



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

Summary of the Year 2016

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

### Officers

Chairman: Bill Barnes

Secretary: Malcolm White

Treasurer: David Bryant

Committee: Vic Blake

Lorraine Carter

Derek Carter

Bruce Spiller

## Berkshire Section Yearbook 2016

### January

Toy Run What a wonderful event. Approx. 2000 riders took part including several Berkshire VMCC members and the award for the best Berkshire member's turnout goes to both Derek Carter and Doug Plester in their Santa Claus outfits. Bill Barnes was one of the TVAM team of 150 marshals and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

Mid-week Lunch Meeting Vic kindly organised this month's mid week outing resulting in a super turnout of some 30 descending on the Swan Inn at East Ilsley for a really tasty carvery meal. Two members were brave or stupid enough to turn up on their bikes!! Over lunch we all managed to put the world to rights, compare notes on the various winter projects and to start thinking of the year ahead. Many thanks to the staff at the Swan for looking after us so well.

Cyclemotor Section Quiz Winners The Berkshire 'A' Team pulled off yet another victory at the Cyclemotor Quiz on Tuesday, despite Doug sitting out the event on the A34. They were closely followed by the Chiltern and Oxford Sections. Berkshire 'B' and Cyclemotor need to do a bit more reading in readiness for next year.

Many thanks to Lorraine for an interesting range of questions and to the Cyclemotor Section for making us so welcome.

Club Night - AGM (32 members) Bill Barnes, Malcolm White and David Bryant were re-elected as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Vic Blake, Lorraine & Derek Carter and Bruce Spiller were re-elected as committee members.

### February

Mid-week Lunch Meeting A super turnout of some 28 descended on the Coach & Horses at Rotherwick for a hearty meal and discussions on just about every subject you can think of. Many thanks to Lorraine and Derek for making the necessary arrangements. A few brave souls even braved the cold to arrive by motorcycle; Derek on a veteran Douglas, Lorraine on her Greeves and then the 'little and large' team of Mike and Bill on their 50 and 900cc Hondas.

Club Night - Guest Speaker (21 members) Dave Benn of Brickwood Wheel Builders was our guest speaker for this evening. However, he didn't come along to apprise us in the art of wheel building, but of his exploits on a penny-farthing bicycle in Newfoundland in 1995.

Dave had already received some notoriety for riding his penny-farthing at events in the UK and was thus contacted by Alan Perry about the restoration of one he owned, since it was his intention to ride said bicycle 173 miles from Trinity to St. John's, Newfoundland. Why Newfoundland one might ask and for what purpose?

In the early 19th Century there was an important mercantile and fishing trade business between Poole and Trinity run by the Garland family. Alan Perry, a member of the Wessex Newfoundland Society and the Trinity Trust UK, was fund raising for the reconstruction of the Garland home in Trinity that had fallen into disrepair during the 1960s.

Dave, always up for a challenge, volunteered to accompany Alan saying that two idiots on penny-farthings would be more worthy of sponsorship than one and so it was that in June 1995 they went to Newfoundland. The route ridden was along the hard shoulder of the Trans Canada Highway, that is, in essence, a dual carriageway running from Trinity to St Johns. Dave recounted that although the ride was uneventful, having Kenilworth logging trucks and trailers passing by at a rate of knots, seemingly every 20 minutes or so, created quite a draught.

I believe he said that they took 5 days to accomplish the ride and arrived in Saint John's in plenty of time before being received by the Premier of Newfoundland and numerous sponsors. He extolled the friendliness of the people and had a thoroughly good time. This and other fund raising programs for the reconstruction were successful and the Lester-

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Garland House was officially opened on June 21, 1997 - almost exactly two years after the ride.

Many thanks to Dave for making the trip over to Berkshire and for a very entertaining talk. PS. For the anoraks among you, the penny-farthing that Dave rode was an 1882 Surrey Machinist Invisible.

### March

Mid-week Lunch Meeting There was a good gathering of approximately 20 members and partners at The Jack O'Newbury in Binfield for the March mid-week lunch meeting. This time the weather wasn't suitable enough, with imminent rain in the forecast and damp salty roads, to tempt anyone out on two wheels. However, living within a mile or so of the venue, your scribe substituted a hat and raincoat for his usual riding gear and got there by hitching a lift on shanks' pony.

Topics of conversation ranged across the board from hip and knee operations to the EU Referendum. Oh! And yes, somewhere in there, there was talk about bikes and riding and looking forward to the warmer weather to take advantage of them.

Pioneer Run Sunday 29th saw a few 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 (26 members) The Bring and Buy Book sale formed the substance of this month's club night. Sadly, it seems that we (collectively) are struggling to find those gems of the written word that seemed to be plentiful across the auction table in years gone by. Leaving us with piles of pre-owned magazines, that I for one, hardly ever managed to read in the first place. Nevertheless, these kind donations raised some funds for the Section for which we are most thankful. Many thanks to Vic Blake for taking up the post of auctioneer for the evening.

### April

Mid-week Run The mid-week run over to Bill Faulkner's in Church Hanborough was the first organised ride of the 2016 season. The promise of reasonably good weather generated a welcome turnout of some 18 riders on a wide variety of machines, who gathered in the Pangbourne car park for a scheduled departure at 10.30.

