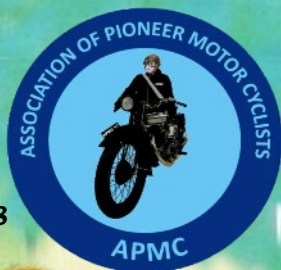


THE PIONEER MOTOR CYCLIST

Association of Pioneer Motor Cyclists. Founded in 1928
Incorporating the Pre 1914 TT Riders Re-union



***We will all
be there soon!***



**No. 191
March 2021**

EDITORS RAMBLINGS *Geoff Davies*



Hope you are all keeping well, after the many lock downs your bikes must be in top condition, with all the spare time you could spend in the work shop, doing those minor jobs that have been waiting many years to sort out. I've been tidying up the many shelves and delving into boxes that have not seen daylight this century. One box was full of hammers of various shapes and sizes, I think they have been breeding in there. When we can mingle again, come along and pick a couple up and just put a few coins in my charity box. Make sure you don't pick a male and female one, or you might end up with a boxful. Don't ask; I don't know which is which. I had this problem when I bought some Holly bushes and was told I must have one of each to get berries. Two legs and I'm OK, but once when looking at a four legged table we were thinking of buying; the salesman said it was a bit feminine. A friend once turned up on a new mauve-ish coloured Harley, and asked what my wife what she thought of it. "The colours a bit girly." she said. He traded it in a few months later. After that, I got rid of my pink Y Fronts.

Now for more serious things. Not being able to get out, riding, meeting friends and visiting shows, etc. I'm short of photos of motorcycling activities. The one below is of a North Staffs VMCC run in October. Everyone was well spaced in a group of six. A fifth of the entry were APMC members including two in the photo. When typing this, I think we can only go out in pairs and not stop anywhere.

You all must have a few photos lying about. Colour would be preferred to brighten up the pages. Send them by post, with captions, and they will be returned within ten days; or email them, at a reasonable high resolution, again with captions The bikes can be in any condition. Moving or parked up. Make

it more interesting by adding some history of the bike and/or rider.



Spot a future APMC member in 2013.

NEW MEMBERS

The following recently joined us. We welcome him and look forward to seeing him at some of our future functions and events.

P2414 Bill Snelling from the Isle of Man. Bill started riding in 1963 with a Triumph Tigress scooter. He worked in the trade with Geoff Dodkin. Joined the Veocette Owners Cub. Present club, Peveril MCC (I o M). Worked for Motor Cycle Sport magazine and Despatch Rode in London. Rode long distance trials, racing including the Manx Grand Prix. His recent autobiography: Motorcycles Mates and Memories, is reviewed on page 19.

MORE NORTON Derek Cheesbrough

Of all the pre-post war British motorcycles the two most unique, and regarded, were Norton and Velocette. I remember looking in Claude Rye's shop window at one of the few new OHC Internationals in the Featherbed frame - £365! Who could afford that! I thought at that moment.



Latterly, Joe Craig tried much with the basic engine to stay with the Italians. His innovations included the Proboscis nose and the Kneeler Manx's - both ridden in the TT by the brave and abandoned style of Ray Amm. Then he copied Moto Guzzi's outside flywheel, although the single M.G.'s came from their awareness of light weight, low centre of gravity, small frontal area

and superb streamlined enclosure of machine and rider. Low overall height and lightweight riders, Keith Campbell being one. Then came Japan! Sammy Miller has many of those Norton bikes. Perhaps an article on Joe Craig's post-war efforts to keep up; and illustrated. Several members could possibly help with this.

West Australian. 25 November 1939

In a South-West township lives a self-appointed woman supervisor of the district's morals. The other day she accused a fellow-churchgoer of having taken intoxicating liquor, because, "with her own eyes," she had seen his motorbike standing near the door of a public-house. The accused man made no verbal defence, but the same evening he parked the motorbike by her front gate and left it there until the next morning. The local gossips are still giggling over the latest scandal.

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AN ENGINEERING ANATHEMA *Part Two* Pat Davy

There was an interlude of solo only riding until I was courting Ann, when I bought a bargain priced Vincent Comet & Steib via an advert in Exchange & Mart. In six months we had rattled the Vincent to bits the final straw being when the large alloy idler wheel in the timing chest lost its teeth. The Comet went but I kept the Steib in stock propped vertically in a corner of the garage it offered the storage space equal to a small wardrobe and quickly filled with bits that will come in handy. We now come to the magnum opus of my formative years discounting the 1932 Morgan Three Wheeler with a 1100cc JAP which I super charged and is a whole story of its own. (*When will we be seeing this? Geoff*)

It had become my practice since the earliest time to have a best bike and a ride to work bike. Ride to work bikes never cost more than £5.00 and usually lasted until a years tax ran out and then changed for something a little more reliable but never more than a fiver, they ranged from a Bantam to a bronze head Rudge Ulster which finally lost the intermediate ratios in its needle roller gearbox. Not to worry it had so much torque and flexibility that I carried on using it for work using only first and top gear. These were the days before DVLA at Swansea and MOTs . I can remember the date I got pulled on the Rudge for no Tax, November 3rd 1957, the day the Soviet Union put a dog named Laika into space. Like the dog the Rudge died in its course of duty, however unlike the dog that fried on the 4th orbit the Rudge engine



ended up in a 500cc Formula 3 Racing Car project and the frame ended up in the skip, please don't tell my friends in the Rudge Owners Club. Enough of this irrelevant stuff let's get back to the three wheel theme.

It became the time to change my best bike and an advert in Exchange & Mart for a small fin BB34 Gold Star took my fancy. I had been missing the 7R and racing and fancied something with some urge under my right hand. It wasn't quite the latest DBD 34 Goldie, that all Ace Cafe boys aspired to, but it was a Goldie. But not for long! On a trip down to Littlehampton with Ann on the back a slight knock developed round about Ockley on the A24 then



WALLOP- RATTLE RATTLE – SCREECH OF REAR TYRE and everything stopped going round. The Goldie had stuck a leg out of bed. The con-rod let go just under the gudgeon pin letting the daylight in the front of the barrel and quite a bit of oil out.

When I got the bike home and stripped the motor it was a mess inside so much so the question was is it worth rebuilding? Searching through Exchange & Mart for a suitable replacement I could not believe my luck when I happened upon an advert for a DBD34 complete with carb & stripped for inspection. No time was lost in whizzing round the North Circular, a route I knew well from my Brands

visits, to make the purchase. The opportunity to view it stripped was a bonus and it all appeared in good condition, the crank cases were new and had not been stamped with an engine number – an amusing problem for later.

