



Berkshire Section
of
The Vintage Motor Cycle Club Ltd.

A Compilation of Events in 2022

Officers

Chairman:	Roger Prew
Secretary:	Malcolm White
Treasurer:	David Bryant
Committee:	Mike Allaway
	Paul Digweed

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At the beginning of the year, the Covid 19 virus, now no worse than a dose of the flu, still dominated discussion and action by the Government. Thankfully, they were at least sensible enough not to impose restrictions over the Christmas period – at least in England – and many were able to visit with family and friends again.

It did, however, mean that activities in January and February were casualties due to the late start and the year didn't really begin until March with the AGM.

March

Club Night – Annual General Meeting The AGM, having been delayed from January due to uncertainties surrounding Covid restrictions, took place on 1st March 2022 at the Burghfield Community Sports Association facilities in Burghfield.

15 members joined the meeting, including officers and committee members, thus there were a sufficient number present to conduct the business of the Section.

The outstanding item of business was the appointment of a Chairman to replace Bill Barnes, who had stepped down from the role. As there were no possible candidates available at the meeting, it was agreed that the other Officers and Committee would undertake this task with a degree of urgency. It was therefore with pleasure that we welcomed the appointment of Roger Prew as the new Chairman of the Berkshire Section, soon thereafter.

The officers and committee were duly elected as follows:

Chairman: Roger Prew (post meeting)

Secretary: Malcolm White

Treasurer: David Bryant

Committee: Mike Allaway and Paul Digweed.

In closing, we thanked Bill most sincerely for his contribution to the Berkshire Section in his role as Chairman for the past eight years. 8 years during which he attended all, but a very few of our social and riding activities, organised many runs and a number of Section holidays around the country.

April

Club Night – Bring & Buy Sale – 5th April 2022

This month saw the return of the Bring & Buy sale for books and motorcycle related items. The main purpose being to provide a forum for the exchange of unwanted and surplus items between members for the benefit of the Section.

The task of auctioneer, by way of introduction to Section activities, fell to our new Chairman, Roger Prew. Was it a baptism of fire? It certainly appeared so initially, as the first couple of items from the eclectic selection on the table in front of him failed to register any interest at all. However, things soon got going and while there was little spirited bidding between the assembled throng, the items and books reduced in number and David was sent scurrying around the room picking up the cash. I wonder how this is going to be done in years hence when we have a cash-less society?

At the end of the evening, it was estimated that 90% of the books, parts and tools had found their way into new ownership and the Section had benefited to the tune of approximately £117. Many thanks to all those who brought items along (including some from Peter Mann's estate), those who purchased them and those who were there in general support of the Section and its activities. Thanks also to

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Roger for doing such a sterling job as the auctioneer.

Mid-Week Lunch – Longbridge Mill – 13th April 2022

There was a very pleasing turn out for the mid-week lunch on Wednesday. Although originally billed as a mid-week run, it was thought that a reasonably local location would encourage folks to get their machines out – perhaps for the first time this year – and ride over to the Longbridge Mill at Sherfield-on-Loddon for lunch.

And so it was that 13 riders and a passenger put rubber to the road and made the most of what turned out to be a warm Spring day. They were joined by another eight making a total of 21. Doug & Liz Ellis, who had planned to be there, sent their apologies, as they'd both been clobbered with the virus at the weekend and were on the mend, but not quite over it.

It was good to catch up with folk who we've not seen for quite some time. One of whom was Callum Ives who we last saw a couple of years ago on his HT Ariel. This time he was riding a competition Ariel that his father rode many years ago and, by happy circumstance, was recently up for sale and he was able to bring it back into family ownership. We wish him the best of fortune in the MCC's Lands End Long Distance trial which takes place this coming weekend.



Many thanks to Roger Prew for organising the meet and to all who came along. I believe everyone had an enjoyable time. We look forward to the Calleva Gallop from the Silchester Arms in Silchester in 10 days time.

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Calleva Gallop – 24th April 2022

What a fantastic turn out for the Calleva Gallop this Sunday just gone. Perhaps more in number than I've been privy to in the past – and I've ridden in most for 20 years. It's reasonably certain that the weather played a large part, but no doubt being locked away for 2 years also contributed to the sense of freedom and need to get out and about that we're all now feeling.

There were many old(er) faces with whom to catch up; Michael and Malcolm & Denise Bryant on their TR6 Trophys; Doug & Liz Ellis on a Norton Electra, Chris Maybury on his 1926 Ariel, Mike Waldron on a recently acquired Honda 400 Four and some new faces; Graham Tindell on an Indian Power Plus, Keith Britton – Ducati 350, Keith Owen – Ariel VH and Graham Whelehan – Matchless G80.



Mike Allaway, the run organiser, signed everyone in under a virtually cloudless blue sky outside the Calleva Arms before giving the riders' briefing, in which he commented that there were few potholes of note – one wondered at the finish if he should perhaps have gone to Specsavers. There were route sheets to follow, but, as is often the case, the first rider showing signs that they know where they are going becomes the run leader and the number who followed behind thank Doug Ellis for acting in that capacity.

The 48 mile route itself was quite familiar – it's been the same for a number of years – but that doesn't detract at all from the enjoyment of riding along lanes in the Spring sunshine with the scent of yellow rape wafting across the hedgerows and new born lambs gamboling in the fields.

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I'm pleased to say that despite many of the machines not having been out for a while all made it around without major issues. Although about half-way around, I noticed a very thin stream of oil glinting in the sunlight on the tarmac as we rode along and pooled briefly at junctions. I discerned from the track that it was coming from the Indian four bikes ahead, but such was the steady pace with few pauses, I was unable to safely overtake the intervening machines to catch up and could only hope that there was sufficient oil to make it round. It was therefore more concerning to see the oil stream stop approximately 6 miles before the finish. Graham did finish, however, the Power Plus apparently none the worse for wear and on inspection found that an oil pipe from the tank had fractured.

The John Moore Cup was, I am led to understand, supposed to be awarded for success in an activity that embodied an element of competition, but over the years this has become an award for the Best Bike as perceived by the landlord – a biker himself – but, more lately because the publican and staff are rather busier now, the choice has been delegated to the organiser and Chairman. This year the John Moore Cup was awarded to Malcolm White and the 1939 Triumph Speed Twin he has restored on behalf of his brother.

Many thanks to Mike for organising the event and to the staff at the Calleva Arms for great food and service.

May

Club Night – Video Evening – 3rd May 2022

On club night we were treated to a good selection of videos compiled and presented by Michael Bryant.

They started with one celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the British Motorcycle Racing Club that was inaugurated in 1909. The BMCRC or “Bemsee” is the world's oldest motorcycle racing club and played a significant part in the early days of racing at Brooklands through to the circuit's closure in 1939. Also included were clips from Shelsey Walsh Hill Climbs and Oulton Park in the 1950s.