It was good to see Keith and Muriel, who joined us on 4 wheels, as Keith's bikes were still suffering from indeterminate winter malaises and weren't operational. Noted by his absence, Brian Ling, co-organiser of the visit, tendered his apologies for not participating, but a fire door had dropped on his foot the day before and he was unable to walk. Ouch! I hope Brian, that you're soon up and about again.

Bill Barnes was ride leader on one of his Tiger 80s. He had loaned the other to Steve Harris, his TVAM observer, whose only experience of riding a rigid was in his early days on home built Harley Davidson choppers with solid rear ends. He commented later that he had to anticipate braking a lot sooner with the pre-war Triumph than his BMW 1200 RT and appreciated the BMW's modern suspension after experiencing the impact of the numerous potholes and drain covers en route on the Tiger 80.

Bill's route took us northwest from Pangbourne, past the Four Points at Aldworth and on to West Ilsey. Then north, past Harwell, Abingdon, Wooton, Cumnor and Eynsham and finally through Church Hanborough to the George & Dragon at Long Hanborough for lunch. A very nice route and such was the level of traffic that the group remained intact for the whole trip.

After a pleasant lunch, we retraced our steps a short way to Bill Faulkner's in Church Hanborough, where we had an enjoyable couple of hours looking at his collection of bikes, that range from veteran through to the 70s - many of which he simply rescued from

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people who were going to throw them away in days gone by. Bill was the ideal host, knowing the history of each of the bikes he'd acquired and regaling us with anecdotes of his long association with motorcycles. What's more, his wife plied us with tea and biscuits to conclude our visit. Many thanks to both for a very enjoyable visit.

The run back was led by Bill until such time as more opportune routes appeared for members to make their separate ways back home. Many thanks Bill for running point and to Brian for organising the visit.

Calleva Gallop What an excellent turn out we had for our annual Calleva Gallop. 21 riders assembled in the forecourt of the Calleva Arms under broken cloud and in a very brisk westerly wind. Laura Blake looked by far the most snug, suitably ensconced in the boat sidecar of Vic's Matchless outfit.

Allan Herbert and Doug Plester had organised the run of 44 miles, that took us down past the walls of Roman Silchester and on toward Tadley, Ramsdell, Ewhurst, Hannington, Binley and west most to St Mary Bourne. Our easterly return took in Kingsclere, Wolverton Townsend and Pamber Heath. Arriving back at the Calleva Arms approaching 12.30 in plenty of time for lunch.

By tradition the landlord, chooses the winner of the John Moore Cup for the bike he likes best. This year the award went to Lorraine Carter with her 1962 250 Greeves Scottish. Well done, Lorraine.

The run was very enjoyable with very little traffic and some wonderful countryside and views. Although, without putting the commentator's curse on next year's event, it would have been nice, if it had been 10F degrees or so warmer. In any event, it has been an ideal start to the year. Many thanks to Allan and Doug for doing the organising.

Club Night - Video Evening (20 members) The section was once again treated to another wonderful selection of videos and video clips that Michael Bryant had managed to unearth from the archives and Internet. They varied from the last days of Triumph in 1983 - where it was apparent that the board of the Co-operative couldn't be bothered to get off their backsides to follow potential opportunities - and the demise of the Hesketh V1000 to clips of a lion (as passenger) on a wall of death motorcycle outfit and to the rugged(!) going of the Allan Jefferies Trophy and Scott trials in Yorkshire in the late 50s.

Also, some footage of Owen Tyler on his 1913 Scott. Most appropriate given that our annual Owen Tyler run is set for the 22nd of next month. In addition, an interview by Meridian TV of our very own Peter Mann, who, when he worked for BOAC, was given the responsibility of serving the Queen on royal flights. An experience not to be forgotten. Many thanks Michael for a most entertaining evening.

Evening Gathering Following up on suggestions at a previous club night that it might be nice to hold an additional informal gathering of the Section during the summer months - when the evenings are lighter - the Coach & Horses at Rotherwick was chosen as a likely venue. Several members took the opportunity to do just that on the first Tuesday of the month - and did so through October.

### **May**

Founders Day Rally The Berkshire Founder's Day Biennial Relay Rally checkpoint this year was at Brightwell's Cafe, Holiday Inn, Padworth.

Bill Barnes (1981 Honda CB900 F2) and John Campbell (1995 Moto Guzzi) were the first to arrive soon after 9.00am. Shortly followed by Robin Strange (1967 Triumph T90), Allan Herbert (1989 CG 125), Roger Hunter (1978 CB400), Roy & Marion Headon (1970 BSA Firebird), Alex Taylor (1938 Francis Barnett Seagull) and Chris Green (1937 New Imperial).

Michael Allaway (1979 BMW R45), David Fidgett (1970 Moto Guzzi V50), David Little (1957 Ariel NH 350) and Richard Potts (1951 Royal Enfield 350), a newly active member

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in the Section, arrived and departed during the day.

Bruce Spiller (Triumph T100SS) concluded his run at the checkpoint after travelling 287 miles and visiting 6 sections. 6 others from further afield checked in for stickers at various times.

Bruce from within our contingent covered most Sections with 6, Robin covered 200 miles and 5 Sections, Bill and John, 187 miles and 4 Sections. Michael and Malcolm Bryant rode 249 miles and visited 7 Sections before missing out on the 8th at Berkshire, as the checkpoint had already closed. Maybe we need to stay open a bit longer in 2018? Thanks to Vic Blake, Malcolm White, Roy Alexander and Paul Richmond for manning the point.

