

GOOD VIBRATIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH MOTORCYCLE OWNER'S CLUB, B.C. CANADA



BMOC Vice-president Wayne Dowler demonstrates the 'grin factor' that his little BSA can generate. This shot by Robert Smith was taken at the Tiddler TT.



AUGUST 2012



A picture is worth a thousand words..... The Salt Spring Camp-out



Some time ago BMOG President, Bevin Jones, sent us this snap from ATS Vintage Moto in Paris. They look like the very thing for ticking off Gendarmes on the Champs-Elysees



Tony MacNeill's '65 Velocette Thruxton; what a find this one is. Purchased from only its second owner - who had it for 44 years. A matching numbers machine, full documentation, receipts, it even has the Thruxton fairing although it has never been put on. The look on Tony's face rather tells me that this machine is staying with him for at least another 44 years.....so don't even ask.....



There was an informal gathering on Barnston Island where we re-visited the machines of our youth. The story is inside, some of the bikes are right here.

The Salt Spring Island camp-out this year was a well attended event. It's an important day on the club calendar because, especially in a non-INOA rally year, it's one of the few gatherings that gives us the opportunity to get together from all over BC and Washington. The best part is that since you typically only see some of these folks once a year you can retell your old stories one more time - reuse and recycle, it's important.

For those who rolled up on Friday the weather was at first 'threatening' but this soon became 'challenging' before being up-graded to 'hang on to something'. All this was taken in fine spirit - both literally and figuratively if you get my drift. Geoff May, who is a true *Meister* of the open flame cuisine, rustled up some magnificent steaks for us all and we could hunker down under the canopies, which we did for a while until it was theorised that if the fire was stoked to a couple of settings past 'blacksmith forge' level then the rain would get vaporized before reaching the ground or, at the very least, you would dry as quickly as you got wet. That's the true beauty of the Salt Spring camp-out: it brings out the genius in us.

Saturday morning dawned with much improved skies and slowly the field began to rumble with the sounds of fine British machinery filtering into the campground. The wire fence got draped with the odd soggy tent and sleeping bag as we got ourselves back to normal - and I use the word 'normal' here in its loosest possible context.

There are many people to thank for making this grand event happen. Ian Bardsley headed up the organization with much assistance from John Ferguson and Geoff May. Allen Larsen saved the day with a truckload of firewood after the 'rain vaporizing' experiments of the previous night burned up our stash. He also organized the marquee tents, tables, garbage containers and the subsequent disposal of same. Of course none of this happens without Ian Clement not calling the cops on us and this year Dagwood's restaurant supplied the grub which was well received. Thanks also to all for attending and making it such a fine event.

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Fine Print

The West Coast British Motorcycle Club (aka BMOC) is a registered not for profit society dedicated to the preservation, restoration and use of British motorcycles. Our newsletter, Good Vibrations, is published sporadically and is intended to inform and entertain our members. Articles appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the BMOC. Technical and other information contained in this newsletter should be treated with a measure of common sense, as we cannot vouch for every word written.

We welcome all contributions from our members; 'want' ads and 'for sale' ads are free to members and non-members. They must be limited to motorcycles or related items. 'For Sale' ads are printed with the good faith that the seller's description of the goods is fair and accurate. The BMOC assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the advertisements.

Articles, reports, photographs and ads may be Emailed to: p.dent@dccnet.com

Visit the BMOC website, BMOC.ca for a full colour version of the Good Vibrations and the latest event calendar.

Help us keep in touch. If you have changed your mailing address, phone number or Email address please email your current info to patrick.jaune@amec.com



Cover photo: the pastoral bliss of this year's Salt Spring Campout.

AMAL 1038

Nigel Spaxman

Warning: this is so boring that only the most extreme British motorcycle gear head can read it without falling asleep. But if you are the type of gear head who likes this kind of stuff you might learn something. I had to write it down while I was doing it so that I could remember which steps I had taken so that I would not have to repeat steps that I had already taken. On the other hand if you can't sleep and you want to sleep maybe you could try reading this instead of taking pills.