Once home the engine build commenced. A new experience for me was the laminated head gasket where one peels off layers of very thin alloy film to achieve the exact gasket thickness to suit your particular engine – very trick. While all this was going on the embryo of an idea was rattling around my



brain. Every man and his dog who owned a Goldie turned it into a 'Clubmans' solo Cafe Racer, so the Magnum Opus was initiated. The Steib was taken out of storage and refurbished including a respray to match the bike. British Racing Green was chosen as I still had some left over from the Morgan Three Wheeler rebuild. The Steib ball & claw design of sidecar connections are in my view the best of any road going clamps short of solid welded connections used on racing outfits. I would improve Steib clamps even further by bronze welding gusset plates to the Goldie frame at the four chosen connection points, then saw off the clamp element from the balls and weld the balls directly to the gusset plates. The wheels were the next consideration. A BMW twin leading shoe front brake was chosen, mainly because it was about the only decent Twin Leader that was fairly easily obtained. It turned out to be well up to the job of stopping a quick outfit, but had one fundamental design fault – more of that later. The standard BSA rear hub was used with the precaution of having those dreadful rivets welded up. The hubs were built into 16" Dunlop Racing Alloy Rim by Mr Nunn who was a very experienced and highly respected in Southern parts. He said 'first get your tyres and then I'll order the rims' thinking I would not be able to obtain sidecar racing tyres. So straight round to Comerfords just down the road, produce my ACU race licence and hey presto a tyre order was placed. Mr Nunn built the wheel but he did struggle with the BMW hub as with 16" rims which all sidecar racers were using at the time, the spoke length was only about 2 1/2" on both sides being a full width hub. Front forks were the next component to consider. Leading link of the Earls type were the obvious choice and BMW were favourite but I could not find a second hand straight pair so settled for Douglas Dragonfly. These needed modifying to accept the BMW hub & spindle, also the torque reaction for the brake (brake plate anchor). The BMW design reacts the braking torque via the unsprung component i.e. the pivoting arm, the result being that on brake application the bike rises and eventually under heavy braking, the top pulls out of the front suspension units. What fun! In hindsight I should have copied the Douglas design and contrived a torque arm from the brake back plate to the sprung component of the fork, and parallel to the pivoting fork. I had owned an NSU Max with leading link forks and properly designed front brake torque reaction which stayed dead level under braking so should have known better. Notwithstanding all that I now had a solo rolling chassis so could attach and align the sidecar. Moving on to the petrol tank, I was lucky to find an alloy 5 gal Lyta for just a fiver but I think somebody had played football with it, so off to Paramount Metals in Kingston upon Thames run by Ted Friend the ex Works AJS rider who raced the Porcupine. Ted could weld anything. He cut the bottom out of the tank,

The Pneumatic Tyre.

The Irish Cyclist & Motor Cyclist.
May 9, 1917

Some interesting details as to the origin of the Dunlop pneumatic tyre have been appearing in the Press, and it has recalled that the first mention of the tyre was in the Irish cyclist of December 1888. It was a small advertisement which stated that the new tyre made vibration impossible. The advertisement was inserted by the makers of the tyre, W. Edlin & Co., Belfast. The announcement interested me greatly, and in February, 1889, I travelled to Belfast to inspect the new invention, and there saw; a hollow tyre filled with air which absorbs nearly all the vibration and renders the going as easy over square setts as a cinder path. As a matter of fact, at the time I saw the tyre it was not filled with air, for it had recently been punctured. The repairing of this early tyre was a tedious and difficult matter, and no doubt, Mr. Edlin did not consider it worthwhile doing it for my benefit. Hence one of the very first characteristics of the tyre which was brought under my notice personally was that it was apt to puncture and difficult to repair. My information as regards the absorption of vibration was gained from Belfast men who had used it.

It was in the following May that W. Hume, riding a pneumatic, swept the boards at a race meeting in Belfast. Previous to trial I was under the impression that the new tyre would possess no very great advantage on a high-grade track, the surface of which was perfectly smooth, but that on rough tracks or grass it would be invincible. A little later, an incident happened in Dublin which was calculated to confirm my belief. W. H. Alexander, of Belfast, came down to race at Ballsbridge on a pneumatic, and although a good rider, he failed to score. My first ride on a pneumatic was in the autumn of 1889, and I at once realised that the result to cycling, would be revolutionary. The pneumatic only appeared on a few occasions in England in 1889, but early in 1890, many English racing men were using the tyres,



and the general opinion was that they were only of advantage on rough surfaced tracks. In fact, when the famous Irish brigade visited England on its triumphant racing tour, Dr. E. B. Turner wrote me, advising that we should bring our solid tyred machines for use on smooth tracks, such as Paddington. By that time, however, Irish riders had fully realised that on every class of surface the tyre was much faster than the solid, despite the fact that those early specimens were slow compared with later types on account of the immense thickness of the tread and the sides of the tyre.

In May 1890, Mr. Harvey du Cros, Harvey, jun., and Alfred went to Belfast to attend a race meeting at which the two boys were competing. Hume on a pneumatic, simply romped away with the first race, and, realising the hopelessness of opposing the new tyre, they did not compete in any of the other events. Mr. du Cros was tremendously impressed, and afterwards got an option on the tyre. This resulted later, in the autumn of the year, in the formation of the Pneumatic Tyre and Booth's Cycle Agency Ltd., with Mr. Harvey du Cros as chairman.

About a year later, a great sensation was caused by the discovery of an ancient patent for air tyres, taken out by Thompson nearly forty years previously, which rendered the Dunlop patent invalid. Under ordinary circumstances,

this would have proved fatal, but the board of the company—and especially Mr. du Cros, were men of grit and resource. They bought up subsidiary patents, of which the Welch was the most important, and fought innumerable actions in connection with same. The result was a Pyrric victory in one sense.

The delights of touring

are derived not only from passing through interesting old English towns, such as Ludlow, but also from the running of your car. Of all tyres designed for touring cars the

**DUNLOP
GROOVED TYRES**

provide the highest degree of comfort and immunity from road trouble. All that experience, skill, and splendid materials can effect has been employed in the production of these tyres, with the result that they have won the favour of the great majority of touring motorists.

Ludlow

Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Co., Ltd., Aston, Birmingham, and 14, Regent Street, London, S.W.
Don't "fossil" the purchase of golf balls: select Dunlops (six patterns).

The patent for the combination resulting in the Welch tyre was upheld, it was found in practice that it did not prevent a firm of rubber makers from manufacturing the cover and the air tube and a firm of steel makers producing the rim. It was only when the components were brought together so as to constitute the complete tyre that the patent was infringed. It will be easily understood that it would be almost impossible to enforce such a patent, for any individual could purchase the air tube, cover, and rim and assemble them on his machine. It was manifestly impossible to follow up all individuals who thus infringed the patent. Despite this fact, the tyre for a considerable period was almost a monopoly, and the Dunlop Co. has proved one of the most gigantic financial successes on record, due mainly to the outstanding ability of Mr. Harvey du Cros, and his son, Arthur who was lately made a Baronet.



A TALE FROM THE EDITORS PAST

There are slight exaggerations but parts are true.

While riding my old Indian, I swerved to avoid hitting a deer, lost control and landed in a ditch, severely banging my head. Dazed and confused I crawled out of the ditch to the edge of the road when a car pulled up with a very beautiful woman who asked, "Are you okay?"



As I looked up, I noticed she was wearing a low cut blouse.

