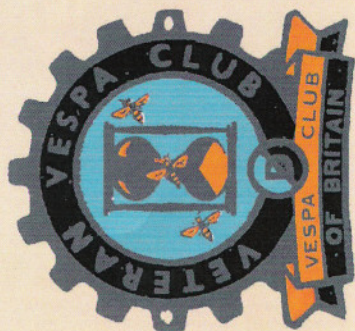
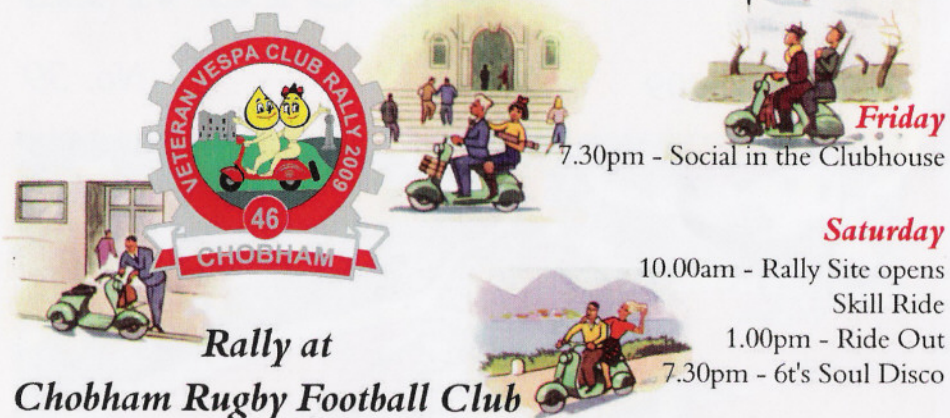


VETERAN *Vespa* CLUB JOURNAL

No. 39

SUMMER 2009





Rally at
Chobham Rugby Football Club
Fowlers Wells, Windsor Road
Chobham, Surrey GU24 8LD
10th - 12th July 2009

Ticket Prices

(including events, ride-out and camping)

Members who pre-book will get a £2 discount on weekend entry prices
 Weekend ticket for Members, and Family Members with Partner £12
 Weekend ticket for Members and Non-Member Partner £17
 Weekend ticket for Non-Members £17 or £22 with partner
 Day Ticket (no camping) for Members or Non-Members £5

Members and guests are encouraged to bring scooter jumble for sale

Accommodation list and latest rally news is available on our website.
 Advance ticket applications can be made via the website www.veteranvespaclub.com
 or by post to VVC Rally, 86 Winkworth Road, Banstead, Surrey SM7 2QR
 Cheques should be made payable to the Veteran Vespa Club

Saturday
 10.00am - Rally Site opens
 Skill Ride
 1.00pm - Ride Out
 7.30pm - 6t's Soul Disco

Sunday
 10.00am - Rally Site opens
 Skill Ride
 Scooter Parts Jumble
 12.00pm - Concours de Elegance
 Prizegiving

Onsite Facilities:

Camping Area, Licensed Bar,
 Hot Food and Drinks, Showers



VVC CLOTHING



To order: All sizes (generous fit)

Gillet in dark blue, (To order only) with printed VVC logo on back -----£28
 Polo shirt in pale blue with embroidered VVC badge -----£14
 T shirt in pale blue with embroidered VVC badge (L & XL only) -----£6
 Fleece 380gsm in royal blue embroidered VVC badge -----£20
 Wind/Waterproof lightweight jacket with hood rolled into collar in dark blue
 with printed VVC logo on back -----£20
 Printed t shirt in dark blue with printed VVC logo -----£9



Please add £2 postage for all clothing items. Patches and banners £1 postage.

See Club Shop on VVC website for more items.

All items can be bought and paid for on line including club gear and cog badges.

membership@veteranvespaclub.com

Send orders and cheque payable to:

VVC, 28 Greenway,
Letchworth Garden City, Herts SG6 3UG



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**VETERAN VESPA CLUB
HALL OF FAME**

1: Frank Brookes	2007
2: Margaret Farquhar	2007
3: Brian Freehold	2007
4: Brian Edwards	2008
5: Vi Edwards	2008

THE VETERAN VESPA CLUB JOURNAL EDITORIAL

Get clicking!

The article inside on Eric Montague's old Rally 200 is a reminder of how fortunate it was that I took some pictures when he owned it, and of how much I regret not recording so much that was taken for granted but which has now gone for ever. Of course, in the days of film there was an appreciable expense and the inconvenience of getting stuff developed to consider. No excuse now! Recently I've been taking the trouble to record a few things, including the factory where our badges are made. I'd urge everybody to do something similar. Recessions have a habit of wiping away that with which we are familiar.

Going home

Economic turmoil inevitably produces a few unexpected

consequences. Many of you will have noticed that the supply of unrestored scooters from Italy has diminished somewhat in the last couple of years, the gap being filled with increased imports from South East Asia. The recent collapse of Sterling against the Euro has led to increasing numbers of Italians wanting to buy back their own heritage at relatively advantageous prices to them. Several scooter shops are actively involved in reversing the flow that established them in the first place. Just goes to show how unpredictable life is.