A Smiths' Film Unit Production featured racing in the mid-50s that included a Grand National Scramble won by the legendary Jeff Smith, a round of the British Championship at Oulton Park won by Derek Minter on a Honda and the Sidecar Championship won by Fritz Scheidegger. Also, the 1958 TT sidecar race won by Walter Schneider on a BMW, a race in which Eric Oliver with passenger, Mrs Pat Wise, raced a road legal Norton Dominator with a Watsonian chair finishing a very creditable tenth out of a starting field of 25.

After a brief interval to re-charge glasses, the evening's presentation continued with a promotional film from the Triumph factory also in the mid-50s. It depicted the build of the Tiger 100 and delved a little deeper than most into the technicalities, showing the machines and jigs employed to precisely bore the barrels and conrods, machine the pistons, cut the timing gears, assemble the gear box and clutch, build and true the wheels and fit tyres and tubes. The latter apparently taking an average of two and half minutes!

Assembly of these components into the frame seemed equally effortless with the engine fitter being seen to simply pick up a complete engine from an adjacent bench and drop it into the frame cradle without appearing to scratch the paint at all. Fitting the wiring loom into the headlamp nacelle – as anyone who has ever had the masochistic desire to attempt – was a snip.

Once fully assembled the bikes were placed in a series of test stations with rollers under the back wheel that drove the bike at an equivalent of 35 mph for 10 minutes. During which time all gears were

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selected. When this test was passed they were taken for a road test to ensure that all was well before leaving the factory. Seemingly, as it doesn't show it in the film, bikes for export were then disassembled for them to be packed in crates and shipped to their destinations around the world.

The promotional film finished with footage showing the use of the twins by the French police in escort duties – when the French authorities were still friends of ours – and the Royal Army Signals Corp with the fabled “How many riders can I fit on a Triumph” question. The answer being 20.

The evening's presentation concluded with a short clip of a young lady showing how to go about picking up a Harley Davidson – if one should be so careless as to drop it – without a sweat and many helpers. Also, Toni Bou man-handling a BMW Trans Africa with ease, but then again he is a multi-year World Trials Championship winner.

Many thanks to Michael for putting together an excellent presentation, despite a late minute problem with a Windows' update that required a change to his planned program.

50 Years A Member

As an aside, it should be mentioned that Tom Tucker and Chris Maybury received awards and certificates from the VMCC at the recent AGM in recognition of their continued membership and support of the club for 50 years. Congratulations and thank you to you both.



Mid-Week Run – 11th May 2022

To say that Wednesday's mid-week run was a bit damp would be an understatement. While not exactly torrential it persistently rained throughout the day and the low clouds obscured the vistas that

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would otherwise have been spectacular.

Paul Digweed, who had organised the run, was somewhat concerned about keeping everyone on track using the buddy or drop off system, in order that we didn't lose anyone on the way. He needn't have worried, however, as by 10.30 there were just the three bikes; Paul & Pam, Mike Allaway and Malcolm White, so it wasn't a problem. There was a notion that we could stay at the garden centre and have brunch, but since Paul had already ridden and checked the route three times – the latest being just the day before – it was felt that we'd have to give it a go.

I am unable to recall all the places we rode through, as Paul had done a thorough job of finding some of the lesser roads through West Berkshire and since he's hoping to rerun the route later in the year when the weather is more amenable, I won't attempt to give the game away. Suffice to say that quite a few of the roads have featured in others of our runs, even though they were often ridden in the opposite direction.

Arrival in the pub car park, more than a little bedraggled. Thank heavens for GoreTex.



Lunch had been arranged at the aptly named White Horse, since it was almost within spitting distance of the Uffington White Horse carved into the chalk downs above us. Mike Allaway didn't stay for lunch as he had a package to deliver to his son in Swindon a few miles away. We were, therefore, a bit surprised and concerned to hear that he had taken a tumble in nearby Compton Beauchamp. We quickly settled up and made our way over there only to meet a kind lady in a Volvo coming up the road who flagged us down and advised us not to go that way as it was very slippery. She also had Mike safely in the car and was taking him to Swindon hospital. She'd called the paramedics, but, it

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appeared, their response was along the lines that they couldn't get there until a week the following Tuesday!

Speaking to him later when he'd got home, I learned that when he left us he'd inadvertently taken the wrong turning that led down into Compton. Realising his error at the bottom of the hill, he'd turned around and was making his way back up when the rain, wet grass clippings and a generous quantity of diesel on the road surface conspired to up-end his Honda, dumping him unceremoniously on the asphalt and dislocating his right shoulder in the process.

Thankful that Mike was being cared for, there wasn't much else that we could do, so we made our way back to Aldermaston and home. It was a very soggy day and not without its dramas, but for all of that it was nice to get out on the bikes and ride around the countryside. Even though I spent much of the following afternoon washing away the dirt and grime from the T100.

