

GOOD VIBRATIONS

NEWSLETTER of the WESTCOAST BRITISH MOTORCYCLE OWNERS CLUB

August 2020



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Many thanks to our Advertisers

Next Issue mid September prior to AGM

Above pictures: Stay-cation ride and Norton
as shown at the Vancouver MC Show



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2020 UPCOMING BMOB ACTIVITIES

All upcoming events are dependent on Health guidelines and status of COVID 19 pandemic. Indoor club meetings are cancelled until further notice. Email and website notification of upcoming rides or events will be circulated as and when conditions allow. Ride safe/Stay safe. Good Health to all. Please refer to latest Executive Minutes for current proposed events.

BMOC ADMINISTRATION FOR 2019-2020**BMOC EXECUTIVE**

Past President, Nigel Spaxman, nigelspaxman@gmail.com

President, Geoff May, geoffmay@telus.net

Vice President, Patrick Jaune, patrick.jaune@shaw.ca

Secretary, Robert Smith, t695sprint@icloud.com

Treasurer, Peter Vanderkooy, bmoc.treasurer@gmail.com

Review Committee: Daryl Brown, Todd Copan and Jim Bush.

MEETINGS

General meetings are held monthly on the second Thursday at 7:30 PM at the Burnaby Rugby Club at the east end of Sprott Street one block east of Kensington Avenue.

Informal breakfast meetings are held every Sunday at 8:00 AM at Jim's Café located at 6th Street and 5th Avenue in New Westminster. Informal rides depart following breakfast, weather permitting.

The West Coast British Motorcycle Club (BMOC) was established in 1985 and is a registered not for profit society dedicated to the preservation, restoration and use of British motorcycles. Our newsletter, Good Vibrations, is published five times a year and is intended to inform and entertain our members. Articles appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the BMOC. Technical tips, views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent or reflect the position or policy of the editor or any other BMOC officers.

We welcome all contributions from our members; 'want' ads and 'for sale' ads are free to members. They must be limited to motorcycles or motorcycle 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: gveditor2019@gmail.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 please inform the Club Secretary

BMOC is a member and supports

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We are always looking for articles and if you have a bike and a story, write it and send it to the Editor at: gveditor2019@gmail.com.

We will also try member to member adverts which will have to be a very brief description of the item together with a single contact number or email. As this newsletter is a public document your contact information should be considered to be NOT private so caution is advised.

President's Message

The summer marches on and time is not waiting for the whole pandemic to end, further time waits for no one and we are running out of summers. 2020 has been challenging for all of us and finally we are slowly coming together, and getting back to normal, well the new normal.

Your Executive have been meeting every month trying to plan things around the situation. We have cancelled almost all the events as well as our meetings. I hope everyone has been getting and reading the minutes of our Executive Meetings which have been circulated via e mail to all members. In these times it's important to read what we have been discussing and what we have planned coming up as it effects all of us as individual members of the club and the club as a whole.

We have Now had two rides in, the Shakedown ride and the Stay-cation ride. Both were very successful boasting 22 bikes and 28 bikes turning up, though some did not make it all the way around.

With the Burnaby Rugby Club being closed and not having any meetings it has been difficult keeping everyone interested BUT hopefully this will change. Starting September, we have been offered a Turnkey Option from the Rugby club to have the meeting place available to us, the Executive is looking at this Option. If we do not start this in September, we will definitely have our AGM in October, so please mark your calendars and get your nominations ready for the upcoming Executive, all nominations are welcome.

Please read the Minutes from the Executive Meetings as there is lots of information on what is happening, rides and campouts.

Colin Kelly is still holding his campout at his home and the Riondel campout is still going ahead but it will be in Nakusp, again this information will be in the Executive Minutes, dates locations etc.

Keep the rubber side down and I hope to see all of you at our AGM in October, if not before that.

Cheers Geoff

Pictures from Shakedown Run



Deja Vu All Over Again

Shake Down Run 2020 June 14

Bevin Jones

I've been in the club since 1994, long enough to recall "the good old days" of club rides,, after meeting pub rides, group rides to Birken, Coombs to Ucluelet, Sunshine Coast Runs, Shake Down Runs (including Smokey's infamous Matchless explosion) etc. etc. Well, let me tell you, if this year's Shake Down Run was any indication – the good old days are back!