VVC AGM 2009

Don't forget that this will be held on November 7, once again at Letchworth

Ashley Lenton

Technical help

Contact Dave Hawkins on DAVIDJH@PRESTBURY41.PLUS.COM

Website

You can advertise your Vespa for sale on our site, or just have it featured. Send photo and details to:
Membership@veteranvespaclub.com



Scooterist Scene

Remember the 60s... or not? Either way, Scooterist Scene is the magazine for the classic scooter fan. Keep up to date with the news, features and abstract articles that make up the classic scooting world. Pick up a copy today for only £2.95.

Available from all good newsagents or direct from Mortons Media Group Ltd.

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Quality Assured **M**



VMSC SHOW COVENTRY 2009

IN 2008 several of our members organised a club stand at this long-established event with an Andre Baldet theme.

This year we decided to do it again, so the Chairman, Editor, Matthew and Denise Phillips and Colin Bangs all made the trip up to the Midlands. We decided to go with an "early" theme this time around. Matthew brought his 1949 Piaggio 125 and 1955 VS1, while Colin had his 1952 Douglas Rod. The superb condition of all these Vespas (as evidenced by the photos) led to a large number of awards – especially for Matthew, whose 1949 model scooped "Best Vintage Scooter in Show".



As usual we met quite a few club members and signed up a couple of new ones. Although these events represent quite a lot of effort to do properly, doing them fairly regularly keeps the club in the public eye.

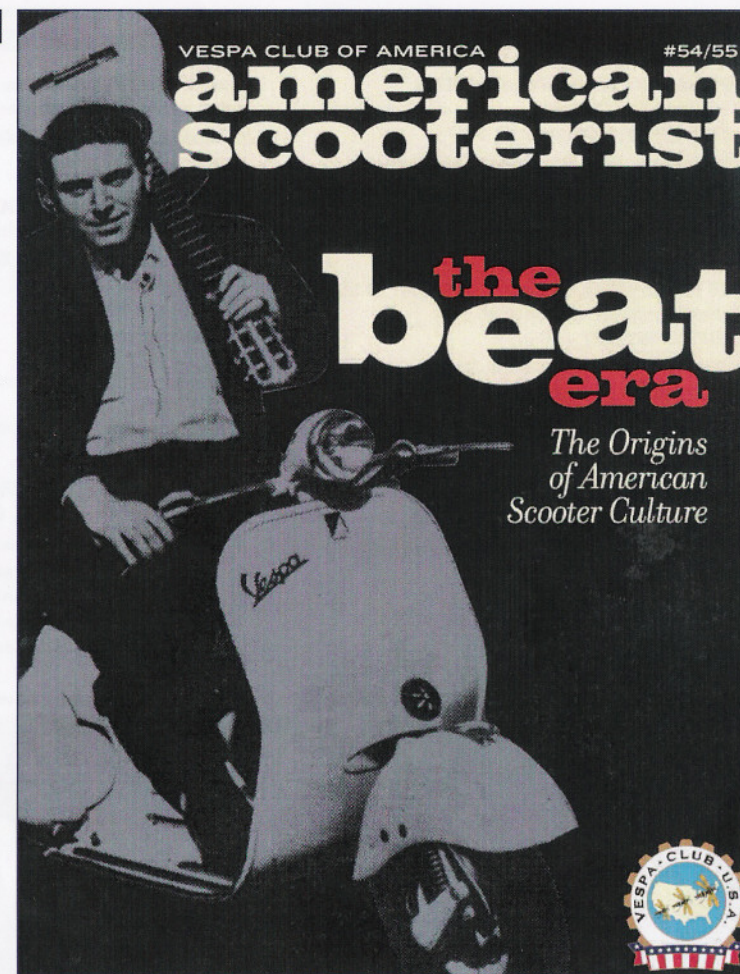
EDITORIAL COMMENT

AMERICAN BEAT CULTURE AND THE FORGOTTEN SCOOTERISTS

...Forgotten in America that is, barely known about in the first place over here.

The failure of scooters to penetrate mainstream America in large numbers (due to a combination of product suitability and endless marketing mishaps) left them ripe for adoption in the fifties by a gradually emerging youth movement. Centred in Boston, San Francisco and New York, this alternative "Beat" culture encompassed all the arts – but especially folk and jazz. The scooter – and particularly the Vespa – ticked plenty of boxes in respect of its European origins and (to American eyes) un-convention. Its low cost and lack of ostentation would also have been compatible with the anti-materialistic stance of Beat culture.

In this country we are aware only of fragmentary images from book or LP covers, but so established was the relationship between scooters and Beat that the Vespa Club USA appears to have been originally organised almost as an extension



of the Beat movement. Eventually Beat found its way into mainstream culture via Bob Dylan and others, but by then the scooter connection had diminished somewhat. But that still leaves a significant piece of scootering history to record, and the person to do that is John Gerber – the principal writer of American Scootist, the journal of the Vespa

Club of America. John and I have a long-standing arrangement to publish each other's material, but unfortunately most of his excellent work on Beat history is much too long to reproduce in this publication. However we do have here his piece on Larry Hagman, which reminds me that one of the joys of delving into history is the unearthing of

unexpected juxtapositions between people, ideas and objects. You may recall that in an earlier issue Joan Baez was discovered to have had a considerable Vespa history.

There's plenty more to say about the Beats and scooters, and hopefully one day John might consider doing a sort of overview for us.