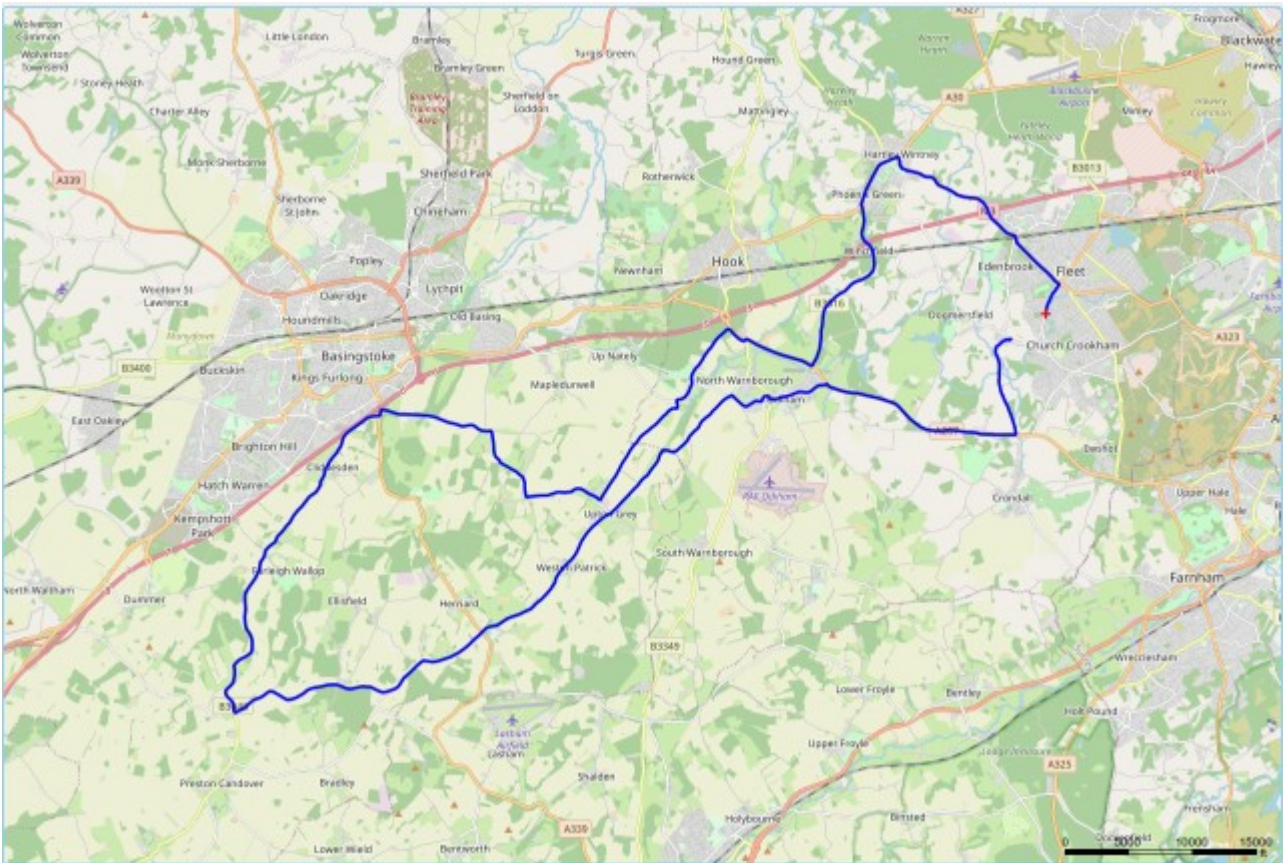
Many thanks to Paul for the effort and time he expended in sorting out the route and the pub. As mentioned, we hope that he'll be able to put this preparation to good use again later in the year.

North Hants' Old Tyme Run – 22nd May 2022

A firm favourite for those of us who live in this part of the locality is the Old Tyme Run organised by the North Hants Motor Club starting and finishing at the WI Hall, Crookham Village.

The weather was nigh on perfect with warm summer temperatures under a cloud strewn blue sky. Just what was needed after a week of somewhat mixed conditions. Entrants signed on from 10.00 am leaving plenty of time to look around the paddock (car park) at the wide variety of machines entered in 5 solo classes ranging from pre-1950 up to 1985 and a sidecar class.

The run started at 11.00 am with riders setting off on the 40 mile route in quick succession. Route cards were provided, but those with eagle eyes soon noted that North Hants had attached arrows to suitable road furniture to indicate changes of direction. It was, however, still worth keeping a watch on the instructions on the route sheet, as there were occasions where some in front thought they knew better and deviated from the course set. I don't recollect 2019's route exactly – the last time it was run – but, although there were a few narrowish roads, it seemed much less nadgery this time. Which would account for the more than reasonable average 30.7 mph speed realised at the end. "Honest guv, I didn't exceed the posted limit!"



Returning to the WI Hall, we parked the bikes in their appropriate classes and took the opportunity to purchase light refreshments from the kind ladies who were on hand to dispense such items. Judging was conducted by those taking part, so there was a fair consensus across the board for the winner in each class. David Webster of the Section was awarded the Jim Orgles Trophy and Cup for his AJS trials chair outfit. Helped, perhaps, by his being the only entry in that class. Others taking part were Graham Denton, Ian Bowdich, Chris Maybury and Malcolm White.

Dorset VMCC – Giants Run – 29th May 2022

Seven members made the journey down to the West Country for the Dorset Section's Giants Run #3. Those taking part, in no particular order, were Doug & Liz Ellis accompanied by their son Richard, Chris & Rose Green, Bill Barnes, Paul & Pam Digweed, Roger & Fiona Prew and Malcolm White.

Breakfast baps were sizzling away on the stove in the Thyme after Time Cafe, as 100 riders assembled their machines in the starting area and signed on to pick up their numbers – by all accounts only 3 were non-starters. After a short briefing we were dispatched in groups that quickly became a stream. Fortunately, most bikes were of similar performance with the route being such that the pace soon settled down to a steady rate of 40 to 45 mph on the open road. A speed that would appear to have been comfortable for the majority. Route sheets also allowed individuals to ride at their own pace and thus stop at points of interest along the way.

Travelling south on the B3143 towards Dorchester we passed through a small parish with the name of Piddletrenthide. The name is apparently derived from its position on the River Piddle, combined with it having been assessed for thirty hides in the Domesday Book (Wikipedia)". Similarly derived Piddlehinton and Puddletown – the latter formally being changed from Piddle to Puddle in 1950 – followed along the route before we came to Moreton. This year the run didn't pass the eponymous Giant on the hillside overlooking Cerne Abbas, but did pass the last resting place of Colonel T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia). Undoubtedly, a giant in his own right.

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10 or so miles further on and approximately halfway round we arrived at the Cake House Tea Room at East Creech. At first glance it just appeared to be a hole in the wall through which one placed orders for refreshments. I wondered how they would ever serve us all, as there were quite a few who had taken the opportunity to stop for a cuppa. Appearances, however, are deceptive, as we were directed around to the back to pick up our orders and found ourselves in a large garden area with tables and chairs that worked well for everyone.

Suitably refreshed we made our way northwards to Milton Abbas which originally comprised of 36 identical, thatched cottages, a church and almshouses. The village was designed and built in 1780 to relocate the residents of the adjacent market town of Middleton, because Joseph Damer, Lord Milton, the first Earl of Dorchester and owner of Milton Abbey, considered the existing town to disturb his vision of rural peace. Middleton was subsequently demolished and landscaped over. Riding up the main street was amazing. It was what one might consider the quintessential, idyllic English village layout to be. Milton Abbas featured in a 2019 BBC documentary series: Pubs, Ponds & Power: The Story of the Village.

A short distance from Milton Abbas we were presented with a wonderful vista atop Bulbarrow Hill, where one could look over the Blackmore Vale and apparently into the four counties of Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire and Devon. It was then but a few miles back to the start and a lunch of turkey or veggie curry to finish off the run before loading up and setting out for home.



Club Night – Car Park Concours – 7th June 2022

Eight riders and machines rolled up to Burghfield on Tuesday for the annual car park concours. It should, perhaps, be more accurately renamed as ‘the bike of the evening’, since the actual translation

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of 'concour's' (pron. con cor) from the French is 'competition' in English.

Thus, a purely subjective assessment by Chairman Roger without rules of engagement, beyond the requirement that there be less than 4 wheels, is perhaps lacking the competitive element implied in the title. That said, in order to qualify one has to be prepared to turn up and that is deemed quite sufficient in our informal gathering of enthusiasts.