"I'm okay I think," I replied as I pulled myself up to the side of the car.

She said, "Get in and I'll take you home so I can clean and bandage that nasty scrape on your head."

"That's nice of you," I answered, but I don't think my wife will like that!

"Oh, come now, I'm a nurse," she insisted. "I need to see if you have any more scrapes and then treat them properly."

Well, she was really pretty and very persuasive. Being sort of shaken and weak, I agreed, but repeated, "I'm sure my wife won't like this."

We arrived at her place which was just few miles away and, after a couple of cold beers and the bandaging, I thanked her and said, "I feel a lot better, but I know my wife Pauline, is going to be really upset, so I'd better go now."

"Don't be silly!" she said with a smile, and started to unbutton her blouse "Stay for a while. She won't know anything. By the way, where is she?"

"Still in the ditch with my bike I suppose."





Two Lady Riders in Germany.—

Exciting and Unpleasant Adventures on the Eve of War. By MISS W. J. SCOTT. August 20th, 1914

We started off on our trip by motor cycle to Bayreuth so peacefully on the 15th July, never dreaming of the possibilities of war, and here we are back again on the 4th August, all that is left to us of the two motor cycles being a spare belt, an inner tube, and a sparking plug.

Our outward journey seems tame now, but at the time it was quite interesting. We left the Isle of Wight by the 7.15 a.m. boat to Southampton, rode up to London, had the motor cycles put on board the *Batavier V.*, and arrived the next morning at Rotterdam. In due course we passed through the formalities of the Dutch Customs, had our passes signed, and duly arrived at our destination, Lendsen, near Amersfoort, where we stayed two nights. We were much disappointed at the state of the roads in Holland. The main roads are paved all over, and are in such bad repair that it was impossible for us to go faster than about fifteen miles an hour. Alongside some of the roads there are special paths for cyclists, which are often very good and smooth, and we were thankful whenever we could get on these.

During the next few days we went through the usual vicissitudes of a motor cyclist—punctures, a little carburettor trouble, belt and clutch slip, etc.—but nothing really to hinder us, and we slept the nights at Rheinberg, Niederbreisig, Wiesbaden, and Wurzburg. The scenery round Wiesbaden is very lovely and the roads excellent. We stayed in Wiesbaden itself for two days. After leaving Wurzburg our luck with fine weather changed, and we were caught in a terrific thunderstorm, and forced to stay the night in a most primitive wayside inn at Rupertsburg, near Richstatt, where our supper and breakfast consisted of black bread and coffee. The next day we rode through most beautiful scenery and along a fairly good road to Regensburg.

From there to Bayreuth was only an easy day's run, but the clutch on my friend's machine kept slipping on every slight gradient, and the clay roads, owing to the heavy thunder showers, were like butter, so we eventually stopped at the little village of Haag, and reached Bayreuth on the morning of July 25th. There we spent seven days of peaceful sight-seeing and opera-

going, often going for little tours on our motor cycles. On these, as everywhere else on our trip out, we found everybody very kind and always civil. It was only natural that we were a great source of interest, as ladies are practically never seen on motor cycles in Germany.

War and Rumours of War.

There were no English newspapers to be had, and except that we heard that Austria had declared war against Servia, there was not even a rumour of our finding any difficulties on our homeward way until the evening of the 1st of August, when the news began to be disquieting, and we were warned that passports would require to be looked at and so forth; also when we went as usual for our Poste Restante letters they were refused us, and we heard that the post was in the hands of the military. That evening we heard that 4,000 soldiers were to be quartered in the town on the following day.

All the English and Americans then began to make hasty preparations for an early start, we among the number; but even then there seemed nothing to make us think of encountering any real difficulties. On August 2nd, a Sunday, we started off at 7.30, the first real intimation of warlike preparations being that the man at the garage only allowed us to fill up with petrol behind a building where we could not be seen, as all petrol was requisitioned by the Government. Well, we started off, and for the first fifteen miles or so we were not interfered with, nor did we see any soldiers or any military preparations, and so we came to Kulmbach, the first town on our route. Here we turned off for Lichtenfels, on the way to Eisenach and Cassel. Just beyond Kulmbach my companion had a puncture which delayed us some little while, and as we started onwards we met all the village people just coming out of church. They stopped us, the men demanding to see our papers. These, fortunately for us, were all in order, passports, bicycle passes, German tax papers, etc., and we were allowed to proceed. Hardly were we through the village than we came to a level crossing, where three or four men were busily shutting the gates, and others were as hastily loading their rifles with ball cartridges.

Arrested !

We were hauled off our bicycles and told to consider ourselves under arrest. Three or four men with fixed bayonets walked in front, and as many behind, and about a hundred peasants accompanied us. It was an awfully hot day, and my cycling clothes were thick and heavy, so I began to find pushing my bicycle, a rather fatiguing game, and began to lag behind, and told my friend to do the same, but in a moment the guards shouted at us to go on faster or else the bayonets would be used. After some ten minutes or more we got to

the station, where the waiting room was made into a temporary guard room, and we could sit down. We were told that the gendarmerie from the nearest town had been sent for, and that they would decide what was to be done with us. In due course four men arrived, thoroughly examined all our papers, and then searched our suit cases for incriminating papers of any description. Needless to say they found nothing. They told us that news of us had been telephoned all along the line from Kulmbach; and that we should be stopped at every level-crossing, at every bridge, at every cross-road, and at every village, and that in case we changed our route, our description had been telephoned on to every crossroad in the neighbourhood. We asked these people, who were quite nice to us, to be kind enough to give us some kind of a permit, which would enable us to get on unmolested. This they did and we got on for a mile or two, were stopped at the first bridge, showed our paper, and were allowed to pass on.

This cheered us up considerably, and we entered the next village quite unconcernedly, and had almost got through it when we encountered another hostile crowd who stopped us, examined the paper again, and were just on the point of letting us go when they discovered that the paper had no official seal on it. This was quite enough, and we were instantly arrested for the second time.

Having learnt by experience that no breathing time was allowed, I quickly divested myself of my heavy coat and knapsack, got them on to the bicycle, and we started the march back all through the village, being reinforced at every moment by soldiers and crowds of villagers. These were not quite so hostile, and we got help from some of the boys in pushing the bicycles, which was a great relief to us. At the station, where we were again examined, was a young German officer, who told us we had much better give up all idea of proceeding on our bicycles, that no pass would really help us, that the further we went the more military we should encounter, and that he strongly advised us to go on by train, and told us he would give us a



**Miss W. J. Scott and (below)
Miss J. Dickinson on their
2¾ h.p. Douglas machines.**

permit to take us as far as Lichtenfels, where we could get a train for the frontier. This he did, and, loath to leave our machines behind, we started once more for Lichtenfels by road.

Rough Reception from Hostile Crowd.

