



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

A Compilation of Events in 2020

Officers

Chairman: Bill Barnes
Secretary: Malcolm White
Treasurer: David Bryant

Committee: Mike Allaway
Derek Carter
Lorraine Carter
Paul Digweed
Bruce Spiller

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January

Club Night – Annual General Meeting
Burghfield Sports & Social Club.

The AGM was held on 7th January 2020 at the

The officers and committee were duly elected as follows:

Chairman: Bill Barnes

Secretary: Malcolm White

Treasurer: David Bryant

Committee: Mike Allaway, Derek & Lorraine Carter, Paul Digweed and Bruce Spiller.

The full minutes of the meeting are available on the website.

Mid-week Lunch Meeting Paul Digweed arranged the mid-week lunch at the Bull in Streatley, which I'd passed on many occasion, but had never taken the opportunity to call in to sample the items on their menus.

Yes, menus in the plural. Choices could be made from the main menu, the daytime lunch menu, the vegan menu, the non-gluten menu, the curry menu – available Wednesdays – and a kids menu, though most of us didn't qualify for that. There may also have been one for Uncle Tom Cobley, but I might have skipped that one.

Choosing was always going to be a challenge, so we were asked to pre-order our main courses in order that the kitchen would be prepared in advance. It was therefore somewhat odd that they were unable to serve a couple of the items on the day. Especially since one was a common staple – bangers and mash. I don't believe, however, that this caused much of an upset and everyone seemed to enjoy the food presented. Paul also aided the process by handing out slips of paper with our selections on them to prompt failing memories.

February

Club Night – Guest Speaker Unfortunately, due to a family emergency, Jason Smith 'The Chain Man' was unable to make it to the meeting, so we had an enjoyable noggin and natter instead.

Mid-week Lunch Meeting The venue for the lunch meeting was the Fox & Hounds at Theale. It's a geographically local pub with an extensive menu, so it wasn't surprising that some 28 members and partners came out to enjoy the conviviality of the proceedings.

Fortunately, Storm Ciara, that ravaged many parts of the UK with high winds, torrential rain and flooding at the weekend, had blown itself out by Tuesday – leaving Wednesday in a state of relative calm before the impending arrival of Storm Dennis the upcoming weekend.

The day that dawned was a little chilly with a covering of frost in some places, but since the forecast was for it to remain dry into the latter part of the afternoon seven members took the opportunity to break out the riding gear and ride over on a variety of machinery.

I had estimated a journey time of 30 minutes for the 16 mile trip, but it quickly became apparent that this was optimistic given the amount of traffic and temporary traffic signals and further compounded by an unanticipated diversion around Shinfield. These impediments to travel are clearly becoming more common place – and they're not because of climate change. (Notice how "despite Brexit" has disappeared from media discourse.) I wonder how long it'll take to make this journey after they've concreted over the whole of this area?

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Thanks to Lorraine & Derek Carter for arranging a very enjoyable get together.

March

Club Night – Skittles Evening One of the facilities offered by the Burghfield Sports & Social Club is access to their skittles alley. The committee therefore thought that it would be nice to revive a social activity that the Section used to put on many years ago. First (during my association with the Section) at the Dog and Partridge in Riseley and then at another whose name escapes me at the moment.

A fortunate aspect of our move to Burghfield is that they have a kitchen and are able to provide catering for refreshments. This service is provided by Rosalie of Cutting Edge Catering and she was happy to accommodate our requirements for finger food that included a variety of sandwiches, mini-sausages, spring rolls, quiche, salad and, of course, chips.

Numbers due to the size of the alley were roughly restricted to 30 and it wasn't long before we had commitments from members and partners approaching that number. Which, I'm pleased to say was just about right, as I don't believe any were actually turned away.

24 were willing to put their name down to take a turn in the competition that comprised three rounds through the order with three balls a piece. The winner being the one to knock down more skittles than any other. The game was nine-pin and when one is at one end of the nine yard alley with a large ball in one's hand it seems inconceivable that a ball of those dimensions can slip through the gaps in between the pins at the far end without the merest touch. But this mystical illusion occurred on more than one occasion leaving the bowler aghast at the lack of a result. At the end of the three rounds, Bruce Spiller was seen to be the winner with the most pins knocked down and was awarded a celebratory box of chocs.

To conclude the evening, a game of sudden death was played out where one only has one ball and is required to knock down at least one pin of those left standing by the previous player. The pins are only reset after all have been knocked down thereby making it harder for subsequent players. I'm sorry to say that I don't remember who it was who lived to tell that tale. It wasn't me.

Refreshments were served during the game and sometimes it was difficult to pry fingers away from them to complete the round, but it was all done in good humour and everyone, I believe, had an enjoyable social evening. A definite addition to next year's calendar.