Thus the 'Bike of the Evening' was adjudged by the Chairman to be the pretty DKW ridden by Bert Appleford for which he was presented with a bottle of pop.



Chairman's Barbecue – 11th June 2022

It is said that the sun shines on the righteous, so we must be doing something that's of value, as we were again fortunate to stage our 7th Chairman's BBQ & Ride-In under relatively blue skies and warm sunshine.

The BBQ was sizzling soon after the first riders appeared and it wasn't long before burgers and sausages, with and without onions, were sandwiched between halves of bread rolls and dispatched in good order. Meanwhile, tea and coffee flowed from the kitchen and were in turn soaked up by an assortment of biscuits. It's fair to say that there was an abundance of cake of all sorts to test the self control of the participants.

It was great to see Lorraine & Derek Carter who had come up from their new abode in Barton-on-

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Sea. In the past Derek had provided his signature bread pudding and felt that it was only right that he should do so again. Bert Appleford, not expecting competition on that front, brought his own bread pudding. Having sampled both – as one must on such an occasion – it is my opinion that they were each as good as each other so well done to both.

One might think from the foregoing that the purpose of the event was just about the food, but it was an opportunity for like-minded enthusiasts to ride their bikes to the venue and chat about all things motorcycling and, I'm sure, a few other things besides.



Mid-Week Run - 15th June 2022

What a difference a month makes. The mid-week run a month ago attracted only three bedraggled individuals who at the outset had much in common with ducks given the damp conditions. The route itself, however, was excellent, so it was decided to run it again in what were hoped to be more favourable conditions.

It was therefore good news to see a weather forecast for the day that predicted warm temperatures and a complete absence of precipitation. And so it was that nine riders and one passenger met at the Rosebourne Garden Centre in Aldermaston to enjoy a day's riding in excellent conditions.

After a short briefing by Paul we set off towards Brimpton and up through Midgham to Upper Bucklebury. Then across to Curridge and Winterbourne and striking northwest to Leckhamstead and Bright Walton. This was familiar territory for several of us, as these are roads we've used on previous

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runs, but as they were not always in the same direction, they had a newness about them. A short run up the A338 towards Wantage and a fork left to Letcombe Regis brought us up to the B4507 which runs along the northern perimeter of the North Wessex Downs and leads along to the Uffington White Horse.

The view as we crested the Ridgeway this time was outstanding. We could see all the way across the Vale of the White Horse. The five wind turbines of the Westmill Wind Farm Co-operative were clear to see from our viewpoint high above. Each turbine is rated at 1.3MW giving a theoretical output of 6.5MW. However, it being a calm day, they weren't generating much of anything at all and were just a blot on the landscape. Thus visibly demonstrating that there is no security in generation from wind power no matter how many turbines are installed.

The final part of the morning's route looped us over the top of the White Horse and down to Woolstone and the White Horse Pub. Where we were able to sit outside and tuck into the various foods on offer from the menu. Suitably satiated we made a less convoluted way back to the Garden Centre.

Many thanks to Paul for arranging and leading the run.



Mid-Summer Run – 26th June 2022

The Mid-Summer run replaced the Vic Blake Memorial Run due to a scheduling conflict and consequential loss of parking space and facilities at the Hurst Village Hall. Nevertheless, 10 riders and 2 passengers met up at the recently revamped cafe at the Wellington Farm Shop just off the A33 Basingstoke Road under bright, but somewhat blustery conditions. A few had encountered brief rain

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showers on the way there, but it was hoped that this would be the exception rather than the norm for the rest of the day.

The route was a repeat of a mid-week run 4 years ago which was itself a repeat of an Owen Tyler run from the Riseley Village Hall some years prior to that. The first few miles were quite nadgery and, perhaps, a bit unnecessary in this day and age, but they were navigated without incident with the exception of an error on the route sheet which indicated a sign post 'Hartley Wintney' at a junction when it should have read 'Hartley Wespall'. Fortunately, it was caught in time and no-one became lost because of it.

Sadly, a few miles further on John Campbell's Triumph TR6 Trophy suddenly ran out of sparks and despite collective efforts from Bill Barnes and Roger Prew there was nothing to be done for the patient and the recovery truck was called. That did mean, however, that Bill and Roger without access to a route sheet and about 45 minutes behind the group were left a bit adrift. Fortunately, they knew that the lunch destination was the Barley Mow at Winchfield, so they made their own way there. Arriving not too many minutes in front of the rest of us.

Meanwhile, as we approached the Yew Tree at Lower Wield, we spotted three very familiar riders and passenger coming the other way. They were of the Bryant clan, who were a little delayed in their arrival at the farm shop and had apparently missed our departure by a matter of minutes. Michael, who I believe had plotted the original route many years ago, decided to take a run around the general area and by happenstance was on the same road as us – albeit going in the opposite direction. They soon turned around and joined at the back of our merry band for the last half of the run.

From Lower Wield we made our way through Bentworth and up to Lasham airfield where tugs with gliders were busy climbing into the sky and undoubtedly having a lot of fun in the windy conditions. South Warnborough with a dog leg through Upton Grey soon brought us to Odiham and then down to Dogmersfield and the Barley Mow for an excellent lunch and a chance to catch up with the day's events.



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July

Club Night – Girder Fork and Rigid – 5th July 2022

Not so many girder fork and rigid machines among the selection of bikes, but there were a few, if you look closely enough.



Mid-Week Run – Fox & Hounds, Theale – 13th July 2022

A baptism of fire for Chairman Roger Prew, as this was the first run he'd ever organised and led.

We met up at the Wellington Farm Shop nr. Riseley at 10.00 am for a coffee before starting off. The weather was brilliant. Perhaps a bit warm for some and expected to get warmer still by the weekend, but it was fine for me.

An entirely fresh perspective from Roger and Fiona in plotting the course led us westwards out of the farm shop and off towards Stratfield Saye and West End Green and thence around the walls of Calleva, Silchester's Roman city.

Continuing westward the route took us through Pamber Heath and Brimpton and onwards to Crookham. Past the now boarded up Travellers Rest public house where we had stopped on outings one or two years BC (Before Covid) soon arriving at the Control Tower on RAF Greenham Common. A destination that Roger had opportunistically worked into the agenda, as this was one of the venues designated by Doug Ellis on this year's Bikeathon event. So those taking part were able to cross off the destination and claim the points.



RAF Greenham Common was infamously the site of peace protests during the 1980s against the storage of nuclear weapons and cruise missiles. The base was closed in 1992 at the conclusion of the Cold War. Greenham Common was designated an area of public parkland in 1997. The Control Tower is worth a visit. Staffed by enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers, one gets an insight into the active part played by the airfield during the Second World War and its strategic importance in the following decades. Lunch was already awaiting us further down the road, but I'm sure the cafe is also a good place to meet for refreshment before taking a walk around the park.