In March 2011 I attended the Tsawwassen swap meet as usual. I have only missed two of them in the last 25 years. Often I show up before the show opens and spend the entire day at this show. If you volunteer you can get a wristband so you can go in early and scoop the really good deals. If you stick around until the end often people will give stuff away for free rather than take it home. For this swap meet I didn't bother to go early. I didn't really need anything. I was going to go more to socialize. Often I can meet people I only see once a year or people I haven't seen in quite a few years. Also I meet new people there every year.

This year there was a nice selection of stuff as usual. One thing that caught my eye was a nice clean Honda step through. It was very original looking. It had no engine. I think it was only \$75.00. Later that afternoon I was not surprised to see Alan Comfort rolling it into his truck. I am sure he paid less than the asking price as well.

Nothing else really caught my eye until I saw this big Amal carburetor. I had seen one once before (maybe the same one). It hung on the wall of British Motorcycles on Fraser Street for years. I always liked it even in those days. I thought even back in the 80s when I shopped at British Motorcycles that I would buy it just to hang it on my wall. In those days I didn't have enough money to buy stuff like that just because I liked it. This carburetor is called a 1038. It looks like a 930 and shares many of the same parts but the casting is bigger to allow bore sizes 34 to 38mm. Many people who know about Amals are unaware these ones exist. This carb was for sale by Ian Watson. He had got it to use on a BSA Goldstar. It had been around for years and had never actually been used. Apparently these are sometimes used on the Goldstar to replace the 1 1/2" GP carbs those bikes came with. The Amal 1038, while not as cool as the GP, probably works better in every way. I think the price was \$250 or \$225. I bought it for \$225 or \$200 I can't really remember. Ian mentioned that it may have been jetted for a 2 stroke, in the way of a warning. When I saw it I had an idea why I wanted it. I thought it would be ideal for my Norton 850. The thing is that my Norton has a single Mikuni 34mm on it. Even though the Mikuni works perfectly in every way I didn't like it. The single carburetor idea is nice, but it bothered me that the hole in the single carb manifold was 38mm diameter but the carb was smaller. I don't like the way the Mikuni looks too small. I don't like the rubber flange mounting that does not seem to match the manifold even though it is a perfectly quick way of efficiently joining the carb to the engine. Also the Mikuni has no built in filter and it has only one fuel inlet fitting that sticks up in a way that makes it hard to neatly join it to the twin petcocks, especially when a fuel filter has to be added in as well. The last thing I needed was to waste time changing something on the Norton that worked great, but this was an impulse buy.

What appealed to me about fitting this carburetor to the Norton was to do with this. One of the reasons I like riding a Norton is to be different than everyone else. I like

to be original. The trouble is I know hundreds of people who have Nortons. I like to be different than them too. I like my Norton to express my originality, and my skill as a rider and mechanic. The Mikuni really didn't do that. It is a bit like a cop out. Really the Norton would run better with a pair of the original Amals on it, that would be too easy. The simplicity of a single carburetor is very appealing. It can work very well on a Norton. Even though according to dyno results Nortons do produce more horsepower with twin carbs, the fact is in every day fast riding you rarely take the engine over 5000 RPMs. Norton 850s are very torquey and low geared. Riding satisfaction does not come from revving these engines hard. At below 5000 RPMs probably the single carburetor will work just as well as twin carbs. At speeds below about 3500 RPMs it may even work better. On my Norton 3500 RPMs gives about 75 MPH in top gear so this is an ideal level to have great torque. I thought that with a sufficiently large single carburetor, with a long velocity stack and non restrictive air cleaner I should be able to have a very good result. I suppose the right thing to do would be to test the engine on a dyno and then change carburetors and do it again, but I think this is a waste of money. Actually I think my choice in bikes also reflects my frugality as well. Anyway I knew my bike would do 95 MPH in third gear up the cut in North Van. If the speed with the bigger carb is a bit higher I will know that I have improved the bike. It would be nice if this change would take the bike over 100 on that hill. (My Ducati would do 115, my Triumph 650 about 95, my Triumph 750 Trackmaster about 105, my Sprint and my Honda too fast)

Over the next several months the carburetor sat in the cupboard. I wasn't going to mess up a perfect running bike in the summer when I just wanted to ride.