Fleet Lions Charity Run 'Though not specifically on the Berkshire VMCC calendar, the Lions Club of Fleet Classic Motorcycle Run & Concours on May day is quite a favourite for a swift jaunt through north Hampshire and south Berkshire with a BBQ lunch at the White Hart or the Four Horseshoes depending on which side of the junction in Sherfield on Loddon one chooses.

When we got to the lunch stop, Roger Prew found that the retaining bracket holding the Altete horn on his Triumph had fractured and, after apparently swinging in the breeze for a while, pulled free of its wiring and had fallen off in the road. Fortunately, a following rider had noticed this happening and retrieved the horn from the roadway to hand it back to a much relieved Roger when he returned to his bike.

Others seen on the run were Robin Strange, who clearly hadn't had enough riding on the Relay Rally, and Doug Plester, who had suffered a broken wheel adjuster on his Greeves on his way to the rally point the day before. A very pleasant day out and a return to home, just as the first drops of rain started falling.

Mid-week Run (11 members) With torrential rain overnight and heavy showers forecast during the day, it was hardly surprising that only a merry band of three on bikes, Bill, Paul and Malcolm and two, Allan and Jean, in a 4 wheel conveyance assembled at Nelson's Diner in Kingsclere for the run down to the Empress of Blandings in the New Forest.

In fact, despite a welcome pause in the precipitation, just getting to the start itself was problematic, with major holdups on both M4 and M3 motorways spewing traffic onto the highways and byways around Wokingham and Grazeley. Not to mention the odd, impromptu ford across the road that had to be navigated feet up. Suitably stoked with coffee, tea and pancakes (well, at least I had pancakes), we set off at about quarter to eleven under threatening skies with Bill in the lead. Allan and Jean, the good sports that they are, dropped the convertible roof of their Mazda MX5 to share in whatever weather was to come.

Bill's route took us over to Whitchurch and down to Hurstbourne Priors, Long Parish, Wherewell and Stockbridge. Turning left in the middle of Stockbridge, we took a southerly route down roads unfamiliar through the Houghtons, Dunbridge and West Wellow to Ower and our destination at the Empress of Blandings in Copythorne. This, despite a slight detour around the aptly named town of Wigley, when the local signage helpfully showed two A36s with no obvious distinction between the two.

Arriving at the pub, we were met by Ian, a participant in last year's Welsh holiday, who had ridden up from Gosport to join the group. The bar staff had set us up in a nice area at the rear of the pub and wild boar sausages, fish & chips and baguettes were soon consumed with relish (not the sauce).

The run home took a more direct route up to Stockbridge via Romsey and then east to Sutton Scotney. Bill and I stopped at Nelson's Diner for tea and a dessert, in order to make a complete day of it. The rain? Well, there were a few light showers, but not of sufficient intensity for Allan to stop and erect the top of the car on the way down, while the sun was shining through broken cloud on our arrival at the Empress. The heaviest I experienced was in the last couple of miles of getting home. You would think that heavy

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rain would wash off some of the mud and grime, but it's just one of those things that it doesn't! Thanks to Bill for arranging and leading the run.

Owen Tyler Run There was a good gathering of motorcycles and riders at the annual Owen Tyler Cup Run, the date of which we'd brought forward one week to miss the Whitsun bank holiday.

The start was located at the Air Scout Hut in Hurst and participants were plied with tea, coffee and biscuits before embarking off on their excursion around the Berkshire and Oxfordshire countryside. There were two routes; one for veteran, vintage and smaller capacity machines and a longer one of approximately 70 miles for the others.

Lunch was had at the Rising Sun in Witheridge Hill, Stoke Row, where there was plenty of time to sit outside in the broken sunshine while enjoying our meals. After which we returned back to the Air Scout Hut for peer judging and awards and consummate quantities of tea and cakes.

Chairman, Bill Barnes, presented the awards, which were as follows:

Best Veteran - Sadly there was an absence of veteran entries this year.

Best Vintage - Vic Blake, 1926 Raleigh Sports 350cc

Best Post Vintage - Roger Prew, 1939 Triumph Speed Twin 500cc

Best Post War - Michael Bryant, 1955 Triumph 110 650cc

Most Original - Oily Rag Cup - Alex Taylor, 1927 AJS M6 350cc

Best Under 250 - Doug Plester, 1965 Greeves Essex 249cc

Best Tiddler - Mike Allaway, 1999 Honda C90 Cub 89cc

Highest Combined Age - Vic Blake, 1926 Raleigh Sports 350cc

Owen Tyler Cup - Vic Blake, 1926 Raleigh Sports 350cc

Many thanks to Vic Blake and Bruce Spiller for organising the run and arranging the facilities. Thanks to Laura Blake who organised the refreshments and for all those who donated cakes and sundries and helped out behind the counter. Thanks also to the Hurst Air Scouts for allowing us to use their hut for the day.

Club Night Girder Fork, Rigid and Low Power Show (18 members) Heavy rain, unfortunately, put the mockers on the show, so members returned to the bar for a noggin and natter instead.

### June

Chairman's BBQ & Baton Exchange This year we combined the Chairman's Ride In and BBQ with the VMCC 70th Anniversary Baton exchange. And a very fine day it was. When arriving just after 11 o'clock, there was already the aroma of barbequed sausages and burgers woofing through the air - and a number of bikes in the paddock.