A L

LARRY HAGMAN:

Greenwich Village Bohemian and Vespa enthusiast

by John Gerber

AS hard as it may seem to believe, Larry Hagman, best known for portraying the Texas oil tycoon, JR Ewing on Dallas, spent a number of years as a Greenwich Village Bohemian during which he was also a passionate Vespa enthusiast.

Hagman got his first Vespa, a yellow Douglas rod model, in 1953, while stationed in London entertaining U.S. troops during his air force service. At the time, he shared a flat with the British writer Henry Kleinman. Both were single and dated extensively. One evening Kleinman invited a 25-year-old Swedish woman, Maj Axelson, home for tea. Just as they arrived Hagman buzzed in front of them on the Vespa, loaded with bottles of whiskey and gin and sacks of food from the Post Exchange. Maj couldn't fail to be amused and it was love at first sight.

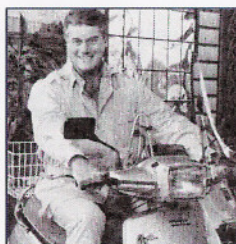
Hagman spent the next year courting Maj on the Vespa – often taking her on long trips into the English countryside – before getting married in 1954.

After his discharge in 1956, Larry and Maj headed to New York, where he began his acting career in Off-Broadway theatre and rented a \$75 a month Greenwich Village basement apartment. He either brought the Douglas Vespa back with him or purchased another one in New York. During intervals between jobs, they used the Vespa to tour the U.S. At one point, they camped on the living

room floor of John Wayne's Connecticut home.

But their most memorable Vespa experience came in 1958 when Maj was nine months pregnant and they set out to go to a party. As Larry explained: "We had two vehicles, our Austin-Healy and a Vespa scooter. Maj made me get out the Vespa, as she said, so she could feel the wind in her face. It was against my better judgment. Nonetheless, I loaded her on to the back. 'Larry, it's like when we were in London,' she beamed. 'Let's go!' She held on tight and we scooted into the night. Less than a mile later, I drove over a pothole and Maj's water broke. It was probably the first time a pothole proved useful. Instead of a party, we ended up at the Lennox Hill Hospital, where the doctor's told us the ride had induced Maj into labour."

When it came time to pay the hospital bill they had to choose between selling Vespa or Austin-Healy. The choice was easy: they sold the Austin-Healy.



Fame did not dampen Hagman's love of Vespas. In the 1980s he was seen all over Los Angeles riding Vespas and a Yamaha Riva 180. Sometimes he would dress up in a chicken costume. Reportedly, he had Scooterville in Anaheim teach the parking attendants at his favourite restaurant how to drive a Vespa so they could park his. He also bought a P200 for one of them.

Although he was portrayed as a right-wing oil tycoon on Dallas, Hagman's personal politics are at the other end of the spectrum. Since the 1960s he has been a prominent supporter of the California Peace and Freedom Party. More recently, he has stirred controversy by accusing President Bush of leading the country toward fascism.

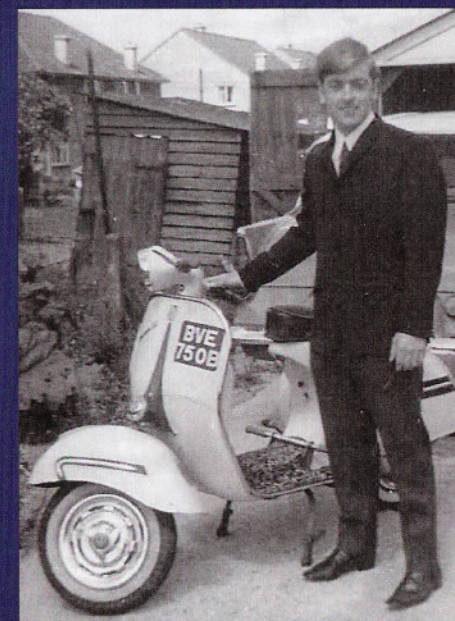
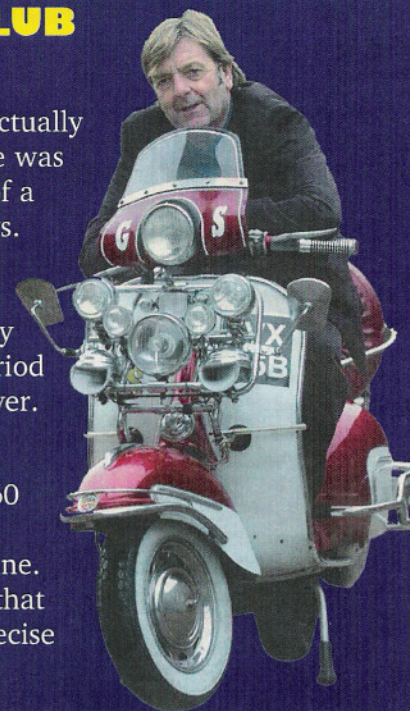
While aging and health problems have forced Hagman to give up his Harleys, he continues to remain an avid scooterist. Recently he has added an Aprilia to his stable.

(This issue originally appeared in "American Scooterist", the journal of the Vespa Club of America.)

CAMBRIDGE VESPA CLUB & ROGER GASCOIGNE

Although Roger Gascoigne was never actually a member of Cambridge Vespa Club, he was featured alongside it in a recent issue of a magazine produced by Cambridge News. Given the once prominent position of scooter clubs in general society, local newspapers probably represent a largely unexplored avenue for good quality period photographs such as the one on the cover.