Burys Bank Road, the road leading to and from the Common, is crossed by several cattle grids that would not normally be of note except that the highway engineers in their wisdom(?) had put in 30 feet of rumble strips before the grid which were significantly worse than the grid itself. However, since the rumble strips were only on the side preceding the grid, it wasn't difficult – on a bike – to skirt around them.

We had likely dallied a little longer than intended and there was still a bit to go before reaching our final destination at the Fox & Hounds pub at Theale. So, best foot forward northwards across the A4 to Midgham, Chapel Row and Bradfield Southend. Then southeast to Ufton Green, Ufton Nervet and back up to Sulhamstead Abbots and the pub on Deans Copse Road. Where we met up with Bert & Trisha Appleford and Alan Atkinson who had made their separate way there.

Many thanks to Roger for leading the run and to Fiona for making such detailed notes on the route sheet. An excellent day out.

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Girder Fork & Rigid Run – 31st July 2022

The Girder Fork and Rigid Run started at the West Berkshire Brewery. A couple of bouts of illness and holidays reduced the number of entries to 10. Of which, 4 were girder fork and 2 were rigid. There would've been 5 girder fork machines, but Roger Prew's Tiger 100, despite the fact that it had been running the day before, decided not to fire up when leaving from home, so he was relegated to a 750 Bonneville.

[Roger's dilemma with the Tiger 100, it subsequently transpires, was apparently due to his diligence in ensuring that all fixings were tight, which included the metal strap holding the cutout button in place on the handlebar. Yes, you've guessed it. Screwing it down tighter shorted the switch to earth. Something definitely worth checking, if you're faced with a similar situation.]

This year, to make it a bit more interesting, we ran the routes in a clockwise direction. I'm sure I've made mention of this before for other events, but it's surprising what a difference it makes, as you're seeing the road furniture and approaching scenery from a 180 degree perspective. There were mixed fortunes regarding individual directions taken. Five having taken the longer route and five the shorter, but despite a few missed steps we all arrived back at the Brewery within 10 minutes of each other.

We had been allocated space under the pergola in the garden with plenty of space to spread out. Where we had an enjoyable lunch and a good chat before setting off homeward bound.



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August

Club Night – Ride-A-Bike Night – 2nd August 2022

There was a good contingent of riders and members who turned out for the ride a bike night. Due to an oversight, I forgot to take any pictures. So please forgive me if I'm not able to remember all the bikes present, but at least there were: Two Royal Enfields, a pair of T150 and T160 Tridents, a 750 Bonneville, a Honda 900, a DMW, a Featherbed Norton with a nicely installed Commando engine, a Ducati, a BSA C11 and a Honda 125.

Mid-Week Run – The Milburys – 10th August 2022

It's unusual to make a comment about the weather being a bit on the warm side – after all it is August – but a hot spell lasting more than a few days in England tends to be the exception rather than the rule. That said, high pressure was expected to dominate into the weekend and it was expected to get warmer still, as 12 riders and machines gathered at the Pathfinder Cafe at Blackbushe Airport for the mid-week run.



Tony Heyworth led the charge on the day with his 1973 XL 250 Honda. He had ridden the route the day before to brief that all was well and issued the usual cautions about narrow lanes and gravel in the road. Which, in the case of Odiham, extended down the length and breadth of the High Street, where, courtesy of the Highways Agency, they had been busy sprinkling chippings over a layer of sprayed tar that in terms of thickness would likely be measured in microns and similar to the thickness of margarine applied to British Rail sandwiches in the last century (for those old enough to recognise the comparison).

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Our destination was The Milburys pub at Beauworth. Geographically, it's a few miles southwest of the Flower Pots Inn at Cheriton. Which, reportedly, had gone somewhat upmarket with the regular Wednesday motorcycle gathering moving to The Milburys. The run therefore traversed much of the route used on prior occasions, but since it had been several years since the last it was like riding it anew, while being comfortably familiar to those who have been before. It was really enjoyable riding along in the bright sunshine with a few wispy cirrus clouds in the sky.

We arrived, as anticipated, just after midday and quickly joined the line to order food and refreshment. Allan, Roger, Roy and Mike had made their way to the pub taking an alternative route and, arriving earlier, had sequestered themselves at a table behind a large umbrella and up against a tall hedge to shelter from the heat of the noonday sun. Disappointingly, while the food was good when it was finally delivered, several of our early orders were lost in the the kitchen and subsequently had to be re-ordered. It is believed that this was due to staff shortages. It wasn't a great first experience, but sitting out in the garden watching a wide range of machinery come and go and engaging in conversation with fellow compatriots was pretty fine.



should also make mention that Lorraine and Derek Carter rode the 40 miles up from Barton on Sea on their little Honda step throughs. It was great to see them again. Also, Ian Thompson, who is a friend of the Section and has participated in one or two Section holidays.

Finally, it really became too hot to sit still any longer, shade or no shade, so I think we all felt the need to get moving and welcome that blast of air through our riding gear to cool down on the way home.

Many thanks to Tony for organising the run. And, many thanks to all who came out to ride on such a lovely day. Well done to everyone who kept together and in sight of each other on the way down. It made my job as back marker/tail end Charlie far simpler.

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Graham Walker Memorial Run – 14th August 2022

I don't know why it took so long for me to participate in the annual Graham Walker Run organised by the Sunbeam Motor Cycle Club, as quite a number of the Berkshire Section have been taking part in it for years. Somehow or other it simply didn't appear on my radar. Perhaps, it was the perception of distance to the venue – way down south. But that's a bit irrational, since it's marginally closer than Banbury and quite a bit short of the Giants Run. Or maybe, I'm now more interested in participating in traditional runs for vintage and post-vintage machines.

The event starts in the grounds of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu and has a very relaxed air about it. There isn't a proscribed time of arrival. One arrives between 10.00am and 1.00pm with a nominal off for all entrants at 1.15pm. This means that there's ample opportunity to park one's machine at its allotted slot, mosey around looking at other machines and grab a picnic sandwich or two.

This year, due to the spell of hot weather and in consideration to the marshals standing at appointed points around the course, the organisers decided to get everyone moving at 12.30, which caught a few of us lagging behind. Tony Heyworth's Rex-Acme Blackburne decided not start on the kickstart despite plenty of prodding, but did get underway with a concerted push from the rear. This left us a bit in catch up mode that was not helped by us missing a couple of direction markers. Nevertheless, we made it around the route OK and we finished without mishap.

An unexpected award; the Public Schools Cup presented by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu for the Best Vintage Solo. [They wouldn't let me take the actual cup home.]