It was the Chiltern Section's turn to hand over the baton to Berkshire and a contingent of riders led by Chairman, Mike Vangucci, arrived about 1.00pm. They had been a little delayed due to the need to work out a detour around the ford at the Lands End Pub in Charvil, as it was a little deep for their liking. VMCC President, Rodney Hann, presided over the baton exchange, as Mike passed it over to our Chairman, Bill Barnes. This was especially fitting, as the baton was crafted by Rod in honour of the anniversary in the first place. Two members of the Brooklands Section were also in attendance, as it was to them we were to hand it on the following day.

All in all, another very successful event with some 40 riders and machines taking part. Our thanks to the Hurst Air Scouts for the use of their facilities, Bruce and Simon for organising and managing the BBQ and the ladies for dispensing refreshments and bringing along sumptuous delights.

Baton Exchange at Brooklands Following the acceptance of the 70th Anniversary baton from the Chiltern section the day before, a contingent of 10 Berkshire members met at

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the New Leathern Bottle at Jealotts Hill, Warfield and rode down to Brooklands to hand it on to them.

We were warmly greeted by an equivalent number of Brooklands' members and treated to coffee and pastries to get the proceedings going. We were then given a guided tour of the motorcycle exhibits by Tony Baxter, who provided us with excellent snapshot histories of the bikes in the collection.

At 12.30 pm it was time for the baton exchange between our Chairman, Bill Barnes, and Richard Huckle, Chairman of the Brooklands Section. After which we were able to explore the museum and the enormity of the newly renovated Stratosphere Chamber designed by Barnes Wallis in 1946.

Thanks to all at Brooklands for a very enjoyable day.

Mid-week Run to Flower Pots Inn The mid-week run took us to the Flower Pots Inn at Cheriton. A popular watering hole for classic bikers during the summer months. We started at the Bushe Cafe at Blackbushe airport and made our way across country along roads which were generally unfamiliar. Taking in Odiham, Shalden, Bentworth, Preston Candover, Totford and Itchen Abbas along the 38 mile route. Arriving at the Inn at 12.15 in plenty of time for lunch and a gander at the myriad of bikes, as they appeared and departed. The most desirable for me that day was a very nicely turned out Matchless G3 in competition trials trim.

Club Night - Car Park Concours (24 members) This month's club night was scheduled as the Car Park Concours, but it was postponed until August, due to the appearance of a weather front driving through that evening. We did, however, enjoy a good noggin and natter. Next month is an opportunity to ride out with observers from the Thames Vale Advanced Motorcyclists organisation. A chance for a friendly critique of ones riding style in the interests of enlightened enjoyment.

Mystery Run The Mystery Run, as the name implies, is a mystery - the route and destination only being known, in this case, by Bill Barnes. Ten or so participants assembled at the Holiday Inn in Padworth for the start at 10.30. Bill was pushed off with some trepidation, as the charging system on the Honda had developed a fault and there was an insufficiency of urge in the battery to kick it in to life. Where's that good, old fashioned, cranking handle when you need it?

I didn't take much note of the route we travelled, as it was a pleasant enough day and it was nice just to get out and about. Good progress was made until the North Wanborough area, when the Honda sucked the last vestige of life out of the battery and finally expired. Michael Bryant, with a hasty exchange of instructions and Denise to guide him, kindly took on the mantle of run leader to get us where we going. Bill, last seen, was calling the recovery service to get him home. The first time, he says, he's ever needed to use such a service.

Our destination was the Rural Life Centre at Tilford, a little south of Farnham, and Michael ably led us there. Although he did admit later that he made up some of it as he went along, but such is the nature of a mystery run.

The Rural Life Centre is worth a visit, if only for the good food and service available in the cafeteria. Roger Prew and I took the opportunity to wander around all the exhibits. Life in the early 1900s, although more physically demanding than today, seemed to be a lot simpler then. Bill, I'm pleased to report, was successfully recovered and returned home in time to appear at the Centre on his BMW in the early afternoon. Thank you Bill for organising the run and to Michael for stepping in.

## July

Mid-week Run to Hayling Island It being summer(?), Lorraine and Derek thought that a day at the seaside was apropos. And so it was. Eleven of us met at the Shack Cafe for the 10.30 start. Derek was to drive the van and Lorraine to lead. Along the way in Alton, we picked up a small contingent of BSA club members, whose inclusion had been



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prearranged seven days before at the 'Pots.

The route down to Alton took in North Wanborough and Odiham, but then we departed from the normal track and passed through Selborne, Liss, South Harting, Compton and Emsworth and thence across the bridge to Hayling Island. A nice road with not much traffic and with, seemingly, fewer potholes than normally encountered these days.

Derek had arrived in advance of the party and had tea and coffee brewing on the stove. Jean and Denise had driven down separately and Ian had come over from Portsmouth. Rob arrived soon after on his mountain bike, impressing us all with his fortitude. That is until it was discovered that he'd parked in another car park on the island and ridden over.