Roger kindly supplied the photo of him looking very dapper with his new GS160 in 1964, which complements the more recent one that appeared in the magazine. One advantage of reliving your past is that second time around you can get the precise two-tone paint scheme that you really wanted in the first place!



WHEN LESS WAS... LESS

IF you are planning to re-visit scootering's history in a time machine, then there's a few things worth avoiding.

"A new age of austerity" proclaim the headlines as a response to the current world economic situation. Implicit in such a sentiment is the notion that a prolonged dose of austerity will be good for the soul and good for the planet. And indeed it may be. The trouble is that the last age of real austerity was so long ago that the details have left the collective memory – all that remains are the images of the pipe-smoking "head of household"

doing the servicing on the car and repairing its exhaust while his wife sews leather patches onto the elbows of his sports jacket.

It is true that a lack of resources encourages thrift and provides an opportunity for human ingenuity. It is also true that it encourages short cuts and provides an opportunity to exploit the gullible. One suspects that a degree of gullibility would be necessary to believe that it would really be possible to run a



successful re-chroming or reflector re-silvering operation from a car battery, but these ads ran for quite a while so someone must have responded to them.

The remould tyre industry, however, was quite large and reasonably respectable for a good many years. To anybody under forty five the very idea that worn out second hand

tyres could be worth repairing probably seems ludicrous, but a brand new tyre was an expensive item in the fifties. One of the photographs here shows part of the process, and in truth remoulded tyres were adequate provided you didn't drive too fast on them. Of course, vehicles of all kinds started getting a lot quicker, and then some

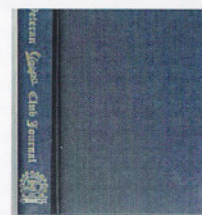


**Just
press the
tab and
on goes the
paint!**

Perfect for touching up
damaged car wings or

CLUB GEAR

All of the following items are available from the Editor.
Please note that prices are exclusive of p&p



Journal binder. Takes 12
issues plus index – £4.50



VVC club badge
– £23



VVC 2007 rally badge
– £25



Hertford Rally badge
– £25

VOLUME THREE INDEX AVAILABLE FREE FROM THE EDITOR

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Vespa frame jiggig service

Frames jigged or checked on the original vespa frame jig
As used by mike clark and revival scooters.

Most models catered for including
rod,gs,4212,sprint,rally,Sportique,ss90,small frame,px and px disc.
Services include Frame dimation check.Frame jiggig/re-alignment.

Why reframe when you can re-use your original frame?

Check out the web site at www.vespaframejig.piczo.com

email me on john.mclaughlin2@homecall.co.uk

or ring me on 01768 896116 /mobile 07879 634928.

10% Discount for club members



2008 Brockham rally
badge, £25



2009 Painswick rally
badge, £25

MANUFACTURING IN INDIA



Graham Wilmott has recently returned from a trip to India, and has kindly sent in this picture of a shock absorber factory.

All manner of shock absorbers – including Vespa ones – were available. The retail department is on the left, and the entrance to the “factory” on the right – if you look hard enough you can see a couple of ancient lathes. Final assembly appears to be courtesy of the chap sitting down in front of them!

Looking at this picture it is difficult to imagine that such an operation could amount to anything. But the fact is that the minimal overheads and the lack of anything resembling BSI or Health and Safety regs to worry about have meant that enterprises such as this have been able to deal a mortal blow to manufacturing in this country – and elsewhere in Europe.

So the next time you buy that shiny pattern part at a bargain price remember that it may have started off at somewhere like this.

- ★ NO UNDERCOATING REQUIRED FOR A FIRST CLASS FINISH
- ★ DRIES IN 2-4 HOURS
- ★ STEAM, HEAT, OIL & PETROL PROOF
- ★ EASILY APPLIED, EASY TO KEEP CLEAN

VALSPAR
2-4 HOUR LACQUER

unscrupulous operators started recutting tread patterns into worn tyres without moulding any extra rubber onto them. After a predictable spate of accidents, the ensuing press campaign had a rub-off effect on remould tyres proper, and such things have long disappeared. To no ones regret.

The cost of respraying anything was very expensive, and for older vehicles painting by brush was very much the norm. To most people this was an arduous and messy job that never turned out any good. The public in the fifties was somewhat in awe of technology. In an age

when a microwave oven was sufficiently exciting to precipitate “radar cooked food” restaurants, even something like an aerosol was considered exotic. The advert shown dates from 1957 and it is instructive to note the bejewelled hand of the paint sprayer – with implied twin set and pearls just out of sight. Aerosols were definitely up-market in 1957! Most people just had to make do with a paint brush.

But for the impecunious (i.e. most people) there were plenty of opportunities around to make a saving. Items like spark plugs were never

Replating Headlamp Reflectors

By D. MULLIN

IN the method described the bowl of the reflector is made the cathode by connecting to the negative terminal of a six-volt battery. The anode is in the form of a cotton-wool swab soaked in the electrolyte and held by a wire connected to the positive terminal of the battery. The swab is used like a paint brush and by dipping in electrolyte a film of pure silver can be painted on the reflector.

