

# VINTAGE MANN



*The Official Journal of the Isle of Man Section V.M.C.C.*

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# VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Member,

Time marches on, and we are half way through the year. The section continues to flourish and membership increases, but your committee continues to struggle to find new or original ideas for club activities. I do not believe that we have reached the status quo, so give us your ideas and let me know what you would like to do.

The TT rally was obviously not to your liking, judging by the poor entry and we made a considerable loss on the event. The Australian contingent certainly had a good time and their machinery was interesting and well presented. Most of the awards went their way and rightly so, but we kept our end up thanks to Ann, Allen and Juan.

Recently I was looking at one of the latest Ducatis and marvelling at its engineering and style. The motorcycle designers of Victorian era had no experience to go on save for the gas engine, their original thinking and trial and experimentation in making the best use of volatile fuels. Harnessing its explosive power to provide powered movement, which only a motorcycle can provide, is truly fantastic.

Motorcyclists can look to the future of our hobby evolving further and further, but we in the VMCC can look back with pride knowing that our machines and their designers represented the basis for this future evolution.

Keep between the hedges.

*Richard Birch*

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## The Yorkshire Experience Sept 10th - 14th

A long weekend in Yorkshire based at Pateley Bridge, using the Austin Seven Club routes to explore the countryside. Anyone who wishes to take part please contact me by phone or e-mail in order to be put on the list. Please do so, even if you have shown an interest previously.

*Job Grimshaw*

Tel: 01624 - 897164 or e-mail [jenjobgrimshaw@manx.net](mailto:jenjobgrimshaw@manx.net)

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### **Front Cover:**

The late Jackie McCredie (250cc Excelsior) riding in the 1951 Ulster Grand Prix.  
(see 'On the Four Winds' inside)

*Pic: Amulree*

# Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

Several issues have been exercising our minds recently. Firstly "Historic Vehicle Duty". I am certain that Minister Gawne has inherited a department that seems to have a lot of muddled thinking vis a vie Historic Road Tax. They have an attitude that if you can afford multiple motorcycles, cars, tractors etc then you must be able to pay this horrendous increase of 300% per machine. All I can say is wake up and get into the real world. By the time you read this, we will have had a face to face meeting with the Minister on Wednesday June 30th, to present our petition and to discuss our points of view. This issue is by no means dead and buried and we will do our best to overturn this unfair increase in tax on our hobby.

At a recent Committee meeting we discussed the high cost of stamps for local mail and the Section's inability to contact its members quickly on important and perhaps urgent matters. To this end I want to drag us into the 21st Century. You can help by emailing Steve Price on [ducati@emails4us.com](mailto:ducati@emails4us.com) , or telephoning him on 880177 and giving him either your email or mobile phone number. Steve is building a data base for the Section enabling us, at no cost, to contact members quicker either by email or text. All members without email addresses, but with a mobile telephone, will receive a text message. Magic! Please support this fantastic initiative, it will make such a difference to Section communications and to the Section's bank balance. Obviously those without either email or mobile will receive hard copy in the post.

Now onto T.T. Rally matters. Richard and Rupert worked hard to provide an enjoyable Rally, regrettably poorly supported by the Section. No organiser likes to put so much effort into a project, only to have such a poor turnout, and clearly this state of affairs cannot continue. Our Section ride outs are better supported than the T.T. Rally. Is it time to give it up? The price this year was brought right down to reflect the comments that "Our members can ride on these roads for free anytime, so why should they pay?" It offered terrific value for the £20 entry fee, but still did not attract you. Do you want a T.T. Rally? What suggestions do you have, if you want to keep it going? Only by entering these activities can they continue into 2011, the Centenary of the Mountain Circuit. We had a saying in my Company "By your results you will be known"

The Manx Rally is shaping up to be a success, mainly due to the UK and International entries. Jurby is bigger and better, with Celebrity riders Sammy Miller, Malc Wheeler, Ivan Rhodes, Nick Jefferies and John Kidson. The M.G.P. Riders Association will also be present, with past and present masters taking to the track. 150 Gold Stars will be visiting along with car clubs, steam, vintage buses etc. All great stuff with free entry for all. There will be plenty of food outlets this year and lots to see. If you are not entering the track day, but intend to spectate, please get there early as we expect a huge crowd.

By popular request the Rally is visiting Castletown Square again this year on Tuesday afternoon, from about 5pm. There will be a display of machines and musical entertainment. Hopefully those among us who have to work will find this rearranged time more acceptable. The Fish and Chip shop in Callows Yard will be reopened by then. Let's keep fingers crossed for good weather this year.

If you haven't yet entered this rally, please consider doing so. Even if you unable to attend all events, it still represents tremendous value for money and your support is so important, especially to the morale of YOUR committee.

In my view, as Secretary, the Section is entering a decisive stage in its development. We can either continue to be an innovative, exciting, proactive, friendly Club with a voice that is listened to locally and nationally, in fact the envy of the VMCC movement, or we can return to what we were. It is your Club, the choice is yours!!

*Tony East*

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# **VINTAGE MANN**

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# Memory Lane



*Pic: Amulree*

The passenger is Rem Fowler and behind are Bertie and Harold Rowell wearing trendy pak-a-macs. Both leaderboard men in the Manx and founder members of the Isle of Man Section VMCC. But who is the lady rider of the Manx registered Sunbeam?

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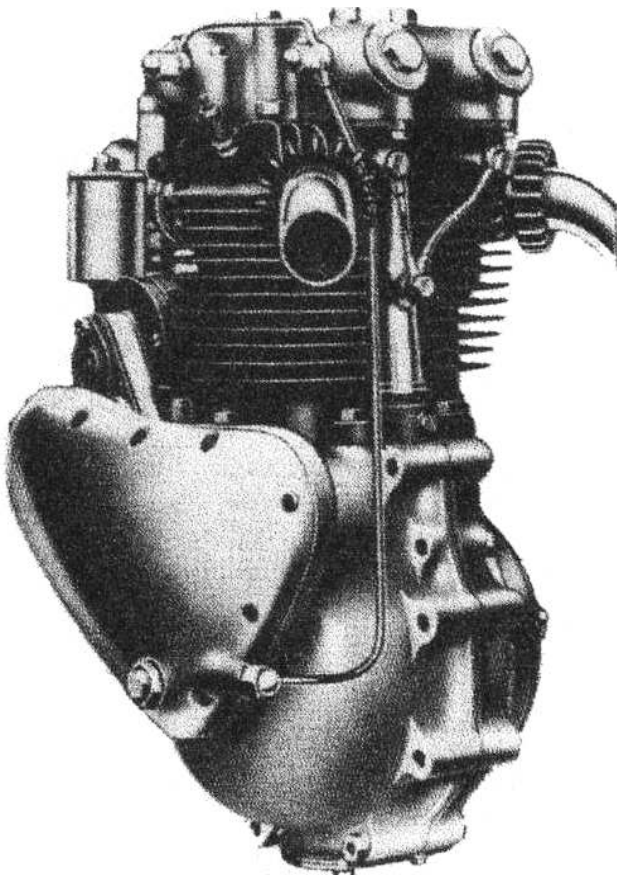
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# THE VERTICAL TWIN

The Ariel Square Four first produced in 1930 and in various capacities of 500cc, 600cc and 1000cc up to August 1959 is often quoted as Edward Turner's most brilliant design but in all of the 29 years of its production it was never copied or imitated.

The same cannot be said of another Turner design, the 1937 Triumph Speed Twin. It quite literally changed the face of motorcycling with scores of similar designs from other manufacturers the world over for many years after.

The idea of a vertical twin was not new in 1937. There had been vertical twin engined motorcycles before but they carried their crankpins at 180 degrees to one another. The resulting alternate firing order at 180 degree and 540 degree intervals gave an irregular sounding exhaust note and demanded a large heavy flywheel to smooth out torque variations. In addition fuel mixture bias problems were encountered when only one carburettor was used. Also Triumph themselves had produced a prototype 400cc twin of that configuration as far back as 1913. What is more they had been producing since 1933 a Val Page designed 650cc vertical twin, model 6/1. At one fell swoop, this model with its pistons rising and falling together and firing at 360 degree intervals solved all the problems. However, this was not a commercial success for several reasons.



*The Turner designed Triumph Twin*

It was largely intended for sidecar work for its engine was so wide, including an external flywheel concealed within the primary drive housing, that it did not sit centrally in its frame but hung lopsidedly out to one side. Not a feature consistent with good solo handling. Also it was regarded as old fashioned with its petrol-tank-mounted hand gear change when other marques were starting to incorporate positive stop foot-change gear boxes. Worst of all, it was expensive, costing £20 more than the company's excellent Silent Scout. One strange feature, although one that had no adverse effect on performance, being that as the helically-gear primary drive had no intermediate pinion, the engine ran backwards!