Suitably buoyed up with tea and biscuits, Lorraine, Derek, Doug, Liz and Ian - individually - changed into bathing attire in the bathing hut (van) and went for a swim in the Solent. Bill and Malcolm couldn't let it be said that they'd wimped out and went for a dip after eating hearty lunches of British Steak and Admiral Stout pie at the 'Inn on the Beach'. The Caribbean it was not, the soft, white sand giving way to a preponderance of shale, akin to that of Chinese torture when walked on with barefeet, and a temperature quite a way south of balmy. However, it wasn't that bad, once one got used to it. It definitely made one more appreciative of the tea on offer, afterwards.

The promised rain then came in from the west in a rush, but by that time we'd all put on waterproofs and the torrential downpour that chased our convoy up the A3(M) was just inconvenient. We emerged from the shower into sunshine and veered off west onto the A272 and down to Loomies for another cuppa and some cake to round off the day.

Many thanks to Lorraine and Derek for organising the run. So say we all.

Club Night (11 members) Unfortunately, the TVAM (Thames Vale Advanced Motorcyclists) observed ride scheduled for the evening had to be postponed at short notice, due to a shortage of observers.

Perhaps, the proposed event put off others from coming to the club, but there was only a small gathering in attendance. However, seven of the fifteen or so who attended rode in and amongst them we welcomed David Hubbard and his son Alex, who came up from Basingstoke. In any event, a good noggin and natter was had by all.

Girder Fork, Rigid & Low Power Run The Cottage Inn in Upper Bucklebury was again the venue for our annual Girder Fork, Rigid and Low Power Run. Although, the focus is on the former, all vintage eligible bikes are welcome. The weather was kind to us this year and 12 riders assembled in the paddock to take part in the event.

If there had been an award for most impressive paddock transport, Alex Taylor would surely have won it, arriving as he did with his 1924 Motobecane MB1 atop the flatbed of his 1914 Model T Ford.

There were two routes of approximately 35 and 45 miles to cater for the capabilities of the machines and there was more or less a 50/50 split across the group and a good showing of 7 pre-war models.

Speaking with Alex before the start, he said that the MB1 didn't like hills. I mentioned that this year I'd routed around Buckham Hill at Great Shefford, which I thought to have the steepest gradient. It was only on the occasion of me passing him sometime later on the road and then to be faced with quite a number of longish inclines that I wondered how he was going to get on (or off and push) along the rest of the route. I consoled myself with the thought that there was likely to be as much up, as there was down. Fortunately, he advised back at the finish that he'd only needed to push up two inclines, so not too bad considering the power available to him.

The longer route took us south through Boxford and west to Eastbury before heading back to Great Shefford and thence in a northeasterly direction to the village of Farnborough on the Berkshire Downs. Followed by a jaunt through West and East Ilsey to

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Compton, where the kindly Highways Agency had dumped a mile or so of loose chippings on what appeared to be a smear of tar no thicker than that of butter on the proverbial British Rail sandwich. Muppets!

Arriving back at about 12.30, most had successfully navigated the route as written, although Allan admitted that he had inadvertently skipped a couple of lines on the sheet and gone off in the wrong direction for a bit. It wasn't long after, that Chris Green on his New Imperial and Alex on the Motobecane returned to the car park to conclude the run.

Sunday lunch was enjoyed by many and we thank Gary and Mandy at the Cottage Inn for their hospitality. Participants: Roy & Marian Headon, BSA Firebird; Malcolm Bryant, New Imperial; Michael Bryant, Triumph 2/1; Allan Herbert, BSA Bantam; Roger Hunter, BSA 350; Mike Allaway, Honda 125; Nigel Beale, Rudge Special; Alex Taylor, Motobecane; Alan Hummerstone & son, Le Velocette; Bill Barnes, Triumph T80; Chris Green, New Imperial; Malcolm White, Triumph Tiger 90.

### August

Mid-week Run to Ducklington (11 members) Our August mid-week run started from the Holiday Inn car park at Padworth. The destination was the Bell Inn in the village of Ducklington, Oxfordshire. The venue was chosen for no other reason than for its interesting location and the Senior's menu for lunch. Quaint, as our ex-colonials across the water might say. According to our past Chairman Doug Ellis, Liz rode the bus between Abingdon and Witney and the route it took went through the village - that is until the bypass was built.

The run involved a gentle saunter up past the Four Points pub at Aldworth, subsequently taking in Compton, East and West Ilsley. Thence along the perimeter of Harwell to Rowstock, East Hendred and Ardington. Proceeding through East Hanney and West Hanney we were suddenly faced with a Road Closed board, a new tarmac surface and an advisory notice indicating that the road to Lyford would be closed from 18 July for 10 days - Google maps can only provide one with just so much current information. Well, it was way past the 10 days specified and the road looked worth a try. After all, the worst that might have happened is that we would have had to turnaround - though a little more difficult for Keith and Muriel following in their car. Fortunately, the new tarmac took us right up to the cross roads where we needed to turn left. Lyford, Charney Bassett and Buckland Marsh were soon in our mirrors, with Bampton and Aston to follow suit. Crossing the A415 bypass we arrived in Ducklington pretty much on the stroke of noon with the church bell ringing out the time. There was a pond, but no ducks were in evidence.

Not long after we'd parked, Alan Hummerstone rode up having taken a separate path and Michael, Malcolm and Denise Bryant arrived in four wheels, as they didn't wish to go through the double shuffle of moving suitable bikes around in the garage for this run and then Popham at the weekend.

It was just warm enough to sit outside (most still in our jackets) and enjoy the conversation and the variety of food the pub had to offer. After which, we made our way back to our various homesteads with people dropping off the convoy, as our paths diverged.

