



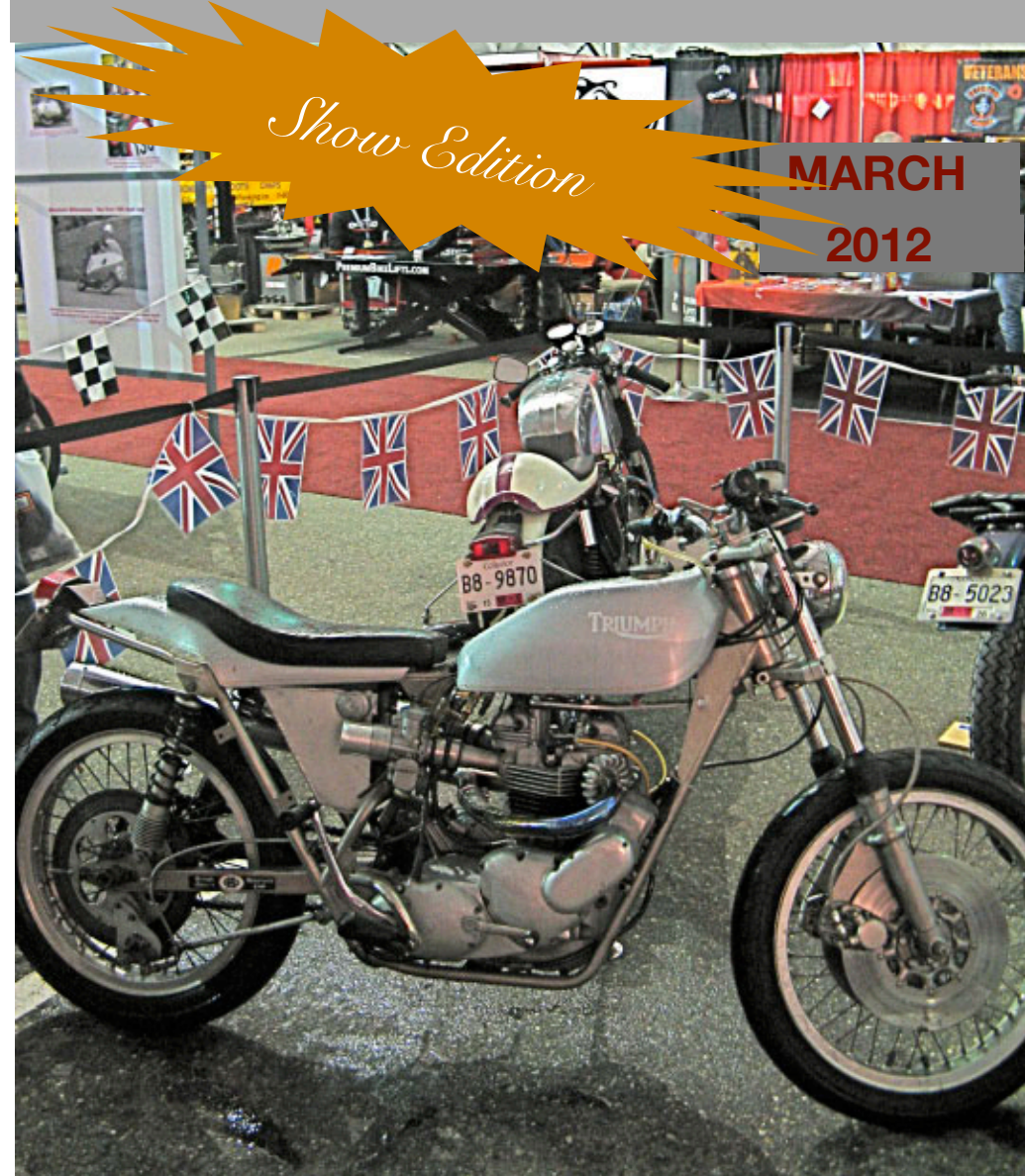
photo: Geoff May

Flying across the Delta marshlands on January 1st, that's how you start a new year