Silver Plating
Firstly the reflector should be polished deposited. Do not allow the wire con

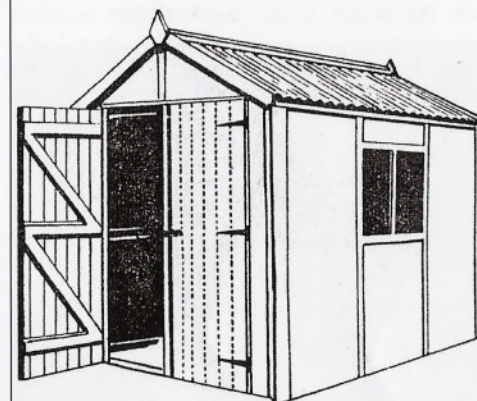
discarded lightly. Unless they had significant wear they would be taken to the local garage who would sandblast them for you. Unthinkable today.

The advent of scootering brought about certain marketing opportunities. In particular, your average garden shed could be rebranded as a “scooter

garage” as with the example shown here. But, more through ignorance than design, his garage was deadly. Apart from the doors it was built entirely out of asbestos. Just a little reminder that when hankering after the past (as we all like to do) it is sometimes necessary to be a little selective.

A L

SCOOTER GARAGE



CASH PRICE
from £27. 12. 0
OR H.P. TERMS

DO YOUR OWN CHROME-PLATING

AND SAVE £££

NEW INVENTION
replates by Electro Plating. Renew your car or motor cycle plating with a “DuKROME” 13/6 Outfit only complete.

Alan Johnson recalls Eurovespa Rome 1960

1960 Eurovespa saw me setting of for Rome on a Wednesday evening, staying overnight with my aunt in East Dulwich, then on to Dover.

Thursday night I stayed at Soissons, west of Paris. Not being able to speak French I struggled with the menu, but Salade d"Tomato I thought would at least have some tomato in. I soon discovered that was all it had – I still chuckle to myself when I see it on menus in France to this day.

Then 330 miles to Tenay at the foot of the Alps, Saturday through the Tunnel Du Chat and over the Mount Cenis

pass and down into Italy and Turin where I remember stopping to have a very welcome Italian ice cream from a street seller. Then onto Chivassio to stay in a small friendly hotel and meet up with Jet Whittle and some more of the British Team. We could not speak the lingo but had a great time. The food was wheeled around the restaurant on a trolley and Madame would offer us tastings on tiny dishes to help us select



what we liked. Then off to Turin for a grand banquet at the Palace Hotel with the British, French and Luxembourg teams.

Monday morning we set off to Rome with Italian police motor cycle escorts riding in the centre of the road, slowing the oncoming traffic with one hand and urging us on faster with the other. Sometimes there was a hundred feet drop from the side of the road into the sea. After an overnight stop at Pisa, and another long day riding in convoy, the next night we were in Rome – 1400 miles from Spalding on two small wheels.

It was dusk when we arrived, and our team were upset at finding we were accommodated in tents. I myself thought I had finished that sort of life when I finished my time serving in Egypt in H M forces. Some team members were talking of leaving the next morning, but tomorrow came and everybody decided to go along with the situation. That afternoon we all rode our Vespas to St Peters Square at the Vatican, and where we were lined right across in a prominent position for a blessing by the Pope.

Next day we attended the opening ceremony of the



pictures seen here I took in 1989 when Eric and myself were doing a photo shoot on English eccentrics for a Japanese Magazine – on account of us riding scooters to work! The Rally was already eleven years old at this point but still looked brand new.

Fast forward another nine years and Eric decided he was going to sell up. He gave me first pick of everything and I almost took the still immaculate red Vespa, but settled at the last moment on one of his older machines. I left him with the parting shot that he would have people queuing up to buy the newer Vespa. But, as is sometimes the way with life, when it came to it the Rally took ages to sell despite its obvious quality. I briefly saw it at the Isle of Wight in 1999, but didn't get to speak to its new owner.

By 2009 I had long since left the suburbs of South London and lived on the South Coast not far from Brighton. During one of my frequent trips into the latter, I stopped for a coffee at a café called the "Cappuccino Kid" situated on the Steine – the large grassy area in the middle of the A23 that runs the last half mile or so before you get to the pier. And there, in front of the café – and immediately identifiable by the VCB badge on its

legshields – was Eric's Rally. Other than a few stone chips it had hardly deteriorated at all.

It turned out that the owner was actually the proprietor – a fellow refugee from London called Alex Inch. Alex still recalls being amazed at being able to buy a virtually brand new Rally in the late nineties for £1500. Under his ownership the mileage has been clocked up and it has been ridden as far as Sweden. But it is still in superb original condition – I'm sure that most people think it is a restoration from about three or four years ago, which is what it looks like.

The Cappuccino Kid has all sorts of scooter bits and pieces inside, and not surprisingly has become something of a focal point for local scooterists who can pull up on its forecourt. But its best advert is the Vespa that is usually parked outside.

Although on the face of it this is just another standard production Rally, this one has been known in scooterist circles since the day it was registered. It has somehow threaded its way through mine and others lives. Maybe its true value is that it represents something that is in short supply – a genuine piece of seventies British scootering nostalgia.