It was by no means a poor performer. In the 1933 ISDT Harold Perrey competed with a 6/1 and sidecar and with a loss of only 5 marks won a silver medal. The same machine was then checked over and taken to Brooklands where an average speed of 60mph was maintained for 500 miles. This demonstration of speed and reliability secured the coveted Maudes Trophy for Triumph. But despite this success, the buying public was not impressed and after just three years' production it was withdrawn with only around 100 being sold. Not so for Turner's masterpiece, the Speed Twin sold in its thousands and later in tens of thousands,

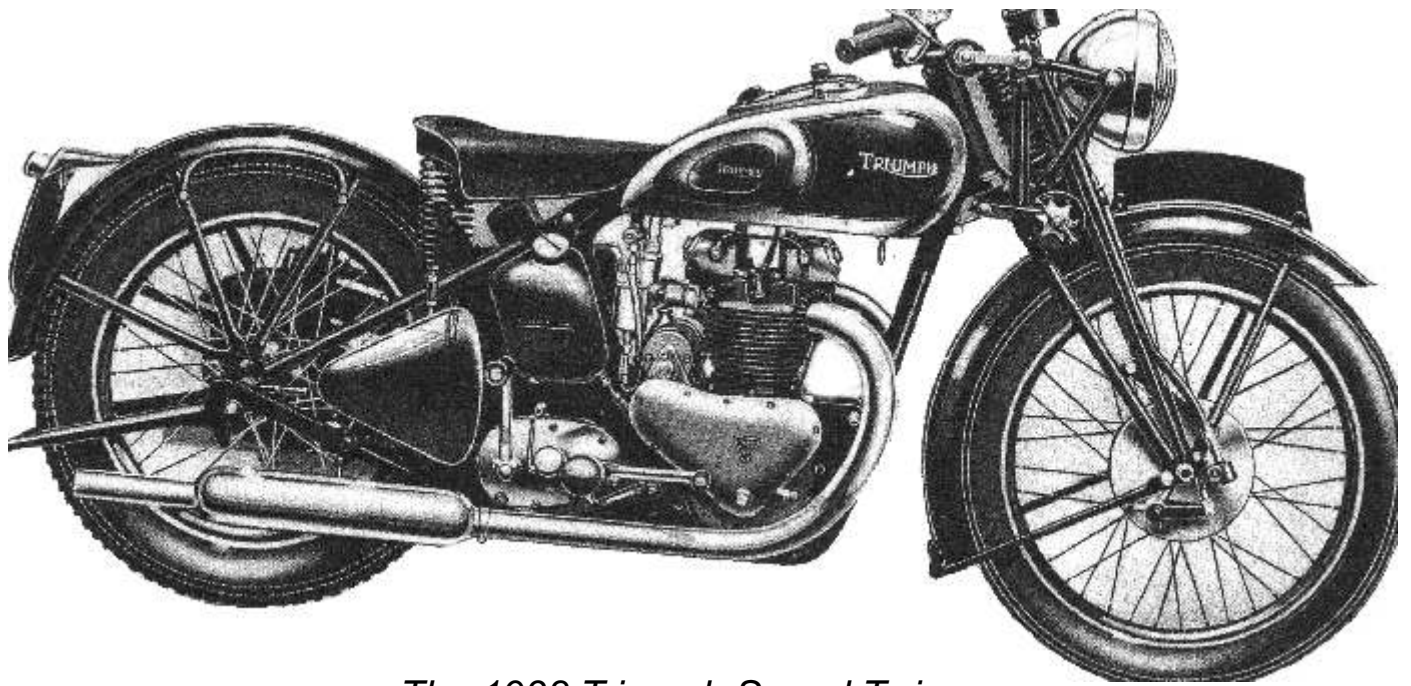
There was nothing radical about the new Speed Twin. It was perhaps a case of 'If it looks right, it is right'. Today it still looks good but in 1937 it was stunning. Producing a respectable 28bhp, with an easily manageable weight of around 360lbs (166kgs) and returning about 70mpg, priced at an acceptable £75 it had no problem in winning over prospective buyers. But there was more: a standard model tested by The Motorcycle reached an average speed in two directions of 93.75mph, with a best speed in one direction, assisted by a strong following wind, of a truly stupendous 107mph. The standing quarter mile secured a terminal speed of 74mph. Such performances would have been acceptable from 500ccs twenty or more years later. All these amazing figures did not go unnoticed by the authorities, for in just under one year after its launch, after testing motorcycles from other numerous manufacturers, the Metropolitan Police Force chose the Speed Twin as their vehicle of choice. Initially two dozen were supplied but many thousands followed over the years. The most remarkable result, considering the short time in which Turner had brought the machine into being, was that it immediately gained a fine reputation for reliability as well as performance.



"Oh, a DIVORCE . . . I thought for a minute you were going to ask me to give up motor cycling"

Turner had obviously thought long and hard regarding fundamentals before picking up his pencil. Folklore has it that he took a good look at the engine of the Riley 9 car that he owned, for there are perceived similarities, be that as it may, there are plenty of originalities. The bolted-up crankshaft with its heavy central flywheel was so remarkably compact that the overall width of the crankcases was  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch less than the width than that of the 500cc single cylinder Tiger 90. Its design





*The 1938 Triumph Speed Twin*

was so straightforward that it could be produced on the simplest of jigs and machine tools. The exceptional narrowness of the engine had one supreme feature. It was possible to save time and a great deal of money by bolting it straight into the existing Tiger 90 cycle parts, that model itself being withdrawn in 1939. A few raised concerns that the narrowness of the engine would cause over-heating between the cylinders but no such problem arose and the Speed Twin together with its faster sibling, the Tiger 100, introduced in 1938, established Triumph as market leaders, until 1940 when the factory had other matters to deal with.

Post Second World War, although many other British manufacturers had caught up and offered vertical twins, it was Triumph which led the sales in America and started the fashion for that configuration. Ironically it was that market with its demands for ever increasing engine capacity, which destroyed the smoothness and vibrationless performance of Turner's original 1937 creation. The fact that this seminal engine design should emanate from Edward Turner is nothing short of remarkable when one considers the man himself. In 1927 when under 30 years of age and operating a motorcycle retail business in Dulwich, London, possessing no engineering training or qualifications, draughtsmanship experience or knowledge of metal properties whatsoever, the Ariel Company, in a tremendous leap of faith, recruited him to design the Square Four. From that time, in just 10 years he progressed from selling motorcycles to designing an engine that revolutionized the motorcycle world: the Triumph Speed Twin. Edward Turner both as designer and international businessman took Triumph to the very top. He gave the world no more truly innovative designs. What a pity it never occurred to him to lay-out on his drawing board a three-cylinder 750cc engine. Edward Turner died in 1972.



## Relocation

Most of you will be aware that your magazine is somewhat late out this time. This is due to Jen and I moving house.

Our new address is  
**'Newhaven', 4, Close Cullyn,  
Station Rd, Kirkmichael. IM6 1HS  
Tel:- 878690**

Our Email address is the same :- [jenjobgrimshaw@manx.net](mailto:jenjobgrimshaw@manx.net)

For those who are coming just to our reception, after the Charles Craine Run on the 25<sup>th</sup> July, here are some directions. Coming from the north, turn right after the Isle of Man Bank into Station Rd. Don't go left into Shore Rd but carry straight on into the narrower minor Station Rd. Close Cullyn is on your left a few yards further on. Just go straight down the Close, which curves right and goes straight into our drive.

Please, think about contributing an article to your magazine. Remember, no contributions – no magazine  
Good riding

*Job Grimshaw (Editor)*

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## Just Strolling

In late June Phil Newman took a stroll round the Island - a 52 ½ mile stroll on what was one of the hottest days of the year.

Competing for the second time in the Parish Walk, Phil made it to Bride Church before pulling out; at the time he was 161st out of 1,600 + competitors. He raised over £900 for the Parkinsons Society with his valiant effort.

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## Photo Display

Bill Snelling is arranging a photo display in the Marquee at the Vintage Day at Jurby in September. The pictures will be A3 size, laminated (as per Bill's photo exhibitions). If you have any pictures that depict the Vintage Club, they can be scanned and laminated by Bill. Contact him at [amulree@mcb.net](mailto:amulree@mcb.net) or 862238

# JACKIE McCREDIE - Letter from Brian Trustrum

There is an article in Vintage Mann Issue 21 March 2010 (near the end). It does not mention that Jack was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1948 Ulster GP on an Excelsior. A very wet race. Thanks for the excellent article. I didn't realise that Jack was the oldest surviving TT rider. (*Sadly, Jack recently passed away. Ed*)

I enclose a photocopy of pages 162 and 163 of 'Racing through the Century' by GS Davidson that confirms this.