A line of 17 British bikes were parked against the curb in Fort Langley ready for the 10 AM start. An impressive line up which included 2, yes 2, Vincents, 2 Norton singles a '51 OHC International and a 1957 ES2, 8 Commandos including a very smart Fastback, 3 Meriden Triumphs, a lovely Polychromatic Blue T100, a T140, a TR6C plus one Hinkley 1200 Bonnie and a venerable and extremely rare long-distance BSA C12 "Trans-

continental". There were 3 other bikes but we won't mention them here.

Thanks to Club president Geoff, who led the group up, down and over the Fort Langley escarpment and along some of the best motorcycling roads in the area. Through Clayburn Village and over Sumas Mountain, a rest stop beside the Sumas River then on to Yarrow and Majuba Hill, along the narrow bucolic farm roads paralleling the Covid-19 boundary to Huntington. The final leg included the obligatory dead-straight sections past berry fields, YXX and on through horse country ending up at Campbell Valley Regional Park for a snack and some tire kicking, "Nice bike, etc."



Although the event was postponed twice because of rain, the weather for the ride was pleasant and dry, a great way to spend Father's Day. The highlights for me (apart from the obvious great route and roads taken) were, in no particular order, riding at the back of the line (since I had brake light, turn signals and four-way flashers), was listening to the sound coming from Jim's unsilenced Norton Inter, seeing the respect that we were getting from other drivers who waved us through intersections etc., the friendly waves of people along the way, just watching the line of bikes wind its way along.

Yes, the good old days are back.

Stay-cation Run July 19 by Peter Vanderkooy

Well it was as they say a 'glorious day'. The weather was spectacular, probably the envy of many in other parts of the country. The Group consisted of an unofficial count of approximately 20 mostly British Motorcycles of various vintages. It is worthy to note that our President Geoff May actually rode 2 bikes, the first being problematic, Geoff, resorted to the 1950 Ariel 350cc single, see the Pic.



The first stop and starting point was Fort Langley, the so-called 'birthplace of British Columbia'. From there the group meandered through Langley / Surrey along 96th Avenue, the Golden Ears Connector to Highway 17. Circling under the Alex Fraser Bridge, River Road was employed to provide a more scenic pace along the Fraser River.

Our next stop was at Deas Island Regional Park a worthy location for a day trip, with scenic trails along the Fraser and much history. The H.R.D. of Nigel Spaxman always draws a conversation as did many other iterations of British machinery including Geoff's Ariel when he caught up to the gaggle. After Robert Smith's discussion with a local Parks Officer, not sure what was discussed, however it was all smiles when the group mounted up. The troupe left to serpentine through East Delta / Ladner to arrive at Wellington Point Park along the south arm of the Fraser.

Peter Dent's Royal Enfield / Hillman Imp Hybrid became a focus of discussion of sorts. It being Peter's creation of stuffing a Hillman engine block and cylinder head cast in aluminium, into a Royal Enfield frame. The story included riding the 'beast' across Canada in October. Ask the engaging engineer Mr. Dent for the details it's worth a listen to.



The next stop after a further ramble was at the confluence of Highway 10, Ladner Trunk Road and Highway 99, not quite the Ace Café however the ubiquitous Tim Horton's / White Spot was a welcome refueling / replenishing occasion. From there the group somewhat scattered and reportedly ended at the Campbell Valley Regional Park.

A big thanks to Robert Smith for the creative mapping of the route .. hopefully soon to be repeated with another BMOC Stay-cation Adventure.



Showtime A Retrospective (part 2) Wayne Dowler

The theme for the **2012 show** was “A Salute to Our Racing Heritage.” It featured a large photo and poster display showing both club members and other local racers who competed in the local Westwood races and the Isle of Man. Bikes of note on display included Yellow Peril from the Okanogan, Tom Mellor’s trident race bike plus a street legal Trident, Alex Dumitru’s



race bike, Dave Haydon’s Triumph race bike, Dave Woolley’s café racer, and Nigel Spaxman’s jewel of a bike, a Triumph 650 bored out to 750 in a nickel plated flat tracker frame. Rounding out the strictly race bikes was a “Slippery Sam” replica as shown by “Rocket” John Collet. Robert Smith and Gil Yarrow both showed Bonnies, Lyle Whitter showed his Square 4, and Wayne Dowler his BSA in ‘desert racer’ mode.