Newsletter of the British Motorcycle Owners Club, British Columbia, Canada

The Vancouver International Motorcycle Show Edition

Good Vibrations



Show Edition

MARCH
2012



Some of the BMOC members and bikes at the White Rock museum, new year's day



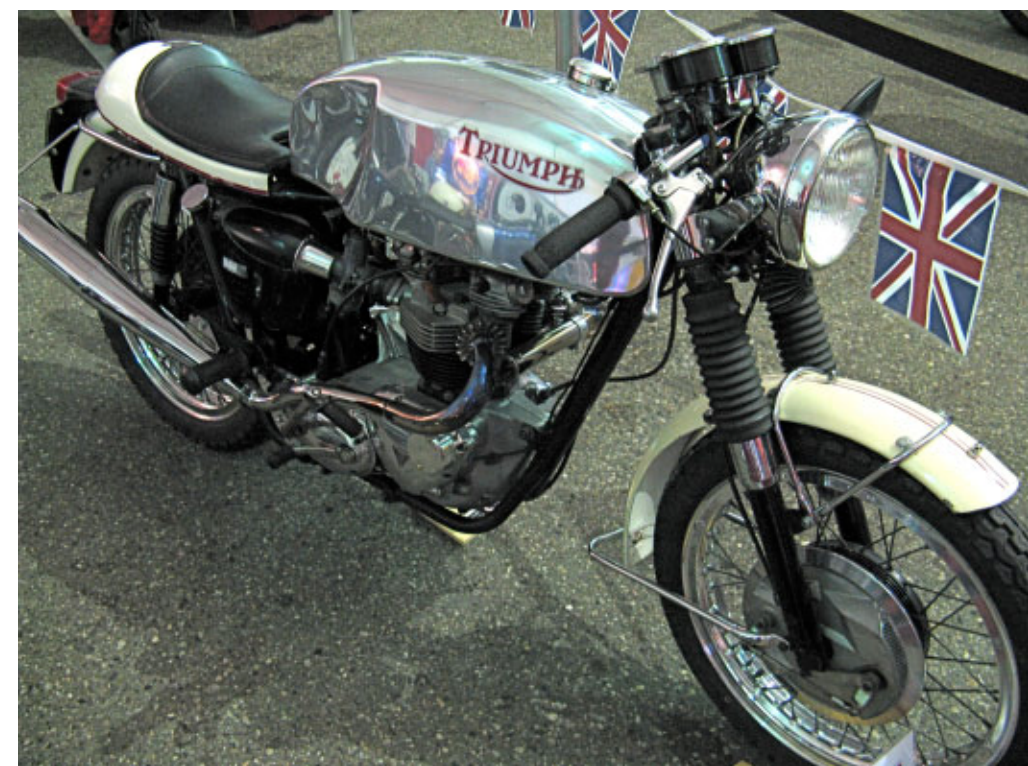
Wayne, Peter, Dave, Bevin, Alan, Gil and Lyle look businesslike at the BMOC stand at the Vancouver International Motorcycle Show with Yellow Peril



John Collet with his amazing Slippy Sam replica



The BMOC stand at this year's Vancouver Motorcycle Show, nicely done it was too.



Dave Haydon's rare '69 Triumph Bonneville Thruxton Production Racer

The BMOC Technical Committee provides technical assistance on a consultative basis via email. All of our members are experienced in restoration as well as having experience with the more common British marques. We may not be able to answer every question you pose, but we can probably point you in a fruitful direction. To access the Committee send your queries to: BMOC_tech_cmte@telus.net

The Christmas Party this year was a spectacular success. I understand that we pretty much filled the capacity of the venue so I would like to thank the creators of this winning formula for all their hard work and creative energy. Robert Smith and Geoff May worked their magic with the turkey and Patrick Juane supplied a ham most excellent. Rosemary, Sue, Sheila, Allyson and Lyle all made significant contributions to the event, supplying the wherewithals, cooking, baking, slicing and dicing - you will by now realise that I'm well out of my comfort zone when the cooking starts so the specifics of this art are somewhat lost on me but the end results, most certainly, are not. Your collective culinary skills amazed me. Organising this group effort, and generally making sure everybody was pulling in the same direction was Penny Freestone. Cheryl Smith and Barb Jones led and organised the singing - and its not a Christmas party without a carol or two - thus ensuring that a good time was had by all. My thanks to everyone who participated in this hugely successful event.

Al 'Smokie' Greaves has been a significant contributor to the Good Vibrations over the years but, alas, this issue contains the final installment of his great motorcycle journey across Canada in 1978 with his young son. Al is a gifted story teller who took the time to live it and then he took the time to tell it and we are all better off for it; thanks Al. These are hard shoes to fill but I believe a continuing saga like Al's benefits the newsletter and it's readers greatly.....that's a hint by the way.

If you wish to receive email bulletins and are not presently getting them, please email patrick.jaune@amec.com with your email address.

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membership rates: Canada - \$25, USA - \$30, International \$40 (all CND funds)

Fine print

The West Coast British Motorcycle Owners 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 test or 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.

Ads 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. BMOC assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the advertisements.