Finally in October I was just returning from a Sunday afternoon ride when the Mikuni started flooding. The trouble was I had removed the fuel filter because it was ugly. Some particle had lodged in the float needle obviously. I rode the rest of the way home by turning the petcock on and off. Then I decided it was time for the Amal.

I had a spare 2:1 manifold, originally made for a Mikuni, so I welded up the bolt holes and re drilled them to match the 2 9/16" centres on the 1038. Then I got a piece of Nylon 1/2" thick and made it into a heat insulating spacer that would fit between the 1038 and the manifold. Later I ended up making a nicer spacer from Bakelite. The Bakelite is a better material because it is very hard. Then I machined a really nice long velocity stack from a piece of aluminum tubing. I made it look beautiful even though most of it would go inside the air cleaner where no one could see it. I made it so it screwed onto the carburetor and had a shoulder about half way back that would hold a big K&N filter I had bought when Richmond Motorsports went out of business.

Then I bolted the carburetor on, the original single cable that was for the Mikuni fitted onto the Amal. I made two fuel lines from polyurethane tubing. The Amal looked great on the manifold. Often if something looks right then it is right.

Then it was time to start the engine for the first time with the new carburetor. I flooded the carburetor and gave the bike a few kicks. Finally it started. Not anywhere near as easily as with the Mikuni that always would fire first or second kick. I did expect that I would need to do some tuning. I grabbed my helmet and headed down the road for the first test. It was awful. The bike would not

accelerate at all. I didn't go more than 300 yards down the road before I came back.

I thought the engine felt very lean. I took out the plugs and they were white, even the side electrode. The side electrode even looked a bit burned. Then I decided right away that the carburetor was set very lean. I raised the needle immediately by putting the clip in the lowest notch. Then I went out again. It was still horrible. I decided I needed a bigger needle jet. I checked all my old parts but all I had was smaller ones. I also noticed the original needle jet was the two stroke type. That type does not have the small cross hole in it. I decided I could drill out the jet I had and add the cross hole. The size I had was a .107". I thought I might try a 108 but a 7/64 drill was .109 so I drilled my jet out and added a cross hole. I had all that completed by the next day so I went out again. Now the engine was starting to run well. The acceleration was good, but the low speed and idling was horrible. It was obvious that at idle the engine was very rich. I could unscrew the air screw all the way and the bike would still idle very poorly. It smoked while idling. The plugs would go black.

Because of this idling problem I decided that I would order some smaller pilot jets from Walridge. I ordered them by the internet on Sunday and they mailed them to me on Monday. I received them about a week later. When I fitted the 20 instead of the original 30 it didn't seem to make any difference. I decided to check the fuel level. Even though this was a new carburetor I had to check this as there didn't seem to be anything else I could do. I made a fitting with a hose connected to the bottom of the float bowl. The fuel level was perfect, about ¼" below the bowl joint.

During this time waiting for the jets to arrive from Walridge, I told a few friends about the problems I was having, in case one of them had any ideas. The idea that kept me going with this project came from one guy, who, after I told him I could not get the bike to idle, said "the carburetor is probably too big". I realize there is some truth in what he said, however when a bike is idling with a single Amal 1038 carburetor or a single 930 carburetor really it is the same. When the throttle is almost completely closed the two carbs are just about exactly the same. I would have to work on whatever the differences were to get it working right. I thought that a good starting point would be the data I had for a Triumph Tiger 750, the single carburetor model. That bike used a 930 carburetor, with a 280 main jet, .106 needle valve, std needle, needle position 1, and 3 ½ throttle valve. In fact all Triumphs with 930s used .106 needle jets. I think even in the Monoblock carburetors the needle jets were also .106 size. Those are longer though, but if I felt like it I could butcher some of those from my spares box as well.

By now I was starting to wish I had never even started this project. Finally I decided it was time to experiment with the throttle slide cutaway. I had to check everything else first because the throttle slides for this carburetor are very hard to obtain. This carburetor was never popular. It was only made from about 1969 to 1974. The only place you can get slides is from a shop in Germany that makes them from solid brass. (later I found out I could get original ones from Hitchcock in England, and a Bultaco shop) The cost is about \$150.00 for the billet brass one. Once I had removed the slide I realized that at some point someone had messed with it before. Even though it had a 3 stamped in it, someone had changed it to a 2 ½ by filling the bottom of the slide. I decided to turn it back into a 3 by filing the cutaway down so that it measured 3/16 as it would have been originally. The

change that was made previously to the slide would explain why I had to raise the needle so much.