Those taking part from Berkshire were: Derek & Lorraine Carter, Andy Dean, Doug & Liz Ellis, Chris &

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Rose Green, Tony Heyworth, Roger & Fiona Prew and Malcolm White.

August Amble – 28th August 2022

Past Chairman, Bill Barnes, volunteered to run the August Amble this year which started at the Wellington Farm Shop near Riseley. The August Amble in the past has tended to cover relatively familiar territory to the south, but Bill decided to guide us north of the river (Thames) and up into the Chilterns for a change of scenery.



The initial part of the route between Riseley and Wokingham mirrored that taken by those in the Bracknell area on the way down to the start. There was a little concern that visitors to the Swallowfield Show would impede our progress, but we were early enough to miss any possible traffic holdups and made it past unscathed. Another perceived pinch point were the traffic lights across the Reading Road at Winnersh, but the timing was such that those in front were held long enough to allow the rest of the group to bunch up and we made it across in one go. Skirting along the back lanes around Waltham St Lawrence and through White Waltham we crossed the A4 and made our way to Pinkneys Green. The uninterrupted view across the Thames Valley and the Little Marlow Lakes Country Park from Winter Hill, north of Maidenhead, was quite unexpected.

Crossing the Thames at the Ferry at Cookham we steered clear of the main conurbations and shredded our way past Cliveden House – infamous for the part it played in the Profumo affair of 1963 – and up to Little Kingshill and the Full Moon for lunch. Where we caught up with Paul and Pam, who hadn't make it to the start, because the nipple on the choke cable on the A65 had come off, thus continuing to apply full choke no matter the lever position. Although a couple of things were tried, a quick fix wasn't possible, therefore necessitating the change of plan to another bike and car.

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The return to the Henley/Twyford area took us further into the Chiltern Hills and up Kop Hill at Princes Risborough, famous for the eponymous hill climb which began in 1910 and ran until 1925 when a spectator, who apparently chose not to take instruction from the marshals, suffered a broken leg. As a consequence, the RAC stewards stopped the meeting and within a week declined to grant any further permits for high speed contests on public roads in the UK. Sadly, another instance where one mindless individual wrecks it for everyone.

While not hugely important in the grand scheme of things, it was soon after our decent from Kop Hill that the buddy system broke down. For those unfamiliar with the buddy system, the system requires that the rider in front watches out for the chap immediately behind. This doesn't mean that one has to have them in sight all the time, but does mean that when there is a specific change of direction from the main path or a staggered crossroads – as in this case – that the rider in front waits until he is sure that the rider behind knows which direction to take. In this instance, a stall delayed the following group and when the bike was restarted the rider took off quickly – bat out of hell comes to mind – to catch up and missed the turn. Fortunately, I was at the tail end with a route sheet, but it took a while for me to overtake and turn him around. The lead group noted that they were short in total number and stopping at Bledlow, patiently waited and in limbo for the 10 minutes or so before we caught up. So please, when out riding in a group, watch out for the guy behind, as one day it might be you who is left without direction.

The final leg was up and over Bledlow Ridge, down past the Hell Fire Caves at West Wycombe with a brief westerly jig along the A40 before taking the Piddington Road to Fingest, Skirmett and Hambledon and thence to Mill End and Henley. At which point each made their own way home.

Many thanks to Bill for organising such a great day.

September

Club Night – Noggin & Natter – 6th September 2022

Perhaps the change in the weather had something to do with it, but barely a dozen stalwarts made it to the club night for the noggin and natter. Nevertheless, we were able to drink a couple of beers while discussing all things motorcycling, the change in Government personnel and plenty else besides.

Mid-Week Run – Lasham Gliding Heritage Centre – 14th September 2022

The overnight rain disappeared and the sun gradually appeared during our memorable run out to the Lasham Gliding Heritage Centre. The day started with the ritual latte or cuppa for most at the Rosebourne Garden Centre. Eleven gathered together under the watchful eye of Brian Magee, our leader for the day. Before setting off, Malcolm led us in a 2 minute silence, as a mark of respect for the passing of Her Majesty the Queen a few days before.

The rolling hills of Hampshire beckoned and off we set through 30 miles of beautiful countryside. It's possible to think that we've ridden along all the roads in the geographic area, but this is not so. It might not seem obvious when it comes to planning a route, but there are three key decisions to be made. The first being the destination. Yes, I know that great explorers would not have ventured off this sceptred isle – or even into the next county – if they had a known destination in mind, but then they wouldn't have had nearly a dozen motorcyclists snapping at their heels. The second decision therefore follows that the start should be at an accessible location with refreshments and facilities – the latter being quite important these days – on the same side of major conurbations as the destination. Or with access to easy through routes to minimise the possibility of disruption. Once these are known then the possible routes may at first appear myriad, but since they are constrained by the type of roads to be taken and the distance to be ridden there aren't so many. So a new destination, such as the Lasham

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Gliding Heritage Centre – a place we've ridden past on numerous occasions – opens up new possibilities. And so it was with this run.

Brian led us roughly westward through Ashford Hill and Plastow Green and then down to Kingsclere. Where we caught up with the Bryant clan, as Michael needed to rejuvenate the petrol that he'd had in the T110 since before lockdown (2019). As a consequence, they'd left a few minutes earlier to top up at the Shell garage on the A339. Leaving the Overton road, we travelled through Hannington across to Malshanger Lane and by skirting Basingstoke to the west and south reached across to Cliddesden and Tunworth and down through Weston Patrick to our destination at Lasham airfield. A terrific run over mostly good lanes that were quite damp in places and necessitated only one turn about when faced with a refuse truck that took up the complete width of the roadway where there wasn't even room to get by with a bike.

Upon arrival at Lasham airfield, John Campbell's fine looking Bonneville was unfortunately put out of action with a puncture, but at least he managed to reach the cafe for lunch. The cafe was open despite a recent fire in the clubhouse that had put them into a somewhat temporary situation, but we were able to tuck into various hot offerings that were on the menu.



Suitably satiated, we were guided around the perimeter by Tony Fendall, one of the Gliding Heritage Centre's volunteers, to the other side of the airfield where the Trish Williams Workshop and Visitor Centre is located. The tour began with a short video introduction giving the history of gliding from its practical inception by Sir George Cayley in the mid-nineteenth century – the principles of which; thrust, lift, drag and weight, he had identified some half a century earlier – through the periods prior to and after the First World War where German engineers became preeminent in design and

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successfully conducted an Olympic demonstration event in 1936 for the 1940 Olympics which, of course, never took place.

As may be imagined there has been a natural progression from wood and linen to new materials that have brought lightness, flexibility and strength into the construction of modern gliders. A progression that allows them to fly further and stay aloft longer, reaching for those welcoming thermals. Yet, when all is told, gravity remains their true master.