Robert Smith gave an entertaining talk and slide show on motorcycle touring, a subject he is well versed on. Alex Dumitru gave an intriguing presentation on ‘getting into vintage racing’, again a subject on which he is well versed.

This year also saw the introduction of the red vests for Club member to wear when working in the booth.

Many hours of work by club members went into this show, from research to selection to production to actually getting the machines and equipment to the show and back home in less than ideal conditions, to teardown.

Display organisers, Alan Comfort, Dave Wooley, Bevin Jones and Wayne Dowler were assisted by many other members of the club to make this a memorable show. Special thanks went out to John McKenzie for driving up to Kelowna to get Yellow Peril and to Bruce Davidson for transporting it to his home and storing it.

We enter a new era for the **2013 show**. The show management has changed, the display area is reduced due to the elimination of the tent area, and many of the club and volunteer exhibitors are gone. The area allocated to us is greatly diminished and the honorarium is reduced. But we are one of the very few non-paying exhibitors remaining. The show remains as a four day affair but hours are reduced. This is also the first



year that we offered used motorcycle magazines for a donation. This service has continued to this day and has provided a valuable source of additional revenue for our club.

Our 2013 display marked the first time a non-British bike was shown in our booth. And not only shown but it was our feature bike. It was the fantastic 1970s MV Agusta Magni Race Replica built by long

time BMOC member Jim Bush. This decision raised a few eyebrows from some club members, but our display committee decided that this bike and the accomplishment of building it could not be ignored and it was a must show, British or not. Other bikes in the display included a Dominator also shown by Jim Bush, a Super Rocket shown by Gil Yarrow, a Royal Enfield shown by the Wheelers, a James shown by Wayne Dowler, a Commando shown by Robert Smith and an Ariel shown by Dick Allan.

A great article was published in the Tri-City News about the accomplishments of club member Gil Yarrow, who at age 81 and a great grandfather was still an avid motorcyclist.

In the show edition of GV, club member Alan Comfort had an interesting comparison on the cost of owning a classic bike as compared to a modern machine.

Display organisers for this show were Alan Comfort, Dave Woolley and Wayne Dowler.

The **2014 show** was reduced to a three day event and the area allocated for our display was increased slightly. In early discussions with the show organisers about our display we mentioned that we would be showing Tom Mellor's Salt Flats Bike. They then offered us a second spot close to the front entrance and in the center of all the action for a special display of Tom's bike. A raised stand for Tom's bike was constructed and Tom, Bob Duncan and Bob Gosling were present at this display for the entire show. A fantastic visual and informative display that even drew more people than the Amsoil Girls



Our main display featured bikes from "The Big Three" British manufactures. Representing Triumph we had a father and son team of Colin and Neil Vaughn showing a pair of 1971 Bonneville's. One was a period correct restoration the other a "Bobber". Representing BSA we had Keith Barnett's B50 SS. Representing Norton we had a 2013 961 from British Import Motorcycles and a 1936 Model 18 as shown by Steve Snoen. Jim Bush also showed a 1971 Commando as a tribute to recently deceased club member Tony Duffett.

We also received some great press coverage and a spot on Global TV. In the Vancouver Sun we had an article by motoring writer Brendan McAleer on Tom Mellor and his salt bike. The nearly full page article was entitled "Best way to learn? Break stuff". The subtitle was "Vancouver man chases triumph on his homemade two-wheeled masterpiece." It chronicled Tom's quest to set worlds records on the salt at Bonneville.

Lyle Whitter represented our club on the noon time news on Global TV with his Ariel Square 4. Lyle explained the rebuilding of the bike to Steve Darling and Sophie Lui and even started it in the studio. A link to this interview can be found on the BMOC Web Page.

We also managed to squeeze Lyle's bike into the display with a special sign that said "As Seen On TV"

Display organisers were Alan Comfort, Dave Woolley and Wayne Dowler.

Shortly after the show we learned of the death of club president Dave Woolley. A tireless worker and supporter of the Club, he was very involved with all the activities of the club, especially the shows.