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

Cover photo: Nigel Spaxman's Curtis Triumph as seen at the VIM Show

Mark your calender: Tsawwassen date is April 22 2012
check out the BMOC website: BMOC.ca for full colour version of Good Vibrations



Help us to 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

THE NEW YEAR'S DAY RIDE

Peter Dent

And gentlemen in England now a-bed.

Shall think themselves accursed they were not here-

(Henry V)

The management of what some consider to be the world's greatest ever rock band, The Who - and I use the word 'management' here in it's most laughably ridiculous context imaginable - had a problem. They actually had several problems, the inability to *manage* being chief amongst them but they didn't seem to know that at the time so they concerned themselves instead with the problem of Jimi Hendricks. You see, Hendricks had just arrived on the scene. He brought with him some astonishingly nimble fingers, a headful of complex blues riffs and the recently invented Wow-wow pedal - and he wasn't afraid to use them. Things on the rock stage had suddenly changed and it was he who had changed them.

As fortune would have it, both Hendricks and The Who were due to do a North American tour at much the same time and at more or less the same venues. That was the problem that the Who management now mulled over. Pete Townsend was an established rock god but could he afford to go back to back with the amazing Hendricks?

We don't know how their logic went but it probably involved a smoke filled dive on the Old Kent Road, several bottles of single malt Scotch and a fist fight, but in the end, for better or worse, The Who's tour got cancelled and Townsend's rock god status remains to this very day.

If this was one of Aesop's fables it might have the moral; 'things only ever have *relative value*'.

Mind you, it can work the other way round: sometimes you can make yourself look *better* by choosing the company you keep. But I'm getting ahead of myself; let's go back to the award winning Big Six Restaurant - 'Best Greasy Spoon' Province Newspaper - where the New Year's Day ride begins. (admittedly, this award was given in 1991 but the *spirit* of excellence lives on, *lets say*).

It was a fantastic turnout. A dozen bikes or so, all classics in their own way, many of them British to boot and all were running crisply. After a generous sampling of award winning breakfast fare we headed outside to sniff the refreshingly damp morning air, and, after the traditional bench racing discourse, to stroke the awaiting motors into life.

It was quite the din; almost hooliganesque as we blipped and thrapped away at our respective throttles. Hearing it all, I actually laughed out loud: you can't *buy* this stuff, it's just that precious. I suppose I have to consider that the exhaust fumes were causing severe oxygen dilution and it was that that was causing the laughter as a precursor to delirium but we won't dwell on that now.

Singles, twins, threes and fours; each and every one of us there that day has spent great chunks of our allotted three score and ten in basements and garden sheds working on our machines and now we had reached this moment of joyous collective combustion: and an entirely satisfying racket it was too.

And so, eventually, we meandered in our own somewhat haphazard, disorganized way through the Delta side roads and then out across the empty stretches of the Fraser delta with its tall grass and marshland lanes. Drying roads, mild temperatures and light traffic made it a perfect day for riding a motorbike. This glorious cavalcade of classics banged and coughed and wheezed and purred and roared in their own unique way, each rider master of his own creation. I was reminded again, you just can't *buy* this stuff.

The city fathers of White Rock are gracious enough to grant us parking at the museum located at the old railway station on the seafront there. A fine picture we cut too with our machines all neatly lined up in front of such a classic old building and yet more bikes met us there.

Of course the genius of picking White Rock as our destination for our New Year's Day ride is that we are not the centre of attention on that particular day. No, even in the dead of winter, nobody gives a second glance to a fellow wearing motorcycle leathers. Suddenly, as far as the public is concerned, we have all our marbles, we are the sharpest knives in the drawer, we have enough sandwiches for a picnic, we are playing with a full deck, we were *on* our rockers with no loose screws.

No, there are people running round in bath robes and fluffy slippers, and these folks are about to throw themselves into the freezing briny what's more. Suddenly we look like the wise ones. It's like that Who/Hendricks issue and the relative public perception one can gain or lose with judicious positioning.

So, with hands clasped around paper cups of steaming Arabica grinds we watched as the Polar Bear swimmers launched themselves into the gently lapping waters of the White Rock bay. The gathered masses cheered heartily at the thrashing melee and a good time was had by all - at least I presume they were having fun.

Truly, it was a grand day out, bikes got ridden and lies got swapped. As Alan Comfort so succinctly put it later on: 'it was time well wasted'. Exactly so, Alan, exactly so.



