchurch, Hurstbourne Priors, Hurstbourne Tarrant and Oxenwood and on to the Crown at Upton for

lunch. In past years we've stopped at the George Inn in Vernham Dean, but this time they were catering for a musical gathering, so weren't able to accommodate us. In any event, we were not disappointed with the Crown who looked after us very well with tables laid out in the atrium and good food to boot.

The run back to Roger and Maryan's for tea and cake was a little more nadgery, especially around Kintbury, but fun despite the light rain that had arrived. This had stopped by the time we'd quaffed all the cake, so it was a dry run home.

Thanks to Allan for organising the day and Roger and Maryan for their hospitality.

September

Annual Holiday - September saw the Berkshire Boys and Girls set off for their annual touring holiday in Mid-Wales basing themselves in The Baskerville Arms at Clyro near Hay-on-Wye, which proved to be an ideal centre for a range of super runs. Monday commenced with a downpour of biblical proportion, but undaunted all set off for the Brecon Mountain Railway for an enjoyable trip into the hills, visibility was a little restricted due to the rain and misting up of the windows. Roger tried to measure the depth of a cattle grid en-route and ended up with his Honda resting on top of him. Allan then led us back to Clyro along a scenic route, which would have been a challenge in the dry. So this turned into a real test of nerve and stamina in the monsoon conditions which we, of course, all met head on.

Other places visited were the Eppynt Race Circuit, Llanthony Priory and the Spaceguard Centre where we all learnt a great deal about near earth objects which might just wipe us all out, so get in as many rides as you can. Allan had a run-in with a dead Badger on a very nadgerry lane resulting in a wee tumble (only his pride was hurt). Bill decided to go one further on one of the runs by finding a road/track that crossed a 1500ft mountain that didn't seem to figure on the OS Map. All, however, safely made it back, but with some very white faces. In summary, we all had a super time, good accommodation, great biking roads roads, super weather and great company, roll on next year.

Club Night - Inter-section Quiz (24 members) -

October

Mid-week Run - Vic Blake kindly organised a visit to the Brooklands Centre for a super tour of all the facilities by Michael Sands, who proved to be extremely knowledgeable and entertaining in his briefing on all aspects of museum displays. Most of the team were in awe of the recently opened Stratosphere Chamber. The scale of the engineering was just staggering for something that was designed by Barnes Wallis for Vickers-Armstrong's R&D Department and built in 1947 to test aircraft components under the environmental conditions experienced at 70,000 feet; the height at which Wallis' designs for new supersonic aeroplanes would fly. Many thanks to Vic for arranging the visit.

Club Night - Bring and Buy Hardware (19 members) - The annual hardware Bring and Buy sale was the format for our October club night. As usual there was an incredible range of hardware ranging from some worn out files to a child's sidecar chassis. Many thanks to Doug Ellis who worked his magic to extract some monies from the audience to bolster the section funds.

November

Mid-week Run - A record 11 Riders turned up for the last mid-week run of the year. This was a 45 mile run through the Berkshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire countryside which was sort of led by Bill Barnes. We finally ended up at the Four Points Inn at Aldworth, where we were joined by a few more of the team who had arrived on 4-wheels Tutt Tutt. We then max'd out the Senior Citizens menu and caught up on all the gossip. Many thanks to all who turned to enjoy the balmy November weather.

The Berkshire Boys and girls are on a bit of a run with the Inter Section Quizes. At the Oxford Evening the A team came first followed by the B Team in joint second and the Ladies came third, what a result!

At the Chiltern Evening the Berkshire A team scraped into 1st place closely followed by Chiltern and the Bedfordshire teams. The Berkshire B team resorted to their normal status by finishing last and in doing so concluded that they were better at general knowledge questions than bike related ones. In both cases all thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Club Night - Guest Speaker (27 members). Rodney Hann paid us a visit and gave a super practical demonstration on the art of wheel building which might just result in some of us attempting to spoke a wheel. Many thanks to Rod for an enjoyable and informative evening.

December

30th Anniversary Reading Toy Run - What a wonderful event.

Approximately 2,000 riders took part, including several Berkshire VMCC members. The award for the best turnout went to both Derek Carter and Doug Plester in their Santa suits. Bill Barnes was one of the TVAM team of 150 marshals and thoroughly enjoyed the event. Next year he'll be looking for volunteers to act as marshals - you have been warned.

Mid-week Lunch Meeting - 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.

Christmas Dinner - Thirty members gathered at the Bull Inn for our annual Christmas Dinner on the 13th December, which had to be hastily re-arranged as our normal location had lost our booking!! However a great time was had by all with much discussion about the past year and the year to come.

Club Night (22 members) - Our last club night of the year, falling as it does between Christmas and the New Year, is a social gathering.