On the way we were held up several times, but allowed on again after our paper had been shown. About half a mile from the town, we overtook a noisy band of Reservists, and these, when they discovered we were only two ladies, shouted to us to stop, and as this was done not quite quickly enough for them, they absolutely dragged us off our bicycles. I believe that these men had no right whatsoever to stop us, but they were uproarious and I suppose thought it a bit of fun. We were very roughly handled by them, but eventually one older-looking man amongst them came forward, looked at our passports, etc., and allowed us to proceed. We were then within sight of the town, and rather heaved a sigh of relief to think that we should at last get a little peace. But this was not the case, for at the entrance of the town we were met by one of the ugliest and most hostile crowds I have ever seen. We rode quietly side by side so as not to get separated, and then came the order "Halt! or we shoot." Some of the men ran off for the police, leaving us in the middle of the road closely guarded by soldiers and civilians. One would have thought we were the most dangerous spies caught red-handed; they could not have, treated us worse. They shouted to us that if we attempted to move or speak to each other we should be instantly shot.

An old man standing in front of me then began talking to me; he was quite friendly, really, of better class apparently than the rabble around us. He said he could not understand why two respectable ladies should be riding motor cycles instead of staying quietly at home. Did we not know that war was declared, etc., etc. I answered him that, of course, I could quite understand his point of view, as he was at home, but that we were not, and, although we were trying our very utmost to get there as quickly as possible, he and his nation were doing their utmost to prevent it. This seemed to appeal to his sense of humour, and he then began to call the ruder boys and girls to order. They were just beginning to get out of hand, pulling at our hair, snapping their fingers in our faces, and so forth, and then he suggested to the calmer of the guards that they should escort us at any rate into the shade, and not keep us in the broiling sun.

Kindness from the Police.

Much to our joy we were soon met by uniformed police, who escorted us and kept off the crowd, who then contented themselves with shouting, " To

prison, to prison." The chief of police was excessively kind to us, and helped us in every way. He brought us into a room, had the bicycles guarded by police, cleared the streets, and then proceeded to write a further permit for us as far as the Dutch frontier. He added to his kindness by accompanying us to the station, and, while he assisted my friend with the machines, I went to get the tickets. I was asked for my passport, which I showed, also I told the man I should require tickets for the motor bicycles, and that the chief of police was on the platform with us. Whether or not he believed me I do not know, for at that moment someone outside the station recognised me, and in a moment the whole building was swarming with men and boys, and the man at the ticket office, telling me to wait a moment, went out by a side door and fetched in a whole band of soldiers.

Seeing I was going to be instantly surrounded and separated both from my friend and the chief of police, I made a dash, ducked under the bayonets, and flew through the crowd on to the platform just in time to find the chief saying good-bye to my friend, believing all was well. He was perfectly furious, white with anger at the brutal behaviour of his countrymen, and just hurled abuse at them all, told them what curs they were to bully two perfectly harmless and helpless women, insisted on the tickets being then and there, handed over to us, and a telegram despatched to Wurzburg to say we were not to be interfered with, but were to be helped to the frontier. We said good-bye to the Chief of Police with real regret, for had it not been for him I scarcely think we should have left Lichtenfels that day.

Over the Frontier at Last.

Two Dutch youths gave up their places to us, otherwise we could not have had a seat at all, but the bicycles had to be left behind. At Wurzburg we booked to Utrecht, the only Dutch town to which tickets were issued. All through the night we were continually leaving one train for another, but reached Cologne about 6 a.m. and Utrecht at 2 p.m. Thence, with many difficulties, we proceeded through Hilversum and Amsterdam to the Hook of Holland, where, after spending the night on the wooden Customs benches, we embarked for England. Outside Harwich we were ordered to stop, and escorted in by a submarine. It seemed almost too good to be true to find ourselves back once more on English soil after the experiences of the past days. One thing which greatly surprised us was to find that even then—on Tuesday afternoon, August 4th—we were not yet at war with Germany, though we had been subjected to such gross treatment at the hands of the Germans.

Motorcycles, Mates and Memories. Book Review

The name of Bill Snelling may be familiar to many as the author of a number of excellent books on various motorcycling topics over the past few years and now he has compiled his own autobiography. Alternatively, you may be aware of Bill - thanks to the excellent photographic exhibitions during the Isle of Man TT and Manx races - or have bought photographs from his extensive photographic collection on the FoTTofinders Bikesport Photos website.

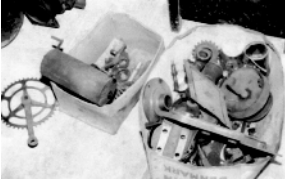
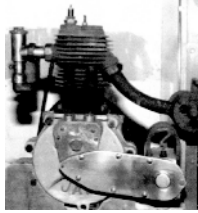
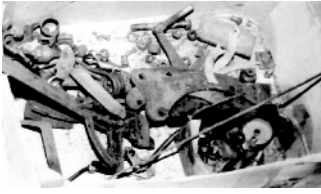
What you may not know is that he has an extensive motorcycle history as part of the motorcycle trade, a competitor on and off-road, a motorcycle courier, as well as a journalist for the motorcycle press, to mention just some of his life spent on and associated with motorcycles. Thanks to renowned automotive publishers Veloce you can learn at least some of his fascinating life in a real social history of motorcycling over the last seventy years in his own words, entitled *Motorcycle, Mates and Memories*.

Over 200 period images illustrate the text in this soft-bound volume as he guides you through a life spent riding and competing on some often very unsuitable motorcycles on and off-road, which will evoke many similar memories from readers who have been riding and competing over the last seven decades. Bill takes you through a childhood grounding from a father's love of Vincents, to a working life with Velocettes, moving through working on the original 'Motorcycle Sport' magazine, writing for the now defunct 'Motorcycle Weekly', whilst dispatching, before moving permanently to his beloved Isle of Man from south London. Here, he has established himself as a walking encyclopaedia of the TT and associated IOM races and local historian.

As you work your way through his life you find that despite his 'short portly' figure (his words not mine) that he has an extensive racing pedigree mainly on Velocettes and also a Ducati in the Manx TT, as well as a very successful off-road history especially in the classic MCC events where he has won the prestigious 'Triple' award several times. Along the way he has made numerous friends the world over and whole chapter is given over to giving a brief profile of some of them with some humorous anecdotes. In the main body of the text readers will also find many well-known names and companies that Bill has been associated with during his various exploits, both in the UK and abroad, which will no doubt trigger a lot of memories, as well as his life as a member of a motorcycle club or two. In fact, when you come to end of the book you realise that he is the epitome of a life-long motorcycle enthusiast who has had a go at most things on two wheels and gradually adapted his enthusiasm as age and health problems have caught up with him, but never losing the thrill and camaraderie of two wheels! It is an excellent read from start to finish, written in a humble and self-depreciating style and easily dipped in and out of. It should be at the top of everybody's reading list! Excellent value at £16.99. ***Ian Kerr MBE***

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FROM THIS



TO THIS



The only
motorcycle
made in
Edinburgh,
and was a one
off, I believe.