The bikes gather outside the Big Six
photo Geoff May

Ian Bardsley

No subject other than the meaning of life can have consumed so much of an Amal Concentric equipped British bike owners free time than getting and keeping those darned carburetors in-tune. For every well adjusted example – and I have seen a few, there must be a dozen that require their owners to continually blip the throttle at traffic lights.

The Concentric – perhaps the pinnacle of Classic era British carburetor development - is a flawed instrument. It is the product of bike manufacturers' demands for a lower priced product than its predecessor, the venerable Monobloc. Two of it's primary flaws are the use of the same zinc alloy (pot metal) for the body and throttle slide components and the deeply embedded and highly inaccessible pilot jet. Still, properly adjusted and in good condition, it is capable of stellar performance.

My goal in this article is to pass along a few lessons I have learned the hard way. This is not a primer on Concentric overhaul and tuning – for those so motivated I strongly recommend you read Jim Bush's web page: <http://www.jba.bc.ca/Bushmans%20Carb%20Tuning.html>

Fuel Level:

The importance of getting the correct fuel level in the float bowl cannot be overstated and it is a prerequisite for any further tuning exercises. It affects the air/fuel mixture ratio at every stage of throttle opening. Twiddling the idle mixture adjustment screw can compensate for an incorrect fuel level – but only at idle speed – the rest of the range will still be incorrect.

According to Amal: <http://www.amalcarb.co.uk/TechnicalDetail.aspx?id=13>

The correct fuel level is 4.3 – 6.3 mm below the top edge of the float bowl. But just how does one determine the fuel level? A method I have adopted uses a “sight tube” which comprises a length of transparent plastic tubing fitted into a concentric float bowl drain plug. (see photo) With the tube installed in place of the drain plug and held up against the side of the carburetor, fuel will rise within the tube to the level of that within the float bowl. The bottom of the meniscus of the tube fuel indicates the level in the bowl.

On most bikes, the carburetors are mounted so that the float bowl is horizontal; however the forward cant of a



Norton Commando raises the question of where the fuel level should be measured in that case. I have found that setting the fuel level directly adjacent to the main jet/needle is the correct location. Interestingly, fuel level varies by perhaps 5 mm front to back on a Commando.

Having measured your fuel level, how do you adjust it? This topic is covered on the Bushman's web page. I do offer a note based on personal experience that all Amal floats are not directly interchangeable. Jim's technique (inverted measurement of the float position) works with the first generation floats (brown). I found the later version (white) has a different angle on its tangs and that results in a different fuel level. I have also had difficulty adjusting one of the latest “stay-up” floats which feature adjustable tangs.

A final note on fuel level: whilst fiddling with fuel level on my Commando recently, I had the unfortunate experience of a float that I could not get correctly adjusted - and it was not for lack of trying. If removing the float, tweaking the tangs, reinstalling and re-measuring was an Olympic sport, I'd be fast enough to be a Gold medal contender. The fuel level was too low or the float position was too high and the float hit the bottom of the carburetor body, preventing fuel shut-off with result that fuel poured out of the carburetor – an undesirable and dangerous situation. If you attempt fuel level adjustment – make absolutely sure that your fuel flow shuts off once the bowl is full. Always park your bike with the fuel turned off!

The Pilot Jet:

The idle circuit is the least understood aspect of Concentric carburetor operation. In short: fuel is sucked by vacuum from the bottom of the float bowl, into a passage in the main body, through the embedded pilot jet and into a mixing chamber. Note that the pilot jet is just 0.016” in diameter and easily restricted. Idle air is sucked through a passage from the front face of the carburetor towards the engine. This air passage turns 90° to enter the mixing chamber and it flows past the idle mixture screw as it enters the chamber. The screw allows the amount of air to be adjusted, whereas the idle jet fixes the flow of fuel. From the mixing chamber, a small hole elevates the mixed fuel and air into the main intake channel, at a position immediately behind the front edge of the throttle slide. For an excellent discussion of this circuit including pictures, see the Bushman's web page.

A source of much throttle blipping is the blockage or restriction of the pilot jet. Again the Bushman's web page offers appropriate ways to clear the jet.

A technique I have adopted is to mount a 0.015” twist drill bit in a piece of fine copper tubing (acquired from a model train shop). The copper tube allows me to twiddle the drill bit as I pass it through the idle jet, thus removing any obstruction.

The operation of the idle air screw merits a mention. With it screwed fully into the carburetor body, idle air is shut-off resulting in a very rich idle mixture. Unscrewing increases the idle air flow, weakening the mixture. The prescribed setting is 1 1/2 turns back from fully screwed with the engine operating at normal idle speed. Substantial variation from this setting is an indication of a problem including: vacuum leakage, throttle slide wear, idle jet blockage and incorrect float bowl fuel level.