Participants: Doug Ellis, Norton; Roy Headon, BSA Firebird; Roger Hunter, Honda 400; Mike Allaway, BMW 75/5, Allan Herbert, Honda CD 200; Malcolm White, Triumph Tiger 90, a warm welcome to new member Tony Heyworth, Triumph T160; Roger Prew, Triumph Bonneville; Lorraine Carter, Suzuki GS550; Tony Wright, Honda XBR500

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.

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August Amble      What an excellent turnout for this event. 19 riders and passengers gathered at the Holiday Inn in Padworth for the start - co-mingling with members of an historic car club, who were being briefed before being sent on their way in a plethora of classic automobiles, ranging from Alvis to MG to Sunbeam.

The sky was overcast with clouds lingering from the storm that had blown through the day before, but the forecast was one that was improving, so we set off with high hopes that it would at least stay fine for the time that mattered.

Allan Herbert was ride leader/organiser, but decided he would hustle the herd from the back (even though this placed him in a perfect position to inhale two stroke fumes emanating from a rather tasty Ariel Arrow in front) and let the route sheet do the talking. Which it very ably did, since we all arrived at the George Inn in Vernham Dean not long after noon, having enjoyed a great run through the countryside, while skirting around a number of large-wheeled tractors taking up their lane and then some.

As is mentioned in motorcycling scriptures, 'there was no room in the Inn', so we were directed to bench tables in the garden. No great problem, since the sun had started to break through the clouds and the food arrived surprisingly swiftly, given our number. Those of us who wished to leave room for tea and cakes at Roger's decided to have a lighter meal of ham, egg and chips, rather than the traditional roast. However, with two large slices of ham, two eggs and a pile of chips, I'm not sure that ours was any less.

Replete after our meals, Allan led the 25 miles to Roger and Maryan's at Ufton Nervet, where we quaffed tea, coffee and cake in the now warm August sunshine and chatted about the day and topics in general before making our separate ways home.

Jean Herbert remarked during the tea and cake fest, that Allan has been organising this run for 20 years. Fantastic. Well done and many thanks, Allan, for two decades of fun. Thanks too to Roger and Maryan for their hospitality and to all those who provided tasty treats.

Club Night - TVAM Assessment Evening (12 members)      The best laid plans of mice and men, they say. Well, after a postponement of this event in July, everything was scheduled, except for an automobile accident between J10 and J11 on the M4, that caused chaos to the traffic in the surrounding area. Resulting in the late arrival of riders taking part. Although, it must be said that all the volunteer TVAM observers had made it on time. Thus, with dusk fast approaching, the individual observed ride portion of the evening was replaced by a pleasant 45 minute run out through Streatley, Aldworth, Ashampstead and Bradfield and back to Englefield for a noggin and natter.

Many thanks to the TVAM observers for volunteering their time and effort to come along with the intention of imparting some of the practical aspects of safer riding. I know, after just a few observed rides, that my riding is benefiting from the pointers given, despite my modest half-century of prior riding on the road.

### **September**

Annual Holiday      September saw 20 of the Berkshire Team basing themselves at The Royal Hotel in Skegness for a week of touring throughout Lincolnshire.

The hotel, weather and roads were just fantastic and the following places were visited:- Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, Waltham Windmill, Coningsby Heritage Flight Centre, National Craft Centre, Bubble Car Museum and of course the delightful Wolds.

Friday was rainy so most of the group went on a brewery visit, but four hardy souls braved the conditions for a fabulous run across the Wolds to Market Rasen, then down south to Horncastle and back to Skegness; this route was great despite the rain and would have been epic had it been dry. This part of the country must be one of the best kept secrets as the countryside and roads are just meant for motorcycling and I can assure everyone that the terrain is not all flat!!

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The Royal Hotel did an admiral job of looking after everybody in terms of meals and service and I am sure we will head back there sometime in the future.

Bill decided that we needed to be a little more active one evening and duly arranged for us to take part in some Ten-Pin Bowling; it became apparent during the evening that many hadn't lost some of their skills from many years ago as some quite impressive scores were notched up.

In summary it was a very enjoyable week and all are looking forward to 2017 wherever that may be.

Stonehenge Inter-Section Quiz The Stonehenge Section quiz was held at the Redlynch Sports and Social Club in Woodfalls, Wiltshire on 21st September. Berkshire fielded a team of four; consisting of Robin Strange, Bill Barnes, Lorraine Carter (co-opted from the sidelines) and Malcolm White.

The quiz was 100% motorcycling facts and figures related, so it fell upon Robin, with able assistance from Bill, to put down the answers to the six batches of 10 questions, while Lorraine and I looked on in the hope that at least one question would spark a single contribution to the affair. Despite this handicap, Berkshire placed third out of seven on 34, with Wessex second on 36 and Stonehenge the winners on 40.5. We'll endeavour to turn the tables on them at our reciprocal quiz night on the 27th.

It wasn't a complete bust, however, as Stonehenge put on a grand spread of sandwiches and cakes to see us right on the journey home. Thanks to all involved for their hospitality on a fun evening.

Club Night - Inter-Section Quiz (28 members) Five teams from local, and not so local, Sections participated in our annual Inter-Section quiz competition. Quiz master, Michael Bryant, once again, compiled a wide variety of questions covering the TT, obscure motorcycle models, famous riders' helmet colours, factory and race circuit locations and many other odds and sods numbering 70 in all.