*Brian Trustrum*

*The 1948 Ulster was the "World's Wettest", as has been fully described in The Story of the Ulster – I was drowned here myself, with the rest ! I am still not prepared to say whether or no it was wetter than that dreadful "Belgian" of 1922 but I expect that, on the whole, it was equally bad for the riders. It was a much shorter race, in time, but it was a very much faster one – and rain hurts at high speed ! Maurice Cann (Guzzi) scored a run-away victory in the 250 class, from J. McCredie and H. Kirby (Excelsiors), and Velocettes were 1,2 and 3 in the "350" with Fred Frith, Ken Bills and Frank Fry.*

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## **Trials Events**

With the exception of a couple of cancellations due to heavy snowfalls the programme has progressed well, many thanks to those who have rallied round and helped out over the last few months. Our trials are perhaps the easiest on the Island as we adopt the principal of we want every competitor to be able to go to work (or school) on Monday morning. Despite this we are constantly receiving complaints that we do not cater for the genuine 'Old' trials bikes ridden by the less able riders.

However as we have a 'Chicken and Egg' situation we can only set the 'Very Easy' course if we know these machines and riders are going to turn up. So if these riders would make it known to Shaun (834855) or Geoff (837631) that they will be turning up we will provide appropriate sections. It would be good to see genuine Ariel, Matchless, BSA, F-B, Greeves etc come out of hiding and being used.

*Please note:-* Riders elect to ride either the 'easy' or 'hard' routes.

Most riders are out for the enjoyment and none are fiercely competitive.

Riders can chose to miss sections, there is no pressure.

The monthly trials resume after the summer break on 15th August at Billown Glen, Cross Fourways.

*Shaun Seal.*

# Floggers Corner

I need to reduce collection of bikes due to lack of time / space, so the following are for sale (all VMCC eligible)

**1981 Triumph T140 Bonneville E/start Executive** model with special original paint scheme, fairing and luggage system, re-built couple of years ago with S/S rims & spokes, new f disc, final drive chains and sprockets, St/steel master cylinders, new hoses etc. almost new Avon Road Rider Tyres (600miles only)  
Offers around £3,750

**1981 Honda CG 125** learner legal, in v good cond. still on UK plates, will need Manx test £475

**1982 BMW model K100**, high mileage but good runner, still on UK plates, will need Manx test offers around £850

**1980 BMW model R65** good runner Manx plated and taxed, offers around £750

**1957 BSA B31**, fair bike on Manx plates offers around £2,600

**1959 DKW 175** runs, seat just re covered still on UK plates, needs small amount of work to finish £1750

**WANTED** SINGLE SEAT SPORTS SIDECAR / or Outfit (would p/ex any of above bikes with cash adjustment as agreed)

*CONTACT – Brian Ward 878517 or 419353*

## Workshop Wisdom - Slipping Clutches

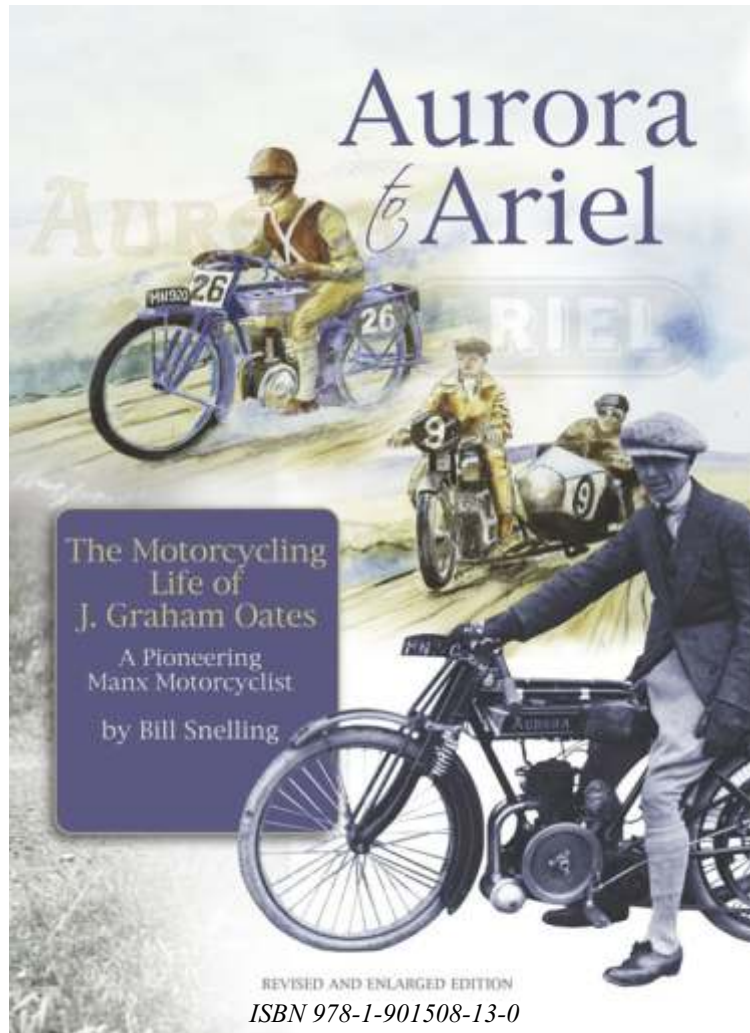
A clutch which persistently slips under load is a thorough nuisance. The problem is almost certainly due to one of the following:

1. Incorrect spring adjustment (ie spring adjustment nuts too far out). The remedy is obvious, but make sure all the nuts are screwed in an equal amount.
2. Worn inserts or burnt corks.
3. Oily inserts, or clutch discs, in a dry clutch. Discs can be washed in petrol and then boiled in household detergent to remove oil. In bad cases it may be necessary to replace the inserts or discs.
4. Cable adjustment wrong. Re-adjust with detectable free play at the handlebar lever.
5. Insufficient number of clutch plates. A rare snag, but it has been known! (only likely to be encountered on autojumble clutches).

*Acknowledgements to Radco*



*Amulree Publications - New Release*  
***Aurora to Ariel -  
the Motorcycling Life of J. Graham Oates,  
a Manx motorcycling pioneer***



VMCC member Bill Snelling and Amulree Publications have released an expanded and revised version of Bill's best-selling book 'Aurora to Ariel, the motorcycling life of J. Graham Oates, a Manx motorcycling pioneer'.

“Since it was first published, I have been fortunate to have found many more photographs and have added further text. A additional foreword to the revised book is written by Graham Oates jnr; at the time of writing the first book he was unaware of his father's full history. I also reveal how the book came into being, and how this important piece of Manx motorcycling history was nearly lost forever!” This 120-page, large format book with many black and white and colour photographs is now available from all bookshops, priced £14.99.

Lossan y Twoaie, Glen Road, Laxey, Isle of Man, IM4 7AN  
Tel: 01624 862238 - email: [amulree@mcb.net](mailto:amulree@mcb.net)

# THE 2009 WORLD TRIALS CHAMPIONSHIP BRITISH ROUND AT CARLISLE - Part 2

*As I left Graham was just starting to drill the rocks to take the pins which would hold the tape to define the routes through the sections. This would keep him busy for the next two and a half months.*

Back home on the Island and by now I was in daily contact with either John or Graham, sometimes both of them and often several times a day, helping to sort out any problems that cropped up, and giving advice when it was needed. I was in contact with my other key officials. The chief medical officer, the timekeeper, the technical officers, the environment officer, the secretary of the meeting and of course my deputy clerk of course, making sure they had everything they needed to do their jobs and keeping them informed of the events progress.

March and April passed by very quickly and soon it was early May. I loaded up my van with all the things that I thought I might need and on the 8<sup>th</sup> set off again for Cumbria, but this time it would not be a quick weekend visit. I would be there on the week leading up to the trial and return home again on the Monday following the event.



Adam Raga (Gas Gas) stirs the stumps



When I arrived on site at mid afternoon on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> the whole place was a hive of activity, with the general clutter of the farmyard being moved out and put away and the paddock area being prepared for the arrival of the services required. In the quarry Graham was still hard at work, he had drilled all the holes needed and had put the pins in place. He was now busy knocking in posts and stakes and doing a hundred and one other things that needed to be done before the trail could take place the following weekend.

I decided that there were enough people down in the farmyard so I stayed in the quarry and gave Graham a hand. By 8 pm we had done a fair amount of work, so it was time wash up, get some food, a couple of pints and early to bed, ready for a full days work the next day. This was to be the way of things for the next 5 days, with work starting at around 9 am and finishing sometime between 7 or 8 pm. By close of the day on Wednesday we were just about ready to go. Which is just as well, as the paddock was due to open for the arrival of the competitors the next morning. On the Thursday the first of the competitors arrived mid morning, just a steady trickle at first, but by mid afternoon it had turned into a flood and by 6 pm most had arrived. The few remaining stragglers arriving by lunch time on Friday.

I spent the last couple of days before the start of the trial on final preparation of the sections, looking and then looking again to take out any cheat lines that I spotted, moving tapes that could have been unintentionally broken or markers that may have been knocked out. It is unfair for a rider to get a five for such infringements if the tapes and markers were in the wrong place to begin with.