Throttle Slide Wear:

As the throttle slide moves, it exerts considerable pressure against the engine side of its bore due to the intake vacuum. Because the throttle slide and bore are constructed from the same material they tend to gall – this can be seen as vertical lines at the front and back of the slide. I have measured several used slides and bores without finding any substantial wear and was until recently convinced that galling was the only deterioration. I believe that galling prevents the slide from bottoming properly; resulting in temporarily elevated idle speed. Galling can be remedied by polishing with fine (600) wet and dry sandpaper.

Quite recently I observed throttle slide wear at the bottom front face corners over an area perhaps half the size of my small finger nail. This wear will allow air leakage and weakening of the idle mixture. Amal has introduced a “hard anodized” slide which should reduce slide wear. Since my carburetors are now equipped with them, I’ll report back at a later date.

Throttle Bore Distortion:

Another source of problems is due to throttle slide bore distortion. This results in the slide sticking in the bore usually near the top. This can lead to a disastrous outcome for the rider of a bike if it occurs at speed. Tapping the outside of the bore sometimes releases the slide, but this can only be a temporary measure. The distortion arises due to over tightening of the manifold attachment nuts which causes the manifold interface to bow, pushing the body back against the slide. It also creates a vacuum leakage path but since this interface is sealed with an O ring, it is fairly resistive to small distortions.

The manifold interface can be flattened using wet and dry over a flat surface - I use a piece of ½” plate glass.

The bore can also be restored to usability by judicious sanding, again with fine wet & dry. Frequent checking is in order. I like to use solvent to lubricate the wet & dry.

Another slide bore restoration technique that I have used successfully, I hesitate to mention here because it sounds quite “hillbilly”. Use a pair of channel-lock pliers to squeeze the bore back to round. The force is applied with the jaws either side of the slide bore exterior at the point of the label pad. Application of force must be very judicious, since over application makes things much worse. I confirmed the nature and location for the application of the force by leaving the slide jammed at the top of the bore and gently squeezed the pliers until the slide dropped of its own volition. I then removed the slide and gave it a bit extra until it slid easily throughout its full range. It took a few attempts to complete.

Conclusion:
Tuning and balancing is a topic for another day and is well addressed in the Bushman’s web site. I’ve found that getting my Amal’s to work correctly to be immensely satisfying and that keeping them in that state is like the pursuit of world peace.

Addendum:

Since writing this article, Amal has recently announced the introduction of it’s MK1 Premier Concentric Carburetor. This new version has a hardened body and slides, stay-up ethanol resistant float and a revised idle circuit with a removable jet. 45 years of accumulated fettling wisdom instantly obsolete!

THE 2012 VANCOUVER MOTORCYCLE SHOW

Peter Dent

The noted Nobel Prize winning American novelist, journalist and adventurer, Ernest Hemingway once proclaimed: ‘There are but three sports in the world: bull fighting, mountaineering and motor-sports. All the rest’, he clarified, ‘were merely “entertainment”’.

I find this quote to be pleasantly amusing and it intones a certain ring of satisfaction to a motor-sports enthusiast such as myself. Mind you, every time I hear it I am transported back to the early ‘70s and a bullring in southern Spain into which I had innocently sauntered one sunny afternoon. At the end of the program there was far too much blood on the ground, and, ultimately, the result too predictable, for it to have been either entertaining or sporting. I can’t remember why I went there now to be honest, for me, it was always certain that it was going to be a gruesome few hours. Perhaps I was seeking some sort of cultural enlightenment, perhaps I saw it as some sort of rite of passage in my young life, but I think it was more just a case of idle curiosity. Back then, all I had was a tent, an old Enfield twin with army surplus canvas saddlebags, a pocketful



The VIMS BMOC stand, the collection of pictures at the back made for interesting viewing

of redundancy money, a map with north Africa on it and all the time in the world. Bull fighting was just part of the peregrination, both figuratively and literally.

So I might not entirely agree with Ernest Hemingway's definition of the sport/entertainment divide but as far as motor-sports are concerned, I am with him all the way.