Mid-week Lunch Meeting You will be forgiven for believing that you've already seen a report of a lunch at the Fox & Hounds and, in that, you would not be wrong. This was due to the recent closure of the Jack O'Newbury in Binfield, our usual haunt for the March meeting, and the absence of any other different alternatives.

That is not to say that the Fox & Hounds was in any way a poor choice. In fact, quite the opposite, since our return was a testament to the good food and service that we received from them in February and at a like meeting the year before.

Another break in the weather and drying roads encouraged a few to venture out on 2 wheels, including Bill Barnes – not that Bill needs too much encouraging – who decided that the conditions were sufficiently suitable for him to bring out his newly renovated 1983 Honda GB250 Clubman. And very nice it looks. I decided to give the T160 an airing, since it, like many others, had lain dormant for the winter. Having it fire up first kick was a good sign.

As similarly reported last month, the ride over to Theale on the back roads was beset with a temporary road closure and diversion. Though, in this instance, once diverted there was scant indication of how to return to ones intended path. So it was down to a bit of local knowledge, a smidgen of familiarity

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and some luck to get back on track. I had hoped that the flood across Deans Copse Road leading up to the pub last month had drained away, but that was a forlorn hope. If anything, it was an inch or so deeper. Nothing to seriously worry about, but it did, however, necessitate the use of a bucket of soapy water and sponge later in the afternoon to clean off the muddy residue left behind on both bike and boots.

Tony Heyworth was intending to ride over, but his Austin Healey 3000 had to be moved to retrieve a bike from his garage. So he took the easy way out and drove over. Well, it was easier until he found out later that the flood water had managed to penetrate the gap between the door and sills and the carpets beneath the seats were sopping wet.

There was a smaller number than last month, but we still managed to muster a good group of 17 and I believe that all enjoyed it. One can't help wondering how the coronavirus (Covid-19) and the attempts to mitigate its effects on the wider populace will affect meetings of this nature in the future. Especially since many of us – no matter how we feel about it – are likely to be classified as being in a vulnerable grouping and possibly subjected to special restrictions.

National Lockdown My rhetorical question posed above was answered on the 26th March when the Government imposed a national lockdown that was to see non-essential businesses close and social activities brought to a halt with advice to stay at home and only leave for necessities.

April – December

The restrictions imposed and the prevalence and resurgence of the virus during the last nine months have caused the cessation of all usual Berkshire Section activities.

Bikeathon 2020 Challenge – One ray of light, however, was the Bikeathon 2020 Challenge that Lorraine & Derek Carter had researched and organised for this year prior to any knowledge of the existence of Covid-19 and its consequences.

So, in a year that has seriously curtailed club and motorcycling activities, the Bikeathon Challenge provided an opportunity for members to venture out with a plan and route that encompassed specific destinations – rather than ride to no particular place without a goal. Points for notional mileage from Burghfield plus bonus points for age of machine and capacity added an element of competition to the mix and was intended to encourage the use of a variety of machines. Perhaps enticing riders to get bikes out of the garage that wouldn't normally see a club run and, with no pressure to keep up with a group, would be able to comfortably turn a wheel at their own pace, yet still reach the objective destination.

Individual logs were kept until the end, so it was difficult to determine exactly how everyone was doing, but regular postings of photographs in the Bikeathon 2020 Gallery on the website – attesting to individual journeys – provided an indication of progress.

There was a flurry of activity in October, as the Challenge was being brought to a close, to reach those destinations more distant and I, for one, wished I'd done those and those further still in the summer months and left the closer ones until last – and preferably not in October at all.

With only 10 members posting results, it must be said that the Bikeathon was not, perhaps, as well supported as one might have thought given that it was an ideal event for individuals and small groups of riders permitted under social distancing guide lines.

This, however, in no way diminishes the accomplishments of Paul Digweed and Mike Allaway who each visited 29 of the 30 destinations. Paul being the winner of the trophy by virtue of additional

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points awarded for the ages and capacities of his motorcycles with a score of 2,001. Doug Ellis a creditable second on 1,851 with 24 destinations and Mike third on 1,651.

Disappointingly, we were not able to make the presentation of the Bikeathon Challenge trophy to Paul in person, but it will be presented when circumstances allow.

Many thanks to Lorraine & Derek for organising it and to Paul in advance for volunteering to organise Bikeathon Challenge 2021.

Virtual Club Night A virtual club night was held in early December via the Zoom application platform. 10 members joined the meeting and were able to chat. It was functional and probably works well for a structured meeting, but it's not a substitute for a chin wag of the social kind.

In conclusion

Many thanks to everyone who participated and contributed to the Section during what has been a most challenging year.

It is sincerely hoped that the efficacy and distribution of the vaccines now approved will allow us to function again with some semblance of normality after Easter and more importantly that everyone stays safe and well.

Best wishes to all for 2021.

Malcolm White

Secretary

For full details of Section activities and the many photos that accompany these notes please visit our website.

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