In addition to this in my role as clerk of the course I had jury meetings to attend as well as an FIM section inspection. The international jury thought the sections where very good and did not want any major alteration making although they did request a few minor tweaks. These where done to their satisfaction and the event was ready to commence on the Saturday morning.

Friday is also the day for last minute panics, when you find out that things that you thought had been done weeks ago have not been done and need to be done before the trial can begin. There were a few of these, but there was a good crew of people already camped in the paddock area. Observers, team support and a good scutch of Manxies etc, a lot of whom I have worked with in the past at events here in the Island. They were all willing to lend a hand when called upon, so in the end everything that needed to be done was done.



Takahis Fujinami monowheels over the rocks

## Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> of May

This is it; this is what I had spent the last 10 months working on and John and Graham the last 2 years. The start of the 2009 British round of the FIM world trails championship.

The day itself was dry and fine although overnight rain on Friday had made the ground under foot very muddy in places; this was more a problem for the 3,000 or so spectators than the riders as the rocks in the quarry were unaffected by the conditions. The sections with steep grassy banks and muddy climbs, I eased a little before the start, to ensure that the course was not dangerous.

The day itself went very well with only one incident, Japanese rider Fujinama crashed quite badly at section 13 causing the trial to be stopped whilst the medics worked on him.

He was sent to hospital for an x-ray and check up, but it was found that he had nothing more than minor injuries. In fact he returned to the event and rode the next day, not only did he ride, he finished on the podium. The first three on day one were

1. Tony Bou
2. Adam Raga
3. Dougie Lamkin

Moving on to Sunday now and the second day of this 2 day event. The weather was a little more overcast and much cooler today but that did not stop the 4500 or so spectators who turned up to watch enjoying the day. For the riders it



makes no difference to them, rain sun, wind what ever comes along is ok for them, they are just awesome in any conditions. The sections had ridden reasonable well on the Saturday so apart from shortening a couple of the longer ones where time had been an issue very little overnight change was needed, which as far as I was concerned was a good thing. The last thing you need as a Clerk of the Course is to have to go out at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> day and change a load of sections, but this was not the case here. The day went well with no problems and no repeat of Fuji's spectacular crash; in fact by his standards he was very steady at that section.

The result on the day was almost a repeat of Saturday with Bou and Raga in the first two places but with Fugi coming in in third spot. Not bad for someone who 24 hours earlier had been in the back of the ambulance on his way to hospital.

So to sum up, it had been a fantastic weekend of trailing, with the best riders in the world putting on a truly world class performance and in the Junior and Youth events a British win in both classes.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Nord Vue, it is a world class venue and the team at Dirt Bike Trax are great bunch of lads and lasses and I look forward to working with them again at some point in the near future.

*Murf (Ian Murphy) Clerk of the Course*

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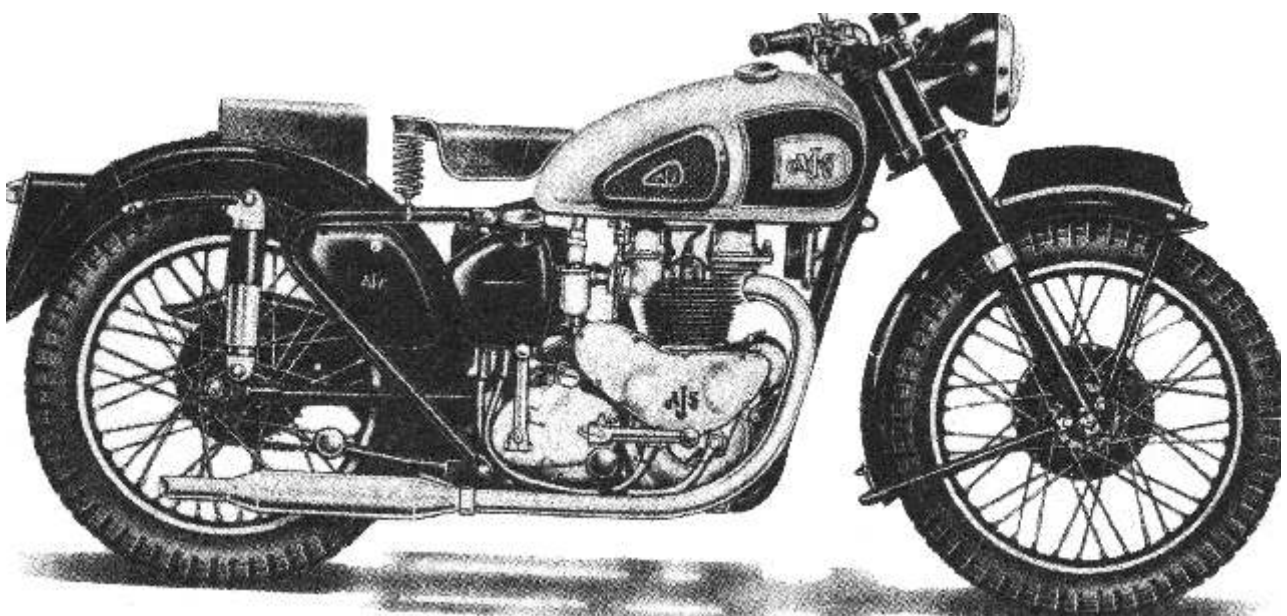
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# REAR SUSPENSION

Some modern motorcyclists seem to think that rear suspension is a comparatively recent development, but in fact spring frames – some of very sound design – are as old as motorcycling itself. One of the most influential was developed by the American Indian company. A make that was very popular in Great Britain both before and after the Great War (1914-1918). It used a normal swinging arm controlled by horizontal leaf springs mounted above and was widely copied.

In the 1920s Matchless tried hard to popularise rear suspension, and indeed their prestigious vee four Silver Hawk and vee-twin Silver Arrow had rear springing as standard. Others who in the 1920s and 1930s persisted were Vincent HRD, Brough Superior and New Imperial. Moto Guzzi raced on spring frames as well as offering them for the road.

Even so, there was no consensus about design, a pretty good indication that most of the systems on offer before the Second World War (1939-1945) were not really satisfactory. Then after the war, the familiar swinging arm and spring damping units appeared and by about 1955 were as good as universal. Here was a classic case of innovation, copying and acceptance. But similar systems used before had not caught on. Why not? The answer of course is oil damping. Late in 1935 Harold Willis and Percy Goodman of Velocette engaged Stanley Woods to help them with a badly needed new frame for the 1936 season. Willis had earlier experimented with spring frames and Woods had in 1935 won both the Lightweight and Senior TTs on rear sprung Moto Guzzis. Willis a keen amateur pilot was greatly impressed by the Dowty 'Oleo leg' aircraft



*AMC introduced oil damped rear suspension to road machines in 1948*

undercarriage which used oil, forced through special valves, to damp out any tendency to oscillate or bounce on landing.

He persuaded the Dowty Co to make, in effect, miniature Oleo legs and used these to control a simple swinging arm. The new frame and suspension was an instant success, transforming the handling of Velocette racers. Though Stanley Woods retired in the 1936 TT, he was second in the Senior race and went on to victories all over Europe. Velocette scored two more second places in the Senior and won the 1938 and 1939 Junior TTs before the Second World War stopped racing.

For 1939 Velocette produced for sale the rear-sprung MK VIII KTT which was made again after the war and earned legendary reputation. The need for rear springing on racing motorcycles had increased in the 1930s as rising speeds meant that the rear wheel was continuously losing adhesion with the road. Increased comfort for the rider was incidental, but nonetheless welcome for that! The increased adhesion meant higher speeds and vastly improved cornering.

Norton too were driven to use rear suspension but made a big mistake by choosing plunger type springing. Plunger units are simpler, required little frame alteration and have low unsprung weight, so that the wheel assembly offers little inherent resistance to following road undulations. Whilst acceptable for normal road use, it has major problems in a racing application. The straight line vertical movement of the wheel causes the chain to tighten as the wheel departs in either direction from its mid position and chain wear can be rapid. In an attempt to prevent this movement has to be limited to around 2 inches (50mm) or less. Another snag is that lateral rigidity – so essential for high-speed handling – depends on the stiffness of the rear wheel spindle and the maintenance of close clearance between plungers and guide rods. Also chain pull tends to increase the friction between plunger and guide, thus increasing the wear rate of those parts. Finally the layout does not lend itself readily to any damping of the spring action consequently a plunger equipped machine can, on fast bumpy corners, hop round them just as a rigid machine does. It was sighs of relief all round when for 1950, the Norton factory machines at last turned to spring-damper controlled swinging arm suspension with the famous 'Featherbed'.

Credit for the introduction of oil-damped rear suspension to road machines must be firmly given to AMC and to their sales manager (and factory racer) Jock West. AMC had early in the war, copied a pre-war BMW oil-damped telescopic fork to make their own famous 'Teledraulic' front fork proved over millions of war-time miles by Army despatch riders. In 1944 they patented a 'Teledraulic' spring frame using oil damped units. It first appeared on Matchless and AJS machines at the 1948 motorcycle show. The rest is history.