A very worthwhile visit and thanks to Brian for arranging it.

October

Club Night – 6th October 2022

This was scheduled to be the annual Inter-Section Quiz, but, unfortunately, only the Oxford Section were able to raise a team, so it was decided to cancel it in the hope that we'll be able to run it again next year. Nevertheless, it was a convivial evening and members present – three of whom rode to the meeting – had a good chat.

Mid-Week Run – Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust – 12th October 2022

It was one of those fortuitous moments where one conversation leads to another and the subject of vintage buses arose at a coffee morning. Vic Youel, a long time member of the VMCC and a vintage bus enthusiast, mentioned that the Thames Valley and Great Western Omnibus Trust, with which he was acquainted, was located in Fifield and would likely be open to giving a tour of their workshops. Roger Prew contacted them and so it was that it became our point of interest for October's mid-week run.

The start was at the Wellington Farm shop near Riseley. While the general direction of the run in this case was to take us northeast rather than westwards or towards the south, the farm shop seems to be proving a good staging point for most rides and in addition serves a reasonable cup of java or a cuppa with outside, undercover seating around which to gather.

Arriving at 09:55, Roger, Tony and I found that we were not the first with four machines already aligned in the parking lot with their drivers suitably seated and waiting for their orders, both for refreshment and, figuratively speaking, from Roger regarding directions. Another three soon joined the group bringing the total to ten with Pam Digweed riding shotgun.

After a short briefing at 10:30, Roger led us off on the 27 mile route to Fifield that took us along byways above and around Hare Hatch, Shurlock Row and Waltham St. Lawrence picking out some of the more rural aspects of this end of the Royal County of Berkshire. We were greeted at the gate by Colin Billington, Chairman of the Trust and our host for the day, and parked up alongside one of several very large buildings in which we expected to undoubtedly find a few(!) buses.

After a little light refreshment of tea, coffee and biscuits – yes, I know, we were being spoiled this day – we made our way into a wooden building that once was the pre-war railway ticket office for Maidenhead. Which, after being relocated and repurposed several times, including as a cricket pavilion, was finally acquired by the Trust and given a new lease of life as the Trust's presentation centre.

Colin gave an overview of the purpose and aims of the Trust and its activities over the years. Naturally, that included the restoration of buses and coaches and importantly highlighted the work performed by the volunteers and the archival activities undertaken to provide an historical and educational resource to ensure that valuable information regarding this era of transport is not lost in the mists of time. They

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also enjoy taking out the coaches – as we enjoy taking out our bikes – to rerun many of the routes on which these buses operated. Especially, in this instance, routes around the West Country where Great Western dominated as the operator for rail and road passenger transport. The logistics for such gatherings, however, dwarf our requirements when parking and scheduling 30 plus coaches are involved in the larger events.

Fortified by an excellent buffet lunch, we made our way to the first of the sheds that housed a couple of rows of buses behind which were the workshop areas. The Guy FBB bus was in a pretty sorry state when the Trust acquired it, having been converted and used as a holiday home located in a field above Perranporth overlooking the Atlantic for several decades, before being returned to its former glory in time for the HCVS London to Brighton Run in May 2013. (For more detailed information: http://www.tvagwot.org.uk/collection_pdfs/YF714.pdf).

There was lots more to see and find out about, but I think the foregoing might give an indication of the scale of work and amount of effort involved in putting these treasures back on the road. That's not in any way demeaning the effort that many of our members put into the miracles that begin with a few rusty parts and blossom into wonderfully restored machines. We don't all have hundreds of square feet of workshop space to play in. If so, who knows where it would lead?

It was then getting quite late in the afternoon and some needed to get away, but a few of us couldn't turn down the invitation and were treated to a fun excursion into Windsor on Royal Blue coach '1250'.

It was quite unexpected to find that the coach was such a sight of awe and wonder to passers by and, by inference, ourselves as passengers in such a vehicle. Who are they? From where do they come? Lets give them a wave. And so they did and we waved back with smiles on our faces. We were still smiling as we bade Colin and the Trust farewell for a great day out.

Mystery Run – 23rd October 2022

The weather forecast for Sunday was not encouraging. It was always going to be a crap shoot whether or not a seven was to roll and it was wet all day. Or that more favourable odds were to be offered by that entity which controls these things and it wouldn't be quite that bad. The morning forecast indicated that there would likely be a six hour window of clearing weather from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm, so some of us decided to chance it.

The snag was that in order to start at 10.30, we had to venture out from our warm – not too warm you understand, we have to save the planet – and dry abodes into less than ideal conditions. It had clearly rained a whole lot during the early hours and each of us was faced with rivulets of water running across the roads and floods in places. Thankfully, not impassably deep. And it was still raining. However, as 10 o'clock approached small breaks in the overcast appeared and one started to feel that the odds were changing in our favour. By the time I arrived at the Rosebourne Garden Centre, the rain had stopped running down the outside of my Hein Gericke jacket. But, disappointingly, it had penetrated the zip and was trickling down the front of my shirt. Not to worry, there was an improving chance that it wasn't going to rain again – at least in the next five hours or so.

Paul had already arrived and was waiting outside – no doubt hoping that someone else would be equally optimistic. So we dripped our way into the cafe and ordered a tea and coffee while waiting for the reverberation of riders that we knew were soon to be coming. And in walked Bill Barnes. The others, apparently, having thought better of it. There was the briefest of inquiry as to whether or not we should go ahead, but there was a lot more blue sky in evidence, the bikes were already in need of a good clean and I hadn't taken the makings of my normal Sunday evening meal out of the freezer, so, with the likelihood of a roast offering at the French Horn in Alton, we set out on the Mystery tour.

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Aldermaston to Silchester, across country to Bramley and down to Sherfield-on-Loddon. By the time we reached Lyde Green the sun was shining and the majority of the sky was free of cloud. Rotherwick, Newnham, Nately Scures and Up Nately were up next, as we zig-zagged our way down to Golden Pot and across to Shalden. It was then but a short distance to the French Horn and a bite or two of lunch where Sunday roasts of pork and chicken were unhesitatingly ordered.



Lunch over we took the more direct route along the B3349 back to Odiham where Bill and I bade farewell to Paul who rode north to Benson and we took a more easterly route back to Bracknell. Fortuitously, we were still within the 6 hour weather window when I returned home and I managed to wash all the accumulated grime and dirt off the Trident before the next wave of showers came along.

Yes, it was rather a damp day, but for all of that the ride and route were excellent. The roads were decidedly wet and strewn with gravel and leaves in places, needing some care, but not dangerously so. Surprisingly, perhaps due to the current mild temperature emanating from the south, the trees had not yet attained the usual autumnal splendour associated with this time in October and the canopies of many were largely intact.