1910 DUNEDIN MOTOR CYCLE

In the late 80's I decided it was time to go backwards in time and get Veteran motorcycle. After much searching I purchased several cardboard boxes containing lots of rust and most of the bits of a proper Veteran, a Dunedin. A make unknown to me; and the rest of the vintage bike world it appeared. Much searching in Edinburgh's records provided details of the maker. George Rutherford, he lived in Dunedin Street in Edinburgh in 1898, then moved to Howard Place where he became a cycle maker. He possibly called his cycles Dunedin from the street where he previously lived, or from the Gaelic name for Edinburgh, Dun-Edin, the Fort of Edwin.

In 1910, he must have decided to go into motor cycles, as many cycle makers did. Most of the items were bought in, frame lugs from Chater Lea, JAP 500 cc engine, Druid forks, fuel tank and tool box from Davison's London, and much more.

I got busy, sorting out the bits, and loosely assembling things to discover what was missing and what was beyond a simple repair and needed to be re-manufactured. Then de-rusting, polishing, painting and plating were dealt with. Eventually, almost everything was ready and it began to look like a working bike. The most unusual item was the clutch. A quite robust item mounted on the extended crankshaft. There were several similar items in the adverts in 1910, but I never found one like this, despite searching the Blue and Green un's. Most of the levers brackets, etc. were missing, but a few hours doodling provided drawings of cranks and levers which looked 'veterany' and worked.



The large coil spring at the end, is compressed by the various levers and cranks and allows the belt to slip, giving a clutch effect. The clutch lever is shown in the other

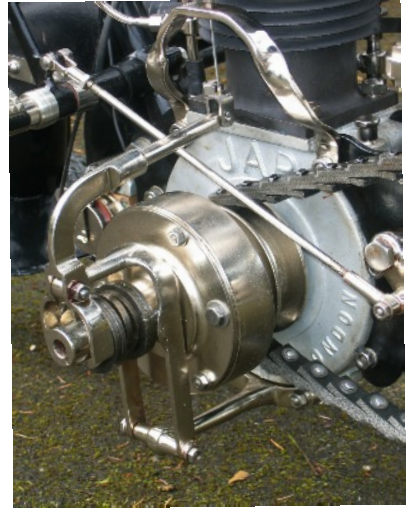


photo. This is where problems occurred. The lever has a sprung pawl so the clutch could be held dis-engaged. Starting was a problem, high saddle made run and jump starts a bit iffy. Gearing was so high that pedaling off was beyond my power as was sitting on the bike and pedaling whilst on the stand. It took a few weeks before I accidentally found a way of starting it. I was standing on the R.H. side and pushed the pedal down to check what compression was like and it started! For the first time in many years. Possibly 1921 because a tax disc was in a very corroded holder. Start the bike on the stand, operate the clutch, take off the stand, which is two separate legs, which entails leaning the bike from one side to another. Climb aboard, give a bit of throttle and engage the clutch. Sounds easy but vibration from the engine or rocking the handlebars, will 9 times out of 10, jog the clutch lever out of the pawls and the engine stalls. Repeat process, again and again.

Now to actually ride it. The bars came a long way back and not far apart making it a wobbly ride, especially as there were seven controls on these

wobbly bars, three on the tank and two for the feet to deal with. I think that would not have been a problem in 1910. Not many cars or bikes, and they were probably wobbling along. Maybe that's why George Rutherford only made the one motor cycle, Edinburgh had a lot of cobblestones.

I then got two more very rideable veterans, which I will tell of in future issues. The Dunedin is now in The Royal Museum of Scotland. Sorry to see it go, a lovely bike to look at, but I view my bikes as 'toys to play with' and enjoy riding. I don't have spare room to sit and gaze. That's why I have owned a wide variety of more than sixty machines, over more than sixty years. However some one is enjoying riding them or gazing at them with wonder, if they haven't been scrapped. All being happy in their own way.



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HOW I GOT INTO ENGINEERING AND MOTOR CYCLES John Goodall

I was born just before WW2 at 91 Henhurst Hill and my first memories of the wartime conflict was seeing Coventry in flames, a vivid red glow on the horizon after bombing by the German Luftwaffe about 1942? My uncle Bill worked for Herberts Machine Tool Co as a foreman and I recall my mother's concern for her brother: fortunately, he and his family survived.

Like many wartime youngsters I became very air minded and by 1945 I could identify most British, allied and German aircraft from silhouette wall posters my father brought home from the ARPI of which he was a spare time Air Warden. I could also identify friend or foe by engine sound. My dad had placed sandbags in the front porch and over the hallway of our bungalow on the top of Henhurst Hill opposite Aviation Lane. We took refuge in the hall when we heard German planes overhead; however, we never had a problem for all that effort. Why my dad thought the attack would come from the front I still don't know? It was natural when my elder brother Jim built a model aircraft just after the war, a Keil Kraft Southerner Mite of about 32-inch wingspan. I took great interest and could not wait until it flew, but what fascinated me most was the engine that powered it, an ED Bee of 1 cc. I could not understand how something so small could actually run and drive the propeller to power the model, but it did eventually. It was compression ignition and a two stroke usually, but wrongly called diesels these days. It ran on a mixture of paraffin, ether and oil in about 50, 20 and 30 % ratios respectively. Inspired by my brother I started to build chuck gliders. I was then about six years old and progressed onto towline gliders, rubber powered, and finally diesel powered models, becoming reasonably adept and able to build successful models. By the time I was eleven, I built my first power model, a Keil Kraft Slicker of 42-inch wingspan, which I seem to recall was powered by a Mills 1.3cc engine loaned by Brother Jim. I joined the Burton Model Flying Club about this time, becoming their youngest member. At the time, they used a flying site on top at Siniai Park Farm overlooking Burton. I lost the Slicker when it flew off in a thermal and was soon out of sight heading towards Shobnall. I had my name and address on it and was surprised when my old Head Master from Shobnall Road School which I had just left, knocked on the door to return my model, which had landed in the school yard under the play ground shelter. Lucky, as there was a high brick wall all round the yard. A few years later, I had started work as an apprentice Mechanical Engineer at FNF in Wellington Road who had taken over premises built during the war to make Gun Turrets for Lancaster bombers and they also had a contract for making Bofor's Anti-Aircraft Guns.

I distinctly remember the Delapena honing machine of about 15 feet capacity for this gun barrel. FNF were set up to make High Speed Knitting machinery and apprentices were expected to gain experience in all areas of engineering from fitting to all types of machine tools operation including gear cutting usually six months in each department. My last twelve months was working on precision turning in the Tool Room. My modelling activities still carried on apace and they had helped me to understand drawings in particular and construction methods, materials and using tools in cutting metal, filing, bending wire and soldering etc. A brilliant hobby that did me proud in my engineering lifetime. I was by now building Control Line models which flew round in circles at the end of two wires secured to a handle and the models elevator which allowed control of the model to fly loops, bunts, figure of eights, inverted flight and wingovers etc, but this was after a lot of broken models.