*By Clubmann*

# WOODVALE RALLY 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2010

As a regular visitor to the IOM and many events, we have always been made welcome by yourself and your members, and in return I would like to invite the VMCC IOM Section to our event; the rally has run for over 38 years. It is a large event attracting exhibitors and visitors from all over the world.

Many clubs attend every year, but it would be great to see your section and give the other clubs a run for there money, the local VMCC have been attending for years and will be there as well. I think it would be wonderful to have a IOM VMCC club stand. The categories for award this year are below.

## Motorcycle Classes 2010

Class A - Motorcycles Under 50cc Manufactured: up to 31st Dec 1985

Class B - Motorcycles British Manufactured: up to 31st Dec 1945

Class C - Motorcycles British Manufactured: 1st Jan 1946 to 31st Dec 1960

Class D - Motorcycles British Manufactured: 1st Jan 1961 to 31st Dec 1985

Class E - Motorcycles Foreign Manufactured: up to 31st Dec 1945

Class F - Motorcycles Foreign Manufactured: 1st Jan 1946 to 31st Dec 1960

Class F – Motorcycles Foreign Manufactured: 1st Jan 1961 to 31st Dec 1985

Class G – Best Club Stand

Class H – Furthest Travelled

You will see that this year I have added classes to suit motorcycles other than British. It really is a great weekend, entrance for club members is discounted and is only £5 per bike. If you wish you can camp on the club stand and there are lots of hotels and bed and breakfast within a short distance. We allow a club support vehicle “FREE”, so you can bring your marquee, lawn mower (yes a lot of clubs cut the grass first) and anything else you require. Cars, vans etc must be paid for and will be parked in the public parking area.

Please have a look at the website [www.woodvale-rally.org.uk](http://www.woodvale-rally.org.uk). you can get on site from Friday 6<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon and stay till Monday morning if you wish, there is so much to do, Auto jumble, Stunt Riders, (Neil Porter & Steve Colley), Vander Brothers “Wheels Of Death”, Ken Fox Troupe “Wall Of Death World Tour”, Laurel & Hardy, Bands, West Lancs Dog Display Team, Classic Cars & Bikes, Military Vehicles, Stationary Engines, Tractors, Model, Trains, Boats, Cars, Model Airplanes (with the Battle Of Britain Run), Huey Helicopter and a Spitfire on display, in fact its endless, I don't think you would see everything all weekend.

I do hope some of your members can attend and look forward to welcoming the VMCC IOM Section. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me, I have also attached a club entry form.

[events@woodvale-rally.org.uk](mailto:events@woodvale-rally.org.uk)

*Bernard Brookes (Operations Director)*



# **YELLOW BELLY NOTES**

from our Lincolnshire correspondent

## **Varano 2010**

**ASI Moto Show: Autodromo Ricardo Paletti: 14, 15, 16 May**

This show, which is the Italian equivalent of the 1000 Bikes at Mallory Park, was held on a very picturesque circuit near Parma. Track time was assigned by age group and the quality of machines was superb! The damp conditions did nothing to deter the riders, with the U.K. represented by guests Sammy Miller and Ralph Bryans, who as Ulstermen, were not bothered at all by the weather.

I saw examples of marques and machines that I have never seen before and have chosen a few pictures for 'Vintage Mann' that members may know something of, but which, apart from Pic 1, your Lincolnshire correspondent is ignorant. This fantastic dohc 50c.c. racer made by Demm was like a jewel or Swiss watch. To give an idea of how small this beauty was, the white number board was the regular size, but on this diminutive gem, appears too big.



Pic 1.





Pic 2.

Pic 2. A Condor, which I assume is Swiss, because of the flag behind the lettering on the tank. This bike was obviously totally restored apart from the 'bum stop' behind the saddle which still had a patina of age. This led me to thinking how much restoration is necessary on a race bike? Something is erased in the process. I appreciate that a bike must run and stop, but the battle scars of its history have gone.



Pic 3.





Pic 4.



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A French made Nougiers Pic.3, had an explanatory sign next to it, written in Italian, so was a mystery to me. I don't know the capacity , but this mighty engine looks as if it was carved from rock. The plunger rear end, the in-line oil





Pic 5.

cooler and the tachometer drive all look so purposeful and made for the race track. What a beast!.

Under normal circumstances the Benelli in the background of Pic 4 would be worthy of a picture itself, but this is the ASI show, so just look at this!. The letters S.I.A.M.T are cast into the crank cases as well as painted on the tank. It has the look of a board- racer, and speaking as the man who rode the radial engined Verdel board- racer at Montlhery (*Vintage Mann Issue 18*), I know how exhilarating those bikes were. Some light pedal- assistance to start then the belt drive kicks in, head down, levers opened up and away.

The Indian in Pic.5. illustrates perfectly the bicycle as parent to the motorbike. Painted in blood red, this must have seemed alien to the horse drawn and mounted citizens of the United States.

*Pat Sproston, Louth, Lincolnshire*



# An unsuitable trials machine!

In the mid 80s, whilst living in 'the smoke', I was gainfully employed as a despatch rider, or, rather, a courier. If you rode a 'knock-knock' a Honda CX500, you were a despatch rider. I was working for a CCL Couriers, a Guildford-based outfit that had bought a large consignment of BMW R80ST - so I was a courier! I had made an entry in the Motor Cycling Clubs Edinburgh trial. This event had originally been the London-Edinburgh Trial which started in 1904. In my days the 'Edinburgh' as it is known, started near Coventry and finishes in Buxton, it took the Edinburgh name to retain classic status within the RAC. I cannot remember why a suitable mount was not available, but I decided to follow the event and take some pics, at that time I was writing the despatch-riding column in Motorcycling. This was a 'freelance job' - I worked for free as I got lanced! Somehow, I was persuaded to ride the BMW in the trial. The sections were not a typical one-day trial section, cars of all descriptions were also catered for in these events; Morgans often entered a team. It was suggested that I remove the large panniers which would have impeded footing, and probably broken an ankle; I left these with Jack Pouncy, a doyen of these events who had ridden a machine bearing his name from the 30s and continued to ride a Pouncy Dot well into his 80s. I had to cover the couriers company's name up with duct tape.



The BM delicately balanced at Bamford Clough

The night run was far more comfortable for me, compared to the regular trail/trials bikes that made up the majority of the entries. We assembled at Denby Dale as light was breaking and then the fun started!. I think the first section I encountered was Millstone Edge, above Bakewell in the Peak District. The section appeared to be manned by the BMW Club, I recall seeing Geoff Wilson out of the corner of my eye as I made a (clean) but ungainly climb of the hill. I distinctly heard someone saying 'bugger me' as I whistled round a hairpin at more than the usual trials speed - road gearing you see!

The trial went on, I failed quite a few sections where the Continental tyres failed to give adequate grip. I had changed to the road tyre class so did not have to endure too many stop-and-restart tests. I was riding along with a bunch of Morini trail bike enthusiasts. They were doing better, with their trials tyres, but only just. We arrived at one section that looked too greasy for the BM. I sat at the bottom as the Morini boys made a bit of a hash of it, Benjy Straw, well known Morini guru, clattered himself so hard he was carted off to hospital. By this time a lot more competitors had arrived, making my exit impossible without going through the section. S\*\*t or bust was the order of the day, I launched it upwards and made it out of the section with a combination of heavy footing and breathing, was I surprised!

We arrived at Bamford Clough. This is a very long hill on the outskirts of Bamford in the Hope Valley. When (if) you reach the top, the town of Castleton far below looks like a model village and the Lady Bower Reservoir look like a mere puddle.

There was no stop and restart for the road class, so it was a case of get it off the line and give it lash! We careered on and upwards through the trees scrabbling for grip. Suddenly, it found a great deal of grip, reared up - and turned left. I either abandoned ship or was tossed off, the brain seems to have erased any further details. When I collected my thoughts, the bike was upside down, on a low stone wall. It was low on the trackside, but very deep on the field side, which is just as well, as the tall RT screen was hanging over unscathed, with the contents of the fairing pouches, camera, gloves, choccy bars etc., gently falling into the field. I had a tank-top map holder which had taken the brunt of the turn-over. The fun came when we tried to right it, we put more scrapes and dents in the tank and fairing getting it back on an even keel. The marshals kindly collected my belongings from the field. It was impossible to try and get further up the hill on road gearing and tyres, so they pointed me down and I set off back to Bamford village. That was hairy! Road gearing meant I was gathering a good deal of momentum, if I tried to ease the brakes on the wheels locked, I was a passenger on a runaway BMW! The start of the section was looming large, as was a skutch of competitors awaiting their turn. They must have realised my



*Pic: Amulree*

plight and cleared a path through, this was still an unmade lane. (One of this group was Steve Costello who visited my Laxey Exhibition recently). I thought of baling off again but suddenly hit a metalled bit of road and brought it to a halt. ( I 'google earth'ed the Clough at Bamford, there are pictures from the top and also at the bottom).