November

Club Night – Guest Speaker – Emma Airey, Head of RH Insurance – 1st November 2022

Emma Airey, the Head of RH Insurance, was our guest speaker in November. She and I had spoken earlier in the year regarding my insurance and a misunderstanding about its renewal. Following which she indicated that she was willing to give the Section a presentation regarding the classic motor cycle insurance offered by RH and the differences that one might encounter in the policy offerings of others

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that could make a big difference to the settlement of a claim, should that unfortunate situation arise. Thus it was decided that we should arrange the presentation in November after the riding season had finished. In addition, the invitation was expanded to members of the local branch of the TOMCC who also meet at Burghfield CSA.

Emma began by saying that RH Insurance is a specialist insurer for classic cars and motor cycles and that their focus is in providing excellent customer service and value to their clients – something about which I am able to attest from my own experience. She then went on to describe some of the key differences between their policies and others. All of which was informative and brought to the fore a couple of benefits regarding spares and projects cover.

To close off the evening Emma entertained us with a sudden death quiz, the winner of which would be the recipient of a £100 voucher to be set off against a renewal or new policy. The sudden death quiz amounted to a series of motor related questions for which she offered the audience two answers – only one of which was correct. Hand on head signified one answer and hand on butt signified the other. Those who chose correctly stayed in the quiz. Those who didn't dropped out. Last man standing was Bill Barnes who was pleased to receive the voucher as his policy was about to renew.

Many thanks to Emma for coming along and providing us with such insights into classic motor and motor cycle insurance.



Mid-Week Lunch – Longbridge Mill – 16th November 2022

This would usually have been our last mid-week run of the season, but by dint of the inclement weather of late it was decided to opt for the safer option of another mid-week lunch at the Longbridge Mill at Sherfield-on-Loddon. Despite a very wet night and the threat of more torrential rain to come, four members took advantage of the break in between to ride over. They were: Mike Allaway, Bill Barnes, Graham Denton and Paul & Pam Digweed. I and a number of others wimped out having decided that the reward of a ride was negated by the expected toil involved in cleaning the bike afterwards.

Many thanks to Roger Prew for organising the venue and to everyone who was able to make it.

Triumph Owners Club Quiz – 10th November 2022

The Berkshire Branch of the TOMCC invited us back to participate in their annual quiz. In past years we have done reasonably well. In fact having won several on the bounce. This year, however, we

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could only manage fourth place, but had a good time anyway.

Oxford Inter-Section Quiz – 16th November 2022

There was a really good showing at Oxford for their Inter-Section quiz evening with seven mens' teams and a ladies' team vying for top spot. John Challen was question master. Questions were mostly general knowledge in the first section where we didn't do too badly, but then Maurice introduced a series of questions relating to music record titles of the 50s and 60s containing the notion of running or walking. e.g. Walk On By, Keep On Running, etc. where we didn't do so well.

Nonetheless, when all was tallied up we were a creditable second with 49 1/2 points, but some way behind the Grass Track section who scored 57 points.

Results were: Grass Track 57; Berkshire 49 1/2; Chiltern and AJS joint 3rd with 46; Royal Enfield 44 1/2; Triumph Owners 43 1/2; Oxford Mens 39 and Oxford Ladies 37 1/2.

December

Club Night – Social Quiz – 6th December 2022

As Michael Bryant had not been able to tease us with his questions at the Inter-Section quiz in October, due to its cancellation, he was invited to regale us with questions of a more general nature on the December club night.

I'm not able to remember all the questions, but I do now know – at least for the next day or so – that there were four rulers in Scotland named 'Malcolm' and that there are no Scottish cities to the east of the longitudinal line that runs through Meriden.

At the conclusion, Team A, consisting of A N Other, Robin Strange and Tom Tucker were adjudged the winners.

Many thanks to Michael for providing such an entertaining and informative quiz.

Chiltern – Inter-Section Quiz – 7th December 2022

Bill Barnes, Tony Heyworth and Malcolm White made the trip over to the Whitehill Centre in Chesham for the annual quiz. Glynn Chambers was the question master and, as is somewhat of trademark of his, he organised the questions into ten categories each of which had a central theme. This year it was countries, where bikes, riders or events would relate to a particular country or region. e.g. GB, France, Germany, Italy, EU, USA, Japan, Anzak. etc. Jokers – worth double points – were available to be played for any category but the last.

Almost from the outset, it was apparent that Cyclemotor were going to be the team to beat with a score of 9 out of 10 for the first round, while we in Berkshire languished behind with 2 and the others not that much better. It was therefore a fight for second place between Berkshire, Chiltern and the Tea Drinkers. It was neck and neck until the last round when we made several wrong choices of answer from those we had collectively come up with and we slipped to fourth place.

Christmas Dinner – 10th December 2022

We returned again to the Wheelrights Arms in St Nicholas Hurst for our Christmas Dinner and were not disappointed. Although, from the cacophony of sound erupting from the fans around the big screen TV in the bar, the highs and lows of the England-France World Cup football match were audibly apparent and sadly resulted in disappointment when the final score came in at 2-1 to France.

As we arrived, David Bryant, the erstwhile organiser of the evening, handed out named cards with our all important menu selections to ensure that we didn't need to strain the grey matter too much trying

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to remember what it was that each of us had pre-ordered a couple of weeks back. I can only speak for myself, but the mushroom soup, pork belly and warmed spiced apple cake served up over the next hour or so were excellent. I don't believe it was that much different for the rest of the party.

After the meal, with coffees and teas distributed, Chairman Roger recounted some of the highlights of the year and paid tribute to Bill Barnes for his tenure and support for his years in the post. Despite the delayed start to activities, it was surprising how much we had done as a section and the various events that we'd supported, like the Giants Run in Dorset and the Graham Walker event at Beaulieu. He also mentioned the passing of Keith Smith and Allan Herbert each of whom had contributed immensely to the Section over several decades. He finished by thanking David for organising the dinner, wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year and hoping that 2023 is an improvement on 2022.

The evening concluded with the raffle of prizes sponsored by the Section and Officers & Members of the Committee. Bill Barnes was the winner of the traditional Christmas Hamper and other prizes were distributed in no particular order.



Bikeathon Challenge 2022

Doug Ellis, having won the Bikeathon Challenge in 2021, volunteered(?) to choose another 30 locations that would provide the opportunity for individuals and small groups to take rides out during the Summer months when the inkling came upon them with some purpose in mind.

Disappointingly, it would appear from the lack of reports received and accompanying images that there were few participants this year and insufficient to specify a notional winner. Many thanks to

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Doug for the effort he put in to select the destinations.

In conclusion

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

Best wishes to all for 2023.

Malcolm White

Secretary

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

www.berkshire-vmcc.org.uk

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