Once I had this done and back together it was dark. I turned on the fuel. It seemed to leak out from the float bowl joint. I tried starting the bike a few times; I gave up and went to bed. The following evening I decided to try again. I thought that now with the larger cutaway I would put a bigger pilot jet back in. Once I took the float bowl off I realized what was wrong. I had dropped the bowl gasket. It was sitting on the gearbox. An Amal carburetor of this type will not only leak without this gasket, it also will not work well at all. If there is a leak between the bowl and the carburetor body the pilot circuit cannot suck fuel from the float bowl. No wonder nothing worked the night before. Once all this was straightened out I gave the bike a few kicks, it started, after a bit of fiddling it was finally idling the way a Norton should. Then another test drive. Now it was better, but the very low speed pick up from idle was poor. It felt lean. Probably I would try a bigger pilot jet now. The effect of the throttle slide cutaway on these carburetors is huge. Filing off 1/32" had made a huge difference. Later in discussions with John McDougal he suggested removing only .010" at a time.

Next I tried the 25 and then the original #30 pilot jet. Those changes made almost no difference. I put the air fuel ratio gauge on the bike. I have a pipe that I stick up the exhaust pipe with a very sensitive oxygen sensor on it. This is connected to a special gauge that displays the air fuel ratio the engine is running at. This gauge showed that the air fuel ratio was very lean just off idle. It was going over 15:1. That's why it wouldn't run. The air fuel ratio was very rich everywhere else. I tried lowering the needles but this seemed to make the low speed leanness worse. I was also beginning to realize that I could only trust the air fuel ratio gauge when the mixture was pretty close. As soon as the mixture was way off to the point that a misfire occurred the gauge was useless.

Then I started thinking about the needle jet again. It was definitely running very lean before I drilled it out. The other thing was that this needle jet was the newer type that was used after '79 according to some information I had found on the internet. I was aware of this difference because I had quite often ordered new needle jets before. They often wear. Often they wear so much you can see the hole in them is oval. I have sometimes, on several internet forums about Vincents and Nortons, mentioned about this wear on the needle jets. Quite a few guys who are vocal on these forums claim that this wear doesn't happen or it is insignificant, but in my experience that is wrong. Some very experienced people on these forums have supported my experience with this wear. It obviously does make a difference, otherwise why would Amal offer these jets in .001" increments. Apparently the newer style needle jets must be used with the newer style needles which are longer. Also on the older style the jet holder is shorter. I realized that the carburetor I had had come to me with the old style jet holder and the new style needle jet. I couldn't identify the needle because it is a special one for the 1038 but it seemed likely since these carbs were only made until about 1970 that they would have used the old style needle jets. (later on I did identify it) I decided to try one of my old jets, the old style ones that were worn .106 size ones. I put that in and most of the low speed leanness was corrected. Finally the bike was rideable. I took a ride around the block, and when I returned I checked the plugs and they looked normal. On the ride I had the air fuel ratio gauge hooked up. I could see that just off idle the mixture was weak. Anywhere after ¼ throttle the

mixture was still pretty rich, and the main jet was way too big. Accelerating saw ratios as low as 10:1. I wonder how much smoke was caused by that rich mixture? It didn't seem smokey. It seemed that as long as the fuel ratio was 13.5:1 or less the engine felt smooth and powerful. The goal now would be to try to get the carburetor so that it would supply a ratio of air to fuel of about 13.5 to 1 with maybe some richer mixtures for acceleration with perhaps 12.5 to 1 for wide open throttle at high RPMs. I think a bit more experimentation is likely to show that I need to adjust the throttle slide cutaway again. I think it might need reducing just a tiny amount. I can do that by taking a little off the flat part on the bottom of the slide. That will lower the needle a bit too, which probably will be good because the stage of throttle opening that is controlled by the needle is running too rich anyway. The trouble is I need to be really sure of this because I only have the one slide. On the day after New Year's day, I spent the morning riding up and down River Road. I would ride it for a while with the air screw turned about one turn out, and then ride it with the air screw about 3 turns out. It seemed as though the bike would run a bit better with the air screw in the outer most adjustment, as far as when the throttle was just cracked open. This is the zone that is most effected by the throttle cutaway. The air screw has some effect on this zone too and a lot of literature says this is the way to determine what is right. Really this is the opposite of what the air fuel ratio gauge showed me, but I was beginning to realize that the air fuel ratio gauge was only going to be useful when the engine was actually running correctly. I would use it to make the fine adjustments.

