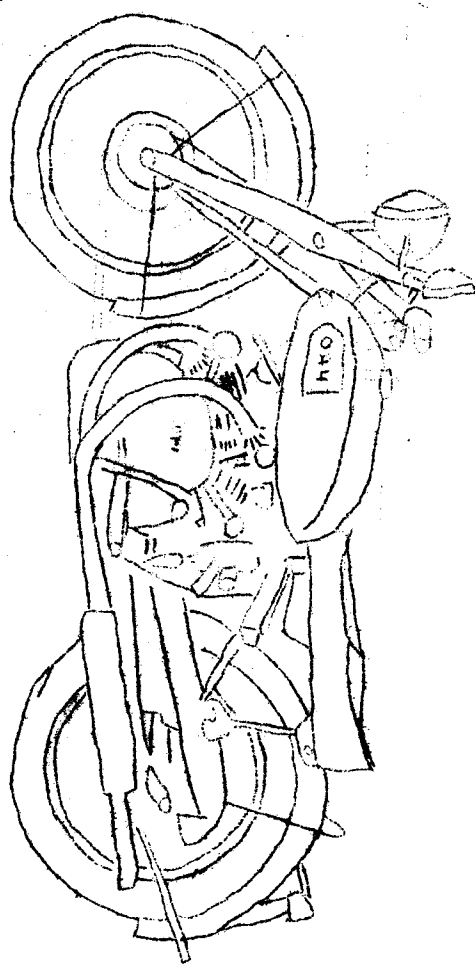
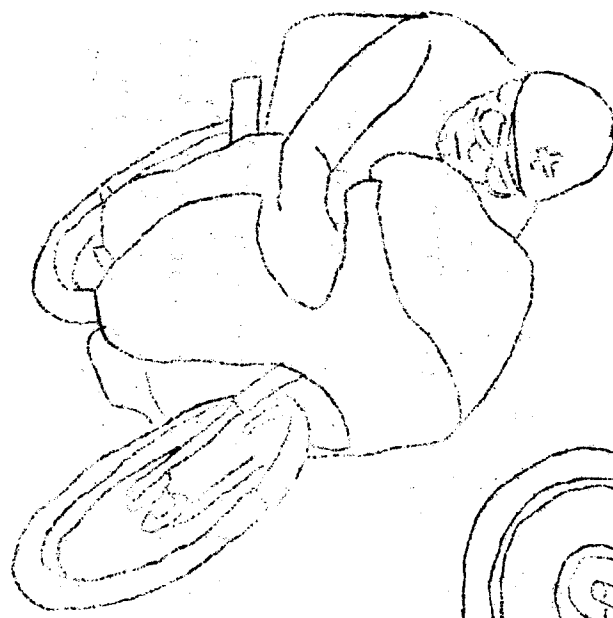
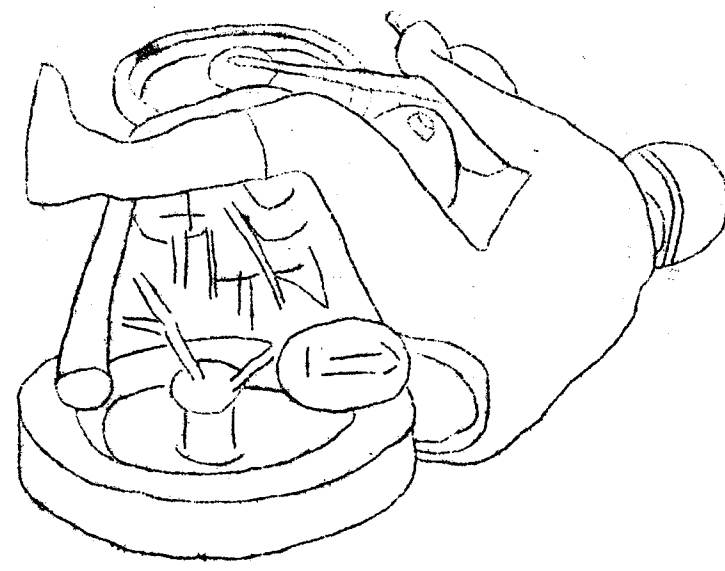