I had passed my big camera to Martin Goodey, a fellow VMCC member who was riding a R80GS (sensible fellow), who preceded me up Bamford. He was too high up the hill to record the BMW turned turtle, but he took the attached snap as we got it off the wall.

### Little and Large - Bill looms over the Baby Triumph

We made our way through the Derbyshire countryside, ending the trial at Buxton, gaining a well-earned finishers certificate and retrieved the panniers from Jack Pouncy, who was surprised to hear that I had attempted every section. That night we rescued Benjy Straw from the hospital, on crutches and dined at a Chinese restaurant called 'Double Luck'. A naff name for a restaurant, but the Banquet Special we tucked into was first class.

On the run home I called into the Belle Vue Classic show where the pic of the 'Baby' Triumph was taken. I got a good chewing off from the mechanic who's job it was to keep the BM's in good fettle after the trial, but the boss of CCL rather liked the article I wrote for Motorcycle Sport so I kept my job!

Of the three classic MCC trials, the London-Exeter, the London-Land's End and the 'Edinburgh', I was fortunate enough to win the 'Edinburgh' motorcycle class outright in the late 70s, but that was on a more suitable mount - a Velocette!

*Bill Snelling*

# Douglas Pirie - Rider Profile No.11

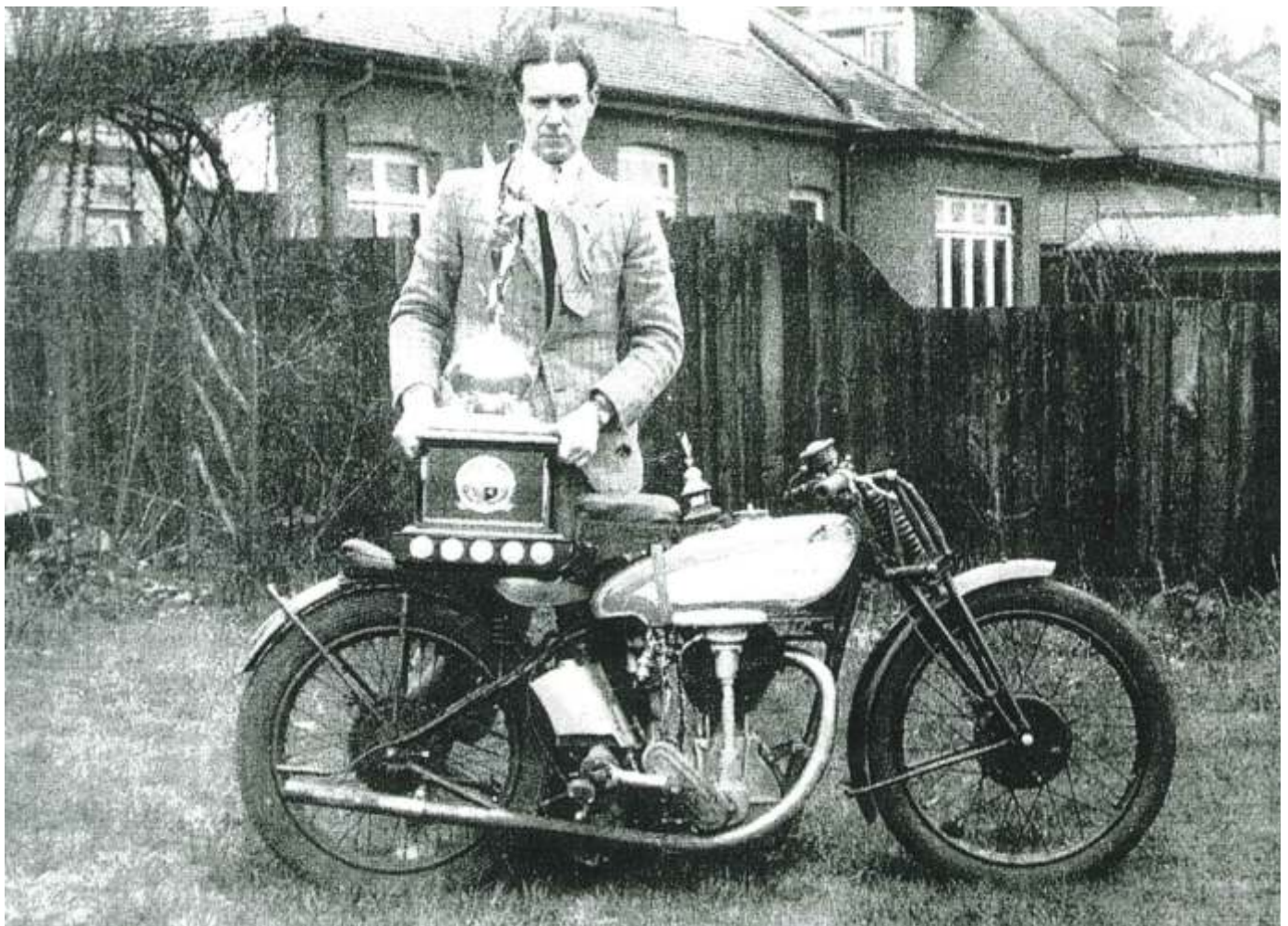
Douglas Pirie, a chartered surveyor from Southgate, London raced in the Isle of Man from 1929 - 1935. In 1930 riding a Velocette he won the Junior Manx Grand Prix. On a Velocette he was again the winner of the Junior M.G.P. in 1931.

Racing a Norton in 1934 he took 1st place in the Senior Manx Grand Prix and was 2nd in the Junior. After his commendable record he decided to enter the T.T. the following year. Entering the 1935 Junior T.T. on a Velocette he finished in 4th place.


The 1935 Lightweight T.T. was run in appalling weather conditions and due to mist on the mountain Douglas Pirie crashed heavily at the 33rd Milestone on the fifth lap. Sadly he died from his injuries and is buried in Southgate Cemetery, London.

The Pirie family presented a Trophy in his memory which is today awarded to the winner of the Junior Manx Grand Prix. Douglas Pirie was 28 years old.

*Dorothy Greenwood*







# O E S

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# A fabulous weekend over at Three Sisters with the Benelli

It was eventful to say the least!

Our jockey Brian Purdy fell off in practice which wasn't part of our master plan, but these things happen if you go racing .....

But there is no stopping this plucky Irishman as finger bandaged and bike patched, he went straight out on the afternoon of Saturday and gave us a brilliant 2nd place in class. More was to come though!

Fuelled by a pleasant Saturday night (usual TS//2C Catering arrangements applied - ie Steaks and Scallops and Wine. (You get the picture!), he was out shaving seconds off his tentative run round on the Saturday. This time was right up there with a lap time of 1.06 against 350s doing 1.10 - fastest lap in class and only 2<sup>nd</sup>, as he was a gentleman!

Final race and another 2<sup>nd</sup> - albeit slower. You would be with half a gear lever to use, as it broke. What a star!

What a great start to our season and its thanks to Robert White for his support along with Eddie, Neil and I and many others for helping us out. You will see



Purdy good! - a beaming Brian and his little gem.



how fabulous our bike looks in its Robert White livery for the 2010 season! I must thank Brian for his input and help as well, they are invaluable. We all had a cracking time (at least the frame is still in one piece!) and are looking at our forthcoming opportunities, plus of course development of the Benelli.

## Jubilant Jurby

*Wow. What a day we had*

So much to say about Sunday! All in all - wow what a day we had!

Started as usual with our prime bacon and sausage baps as Brian took his 400 through scrutineering. We are now old hands of course and so relaxed until the queue diminished (that was the queue for scrutineering of course and not the everlasting queue to look and photograph our little gem!).

Practice was eventful with Brian seeming to forget the definition of practice as



We can mend it!

he had his race head on playing skittles with the other boys on track! Anyway - the guy on the Suzuki got a fright when Brian piled up the inside of him on the first lap! Pulled in just before the session finished with a loose fairing, a misfire and a broken gear lever! Apart from that it all went to plan! This seems to be the price for setting a blistering fastest lap in class of 61mph!

OK - the fairing was easy, the gear lever was whizzed off by our new bessie mate Peter to his outpost at the Point of Ayre where he scorched the metal into accepting a new lump to act as a gear lever. Then the misfire - well, off came the heads - nothing wrong there and plugs all OK (did this as Brian reported vibration and that can be the last thing you feel before the



Brian goes for it at Jurby.

bang!). I checked the wiring and all seemed OK so started up and decided to leave well alone.