I bought my first Motor Cycle about this time a 1954 James Comet and used this to ride to work for a year or two and also to get to Night School in order to improve my qualifications. It was not long before I met a young fellow model enthusiast named Glyn Hall from Newhall after the Burton MFC had moved to Clarence Street School in Burton. Glyn is still a very good friend today. We used to meet and fly regularly together and eventually ride bikes with a friend of Glyn', Trevor Mear, who lived in Swadlincote, another aero modeller would you believe? Trevor ended up, after several £5 bikes tied together with string, with a Velocette Venom. Having started an apprenticeship at Rolls Royce in Derby, I bought a Triumph Tiger Cub from Slater and Adams in Ashby De La Zouch. It was making rather funny noises from the big ends after thirty thousand miles in two years, so it was part exchanged for a 1957 Velocette Viper from Macton Motors in Derby, owned by Peter McManus with his partner, Harry Tunnely. I am not sure who got the best part of the deal, but it did get me into Velocettes and became part of my life up to the present time. I still have the Viper now in need of restoration and three other Velocettes my favourite being the 1930 KTT Velocette, which is currently under repair after some years with a failing crankcase. This is over ninety years of age now and the alloy has fatigued and cracked, (A bit like its owner). I have cast a new timing side from my original case with suitably added padding on all machined faces to give a machining allowance. I hope to have it back on the road in a few months time.

My early life shaped this avid interest in, and for engines, in particular model engines and motor cycle engines, in propeller driven aircraft and mechanical devices of all types. It has led to other bikes like the Big Port AJS, Mk8 KTT Velocette, Mac Velocette my Honda 400/4 and others, which have all give me great pleasure and through the VMCC many good friends. The nicest people ride motorcycles not just Hondas. (With respect to Honda advertising)

JOHN KERRIDGE'S MOTOR CYCLING YEARS

It was about 1949 or 1950 when my interest in Motorcycles was triggered, it came about that we. (Barry Copley, my friend, and I) bought our first motor bikes in about 1950. from a man who lived in Copley, they were both made by AJS and I thought both were 350 cc. **I have recently come up with a tax disc for EK5600. where it says that the capacity is max therefore it must have been a 500 cc one.** I think that the other one was Big Port type, which was supposed to have a bit more grunt to its performance than the standard 350 cc. They weren't a pretty pair; in fact, they were both dog rough, which was reflected in their purchase price, which was for the princely sum of £6 for the pair.



They were both collected from their home in Copley and deposited in my Dad's shed, which was opposite number 2 Queen Street, we decided to make one "good machine" from the pair of them, all went well but a little slowly (due to our inexperience), until it came to producing a spark that coincided with the piston arriving at top dead centre, all very technical we thought at the time, with no instruction manual. Barry managed to glean some information from a knowledgeable motorcycling workmate, who suggested fitting a vernier type adjustment between the magneto and it's chain sprocket, this entailed boring out the sprocket thus removing the central boss and then drilling eight holes just below the sprocket's teeth, a new flanged hub was produced with 9 holes at the same centres as the 8 holes on the sprockets, the two pieces were then fastened together with one bolt, adjustment was then possible to obtain the correct ignition setting by fastening the two together in different holes until the correct setting was obtained.



Old AJS and Me. Barry and David Smith

The next thing on the agenda was the testing of the machine, mere trifles like, did the brakes work? Should we tax and insure it first? Was there oil in the tank? Did the hand oil pump work? Most of these went by the board in youthful eagerness. Petrol in (just a little, we were poor), start the engine, disengage clutch, engage hand change gear lever in first, drop clutch and away they went, Barry was driving, Alan Ford (another mate) was

riding pillion, (I was away this time), they went up the hill heading away from civilisation, luckily there was oil in the tank and the pump worked, up to Hubberton they went, then on to Steep Lane, left uphill and two miles on to the Crag Vale road where a rest was needed, then about turn to return to base,

on the level, all was OK but hills were another thing, part way down Steep Lane the front brake was applied, the nipple parted company with the inner cable, whoops, rear brake was applied, "It's not working" shouts Barry, whoops again, oh well here we go!!!!!!

It's a good job that the Steep lane Bus wasn't in its usual spot, or they would have hit it fair and square amidships, as it was they hit a low wall (going between a telephone box and a telegraph pole roughly 5 ft apart, in the process), which slowed their progress and catapulted both riders and bike twenty feet into a mowing field. The riders quickly picked themselves up groaning and moaning, and seeing that the bike was well hidden in the long grass, left it, creating a single file track back through the long grass, and did a long painful walk back home, where bruises were nursed and thoughts of the bike's recovery were mulled over.

Monday arrived and it was decided to wait until nightfall for a speedy uplift in case the boys in blue had been informed, so, relying on the goodwill of a friend with his brand new Land Rover to give us a lift, we sped up to the scene of the crash and within two minutes the wreckage was removed into the Land Rover and quickly rushed to another friend's farm, where it was put into an unused hay loft, never to see light of day again. From that day until the day he died, the farmer always referred to us as the umbrella gang because of the state the front wheel was in. I don't know what happened to that bike or to the remains of the other one; they just seem to have disappeared in the depth of time. The registration letters are imprinted on my memory one was EK5690 (my dad's initials) and the other one was WW, Weary Willie as Mum called it. That was an apt description of both machines.

The next chapter in this part of my motoring saga really began in May of 1952. After my 19th birthday I decided that I'd saved up enough cash to buy a bike. In those days I was an apprentice which meant that I didn't get paid a lot of money, my first wage as a sixteen year old was £1-7s-6 which then proceeded up a scale until the apprenticeship was completed at 21 years of age, The ball was now in my court, first, turn on the petrol, easily found, second, kick it into life, Whoops its in gear, select neutral and try again, ouch that hurt, it had kicked back, try again, that's better, now here we go, pull in the clutch and select bottom gear (I'd watched other people do this), now for the exciting bit, let the clutch out slowly until it bites then increase the engine revs finally dropping the clutch fully home and wow it worked first time, off we go, wobbling up Horton Street, not daring to change gear as the next challenge was looming in the shape of a roundabout at the top, by the

Victoria Hall theatre, however luck was on my side as there was no other traffic anywhere near, so I trickled left onto Huddersfield Road changing up when the engine screamed, and down again to turn right into Skircoat Green road. After a somewhat noisy and jerky ride, I eventually arrived home, quite chuffed.



Sister Brenda on the Bantam, shortly after I bought it.

After riding quite a number of miles, I found that the riding position left a lot to be desired, due to me being rather too tall for it, I got over this by hiring the saddle, this gave it a rather more comfortable riding height and a better, less cramped riding position, but the bike was always too small. The Bantam did however teach me a lot on the driving side as well as on the rudiments of basic engine maintenance. The engine was shaped just like an egg and could be de-coked in no time, de-coking was an essential part of maintaining a two stroke engine in the early 1950's as the oil used then wasn't specifically made to be mixed with petrol and used in two stroke motors, all that the job involved was to remove the cylinder head, scrape off the carbon deposits on the head, and also in the exhaust port. We, Maurice Ramsden and me (another mate), had occasion to strip his Bantam down one weekend, I don't know why, but on assembly we put one of the gears in the wrong way round, and didn't find out until we tested it, by which time it was nearly tea time, but we took it apart and re assembled it correctly in time to go to the speedway at Bradford that same evening.