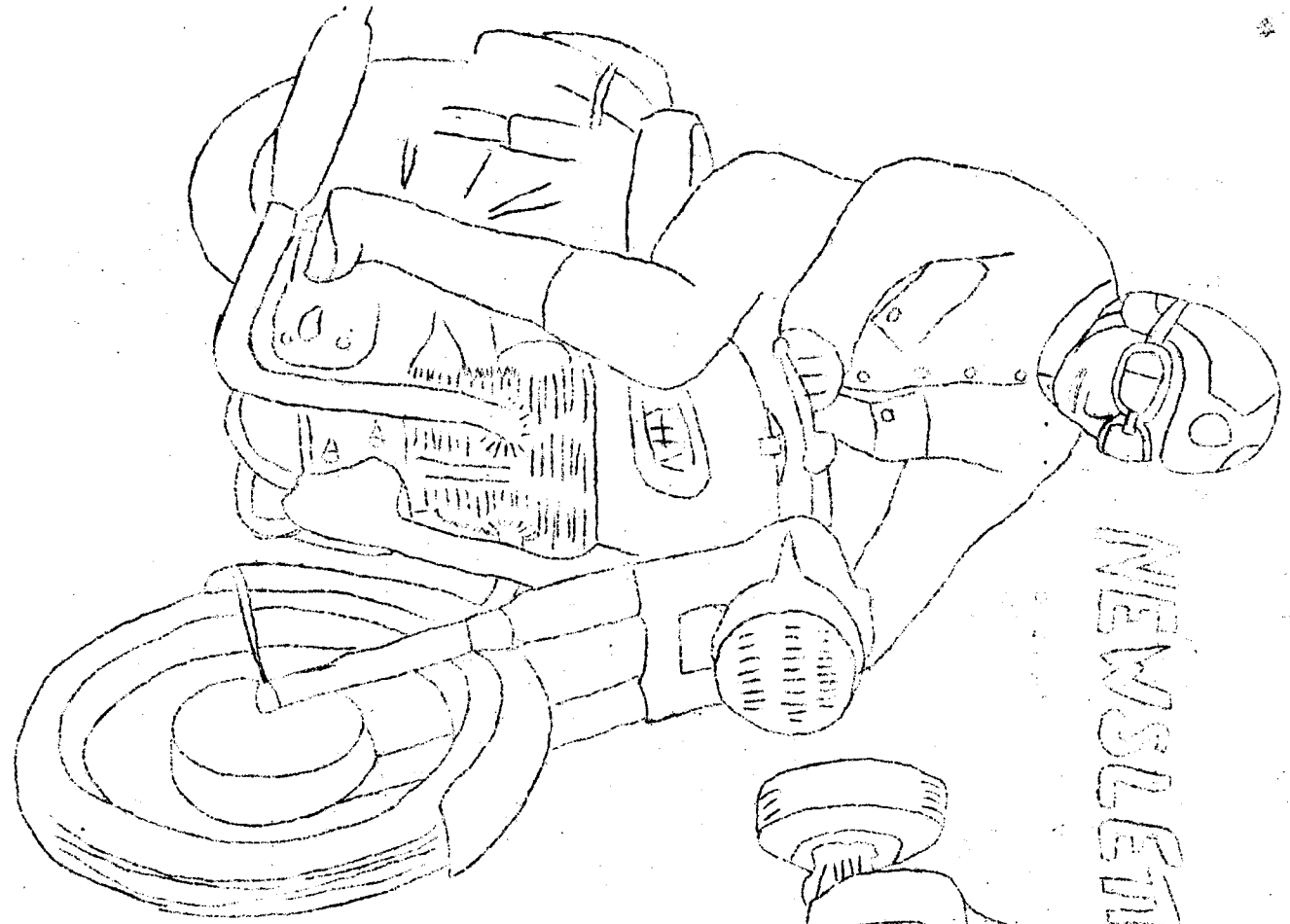
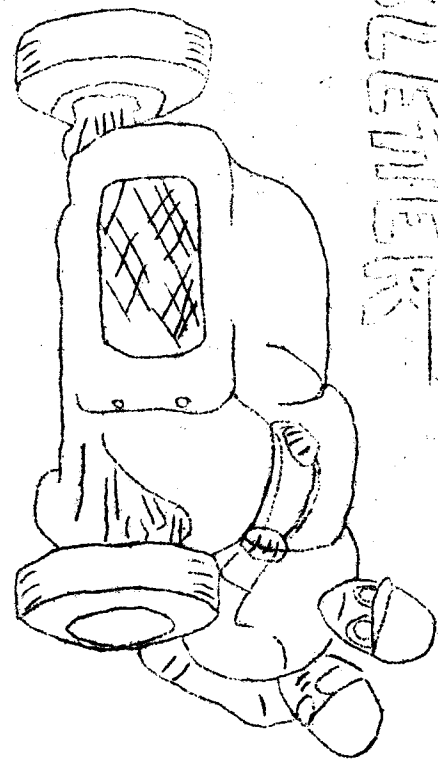
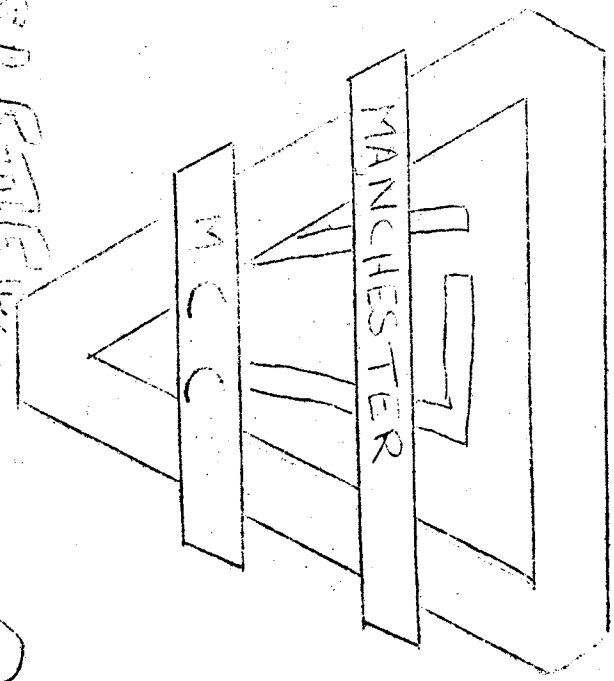