AL





T H R E A D S

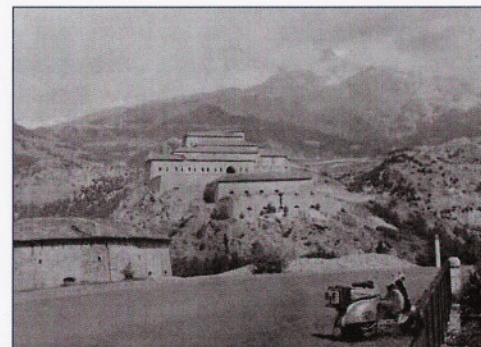
IN 1978 the current General Secretary and I found ourselves knocking at the door of a very large house in Sutton. After years of doing up – one hesitates to use the term “restore” – old Vespas in isolation, we’d heard rumours that behind this door lay the nucleus of a mighty and mysterious organisation known as the Veteran Vespa Club.

It turned out that this was the residence of one Eric Montague, indeed the driving force behind the VVC – all thirty members of it. Although you don’t often hear his name mentioned now, Eric was one of the people who kept things moving along in the South during scootering’s dark period. In an era before personal computers, he scrupulously maintained a card index system recording former dealers still holding old stocks, old Vespas needing a home and people interested in giving them one. Through Eric’s matching service many people –including myself – found what they wanted. All this may sound a bit quaint now but this was all there was in the seventies – and even for much of the following decade.

Eric had a number of old Vespas, but what caught my eye was a brand new shiny red Rally

200. He had just traded in his 1974 150 Super for it at either Pride and Clarke or Elite Motors. It could be argued that one of Eric’s main contributions to scootering in the seventies was being one of the few people willing to splash out on a new machine. The Rally was used regularly but sparingly – on sunny days he would occasionally drive it to work. In an era when it is once again normal to see scooters used for commuting it is difficult to appreciate how unusual it was back then to see the head of Wandsworth Housing roll up to the Town Hall on his Rally 200.

As the years rolled by, and the immaculately kept Rally only gradually acquired miles, local scooterists became aware of it and wondered when its owner would want to sell. One of the



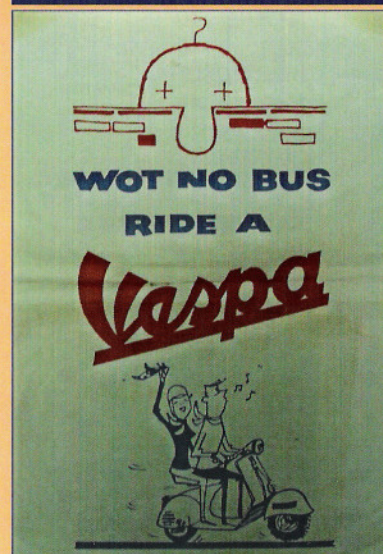
Olympic Games, a scene one never forgets, and all to soon it was next morning and time to start the return journey. Once again we stayed at Pisa, and finally there was a grand banquet at the Palace Hotel in Turin. I still have the menu card for that signed by

founding member and President of the Vespa Club of Britain – Bill Bond.

We all set off on our homeward journeys. Myself, Jet Whittle and John Verral travelled together to Lugano, everyone full of memories they were unlikely to forget.



THE VESPA CHAD ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN



RARELY seen now, the bald ‘Chad’ head peering over a wall accompanied by the slogan “Wot no (insert item)” was once a ubiquitous piece of graffiti in Britain. There is some debate on the origins, but one version has the creator as a British wartime cartoonist with “Wot no eggs?” as the first Chad appearance.

Chad seems to have travelled the Atlantic halfway through the war, and become associated with the “Kilroy was here” slogan that had previously emerged from American shipyards. In America Chad thus became Kilroy and in this form travelled into Europe with the US Army.

Meanwhile, back in Britain, Chad became the principle expression of the nation’s exasperation with rationing and shortages. Since these did not end with the war, Chad thoroughly embodied himself into our culture, still adorning walls into the sixties.

No surprise then that Chad was still considered a suitable base for an advertising campaign by Douglas as late as about 1958, which is when this poster dates from. It was retrieved from the remnants of the Douglas advertising department, and may have been just an idea or it may be their sample from an actual campaign, possibly taking advantage of a bus strike. If there was a Vespa Chad campaign, does anybody remember it?

A L

VVC BADGE PRODUCTION FIGURES



In response to occasional requests for this information, these figures are taken directly from delivery notes or invoices so should be accurate. A few years are missing, and in the case of the Club badge the figures definitely understate production by at least one batch, circa 1998.

VVC RALLY BADGES

Figures are for annual rally unless otherwise stated

1964	50	1989	60	2007	40
1965	50	(VVC/VCB SEAFORD)		2007	25
1966	50	1992	25	(VVC/VCB CHELTENHAM)	
1967	25	(VVC/VCB LONG BARN)		2008	40
1968	25	1993	35	2008	40
1969	30	(VVC/VCB CHELTENHAM)		(HERTFORD)	
1970	20	1993	35	2009	40
1971	20	(VVC/VCB CHELTENHAM)		2009	40
1972	20	1995	30	(PAINSWICK)	
1973	45	1995	45		
1974	25	(SOUTHERN)			
1976	20	1998	25		
(VVC/VCB STANFORD HALL)		1999	55		
1978	20	2001	50		
1979	20	2003	50		
1984	50	2004	40		
1986	20	2005	40		
1988	30	2006	40		
		2006	40		
		(VVC/VCB CHELTENHAM)			