At this point the engine would idle more steadily and slower than it ever did with the Mikuni. Also the engine started really easily. It seemed now that I would eventually get this right and have what I wanted.

Before adjusting the slide I did a bit more experimenting with the main jet. The carb came with a 380 main. I changed it first to a 340 and then to a 300. When I put in the 300 the bike would accelerate well, holding the throttle wide open for more than about 30 seconds resulted in the mixture strength dropping from about 12 to about 13.5:1. After a second or two at 13.5 to 1 the mixture would go even leaner and the bike would cut out. It seemed as though the float bowl was being drained faster than it could fill up. I did a modification to the float bowl that seemed to reduce this problem so that it was unnoticeable. What I did is, I drilled two little holes through the side of the inside of the float bowl into the seat for the float needle. The holes were only just above the actual seat. That way the fuel would not all have to pass along the sides of the float needle. John McDougal told me he had found this to be necessary on his Norton Commando race bike. I think that with there being only one carburetor this engine was sucking more fuel than the standard float needle could pass. From these tests and checking the plugs I was also realizing that my right cylinder was probably running richer than the left, because the pipe that held my oxygen sensor was restricting the exhaust. What I needed really was an old muffler that I could weld the bung for the oxygen sensor into, and then remove it once I had done my measurements. I would have to obtain a 310, 320, and 330 main jet.

I finally found a parts diagram with parts numbers of the 1038. I found it by googling "Amal 1034" which is the smaller size this carburetor comes in. Before I had only tried "Amal 1038". On the Hitchcock Motorcycles site they had the parts diagram. From this I was able to confirm that my carburetor had the 2

stroke needle. (identified by an O stamped near the top) I also found out that the 4 stroke needle I should have is the same one as in the Amal 900 and 600 series carburetors (with two thin grooves machined near the top). I think it is very good the way that all Amal carbs have a lot of parts in common. I know a lot of people are not impressed by British engineering, but I always have been. It is not easy to make things simple, but it seems to me that a lot of British designers did manage this. I think the engineering training in England is more practical than the education that is provided for engineers over here. That is why Amal came out with these beautiful simple devices that would irritate and intrigue mechanics for decades. I had three or four of those needles in my spares boxes so I would try that next, even before I try adjusting the slides.

From Hitchcock's I ordered a new 4 stroke needle and one of the 4 stroke type spray tube. I put the carb back on and when I started it and warmed it up it ran very lean. For some reason I had put the needle clip in the top groove so the needle mixture would be at it's leanest. It was obvious it wouldn't even run like that. Once I put the needle clips in the bottom groove the bike ran really well finally. I would have to do some test riding, and fiddle with the air screw a bit, but it was finally really good. Having the correct needle probably made the biggest difference. I might also check that the slide cutaway is perfect by doing a little experimenting. Also I will have to try some different main jets once I have some of the sizes between 300 and 340. I am pretty sure the 300 is a bit small and the 340 is too big. From all the dismantling and re assembling I already need a new float bowl gasket, but that is about it.



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A VISIT TO UNION JACK CYCLE

Peter Dent

Agatha Christie's celebrated Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot, was a fastidious wee fellow. Fastidious and dapper - going on fussy not to put too fine a point on it. Favouring a pin-striped morning suit with spats he was dressed to the nines on every occasion. But nowhere was this fastidious grooming of his more evident than in his 'moustaches' (using the plural was his idea) and in his precisely trimmed and oiled haircut. Stepping out to look for clues and solve mysteries in the world of M. Poirot was not to be a hurried affair.