THE



NEWSLETTER



MAY 67

May, 1967.

The Manchester "17" Motorcycle
Club Newsletter

Apologies for a rather late and thin newsletter, but things have been a bit hectic lately. I should be back to normal by the next issue, so you can stop cheering.

TRIAL

The Club held its annual Spring Trial for the John Simister Memorial Trophy on Sunday 12th March. We had a good entry of 53 riders who had to ride a 2 lap course of 9 miles including 19 sections per lap, starting from Wicken Falls Farm, Near Duxton.

As the results show it was a benefit for Manchester "17" riders they collected 7 of the 9 awards.

We were blessed with fine weather but unfortunately this didn't encourage many of our members to come and observe, we could only find 9 would be spectators to help out. Nevertheless everybody seemed to enjoy a good day's sport including the 4 club members who had a very late night out at the Cheshire Centre Dinner the night before (John Percy's excuse for not winning).

A special mention must be made on young Gordon Snowball's performance in gaining a Novice Award. The results were as follows:-

Winner	D. Thorpe	Triumph	M/c '17'	4	marks	lost
Runner-up	D. Rowland	B.S.A.	"	7	"	"
1st Class awards	N.S. Syre	Bultaco	"	12	"	"
	H. Lloyd	"	"	16	"	"
	D.L. Davies	"	Wrexham	26	"	"
	I. Sheenan	Bultaco	S.L.M.C.	27	"	"
	J.H. Roberts	Ryffin	M/c '17'	31	"	"
Best Novice	R. Johnson	Greeves	"	109	"	"
1st Class Novice	G. Snowball	D.C.T.	"	121	"	"

* * *

Several weeks ago, Christine and I rode in a "Rocket Trial" organised by the Vincent Owners Club. After dark, one Saturday, about 14 "Vinnies", one Douglas and my Enfield were escorted to the top of a hill and told to look in a certain direction. Soon a rocket went up about 5 miles away. The idea was for the riders to find the bloke who was firing them. A rocket was fired every 10 minutes and we had 1½ hours to find him. The first one there, was of course the winner. This was not as easy as you might imagine, we passed the spot about 4 times before we found him. Everyone enjoyed themselves, and I think the idea could well be used by our club, if enough people are interested.

" " "

Incidentally, I have since been barred from V.O.C. events on my Enfield, after putting up fastest time in a hill climb as part of a road trial.

" " "

THE BIKES IN MY LIFE

(By Wilf Earlam)

Part Three

Nobody used to come to the Clubroom in a car as no one had one, and everyone used 'the bike' for all purposes.

We arrived at Cinemas, Cafes, and God knows where in Barbour Suits and thought nothing of it. Of course from 1947 onwards when I purchased my first 350 Trials A.J.S. from Eric Bowers, one of our club member dealers, I joined the hordes of '17' boys and girls who rode in Trials!

Incidentally Eric Bowers could produce a new trials bike in about a fortnight in Chapel-en-le-Frith when any other dealer quoted at least 6-8 months delivery, if you were lucky.

We used to hold an Annual challenge trial between the '17' and Manchester Eagle and take it in turns to organise the event and it was common to have 80 odd competitors from the two clubs, and I remember in one Cheshire Centre trial we turned out 71 riders from the '17' and carried off most of the awards.

By this time I was learning what motor cycling really was riding to work every day, out most evenings - and even if you had double pneumonia and a bad dose of galloping dry rot you got the bike out on Club night.