ZYLO MINIATURES

1966	15
1975	12

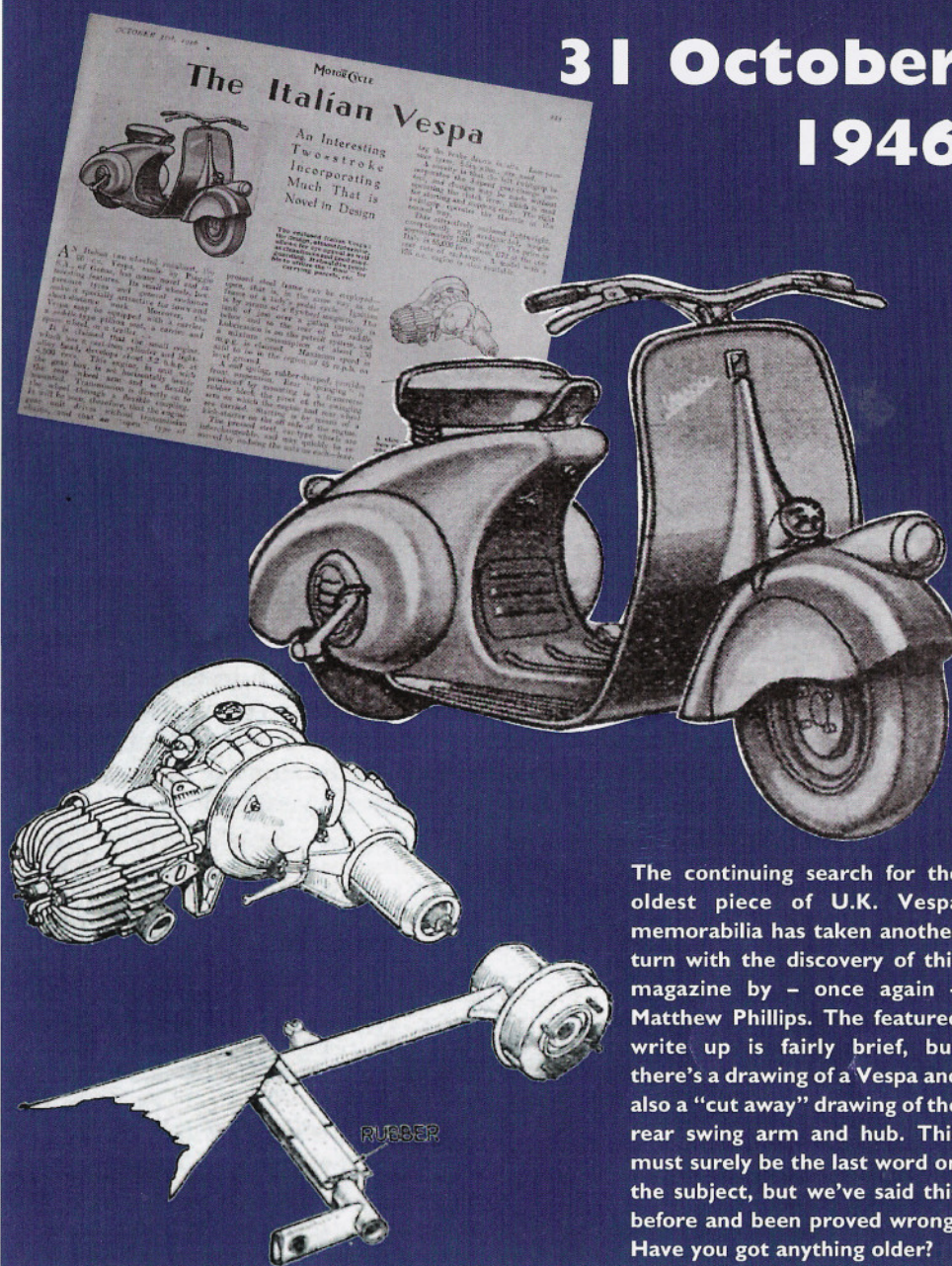
VVC CLUB BADGE

1965	50
1966	50
1979	50
2006	50

Rod Model Badge 20
G Model badge 20

MOTORCYCLE MAGAZINE

31 October
1946



The continuing search for the oldest piece of U.K. Vespa memorabilia has taken another turn with the discovery of this magazine by – once again – Matthew Phillips. The featured write up is fairly brief, but there's a drawing of a Vespa and also a "cut away" drawing of the rear swing arm and hub. This must surely be the last word on the subject, but we've said this before and been proved wrong. Have you got anything older?



THIS 1961 film – starring Angie Dickinson and Maurice Chevalier – has been featured in these pages before largely on account of its extensive featuring of the then-new VBB. Film Stills – literally still prints of a frame of the actual film – were widely distributed for publicity purposes, and they quite often turn up today.

These are not quite the same thing as on-set publicity photographs such as the one from Carry on Cabby featured a few issues back.

An enthusiastic collector of such items is Stewart Simpson who has kindly provided examples in the past, and has just purchased the photograph shown here. It appears to be an actual Still rather than a posed shot. No doubt it originally passed through the hands of a salivating sub editor who captioned it along the lines of “a pair of shapely rear ends” or something. These items make an interesting comparison with the film posters, one of which is also shown.