The theme for the **2015 show** was "Off Road British Motorcycles" These machines, generally referred to as Dual Sport bikes are very popular and we had a great display of some of the best Britain had to offer. A total of 4 BSA's were shown. 2 Victor 441s, 1 by Bernd Behr and 1 by Bevin Jones, a slightly larger displacement B 50 was shown by Keith Barnett and a smaller B25T was shown by Wayne Dowler. Robert Smith showed his Triumph Trophy, Glen Petersen brought his Norton N15CS, Doug Jinkerson his Greeves Pathfinder, and as a feature bike we had a Matchless G80CS shown by British Import Motorcycles.



A fitting tribute to this popular segment of the market.

A fantastic article on this show written by Peter Dent and was in the March 2015 edition of GV.

Display organisers were Alan Comfort, Bernd Behr and Wayne Dowler. This was the first year for a long time that Dave Woolley was not an integral part of the show and he was sorely missed.

The theme for the **2016 show** was Triumph Triples but we actually had a total of 4 special attractions. After we had chosen the theme and started to line up the bikes for the show we were asked by the show organisers if we could include a bike that had been shown at both the Calgary and Edmonton shows. It was the new Norton Dominator SS owned by Norton Canada. At first we declined as it did not fit our theme of Triumph triples and we did not have enough room for it. We were then offered an additional 10 Feet of display area. After much discussion we decided to add the Norton and pair it up with a 1962 Norton Dominator SS owned by club member Derek Steele. The 2 bikes sat side by side in the display. Next to the Norton's we had Peter Dent's Triumph Tiger outfitted as it was for his recent trip to Inuvik. Then we had Tom Mellor's new salt bike mounted on the BMOC stand surrounded by George Fenning's Trident, Bob Duncan's T160, Ahmar Katz's Thunderbird and for the younger show goers Blair Keylock's much modified Street Triple.

Tom Mellor's salt bike always draws a lot of interest and the latest slightly longer and slippery creation certainly did not disappoint. Tom, Bob Duncan and Bod Gosling were on hand to answer the many queries.

The display chronicling Peter Dent's ride to Inuvik was called "Peters Excellent Adven-

ture". The many modifications Peter had made to his bike were of particular interest to many show goers who someday wished to outfit a bike for that kind of journey. The rocking foot pegs and the bear proof locks on the aluminum panniers were of particular interest.

We also had a display in celebration of the club's 30th anniversary. The heading was "Who We Are and What We Do". Pictures of club members and activities were accompanied by write-ups.

The front cover of the Driving section of the Vancouver Sun was Headlined "Roll Britannia" and contained an article by Driving Editor Brendan McAleer entitled "A mild spot of adventure" and subtitled "Cheers to the British Motorcycle Owners Club". It chronicled our display at the show as only Brendan could do. He wrote of the modifications that had to be made to Peter Dent's bike prior to his trip. He wrote of the differences that Tom Mellor had made to his latest streamliner in order to get more speed. He wrote of the differences and the similarities of 2 Norton's. But mostly he wrote of the adventurous spirit that owning a motorcycle, especially a British motorcycle, can bring.

We also had two TV interviews. Nigel Spaxman was interviewed by Xinhau TV for a broadcast to China. Alan Comfort was joined by Laurie Paetz from show organizers Power Sport Services, and appeared on the noon news of Global TV with the two Norton's. Both Nigel and Alan did our club proud with informative and professional presentations.

This was the first time we utilised an Open Concept display. No barriers were between the show patrons and the bikes. Although it required a bit more attention by the members manning the booth it certainly gave a nicer look and feel to our display.

Display organisers were Alan Comfort and Wayne Dowler.

The **2017, 2018, and 2019 shows** were plagued by indecision by the event organisers. Whether we would even participate in the show and if so what would be the terms and conditions were always in doubt until the last minute. During this unsettling time Nigel Spaxman held sway and managed to put on 3 quality shows. A new backdrop designed by Nigel was utilised and many club members pitched in to help in organising the shows under less than ideal conditions.