The rudiments of driving quickly became second nature, so after about six weeks I applied for my driving test and a date was obtained for a few weeks hence, the route for the test was formed by riding in a figure of eight around the streets by the old Police station on Harrison Road. The examiner seemed satisfied, and so was I when he said that I had passed.

The Bantam did provide me with reliable transport every day for work and outings on the odd weekend. I did however manage to drop it a couple of times, both times when I was on my way to work, the first time it was on the canal bridge at the Colder and Hebble end of Wakefield road, the road surface had a polished piece of tarmac on the exit of the bend, and this day it was wet, and I hit it whilst I was going too fast losing the front wheel grip and slamming into the kerb edge, scratching the bike and at the same time damaging my right knee slightly, I didn't mention it at home for quite a long time, but I limped a lot when I was away from home. The other time was on

the railway bridge just after the promenade on Elland Wood bottom, it was on a slight bend which was prone to frost, Alan and I were on our bikes with me leading, when I once again lost the front end on ice this time, and it was as I was sliding down the road that I looked back and saw Alan doing exactly the same thing as me, this time we were both lucky only having slight bruises, and both bikes survived unscathed. If there had been today's traffic density the outcome of these escapades would probably have been completely different

Odsal speedway was a favourite destination on Saturday nights and it was whilst going there one weekend that I got pulled in for speeding, 48mph the officer said, and I didn't argue, but it took that bike all it's time to top 50 mph going downhill with a wind behind it, I was let off with a caution, and that was the only time I have ever been stopped for speeding on a motorbike. The Bantam was definitely under powered for someone of my size and weight, most noticeably when trying to get up Quarry Hill, which was extremely steep and cobbled. I found that I had to give it a bit of light paddle assistance to get past the first bend. I finally fell out with the Bantam after I had been to Bridlington and back in a day; with the engine screaming it's head off for 90 miles each way. It was far from being the pleasant day out which it should have been. So that was the writing on the wall.

THE BANTAM HAD TO GO



Any suggestions for a suitable caption for this one. Rude ones will be privately laughed at, the best of others will be in the next issue.

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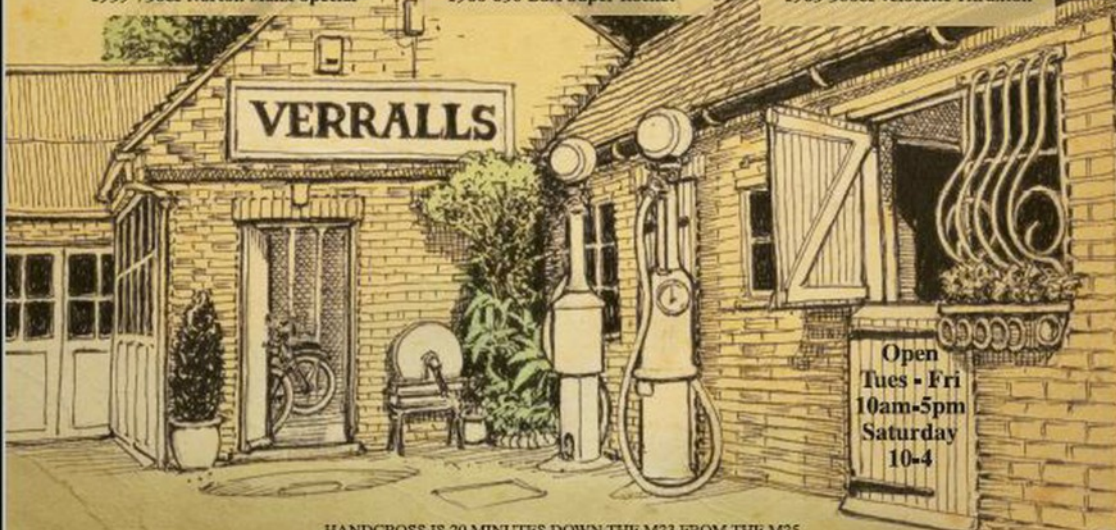
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In the last issue, I mentioned obtaining an old APMC badge that had belonged to a Past President, J.F. Kentish in 1995. This prompted Past President, Ken Brady write these few words.

J. F. (Jim) KENTISH Recollections by Ken Brady

Jim was our 38th President 1995-1997. I remember him telling me that when he was invited to be President, he took office without a Secretary or News Letter Editor (as it was then called). Very soon, he persuaded Jill Mc Beath to be Secretary and Jeff Clew, of Haynes Handbook fame to be N L Editor. Very astute choices indeed. Jill, as we know, did a magnificent job, held the Association together, and organised literally everything. (aided by her late husband Alan).

Jill resigned from office in 2010 when the amount of work she did on our behalf was fully recognised by the Committee who were trying to pick up the threads. The late Howard German was the new President attending his first meeting. Jill is one of our Vice Presidents. When Jeff Clew wanted to stand down, Geoff Davies was persuaded to take it on. The rest is history on that one.

I was first aware of Jim in 1977 (yes 43 years ago) when he used to ride past my place on his black BMW R90/6 (KJJ 1P) equipped with Craven panniers and top box. In 1978, I sold my Triumph Trident and bought a BMW R75/7. Jim saw it in my drive, which prompted him to knock on my front door and invite me to join The International Motorcycle Tour Club now that I had a suitable motorcycle! At the time he was their Membership Secretary and went on to become their President

Subsequently I went on many foreign tours with Jim to most countries in Europe, Norway, Turkey, USA, Canada and Mexico. He was a meticulous planner and all our trips went like clockwork. I know Jim also motorcycled in Peru.

Guatemala, Morocco, Tunisia and other exotic venues. He even organised led a trip to the Czech Republic when he was 80 years old. Jim became my great friend and motorcycling mentor.

Jim had great regard for APMC always displaying our Association badge on all his bikes alongside the TT Riders Association badge. I did go as his guest to several APMC "Tea Parties". Jim was of the opinion that our Association



Jim in 1978 when he was touring the USA with Ken.

was for experienced riders who enjoyed motorcycles and a modern motorcycle was fine. He did not agree that APMC was for old men (and women) with old bikes. In order to promote his idea of modern motorcycles Jim used to put up a Trophy for the rider who had travelled the furthest to Association functions by motorcycle. In most cases, he won it himself and took the Trophy home again.

Needless to say, I became a member of APMC following Jim's death in 2002 at the age of 85. I joined the Committee when Jill quit. I am proud to have served as Association Chairman and President, which I did willingly, out of respect for my now departed dear friend.

Jim never knew his father who, was a Bridge Builder in the Royal Engineers, and was killed in the Great War in 1917 after hostilities had supposedly ended. At the time, Jim was a babe in arms. There is a stained-glass window in St Matthew's Church, Blackmoor, Surrey, commemorating the life of Jim's dad Capt. H E Kentish. The ashes of Jim's mother along with Jim's are interred up against the Church outer wall under his father's commemorative window.