Neil and I waited patiently for our turn on track and then we decided to go and check the wiring one more time. You know what's coming now don't you! Yup - pulled a wire gently and it all fell apart. Oh dear, I said, with 10 mins before we were due out and with no wiring tools at all with us. I found a suitable piece of wire in the box complete with ends on but we need to splice another wire in so I set about this very carefully. Neil then reminded me that if I didn't just do it - we wouldn't be going anywhere - so I did!

Out on track with a flurry of activity and Brian streaked into the first corner scattering the pack ahead. The bigger bikes soon overtook him but he had the other classic bikes well in his sights and after one lap was in 2nd place behind a very well sorted 350 Drixton Honda. These cost about £10 to £20K and are serious classic racers with around 50bhp on tap - compare that to our £3k bike with 30bhp! But we don't care - well to Brian this is just a challenge. Away he went after the Honda swapping places on every lap until the last but one lap, when Brian pulled out such a lead that he held him down the long back straight and into the start finish straight to start the last lap. Then a missed gear change



and the Honda whizzed by. Something strange had happened requiring Brian to resort to hand change for the next corner! Not to be put off - he got on a charge. In the final corner he sling shot out alongside the Honda to come 2nd by a mere 500ths of a second - that's about a wheel!!! What a race!! Lunch was fabulous with Neil presenting us with a superb Taggietelle Carbonara - all made from scratch in our field kitchen - you should come and try our cooking!!!

Next race and we again played cat and mouse with the powerful Honda swapping places all round the circuit - lap times dropping and the two of them kept upping the pace! The race ended up as 5 laps as we were lapped and Brian was planning on 6 (that's his excuse anyway!) so we had another 2nd - and well fought out too! e again set fastest lap having improved our time to 64mph! I wonder how the other classic boys feel to be so soundly trounced by a mere 231cc Benelli!

Brian is of course mad and rides the little bike with no fear and it just goes to show what a skilled and expert rider he is. This boy is good. Happy days then having had tremendous fun playing with the big boys and next time - we go to Cadwell where the competition will be serious. The pictures you see are taken by our team of Gary Lark and Juan Cregeen. Juan has a website and its worth checking out:- <http://www.jcimages.co.uk>

As always we thank our sponsors, Robert and the Benelli club, our wives etc. etc. Without Brian though - where would we be, so a big thank you to him for making this so much fun.

*John South*

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## **Roger Bannan**

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## **Richard Bairstow**

Ballanard Cottage, Ballanard Road, Douglas, IM2 5PQ

## **Robert Kelly**

12 Carrick Bay View, Colby, IM9 4DD

## **Graeme Higgins**

28 Sunningdale Drive, Onchan, IM3 1EQ

## **Raymond Knight**

Sandygate Cottage, Ramsey, IM7 3AF

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**July 25<sup>th</sup>**

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**August 8<sup>th</sup>**

Road Run. Family BBQ . Waterfall Pub, Glen Maye 1.45 for 2.00pm. Organiser Mr and Mrs Dudley Robinson.

**Sept 9<sup>th</sup>**

Club Night. Knock Froy 8.00pm. Speaker T.B.A.

**Sept 26<sup>th</sup>**

Road Run. St Johns School opposite Farmers Arms. 1.45 for 2.00pm. Organiser Mr and Mrs Clive Kneale.

# “Neutral Problems”

At the age of 15½ I got my first motorcycle. It was a 1961 standard Tiger Cub, a black and silver one with Ace handle bars and rear crash bars. When new it was a Southport Reg. UWM 691. I don't think you ever forget the registration of your first motorcycle. This bike was an early 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday present from my Mother and Father. From the age of 14 my friends and I would have our faces pressed against the windows of the motorcycle shops around Liverpool. The bike had been in the window of Cundles Motorcycles, Camden Street, Liverpool, where the trade ins were kept. I had been dreaming of owning one. One day I was called up to the lock up garage where my Dad kept his car. I presumed that I was going to help him wash his car, but to my surprise, there was the 'Tiger Cub'!

My Mum and Dad had bought it for me .Wow! They had gone into town and seen the bike that I had been mumbling about and dreaming of! I still had six months before I would be able to get a provisional licence, but it did not stop me from going up to the garage and starting it up, revving the nuts off it, and almost choking on the fumes!!! My school friends called in to see the bike one day and



asked the most important question - How fast will it go? I said I didn't know, but we would soon find out. So, putting bricks and wood blocks under the rear crash bar we lifted the rear wheel off the ground. With my friends Mike and Paul holding the bike steady at the rear I started the bike up, going through the gears. My Dad had shown me how things go as he was a Despatch rider at one time, in the Army. I got the bike flat out, showing 85 mph on the speedo. We were all choking with the exhaust fumes. My two friends let go of the crash bars and we all gasped at the 85mph. We were not a bit concerned about the bike falling off the bricks and





John and grandson Ryan Dalton who will be the new owner of this 1965 Tiger Cub when he is old enough

launching me through the garage wall, that was just two feet away from the front wheel! Luckily, the bike didn't fall over. We agreed it was a fast bike, the Tiger Cub. I moved on eventually to riding the bike around the courtyard where the garage was. I said to my Dad that I was getting good at riding the Cub. He came up to see me, but I had not taken any notice of the safe riding instructions that he had been giving to me. In my head Dad had only ridden motorcycles whilst being shot at. "That's gratitude for you".

Getting fed up riding around the courtyard with Dad looking on, I swerved around him and ventured out into the street. This was something he said I was not to do, until I had a licence and all the rest of the paperwork. But I was keen to do a bit of showing off! Up and down the street I went, swerving around Dad again, who now had a face like thunder! I headed to the open garage, and thought I would snick it into neutral, coast to a stand still and blip the throttle. That would show him that I knew my stuff. This did not exactly happen. As I was heading into the garage I put it into first gear, blipped the throttle and headed for a chock of wood that was at an angle to the garage side wall. I hit it and shot around the garage wall. With no helmet required, and no brains to put in it, I landed in a heap with the headlight glass smashed. After seeing if I was ok. my Dad said, putting out his Woodbine cigarette with his foot, "you'll need a

new headlight son together with some common sense! The headlight will cost you about 19/6d but common sense cannot be bought". After a week or so I had bought and fitted the new headlight glass, informing Dad I had progressed in my motorcycle riding and I was now in full control.

Back my Dad came to the garage courtyard. A joiner called Mr George Asberry was there putting new gates on one of the garages. I was an apprentice to George and we worked for the company who owned all the garages. Again I flew into the courtyard after a jaunt up and down the street. Same M.O., into neutral, blipped the throttle, but went into first gear again and demolished the garage door that George had just put up! George was looking as stunned as my Dad who was witnessing des ja vous!

The bike was on it's side, the rear wheel being held clear off the ground by those rear crash bars! I could not switch the ignition off with the little spade key so I pulled off the H.T. head from the spark plug. Now I was in pain! The engine eventually stopped. Dad surveyed the damage and said, "another head light glass required son!" Putting his Woodbine cigarette out again with his foot, he saw that I was ok. Then he said that shock treatment would sort me out! I don't know if it ever did, but I learned never again to rely on the daft little neutral indicator on the headlamp nacelle of the Tiger Cub.

*To be continued.*

*John Dalton*

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# LONG DISTANCE TRIALS

I was out recently for a day's trail riding with three fellow Club members, Graham Kneale, Cliff Prince and Ray Jones, and as we travelled a selection of the Island's tracks I got to thinking of the routes of some of these tracks. I know from my time with the old Highways and Transport Board that many of them are ancient highways and had developed from pedestrian routes, into animal droves, and then cart tracks. Clearly, many of them took much more direct routes than the later 'roads' which had to accommodate gentler gradients for early motor vehicles.

The week-end after our trail ride I was across, and managed to get to the Banbury Run. It was most enjoyable to wander amongst the six hundred pre 1931 machines, and gave me a bit more encouragement to finish my 1929 Model 505 Royal Enfield.



Len Ore, well known in VMCC and Ariel circles upends the outfit, while his passenger just keeps on smiling!

*Pic: Amulree*

The route I took to the start of the run at the Historical Vehicle Centre at Gaydon took me along the A5, and I noticed in a number of places, the road nameplate 'Watling Street'.

Many people will know that Watling Street is one of the many ancient highways in Britain built by the Romans, and that set me to thinking of the other great ancient highways in England. The Great North Road, Ermine Street, the Fosse Way etc. When I lived in the Easy Midlands many sections of these now forgotten and by-passed routes were used on VMCC runs such as the Derbyshire Trial and the Taverners Trial.



The one that really sticks in my mind is the Fosse Way. If you look at a road map you will see the route of the Fosse Way from Leicester down to the West Country. Once a major route for legionnaires marching to and from great Roman forts, it is now a mixture of fast trunk road and long forgotten unsurfaced tracks. But my abiding memory of sections of the Fosse Way is taking part in the Greensleeves Road Trial in the late 70s.