At the final accounting, the winners of the coveted Cup were Cyclemotor on 47 1/2, who were slightly ahead of Stonehenge on 47. Chiltern were third on 44 1/2, similarly ahead of Berkshire on 44 and Oxford, who were one person down, taking fifth place.

Sandwiches, sausage rolls and cake were then consumed in order to replenish the grey matter expended during the quiz. Thanks to all who made their way to Berkshire to take part and to those who contributed sustenance and bonhomie.

### **October**

Mid-week Run Despite the threat of a few showers in the early morning, a good group of riders, some 20 in all, met at the Holiday Inn in Padworth for the 11.00 am start. The run, organised and led by Doug Ellis, took us to a village in rural Oxfordshire, where we were treated to a late morning snack of sausage baps and rolls washed down with tea and coffee. We were then given the opportunity to look around a number of nicely restored veteran machines that Joe, our host, had maintained and ridden in many a Pioneer Run. It was a privilege to see them.

Many thanks to Joe and his wife for the invitation and their hospitality and to Doug for organising it.

Autumn Frolic This is the second time we've used Nelson's Diner for the start of a run. Last time, we had to brave traffic chaos and flooded roads to get there. This time the roads were thankfully clear of obstructions, but visibility through the mist and fog was less than ideal. Especially, when further reduced by misted visors and spectacles. That aside, a group of 10 riders and Keith and Muriel safely arrived in time for the start. Some of whom had arrived early enough for tea and breakfast - well I had the Americano breakfast of eggs, bacon, hash browns and pancakes, but we digress. Such, however, is

the popularity of the diner, that a few later arrivals were left wanting due to an absence of seating.

Bill gave a short briefing on the route we were to take and we set off accordingly. His route quickly led us on to a minor road through Ashley Warren. It appeared to have been recently resurfaced, as there was quite a bit of gravel, but it was open with good visibility and ran through farmland with woods in the distance displaying the signs of early Autumn. It's truly one to remember for a later date.

Hurstbourne Priors, St Mary Bourne, Vernham Dean, Fosbury and Oxenwood are all villages with which we are familiar - at least for having ridden through them, but it's always nice to have them strung together in a different order. Our destination for lunch was the George Inn in the centre of Lambourn where they looked after us really well with good value Sunday lunches and locally brewed ale.

The notable thing about the day for me - apart from the company, etc. - was that this was a beautiful beginning to Autumn. The weather was chill, but the sky was bright with broken clouds and blue sky. Colourful leaves were falling on dry roads to be swept up in a maelstrom by the bikes in front to swirl around the riders following. A lovely ride. Many thanks to Bill for organising the day.

Club Night - Bring and Buy Hardware (20 members) An assortment of goodies lay on the top of the auction table at the beginning of the evening. Some near new items were complemented by others that had seen better days. Doug Ellis, once again, did an excellent job of auctioneering and the pile of artifacts dwindled, as they found new homes with the members present. It is understood that £90 was raised for Section funds. So a big thank you to all who participated in the evening and to Doug for doing such a sterling job.

### **November**

Mid-week Run to the Swan Inn at East Ilsey Seven riders turned out on a very grey day for the last organised run of the year. The rain, that had been forecast to clear by early morning, had lingered and although there were breaks in the cloud there wasn't quite the hint of brightness that we had hoped for and the roads were very wet.

There had been some mis-communication over the number of intended miles to reach the Swan from Padworth, so a number of members turned up in their cars not wishing to hose the bikes down after a run approximating 20 miles. Yours truly, the organiser, had mapped out a run of 35 miles, which, given the state of the roads, probably wouldn't have made any difference to the numbers riding. Anyway, everyone was game enough to go for it.

Vic had arranged the venue, but was, as yet, not up to riding, since his and Laura's escapade in Wales. He therefore volunteered to drive his van at the rear of the group, in order to be there to help in the event of a breakdown. I responded that we generally didn't have need for it, thus immediately invoking the commentator's curse.

There aren't too many routes to East Ilsey that we hadn't ridden at some time or other in the past 12 months, so it was a bit of a challenge to find something which was somewhat new. The route therefore introduced a couple of lanes and single track roads in the hinterland, the surfaces of which, as it turned out, were horribly wet and brown with leaves and, in one case, green with moss in the centre.

Successfully and safely navigated, this was followed by open road through Streatley and Didcot and the demise of Roger Hunter's Bantam, the engine of which rattled to extinction (later investigation revealed that one of the flywheel cover plates had come loose). And there was Vic, on cue, to pick up rider and bike and transport them to the Swan Inn, arriving soon after the main contingent. Others had joined the group, so there were about 20 who enjoyed a carvery of roast pork and beef and all the trimmings. Very good it was too.

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Many thanks to Vic who organised the venue and for assisting with the Bantam's breakdown and its return to home.

Riders were: Bill Barnes, BMW R100; Allan Herbert, Honda CG125; Roy Headon, BSA B40; Roger Hunter, BSA Bantam; Paul Fenton, Triumph T110; Rob Lane, Honda; Malcolm White, Triumph Speed Twin.