Believing, one day, that his barber had trimmed one sideburn fully one millimetre more than the other - he measured them - he is so distraught and

frustrated that he has been so badly let down by the man on whom he has to place so much trust that he speaks to his good friend and confidant about the matter; Captain Hastings. 'You see', he begins with the ever patient Hastings, (and feel free to add French accent to taste by the way) 'a haircut is like a partnership; I bring to the arrangement my hair and my barber brings to the arrangement his undoubted skills. So you see, my dear Hastings, one simply cannot exist without the other'. Hastings, actually, did not see, but that is not



Tony (left) and Elwood of Union Jack Cycle prepare a customer's Vincent

an observation that we need concern ourselves with at this juncture.

It's all a bit like the arrangement a bike owner has to make with his restorer. The owner brings the bike and the restorer brings his undoubted skills. It's a partnership. But it's a partnership that requires some considerable dialogue. The restorer needs to know what the owner wants from his labours. The options vary from a museum like replication of the factory original to something that just goes - preferably like the clappers.

I was reminded of all this after a visit to Union Jack Cycle out in the Fraser Valley a few days ago. Anthony Nickolson and Elwood Powley operate out of a workshop facility located in the green fields just outside of the town of Chilliwack. They formed Union Jack Cycle about 10 years ago and recently increased their involvement with the BMOC by taking out a 'Corporate Membership' with us. I spent a very interesting hour or so with these two dyed in the wool Britbike enthusiasts talking nothing but bikes. A very tasty Vincent was up on the work station. It was getting restored but with the subtle upgrades that make these great bikes so much more rideable, like improved electrics, better friction materials, sealing mediums and so on. It was being built to meet the customer's specific requirements.

But its not just blue chip classics like Vincents that they handle. However, rather than have me explain their business model and general *modus operandi*, why not click on over to www.unionjackcycle.com and see what their setup is and whether or not it might work for you. Like Hercule Poirot and his barber, they might just be the partner you were looking for.



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and Anthony Nicholson

TIDDLER TT

Peter Dent

For most of us, our motorcycling beginnings were both humble and modest - and strongly discouraged too in most cases. It took some determination to overcome the financial shortcomings of youth and the ever frowning countenance of parents long on misgivings and short on enthusiasm for your entire two wheeled venture. But we persevered and eventually dragged home some pathetic wretch of a machine; someone else's unwanted junk as like as not. And so it began.

It's strange though, no matter how big, fast and shiny subsequent bikes got, it seems that the sheer adrenaline rush of that very first machine would never really be replicated. Just hearing it fire up for the first time - especially if it was a non runner when you got it - was a conquest like no other. And as for that first shaky ride; the thing was alive with a pulsing vibration, all you could hear was the frenzied barking and cackling of combustion; you sniffed the exquisite aroma of hot single-weight and felt the searing heat radiating from its fins as you experienced the miracle of pedal-free locomotion for the very first time. For that



photo: Robert Smith

Jim Bush (right) was deemed the winner of the Tiddler TT with his beautiful little MV. Of course, he would probably have been deemed the winner anyway just for having Giacomo Agostini's signature on the tank. On the left is Geoff May seen here on the same model bike as his very first machine - he won't be selling this one. Elsewhere in this GV Alan Comfort (centre) tells us of his very first machine and he invites - nay bribes - you to do the same. Steve Gurry's meticulously restored Honda Trail is on the right.

one brief moment you were the king of the world; there was no going back now. It's true what they say; you never forget your first.

So it was in honour of our beginnings that some BMOC members gathered on Barnston Island a few weeks ago to celebrate the noble tiddler. Somewhere down the line the event got named the Tiddler TT - well, who amongst us doesn't enjoy the occasional alliteration? Not a club event as such but club members gathered with a collection of grossly underpowered motorcycles to decide exactly.....er..... Well, to be brutally honest with you, it was not entirely clear to me what was going to be exactly decided but whatever it was it was all highly entertaining and a good time was had by all.

Don't get me wrong, this was serious stuff - there was a prize and everything. One poor fellow, Gerry Philbrick who was found to be using non original equipment was actually deported from the country for this deplorable flouting of order; yes, banished to a small island in the North Sea he was. He later claimed that he left voluntarily be we know the truth of it.