In **2017 the show** space originally allocated only allowed for 2 bikes to be shown. A Triumph T140D owned by Jim Bush and a MKIII Commando owned by Elizabeth Trevisan were chosen. Shortly before the show was due to start, we were allocated another space which allowed the showing of 4 more bikes. Jim bush added his Triumph Thunderbird, Shad Livesley his Royal Enfield, Lucy Rowley brought her 441 and Nigel added his Flat tracker. Nigel arranged the bikes as if they were going for a ride, except for Elizabeth's bike which was placed on the club display stand.



As fine a mixture of British bikes as one can find and all in front of the new Black backdrop as designed by Nigel.

The **2018** show was the Black and Gold Show except for John Anderson's red Norton.

The **2019** show was primarily made up of BSA s and utilised props from our "100 Years of BSA" display. Also shown together for the first time were Lyle Whitter's Square 4 and his recently completed Square Flash. And what a stunning pair they are. A fitting tribute to the skill and ingenuity of this long time club member.

The **2020** show was organised by club president Geoff May. A total of 10 bikes were on display with the feature bike being the Rob North Special built by John Martin. Jim Bush and Elizabeth Trevisan showed a Norton International Clubman, a Norton Model 7 Dominator and little gem of a bike, a 1927 Coventry Eagle "Lightweight". Steve Snoen showed his much traveled BSA C12. A 1957 Triumph Tiger was shown by Geoff May. Darcy Edgecombe showed his 1954 Tiger that had been judged "Best in Show" and "Best Marque" at the ABFM in 2018. The 1959 Royal Enfield Bullet shown by Shad Livesley had also done well at the ABFM, garnering the award for "Best Marque" at the 2015 show. There was even an article about the bike written by Nigel Matthews, Global Director of Hagerty Insurance that appeared in the driving section of the Vancouver Province. A pair of more modern Triumphs were shown, a 2002 Daytona by Chris Hibbert and a 2017 Bonneville shown by Erik McNab.

An interesting lineup of well displayed bikes that attracted a great deal of interest, by both the young and older show goers. The name tags for club personnel manning the booth were a nice touch.

A great job done by Geoff and Patrick Jaune.

This show just snuck in before the changes imposed on us by COVID-19 began. Little did we know at that time what an effect the pandemic would have on all of our lives?

See the next issue of GV for the "Excellent Show That Never Happened".



Peter's Excellent Adventure Tiger and Tom's New Racer/

The first Superbike?

The Series A Vincent-HRD Rapide . . . the first and probably the most enigmatic model of all the Vincent twins. Introduced in the late 30s and with a production run of only about 100 machines, not many people would have written or even seen one of these handsome machines. "Oh yes, the plumbers' nightmare," the clubroom experts proclaimed (on account of its multitude of outside oil pipes). Can it really have been that bad? Of the three Series A riders I have met, two raced them successfully at Brooklands and one learnt to ride and passed his test on his father's outfit!



Jim Kentish rode his big twin several times at Brooklands in unlimited races, gaining a Gold Star for lapping at over 100 mph during a race in 1938. A great all-rounder, Jim won a TT replica after the war on a Norton and a gold medal in the ISDT.

Streatham club member Ted Frend had been very disappointed with his Ariel Square Four and whilst admiring a new "Rapide" at the Earl's Court motorcycle show, Phil Vincent's made him a part-exchange offer that he could not refuse. Trained as an aircraft engineer, Ted prepared his machine to good effect and after riding to his second meeting, with clubmate Carl Pugh on the pillion, also lapped at over the ton to gain his Gold Star (actually, they were made of brass). Straight-talking Ted reckoned his machine was capable of over 120 m.p.h. "If this machine is as good as you say it is," challenged fellow club members, "why don't you ride in the forthcoming grass track meeting?" (Pre-WW2 grass track circuits, unlike today's speedway-inspired tracks, were much longer and featured left and right hand bends, with riders using stripped sports models.) Ted duly obliged and proceeded to blow them all off winning several races and only retiring when his exhaust pipe came adrift. After that meeting all grass track races in the South-East Centre were restricted to a maximum capacity of 750cc! Not content with this, Ted entered the 1938 International Six Days Trial, held in Wales and was in line for a gold medal until a stone jammed in his back wheel, breaking teeth of the sprocket. Not having the optional dual rear sprocket (funds being really tight), Ted was forced to retire. The bike was kept until after the war, when it was sold for a good profit. "The best all-round bike I ever owned," Ted proclaimed.