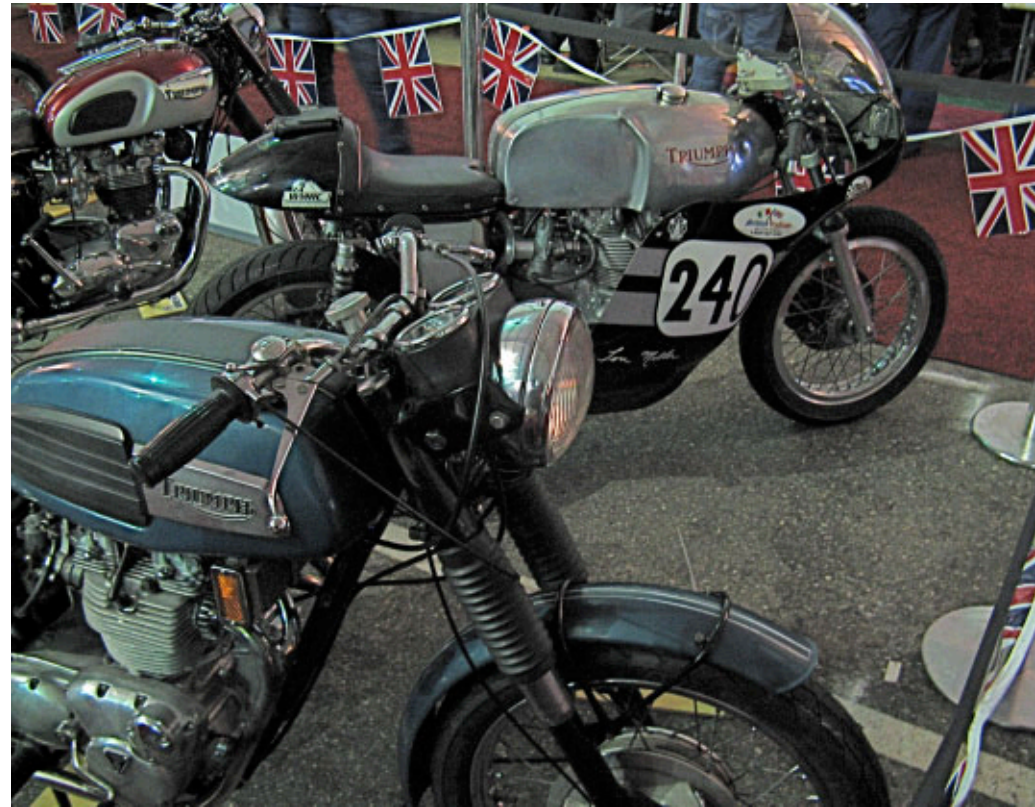
And it was in celebration of British Columbia's contribution to motorcycle sport that the BMOC focused our attention at this year's Vancouver International Motorcycle Show; and there was lots to be focused on. We boasted a most impressive lineup of quality examples of the racer's art.

The committee had assembled an eclectic collection of British racing bikes from present day racers that still wore their abused and torn race rubber to bikes that now enjoyed nothing more strenuous than occasional burn-ups down memory lane. We also had the road bikes that were the starting point for several of Triumph's road racing adventures.



Alex's bare minimum racing A65. This machine is more about the 'go' than 'show'

Edward Turner's venerable vertical twin was well represented in road bike form with a pair of very clean Bonneville. We had Robert Smith's extremely fine example of a US spec. machine and we also had Gil Yarrow's immaculate UK spec. bike. These drew close attention from would-be restorers who took these machines as the gold standard in concours finishing, throwing themselves to the ground before them - looking for detailed technical nuances I presumed but,



Tom's early Trident makes for interesting comparisons with his much modified racer

equally, they might just have been showing due respect to the magnificent Bonneville.

Dave Haydon's dealer prepared Triumph racer is an evolution of these beautiful road bikes that dates back to the late 60s. These were very successful Proddy class machines. Back in the day, I once saw the ex MV rider, John Hartle, on his comeback, race just such a machine against the very best of the best in an open class event at the full Grand Prix circuit at Brands Hatch. Barely a handful of full-blown works multis finished ahead of him. A remarkable result for both the Bonnie - replete with lights and silencers as it was - and the great John Hartle.

One of the current racers on display was the Yellow Peril out of the Kelowna chapter. A group project of some of the members there, it uses a '65 Norton Featherbed frame which has been strengthened and gusseted for improved rigidity. The motor started out as a '72 850 Commando that is now sleeved to 750 to meet vintage class rules. It features a lengthy list of modified engine internals, including some of Jim Comstock's hop-up parts and they are all designed to get the Norton big twin aspirating freely which should make this a formidable track tool.

We had BSAs too: Dave Woolley had brought along his exquisitely finished A65 cafe racer, ironically, it's the lack of glitter that makes this bike shine so much, very businesslike, very professional. Dave has a passion for these big Brummies and it shows in his fastidious attention to detail which manifests itself most notably in the high standard of his fibreglass work.