Oxford Inter-Section Quiz There were seven teams competing for the honour of a win and some prized ales at the Oxford Inter-Section Quiz. Berkshire fielded two teams: Berkshire 'A' with Robin Strange, Michael and Malcolm Bryant and Vic Blake; Berkshire 'B' with Laura Blake, Lorraine Carter, Bill Barnes and Malcolm White.

This is the quiz where those of us with less motorcycling knowledge have a chance to contribute, since only 10 of the 80 questions related to that specific genre. The rest being general(?) knowledge, that, judging from the scores, wasn't as general as one might have hoped.

At the conclusion, the Grass Track section took top honours with the final scores being as follows: Grass Track - 35 1/2, Berkshire 'B' - 33 1/2, Oxford - 32 1/2, Berkshire 'A' and Cyclemotor - 31 1/2, Chiltern - 29 1/2, Matchless & AJS - 23 1/2.

This resulted in modest congratulations among Berkshire 'B' team members, as this is probably the first time on record that they've beaten the 'A' team. Mind you, this is unlikely to be repeated at the Chiltern Quiz on 7th December, as Chiltern quiz master Glyn Chambers assured us that all the questions will be motorcycling related.

Thanks very much to the Oxford Section for being our hosts and for providing the chili con carne, chicken and associated trimmings.

Club Night - Guest Speaker (44 members) Our Guest Speaker on this cold November evening was Allen Millyard, the famed creator and builder of the 'Flying Millyard', 'Viper' and many other special, multi-cylinder motorcycles.

Speaking to a packed Berkshire audience, which expanded into both areas of the Englefield Social Club, Allen gave a fascinating, illustrated talk on the development of both project bikes. He said he'd always had an interest in engineering and upon leaving school enrolled in an engineering apprenticeship at AWRE - an old-school apprenticeship requiring many months of filing, hacksawing and the like. Skills which he still uses to great effect in his workshop, today.

In these days of digital automation, one would be inclined to think that his productions originate from detailed CAD drawings and CNC production, but, in that, one would be mistaken. He is one of those very talented engineers who is able to picture what it is he wishes to do and then puts it into practice on lathe, mill and by hand without committing any of it to writing, save for the odd scrap of paper.

The 'Flying Millyard' is a 5 litre 'V' twin, which was born from an idea he had at the 2012 Salon Privé. A search for something akin to 'big cylinders' on eBay led him to the purchase of a pair of cylinders and pistons from a Pratt and Whitney Wasp radial aero engine. And there it started, with the construction of the crankshaft assembly weighing in at 140 pounds, the machining of a cast block for the crankcases, individual conrods, which were in large part hand filed, etc.....

Fortunately, apart from the fact that I would be doing everyone a disservice in attempting to remember it all, there's a very good article available at '<http://www.brm.co.nz/flying-millyard/>'. So may I suggest to readers, who are interested in this and Allen's other creations to search for other articles on the 'net, of which there are many, but, in truth, there's nothing like listening to the man himself.

Allen said that his primary goal in building his specials is for him to ride and enjoy, most of which having made it to the Isle of Man for classic bike events and elsewhere around the country.

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In concluding, he produced a few pieces of paper and an advert from a VMCC member in 1965, which accompanied the earlier cylinder purchase, who wished to sell said cylinders, as he wasn't able to complete the 'V' twin Morgan project he had in mind. It's nice to think that this fellow's aspirations have been so successfully put into practice half a century later.

Very many thanks to Allen for such an awe inspiring talk. Perhaps, those projects we've nurtured for many a year are indeed possible with a bit of due diligence, a file and a hacksaw. I'm pleased to report that the request for donations for the evening on behalf of the Thames Valley Air Ambulance raised £135. Well done everybody.

### **December**

Christmas Dinner Thirty three members and their significant others met at the Bull Inn in Arborfield for the annual Christmas gathering. The time for the evening was 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start, but when Bill, his wife Gill and I arrived all but a few were already seated waiting for the festivities to begin.

As is the custom, choices from the wide range of delicacies available from the menu had already been made, so it was only necessary to remember what it was that one had ordered a month before. Not so easy these days, especially when the item called appears to be more enticing than that previously chosen. Consultation of the master list soon, however, resolved any potential issues and the throng happily dug into the 2 or 3 courses presented. And, by all accounts, was excellent across the board.

With dessert consigned to bulging stomachs, Bill gave a brief summary of the highlights of Berkshire's 2016 and thanked members' partners for the support that they'd given throughout the year. He, also, thanked Doug and Christine Plester for all their support to the Section since Doug joined in 1979 and wished them every happiness in their move to the Island in January. Echoed, of course, by all.

Thanks to Bill for arranging the evening and the raffle

Club Night (16 members) Berkshire's last gathering of 2016 saw a welcome number of members participate in the annual redistribution of traditional foods, found surplus to requirements and waistlines over Christmas.

Our musical trio of Doug on melodeon, Liz on violin and Derek on phonofiddle were joined this year by Alan Atkinson on an accordeon. Each of whom mostly got the notes in the right order, although not necessarily at the same time. Still, it was sufficient to provide accompaniment to us less musically talented individuals whose vocal chords were in dire need of tuning, as festive songs reverberated off the walls.

Many thanks to everyone who participated and contributed to the Section during the year and best wishes to all for 2017.

Malcolm White

Secretary

For full details of Section activities  
please visit our website.

[www.berkshire-vmcc.org.uk](http://www.berkshire-vmcc.org.uk)  
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