Persuaded by friend Harold Daniel to enter the 1948 Senior TT on a new "garden gate" Norton, Ted finished fourth . . . an amazing first-time result. On the strength of this result Ted was invited to join the AJS works team, riding the fabulous new Porcupine twin and 7R machines with Les Graham.

A few years later, in Belvedere, Kent not far from the AMC factory, a young Colin Seeley was learning to ride on his father's Series A combination and became rather good at it. . . . (Picture above Ted Frend on right J. Hill on left)

The following is an letter by David Dawson to 'The Classic Motorcycle' regarding his late brother's Phoenix Norton. Kindly supplied by Mr. Dawson via Jonathan Hill

250cc Phoenix Norton

I read with interest the article on Ernie Barret's Phoenix JAPs ("The Classic MotorCycle," July issue) because my late brother Robin Dawson started his racing career on a 250 Phoenix JAP in the late 1950's. Robin went to achieve his racing ambition and win the Manx Grand Prix in 1962. More later.



The Phoenix was never very competitive in the 250 class, and he had several breakdowns, if I remember correctly quite a few with breaking cam followers.

Eventually to improve reliability, and be competitive, Robin persuaded his father to let his engineering business build and develop a short stroke 250 Manx Norton, which was fitted into the Phoenix. See attached photo.

In the late 50's and early 60's Robin had acquired an ex Bob McIntyre 7R, and a G50 Matchless, and was achieving considerable success on UK short circuits, and starting his career at the Manx. One of his favourite events was the Southern 100 in the IOM, and it was here that Robin achieved his best result on the Phoenix Norton, finishing second. I cannot recall the year, or who won the event, but maybe one of your readers may enlighten me. It was a great thrill for my father's small engineering staff who built the motor.

Robin then concentrated on the larger classes, and I assume the Phoenix was sold, and I have no idea what happened to it, but hope one of your readers may be able to shed some light on it.

On Bob McIntyre's 7R, Robin had excellent success on the UK short circuits, but his ambition was to win in the IOM, and in 1961 junior was runner up.

For 1962, he was sponsored by Tom Kirby on the factory AMC bikes for the Manx. He won the junior at record speed, and broke the lap record on the last lap, even though it was still damp!!.

Very sadly three died that year, and what with tragically losing his pal Fred Neville the previous year, and as Robin was getting married soon after the race, and achieving his ambition, promptly announcing his retirement after Fridays senior, finishing 4th.

A small point that may interest your readers, I was just a 17 year old youngster, and

was responsible for organising a signalling station for the race. With no mobiles in those times, I selected the Sulby Stores, at the crossroads, as the kind owner Raymond Caley let me have use the phone for the race. I devised a system with a list of fancied runners, stop watch, and computed the leaders as they passed, and phoned the leader board to my brother Peter at in the pits. I mentioned my method in the AMC race shop in Douglas, and that I needed to find a helper, and low and behold, the legendary AMC engine designer, Jack Williams, said he always nervous in the pits, and would welcome the chance to assist me with the signalling away from the pits tension. How amazing, this wonderful and famous engineer, gave up his time to help this 17 year youngster.

As Robin passed us on the last lap, Mr Williams held out the sign, P1 +30sec.

I turned to Mr Williams and said, wow we just have to wait, and said "let's hope those valves continue to go up and down".

I will never forget when he turned to me and said "it's not the valves, the con rod under most stress, and with his arms outstretched simulating the rod, said DON'T LET GO !!!!!".

Robin, very sadly passed away peacefully in his sleep in 1995, aged 56.

The next time I visited the IOM was 2013, and was enjoying a lap of the Island on my Gold Star, and on impulse stopped at the Sulby stores, and low and behold, could not believe that after 51 years Mr Caley was still behind the counter, and remembered that wonderful day. How amazing. He died in 2017, and a corner at the top of Sulby straight was named in memory of a "Popular Manx Character".

The family business, Dawson Shanahan, is still going after 77yrs, and I am still active with my engineering team, although now semiretired at 75 yrs.