Next to Dave's creation, and in contrast to it really, was Alex Dumitru's racing A65 replete with duct tape for band aids and all the scars of battle. It's got a down and dirty look to it that oozes race track cred.; this thing looks like it has an attitude problem but on race day you will have as much fun as anybody else and you won't break the bank doing it.

Then there were the Triumph triples. Tom Mellor brought a pair of the them, one of which was his extensively developed racing machine. Tom gave us a tour of his motors a few months ago at a club meeting, so we know there are many noteworthy features to this bike but, by the numbers, it stomps out a fantastic 82hp and even more impressively, it weighs in at a svelte 339lbs - the stock bike remember, put out 49hp and weighed 478lbs. These numbers make this bike very special indeed; a study in aluminium, titanium and shaved steel; brilliant. Tom also bought along one of the original style stock Tridents - his road bike that he has logged many a touring mile on over the years. This early 'ray-gun' model was the

basis of one of the greatest racing machines of all time; the Rob North/Doug Hele Trident/Rocket3 factory racers. But the most famous and most successful of the racing three cylinder bikes from BSA/Triumph was the Proddy Class machine dubbed 'Slippery Sam' - so named after an oil leak it developed - and it was a replica of this famous machine that drew much attention at the show. 'Rocket' John Collet raced his own Rocket3 back in the day and he later built this really nice replica of Triumph's famous racing triple. It's got the period correct hallmarks of the actual machine with its unhandled front brakes and distinctive graphics,



Dave's A65 Lightening cafe racer

all done by John himself. It has road-going frame geometry but, amazingly, he has Slippery Sam's *actual* spare fuel tank from Les Williams' original machine - the last, since the original machine was lost in the infamous 'museum fire' of several years ago. Les Williams, you will remember, was the shop foreman at the factory race shop and right hand man to Doug Hele. A quite unique piece with a genuine factory artifact.

Lyle Whitter bought along his ever popular Ariel Square Four, and a fabulous beast this thing is too, fully restored but now getting a very nice age and patina to its finish - no trailer queen here, this bike gets

ridden often and therefore work continues to refine it with subtle upgrades. I'm not sure that 'restored' is quite the right term to use in this case mind you: 'remanufactured down to every last nut and bolt' might be more accurate. This bike represents an enormous body of work; and all remarkably well done what's more. This is a '53 four pipe model, the first of the four pipe line.

Contrasting Lyle's giant motor was Wayne Dowler's pristine BSA B25T single cylinder trail bike. Styled in a '70s 'desert racer' mode this beauty looks too pretty to get all muddy but I'm sure it would put a smile on your face doing it anyway. This is Wayne's regular ride about town and nicely combines style, user friendly practicality and all whilst still retaining off-road capabilities: a very tidy machine.

Still very much in the competition theme of the show, was Nigel Spaxman's jewel of a bike. A 650 Triumph motor kitted to 750, big valves, aggressive Megacycle cams and generally hot-rodged out to the *n*th degree - 36mm Mikunis, 5 speed box and a glorious looking ARD/Fairbanks Morse magneto. Brilliant. But it's the frame that steals the show; a nickel plated flat-tracker made in 1976 on Granville Island, no less, by Curtiss Frames. Up front are shortened Can-Am motocross forks and shaved twin discs from a CB750. Nigel tells me this



Tom's superlight Trident racer

modified sideways racer weighs in at a measly 315lbs. which means it goes as good as it looks.

Nigel's Curtiss Triumph racer, like all of the bikes at the BMOC stand, don't tend to come in a ready to ride format. They need many, many hours of patient fettling, hours of research and a complete understanding of what it is, exactly, that makes them tick. The rewards of a smooth running motor, however, repay that input manyfold. This is not easy work and that is what makes these machines so special. Congrats to all.

On the BMOC stand, the show committee had amassed a considerable number of posters celebrating the art of motorcycle racing. Some were of our long departed Westwood track and others were of the Isle of Man. We have to thank many people for them: Bill Snelling from the IoM supplied many and the collections of Dave Wildman, Steve Harding, Michelle Duff, Pete Lallond, Ted Langton-Adams/ Eric Faulks, Bob Copithorne, Nick Smythe, Aaron Stedman, Geoff Kellond, and Bruce Davidson supplied many others.

Robert Smith gave a highly entertaining talk and slide show about touring on a motorcycle. He is a man who has travelled extensively by this means and is clearly well versed on the subject matter. Alex Dumitru, an accomplished vintage racer himself, gave an intriguing presentation of 'getting into vintage racing'. The former factory Yamaha racer and World Champion, Steve Baker, and author and film maker Peter Starr were also on hand to tell about the making of Peter's film; '*Take it to the Limit*'.