With these tiny motors still ticking out their cool-down cycle we repaired to Geoff and Sue May's abode for judge's assessments - here there was a bathroom scale involved which I felt it better to not enquire about - and, most importantly, a BBQ and refreshments.



photo: Robert Smith

Sadly, former BMOC President Gerry Philbrick makes his last ride with us. He is moving on to new ventures in the UK. We wish him the very best.

Jim Bush was awarded, fittingly enough, a small capacity cup in recognition of his day's achievement as winner of the Tiddler TT and we all got to dine handsomely on a fine spread of Boerewors sausage and reminisce on the day's events; it was all very entertaining.

Thanks to Jim Bush and Steve Gurry for putting this event together and to Geoff and Sue for hosting the post rally hospitality. Sadly, it was also one of the last events where we could enjoy the company of our ex-president Gerry Philbrick who is leaving our neck of the woods for pastures new. We wish him well in whatever he does; he gave of his time freely to the club and his energy and friendly enthusiasm seemed boundless. I think Geoff May summed it up best when he declared "you were always a laugh". Indeed you were my old china, indeed you were.

MY FIRST MOTORCYCLE

Alan Comfort

It was the fall of 1963. I was in the garage tinkering with a homemade mini-bike when I heard a strange commotion coming from across the street. The unmistakable sound of a two-stroke engine and a dog barking madly was something that needed to be investigated immediately. Our neighbour, a middle aged working man, had a large yard enclosed by a chain link fence, and he was riding a motorcycle between the flower beds while his large Collie was trying it's best to stop him. I arrived just in time to see the bike hit the dog, veer into a flower bed and high-side the rider into the chain link fence. The dog escaped unscathed, and after the cursing subsided, the rider seemed to have suffered no permanent damage. I came in through the gate to offer assistance and we managed to get the bike back onto it's wheels, but roll and steer it would not. The forks had twisted and there was a large chunk of sod wedged between the fender and the tire. By now the dog had stopped barking and the motor was silent, but the earlier cacophony was soon replaced by a very irate female voice going on about delphiniums and rose bushes.

"Wanna buy a motorcycle?" my neighbour asked as we pushed and dragged the crippled machine into a shed at the back of his yard. "I would if I could afford it", I replied, knowing full well that a real motorcycle was way beyond my means. "What can you afford?" I confessed that I had the \$150 that was the net of my wages from an 8- week summer job as junior counselor at a nearby summer camp. "It's yours for \$125, and that should leave enough to fix the broken headlight and bent forks." The next day I was the proud owner of a 1951 Harley Davidson Tele-Glide, the 125cc predecessor to the Model 165, the Hummer, The Scat and the Bobcat. This bike was a knock-off of the German DKW whose engineering was forfeited to the Allies as part of the war reparations. It was very similar to the BSA Bantam and numerous other sturdy, light weight motorcycles that were built for basic transportation immediately after World War 2.

When the bike arrived home, it was greeted with another irate female voice; that of my mother. She had tolerated the stream of motorized bicycles and home made mini-bikes that passed through my hands and dirtied my clothes for the past two years, but there was no way that I would be allowed to have a real motorcycle. They were dangerous and were operated by hooligans. When I explained that it did not run and that I was going to fix it up and sell it, some of the heat was off. My older brother had broken some ground on that front, having bought and sold a couple of old cars for profit. I also reminded her that I could not ride it on the street because I was not old enough to have a driver's license. So into the basement it went. It was stripped to the frame and all the parts were treated to cleaning,

painting or polishing. My mother was greatly relieved because now it was just some boxes of junk that would never propel a teenager to an untimely demise.

In June of 1964, I got my driver's license and the little Harley emerged from the basement as a right proper motorcycle. It took me 40 miles into the countryside to my summer job as a counselor at the summer camp and brought me home on my days off. I rode that bike nearly every day until I sold it in the summer of 1967 to a fellow camp counselor for \$225...exactly what I paid for the 1948 Harley Panhead that replaced it.

I have always had a motorcycle in my life since that wonderful day in '63, and I hope that is one bad habit that I am not forced to break for a very long time.

The next BMOC member who has a story about his (or her) first motorcycle published in GV will have breakfast on me.



A young, and, it has to be said, dashing, Alan Comfort with his first motorcycle

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