I love motorbikes, it's in my DNA, and member of the VMCC, and have a dozen bikes, mostly classic, including from my father's 1924 Henderson, 1960 DBD Gold Star, Norton Inter, Triumph Tiger 110 to name but a few. My last adventure ride was Patagonia aged 71, on my BMW 1200 GS, pretty tough off-road, but very satisfying riding the tough Carretera Austral and Ruta 40.

I regularly enter the Banbury Run, and in 2015 won the Vintage Trophy on my 1924 Royal Enfield.

Congratulations on a wonderful magazine, and of course your sister publication Classic Racer. No time for hobbies until they have been read cover to cover!!!

Anyway I've digressed from the point of my letter, and do hope that we may find out what happened to the Phoenix Norton.

David Dawson, Hertfordshire UK

BOOK REVIEW**“Colin Seeley 1936-2020”****The machines – the magic – the man
Celebrating an industry great**

Written and edited by James Robinson

Available from Mortons Media Group Ltd, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR Tel.: (01507) 529529 Hardback, 240 x 170, 50 pages with over 35 photographs £7.99 (UK) \$11.99 (US)



Welcome to this celebration of the life, times and works of Colin Seeley, and for whom the expression “human dynamo” could’ve been coined.

He was a most energetic and enthusiastic person who experienced huge highs and mighty lows, both professionally and personally, but who always projected a professional – and immaculate – appearance to the world.

Whilst not a biography, this small appreciation describes the life of Colin who passed away shortly after his 84th birthday in early 2020. However, whilst very good, this little book goes nowhere near to giving the full picture of the extraordinary experiences of a man who lived a life out of the ordinary.

Born in Kent in 1936, the only child of Percy and Hilda, he left school with no qualifications but a noted aptitude for things mechanical and metalwork. His first job was with Harcourt Motorcycles, in his native Bexleyheath, before working for numerous businesses, including Halfords. Young Colin, always a man of style, passed his motorcycle test on his father’s Series A HRD Rapide and sidecar.

Aged just 20, with the unwavering support of his parents, he opened his first business, in Belvedere, Kent gaining the agency for Matchless/AJS and Greeves - machines on which he showed great promise as a scrambler. With the business going well, he realised his ambition in 1960 to go sidecar racing – with a well-worn Manx Norton outfit, partnered by old friend Wally Rawlings. For 1961, a brand-new Matchless G50 was acquired and modified for sidecar racing on which the pair made their TT debut – a somewhat sensational sixth place was the result. The 1962 TT was even better, gaining third place and finishing the season as British sidecar champions. Colin finished his racing career on a high note by racing his FCS-BMW into third place in the 1967 world championships.

At 30 he became a motorcycle manufacturer – the halcyon days of the Seeley G50/7R era - joining Bernie Ecclestone in 1971 in his car racing effort. There was tragedy too in the period though, with the death of Joan, Colin’s first wife, who died in 1979. In her honour, Colin set up the Joan Seeley Memorial Trust. Joining auctioneer Bonhams as a consultant in 1999, he published a two-volume autobiography in 2006 and 2008.

With its many emotive photographs, this little book is, indeed, a collectors’ item.

Book reviewed by Jonathan Hill

BOOK REVIEW

“The BMW story” Author: Ian Falloon

Second Edition Production and racing motorcycles from 1923 to the present day

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Max Friz’s side-valve shaft-driven R32 of 1923, the first BMW boxer twin motorcycle, set BMW on a path that would continue for the next 96 years. BMW has never been afraid of innovation, from the supercharger of the 1920s and 1930s, to the telescopic and then Earls front forks, wind-tunnel-developed fairings, anti-lock brakes and Paralever rear suspension. Here is the full story of all BMW’s road and racing machines, and the people that designed them, including the classic Kompressor, RS54, R69S, R90S as well as the latest R1150 and K1200 models.

The book includes a background history to the company founded in 1917 to produce aircraft engines; their first motorcycle, the R32 of 1923 followed in 1925 by their first sporting model, the sophisticated and very expensive 500cc R37, boasting fully enclosed overhead valves. It is interesting to read that whilst they were the first production motorcycles to be fitted with hydraulically-dampened telescopic forks, they did not get four-speed foot-change gearboxes until the mid-30s and still had rigid frames. On the sporting side, encouraged and subsidised by the Nazi party, the specially-built dohc Kompressors were used to regain the world speed record by Ernst Henne, with George Meir winning the 1939 Senior TT. The post-war resurrection, including the RS54 production racers that were virtually unbeatable in grand prix sidecar racing and the R75/5 – the first post-war 750 - which heralded a new generation of boxer twins lasting until the early 1990s.