The weather, this year, was not the best for the trek up the Fraser Valley. High winds and freezing rain played havoc with the show facilities and the freeway alike. The event organisers gallantly battled the conditions but, for all their hard work, many events had to be cancelled: bikes and ice make a poor combination. The lighting around the BMOC stand also suffered as a result of the hasty repairs to the tent and we struggled to get photos that truly reflected the stunning condition of our bikes.

A lot of work goes into organising one of these events - for everyone. Wrestling your bike onto the back of a pick-up, driving it through freezing rain and subjecting it to possible road salt spray takes commitment. You know that knuckles and enamel will suffer in the process. By the time you have loaded and unloaded you can pretty much write off the whole day. And yet BMOC members did just that - even in those atrocious conditions. That's so commendably old school.

Driving to Abbotsford was tough enough but John McKenzie drove all the way to Kelowna and back to pick up Yellow Peril. It was also good of the Kelowna members to lend it out and of Bruce Davidson to store it. This is exemplary stuff.

Speaking of exemplary stuff; the show committee did such a good job. They had last minute plan changes to deal with as well as the weather. Nevertheless they overcame it all and put a remarkable event together. Dave Woolley, Bevin Jones, Alan Comfort and Wayne Dowler continue to stun and amaze with their contacts and organisational skills year after year. My hat off to them especially but also to all those who brought bikes, lent photos, manned the booth, offered cheery good company and contributed in whatever form. For my money we were the stars of the whole show and I thank you all.

SMOKEY'S CORNER A biographical memoir

Al 'Smokey' Greaves

Finis

We visited relatives and I conducted the business that I had to do, then we went to visit my ex and my son in Odessa near Kingston. My cousin and his wife took us to Toronto and saw us off on the bus bound for Odessa. It turned out that this bus didn't go direct either, instead, it stopped in every town along the way so we ended up in Odessa at midnight. We visited and I bought a van that needed an engine which I got from my ex wife's husband who worked at the local auto wreckers.

We left for Sarnia to recross the border and go to the Soo to pick up my bike. The day was hot, hot, HOT! As soon as I got up to speed the engine boiled! I pulled into a gas station, man, there's cars boiled over all over the place. I borrow some wrenches and take the thermostat out. Away we go; we boil over again! I scrounge some four litre containers and carry on. If we don't go over 30 M.P.H. the van doesn't boil! This is going to be a long trip.

We stop at another cousin's place; a very nice rancher style house, very nice except for the smell which emanates from a manure pit right beside the house! Why would they put that there, why not in the barnyard? We visit, when we go to leave I found the inside roof of the van full of manure flies which by their name means they hang around manure, lots of manure here so lots of flies.

Eventually we arrive in Sarnia and decide to leave right away to take advantage of the cool night air. We drive all night and arrive in Sioux Ste. Marie early in the morning. I phone the guy so I can pick up my bike, no problem. I thank him profusely and we head for home.

Now the gremlins get their chance. The alternator decides to over-charge, filling the van with fumes. To alleviate this I drive with my lights on. After a while the alternator quits working, this means no driving at night, so we park in a roadside pull-off. Big storm at night, lots of thunder and lightening, not like the wimpy storms we get in B.C.. I parked on a hill so I wouldn't have to use the starter: well, look at that, the alternator is working again!

We continue on, when we reach Swift Current and stop at our cousins no one is home, so on to Medicine Hat. Darn, no one home there either. I am getting low on finances, so low that it looks like we may run out of money before we run out of road.

When we get to Calgary, cheap gas, so I fill the tank and the four jugs that I had used for water. Strangely enough the farther we went the faster I could go without a boil-over. When we got into the mountains I would put the van in neutral and coast down the hills, this had an added bonus, the

engine would cool down and the alternator would start to charge, then quit as the engine warmed up.

We went through Kelowna and borrowed some money so we could carry on. We were reduced to eating the really nice field tomatoes my cousin in Sarnia had given us, that and a loaf of bread carried us on. We had travelled all the way from Calgary to Hope on the gas I got in Calgary, but now we needed more money to carry on from Hope to the ferry in Horseshoe Bay. Luckily a friend of mine lived just outside of Hope and he loaned me enough money to get us home.

Epilogue

Voyaging on the broad highway of life, through desolate places, sometimes you meet a fellow wayfarer whose hand is stretched out to you in difficult times and places. The way can be long and such meetings few and far between.



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