Most people knew Jim was proficient road racer in the late 1940's / 1950's. I will write about that and other interesting aspects of his life in due course.

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THE VETERAN MEMOIRS OF A RACING MECHANIC

With 50 years in the Grand Prix world championship, Giancarlo Cecchini is one of the most experienced mechanics currently active on the Moto GP circuit. He's won eight titles and worked with Jarno Saarinen, Renzo "Paso" Pasolini, Tarquinio Provini, and Kelvin "Kel" Carruthers, among others. When the citizens of Pesaro, Italy, were awoken at 4 am by a tremendous and repetitive roar, they knew that was Giancarlo Cecchini heating up the engine of the 250 prototype in front of the Benelli racing department. And they didn't protest because the company employed the members of several local families, and was something of which the whole country was proud.

In the 1960s, Benelli's racing achievements were considered with a mixture of patriotic and romantic feelings. Cecchini recollects,

"Crowds of people followed us when our rider Renzo Pasolini was fighting against Giacomo Agostini and the [Benelli Motobi] MV in the so-called Moto Temporada, a series of road races that took place in the main cities of the Adriatic coast. Like Rimini, Milano Marittima, Cervia, and Riccione. Over 100,000 spectators attended the events. It was on the mouth of everybody, even grandmas chatted about Ago against Paso."

At that time, the activity of the Benelli team was hectic. "In the mid 1960s, it happened that we went to Monza for the Friday and Saturday practices. Then we packed up everything, returned to Pesaro, checked the engines in the racing department, and reached Monza in time for the start of the Sunday race. Barely sleeping," he adds.

"In that era, every part of the motorcycle was hand-made, and a lot of skills were required in order to create a competitive prototype. Today is different. It is often the computer that tells you what to do. Back then, you had to test every single change and understand if it was an improvement or not. The job was very demanding."

But nobody complained. Not even in the team. Because being part of the Benelli racing department was considered better than working as a sound engineer or a roadie for the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. Cecchini had that clear in his mind since he was a young man and managed to enter Motobi. It was there where he met his first mentor, Primo Zanzani, who was considered the wizard of the four-stroke 250cc single engine, which showed its competitiveness in races all around Italy.

"I was 16 years old and was working in a company that created gearwheels for Motobi. Our workshop was very close to Motobi's factory, so I used to deliver the parts with a pushcart. One day, I simply met the boss and asked him if

they were interested in hiring me because I was fascinated by the people who worked in the racing environment. He said ‘Yes.’ And that’s how it all began. It was 1956.”

Motobi had been established in 1949 due to a series of disagreements within the Benelli family, from which one of the owners had decided to split in order to create his own business. In ’62, the company was absorbed by Benelli, and Cecchini ended up working in the racing department, preparing the 250, 350, and 500cc in line four cylinder bikes. He worked side by side with rider Tarquinio Provini.

Cecchini remembers Provini as “a very meticulous rider. Sometimes, maybe too picky, since he asked us to make tons of adjustments and was never satisfied.” After Provini’s crash at the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy TT in 1966, which forced him to retire, Benelli hired Renzo Pasolini, with whom Cecchini developed a tight and friendly relationship. “He was like a brother to me,” says the mechanic. “He was very sincere and spontaneous. His riding style was really instinctive. I remember that when we raced in the Netherlands TT Circuit at Assen, his only request was to change the position of the engine in the chassis to make it higher because it touched the ground in almost every bend.”

Cecchini also remembers Renzo as a fair person who never complained about the team. “If there was an oil stain on his boot, for example, he simply hid it from the journalists. Nowadays, it seems that some riders can’t wait to have an excuse to justify their bad results and show that the motorcycle doesn’t work well. It’s another world. But now it is well organized, if compared to the old Continental Circus, which was made of improvisation.

One year, we left Pesaro and headed to the Isle of Man for the TT, without stopping for a nap or anything. Due to the fog, when we were in the UK, we got lost. And we had no clue about where the car that was following us, with the owner and another member of the staff, was. They had the pounds and the map, we had nothing. We stopped at a gas station and refilled the van. Not having any valid money, we showed our Italian lire. But the man at the gas station got angry and tried to reach for his gun. We ran away, but later, I fell asleep and crashed against a pole, where I injured my foot. I still feel pain, sometimes.”

Pasolini was fast, but also unlucky and impetuous. He often crashed, and in 1969, after he injured his shoulder in Hockenheim, Germany, the team temporarily replaced him with Australian rider Kel Carruthers, who ended up winning the 250 championship. “That success was a big thing for us, but I particularly remember the feeling of winning the TT. Being first at the Isle of Man was maybe more special than winning the championship. When we came

home, with the trophy in our hands, the Benelli owners treated us like heroes. And so did Pesaro's citizens." Cecchini also had strong feelings at the end of 1972 when Finnish rider Jarno Saarinen, who had won the 250 championship that year with a private Yamaha, agreed to a one-off race with a factory Benelli. "We tested in Modena, Italy, only once, and Jarno just asked me to adjust the handlebars," Cecchini remembers. In Villa Fastiggi, a road race in Pesaro, Saarinen defeated Giacomo Agostini and his Benelli Motobi MV in both the 350 and 500 classes. "He was very kind and polite, very focused on what he was doing, a real pro," says the mechanic.

One year later, Cecchini faced a big change. He switched from Benelli to Morbidelli, leaving a big team that developed four-stroke engines to join a small and "family-style" group lead by the owner of a woodworking machinery factory. For Morbidelli, motorcycle racing was no more than a hobby. The Morbidelli team built and developed two-stroke engines under the direction of German engineer Jorg Moeller and won two world championships in the 125 class in 1975 and '76, with Italian riders Paolo Pileri and Pier Paolo Bianchi. "Moeller, after the second title, decided to leave us and join Minarelli," says Cecchini. "The word in the paddock was that without him, we were not even able to start the engines. Well, in 1977, we won two world titles in the 125 and 250 classes, with Bianchi and Mario Lega."

At the end of the year, Cecchini left the team and accepted an offer from Benelli Armi in Pesaro, called the MBA factory (Morbidelli-Benelli-Armi). He worked there for three years, winning another two titles in the 125 class before taking on a new adventure with Sanvenero, a project led by another Italian businessman who loved motorcycle racing, but didn't get close to Morbidelli's results.

The following job was at Cagiva, before Cecchini's decision to establish his own team, participating in the minor classes of the world championship. The next title arrived in 2004 when a young Andrea Dovizioso, currently a factory rider in the Moto GP for Ducati, put himself in good light before moving to higher categories. The creation of the Moto3 class in place of the 125, which now sees Cecchini working with his son in partnership with Honda, brought him back to four-stroke engines. But with a lot of changes. Cecchini now works on 250cc single engines capable of more than 50 hp, featuring electronics and placed in aluminium delta-box frames. Something that was not even imaginable in the mid-1960s. And now, due to exhaust restrictions, he no longer disturbs anybody's sleep. Not even at 4 am.

Thanks to Jim Garrett

***If you have still got to
keep your distance, then
somewhere like this, is ideal.***

Enjoy yourself.