A surprising revelation is that the rather slow and very expensive (in the UK) 250cc models, R39-R27, from 1925-1966, were actually their best-selling models, until succeeded by the single-cylinder Rotax-based F650.

An amazing range of machines is covered from the Indian-built 313cc single-cylinder 34bhp G310R to the 193bhp four-cylinder S1000RR; the F800 vertical twin to the 160bhp six-cylinder K1600 Grand America.

Written by one of motorcycling’s renowned historians, Ian Falloon’s excellent second edition brings the BMW story right up to date. This 300-page tome is aided by the addition of two appendices – one listing BMW production from 1923-2008 and the second with the complete specifications of all production BMWs. The book does suffer, however, from not including the motorcycle types in either the contents or the index and sometimes models are referred to by the factory reference numbers rather than the model names, which can be frustrating.

Book reviewed by Jonathan Hill

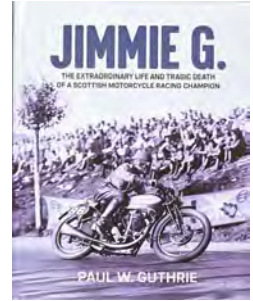
BOOK REVIEW**“Jimmie G.”**

The extraordinary life and tragic death of a Scottish motorcycle racing champion

Author: Paul W. Guthrie

Publisher: Paul W. Guthrie. Available from Amazon, Waterstones and other specialist bookshops and ALS Library Services in Australia.

Hardback, 220 x 260mm (portrait); 344 pages with over 140 photographs and illustrations. ISBN 978-3-9820872-0-7 £34



On the 8th August, 1937, Jimmie Guthrie was on track to win his third successive German Grand Prix, when he tragically crashed on the last lap. He died shortly afterwards in hospital and was mourned by racing fans all over the world. Ironically, he was planning to retire at the end of this, his most successful season, aged 40.

The cause of the crash was never fully explained at the time and many rumours circulated. This book uncovers the known facts surrounding the crash, and explores hypotheses to explain it. In the course of researching the story, many facts were uncovered shedding new light on the British motorcycle racing scene in the 1930s.

Never before published German archive documents are examined to understand what really happened behind-the-scenes. There is an explanation as to why the cause of the crash was obscured by a veil of secrecy. The context of the time is characterised with many facts about German motorsport and the political implications of the (Nazi) NSDAP.

Jimmie Guthrie's life away from racing was equally as extraordinary as in the saddle. A biographical account of his formative years in the Scottish border town of Hawick; his experiences as a machine-gunner at Gallipoli and France in World War One; and the successful business he ran with his brother Archie are presented. Jimmie G., as he was affectionately known by his many admirers, was an enigmatic figure, but a picture of his character has been created from first-hand accounts of those who knew him well. His motorcycle racing career achievements from 1921 to 1937 chronicled for the first time. It is interesting to read that Guthrie was placed second in the 1927 Senior TT, riding a New Hudson; winning the Lightweight TT for AJS in 1930, plus four wins for Norton including the Junior-Senior double in 1934.

There is evidence also, that some British motorcycle racers were involved with British intelligence. For those unfamiliar with German motorsport during the Nazi era, there is a detailed explanation of how it was run and just how important it was as a propaganda exercise for the Third Reich.

Paul W. Guthrie systematically discusses all the crash theories including rider error and mechanical failure – and while we can never be sure, the most likely explanation is that Guthrie crashed due to interference by a German rider, Kurt Mansfeld. If a German rider had caused the crash the incident would have become a geopolitical disaster and a threat to the reputation of the Third Reich. Political tensions were high between Germany and Britain at the time and Paul suggest that it was in the interest of both sides to be vague about the real reason for the crash.

Australian-born and fluent German-speaking author Guthrie is to be congratulated on this truly fascinating and absorbing tome – the result of many years research.

Book reviewed by Jonathan Hill

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