NEW GREETINGS CARDS FROM THE VVC

WE are now selling packs of greetings cards at a price of £4 per pack including p&p. Each pack consists of five cards. The images are taken either from the 1957 Piaggio calendar (A6 size) or from the 1965 version (136 mm square).

These cards are top quality, produced for us by Paul Carr's company. We have taken the trouble to get written permission from Piaggio to use the images, and the back of each card reflects this and also has a small image of the club badge. There is no writing inside.

These images have been scanned directly from the original calendars, and it is intended to offer different years in the future.



THE VESPA 50N 1963-71 IN DETAIL

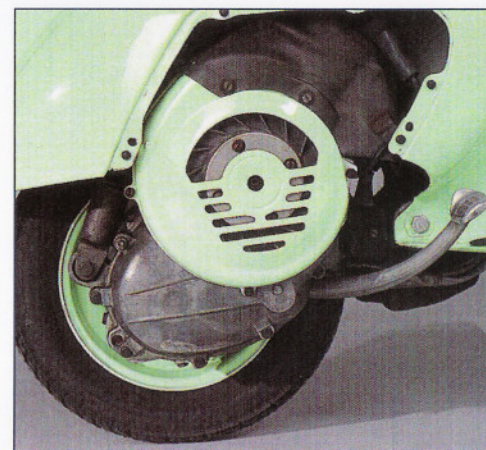
**50N V5AIT
1001 - 283299
= 282299 units**

THE Vespa 50N was the basic 50cc model introduced in 1963, intended primarily to be sold in large quantities to Italian youths who could ride such a vehicle from the age of fourteen upwards with no licence or vehicle registration.

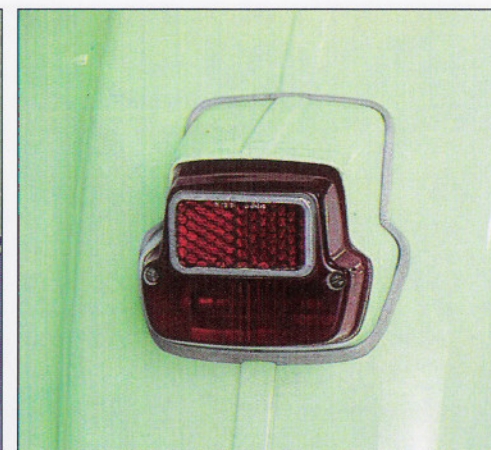
Introduced alongside a slightly better equipped 90cc version, the 50N was a complete revision of the existing Vespa design featuring side panels that were integral with the monocoque. This involved fewer pressings, meaning less cost and less weight. The piston was inclined allowing for a shorter wheelbase, while the front suspension was a miniaturised version of the GS160 layout with combined spring and damper. The bodywork –

with pronounced ridges in the sides and on the mudguard – defined Vespa style for years to come.

The 50N was an immediate success, an entire extended family of Vespas evolving from its basic design. In fact the “N” moniker does not seem to have been always applied until 1965. Presumably its adoption was to distinguish this model from a proliferation of other 50cc Vespas. With such a long production run, naturally there were a few changes



1963 spec with small hatch and body-coloured flywheel cover and wheels

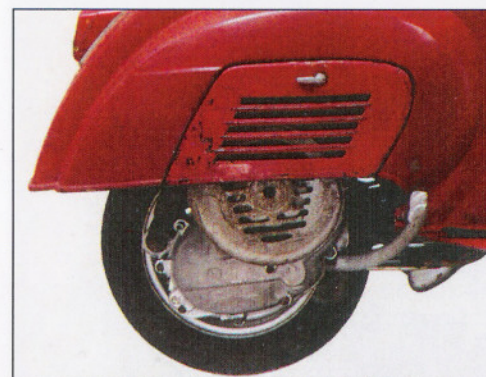


Original rear light (and colour scheme!)

along the way. The wheels changed from body colour to silver in 1964, followed by the steering column and flywheel cover in early 1965. At the same time the rear light – which rather resembled a scaled-down Vespa 90 item – was replaced with a much simpler plastic version. In common with larger engined models, the size of the engine hatch was increased later in 1965 while the new Piaggio front badge dates from October 1967. The legshield “Vespa” script was given a black finish at the same time. From this same date a slight increase in the frame length has been recorded, though it is not quite clear in which part of the frame this was affected. The original colour was a kind of pea green, but over the next eight years this Vespa was finished in a wide variety of colours.

Other than the original 98cc model, the Vespa

50N has a fair claim to be considered the most important Vespa ever made. If utilitarianism is defined as function predominating over decoration – but without sacrificing good design or quality – then this is possibly Pontadera's best effort. As much as everybody loves a GS, the fact remains that the original intention behind the Vespa was that of mass transportation. By the end of 1971 the 50N and its derivatives (50L, 50R, 50S and 50 Special) had sold more than 600,000 units. This compares to around 140,000 Lambretta 50cc models sold in the same time frame. In a battle for survival in which there could be only one winner this was surely a knockout blow. The 50N simply had to be the best. D'Ascanio, with his final design, ensured that it was.



By early 1965 there was a simpler rear light and the wheels and flywheel cover were silver



The larger engine hatch was fitted from late 1965 onwards