Many of you will know of the major road trials run by the Motor Cycling Club ([www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk](http://www.themotorcyclingclub.org.uk)) such as the Lands End, the Edinburgh and the Exeter. The Greensleeves was this type of road trial, run near Bristol. The trial involved a fairly lengthy road route using main roads, the aforementioned tracks, and was interspersed with 'observed sections'. These often involved the more difficult parts of the tracks. Unlike the more common observed trial practice of losing marks for 'footing', on this trial you stayed clean for an uninterrupted run through the section, but lost marks if you failed. However, as the observed section was part of 'the route' you pretty much had to get through, somehow, to keep on the route. There were also time checks throughout the route for which you could be penalised.

I had been recruited to act as passenger on the trial by a friend, and very capable road trial exponent, Roger Gagg. Although having had no experience of trials passengering, he felt my road race experience might help us stay on time on the fast road sections. I was flattered, of course, and let this cloud my judgement!!

The outfit was basically a pre unit Triumph Trophy, with 650cc barrels and head all housed in a Cheney chassis, with trials sidecar. There came my first concern. We would be on the road for around 10 hours, and passenger comfort was minimal. A bit of foam on a plywood seat at the rear and several 'fan belt' hand holds. Roger also pointed out that fast road sections would be no chance to rest as we needed to keep to time and the setup of the outfit meant the passenger 'working' the outfit particularly on left-handers.

I seem to recollect that the trial was in winter and Roger suggested leathers under Barbour suit. Yes, that was fine for the rider but I was soon steaming from the passengering effort, and with nowhere to stow the leathers if I took them off!

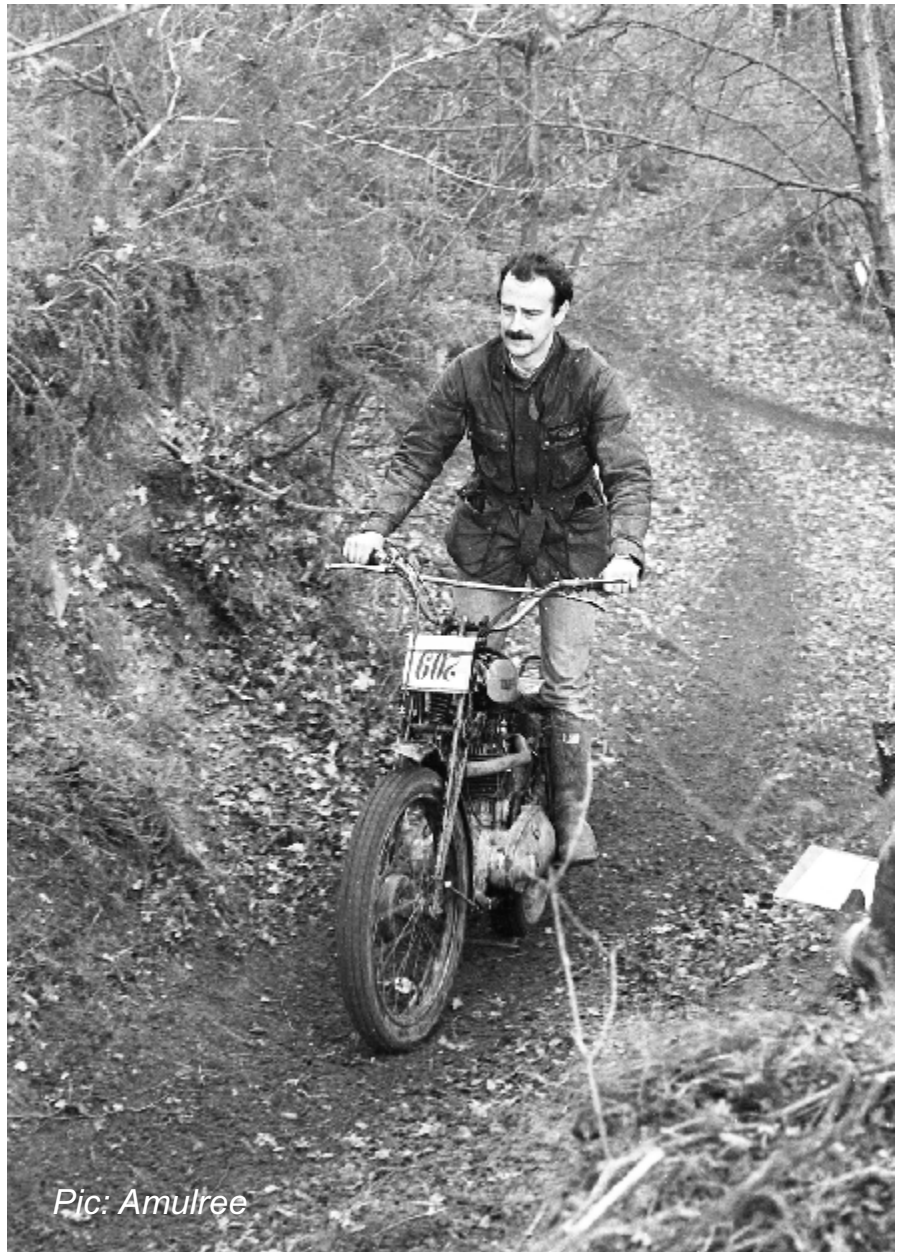
Anyway, we left Nottingham in the early hours of the morning with outfit on the trailer heading for the start. At our appointed hour we were away, and straight into, what seemed to be some road race type 'scratching'. The roads were wet and we drifted quite easily. It was hard work in my several layers of clothing and I was somewhat relieved when we reached the first track. That was short-lived. I came to realise that many of the tracks in this part of the country are at a lower level than the adjoining fields and they act as very useful drains. Mud,

mud and more mud. All nicely chewed up by the solo entry which had started in front of the outfits.

The first few sections were fairly straightforward; I suppose to lull us into a false sense of security! They were fairly muddy but we had no shortage of power...or reluctance from Roger to attack them 'full bore'. About two hours in we had the inevitable puncture. We were in a sea of mud, in one of those sunken lanes and had to change the tube there and then as each passing bike showered us in mud. Job done, we pressed on at great rate of knots to make up time. Suddenly we lost all drive. Rear chain OK, but no sign of primary chain through inspection cover. The good news? We had a spare primary. The bad news? Primary drive is on the sidecar side, and one hell of a job to remove cover and replace chain.

Took us about half an hour, and now we were really behind time. Roger decided that from now on we wouldn't walk the sections, but go straight in and hope for the best.

The plan seemed to work OK, and we remained clean, but needed to make some time up. I continued to lose several pounds in my 'sauna suit'. We came to one section where we dropped down a bank, over a stream, and then up a steepish stony track, not unlike many of the tracks in the Island. Trouble was we didn't know what was round the corner 50 yards up. Roger's plan was, in his words to 'fly' the stream ie full bore, to keep our speed up for the hill and then take that as it came. We got the signal from the observer, and off we went. We 'flew' OK, plenty of speed, good grip. We rounded the left hander with me hung out in the gorse and got good drive up the hill as it steepened and we could see the lane go



*Pic: Amulree*

A youthful looking Steve in the 1983 Talmag

right. Those of you with outfits will know that as you go up steep hills the front goes light and steering is affected. With the level of grip we had and the gradient of the hill, we had virtually no steering, and Roger was right over the bars to keep the front wheel down. Even so, we were starting to bounce from the bank on one side of the track to the bank on the other. As we hit the left hand bank particularly hard, and Roger was effectively astride the petrol tank, he toppled over into the front of the sidecar. As he did so, the track straightened and went slightly downhill. We went through the section end cards with both of us in the chair and Roger steering with just the left hand bar. Still clean!!

I don't remember a great deal of the rest of the day. Apparently the brain blanks out very traumatic events to protect the individual's sanity. But some of the tracks did stop us, and I don't think we finished in the awards.

Eventually I was just so glad to get to the finish and get the riding gear off. We just had a four hour drive home then. And we had a trailer puncture on the way!

I didn't do any more long distance road trials.....but I have a great deal of admiration for those that do, and their efforts maintain the use of these tracks that could so easily fall into disuse and loss of highway rights.

*Steve Woodward*

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## **EVENING EXPRESS**      **April 29<sup>th</sup> 1927**

### **SPEED BURST PAST POLICE STATION** **Seaforth warning to motor-cyclists**

“Motorists generally can take warning and I intend to put a stop to the craze for speed on the section of the road between Aintree and Maghull”, said Supt. James Yates, chief of the Seaforth division, at the County Magistrates' Court, Islington, Liverpool, today, when a number of motor-cyclists were fined £3 each for dangerous driving on that road.

Albert D. Denaro, one motor-cyclist, it was alleged, drove his machine past Aintree police station at a speed of over sixty miles an hour. A police witness said, “He passed the station like a flash. I have never seen anyone drive so fast on a road in my life, and his speed was so great that when his machine passed over a slight unevenness in the road it leapt into the air and left the ground for a number of yards.” In reply to the charge Denaro said the cycle could not do anything like 60 miles an hour.



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