Saturday afternoon was preparation for Sunday's Trial, or Scramble or whatever was going and away we all went, sometimes as many as 30 or 40 haring off to North Wales, ride in the trial fill a cafe with dirty, muddy riders, empty it of food and then hare off home again - with nothing better than a cycle lamp (Bobby dodger) for lights.

Back to work on Monday (having washed the bike in the stream which was part of the last section of the trial) and up to the Scramble the following Sunday. Off same silencers, number plates etc. Scramble numbers fitted, and battle commenced all on ordinary trials tyres which were nothing like they are now either. Scrape enough mud off bike to fit silencer etc. and ride home again, where bike and self were hosed down ready for work next morning.

Runs to various race meetings, particularly Scarborough saw half the club go, and main road trials used to take us about 250 miles on a Sunday, and most of the competitors were the trials and scramble boys.

Mention of Tom Dugdale brings memories of all the various bikes he used to build and one or two very potent Velos for sand racing etc. were built and then Tom used to get some member or another to ride them.

One member - Miss Joan Slack was entered to ride these Velos at a sand race meeting - I think it was run by either Middlesborough or Newcastle M.C.C. and they wouldn't accept an entry from a girl. Joan - being Joan - wrote back and asked if they were scared of a girl competing against all those big strong men.

They accepted her for a laugh and wished they hadn't - she cleaned up the entire meeting! Joan Slack is now Mrs. Leach wife of her equally famous husband Tom, who as most of you know, won the Northern Experts Trial amongst his long list of successes.

I followed this 350 Comp A.J.S. with five others, all from the same source and they were all completely reliable and have given me scores of hours of fun and a lot of valuable experience not to mention a considerable mileage.

One of these A.J.'s was a 500 c.c. incidentally and was one of the first in this area and a young lad who then worked for Eric Bowers asked if he could have a short ride down the road on it before I took it home.

A very quiet unassuming lad this, and after his little ride said "I'm going to start racing on one of Eric's bikes next year" he did too, and very quickly earned a name for himself - none other than our friend and club member John Hartle.

As you now all know John is making a return to racing and Mike Hailwood has been heard to say that he'd sooner have John riding with him than against him!

After competing in various Hill Climbs at Pott Shrigley, and several highly amusing Scrambles at the same venue where Bill Parkes and myself used to have a private 'dice' on our own, regardless of the other bods in the race - Bill on a very potent little Dot of about 1922 vintage!!

Trials were my main love and although I used to finish well down the list I thoroughly enjoyed myself and in over 300 trials I only failed to finish in one - and it was on a borrowed bike, but more of that later.

The new trials 500 Ariel came out and I got one - a big heavy beastie but what a motor. I remember falling off on a severe decent in a Crewe trial once - I was out of the "Section" incidentally and my artificial hand snapped off so that I fell in a heap and the bike, with left hand still holding on the bar fell at the feet of a lady observer who let out a fearful yell and fainted!

On a Winsford trial I wore a crash hat for about one lap and sweat ran into my eyes like a perishing waterfall so I left it at the start and carried on in my usual hatless manner.

I toppled over on one hill, bounced down the hill and banged my head on a sunken drain pipe.

John Hartle and Denis Rourke picked me up and must have thought I'd 'had it' for my face was covered in blood. It was only a tiny cut and a big lump when cleaned up a bit and away we went to lose some more marks - this was the only time I hurt myself in over 15 years of competitions and it was something and nothing.

Two years later the latest 500 HJ Ariel springer was at the Show and I got the ninth one made and it was a fabulous machine but unfortunately to be the last trials bike owned by me.

Owing to an increase in the family it had been necessary in 1953 to have a sidecar and on the good advice of Eric Bowers and his ingenious foreman Frank Lomas, a Watsonian 'Avon' was grafted on to my 1953 350 A.J.S. and was made really quickly detachable.

"Gawd" - I wish you'd have seen my first ride on the outfit, I remember making it the subject of a newsletter article which appeared to amuse members. This was nothing to the amusement of Mr. Bowers and his staff who witnessed my antics - however, I eventually got it home 20 miles and an hour and a half later.

The odd thing about it I never had the slightest trouble after that first ride and toured Scotland, Devon and Cornwall etc. This sidecar was used on both my Ariels as well and handles very well indeed and I really enjoyed riding it.

Eventually, a further increase in the family caused the sidecar to be sold and a car replaced it, although this had to stay at

home on Sundays because my wife couldn't drive then.

We were now organised and Nev Hankinson's landrover and trailer took his, Johnny Redwood's and my bike to lots of trials and some hilarious rides we had - incidentally Nev has still got my 1953 AJ!

Now the expense was a bit much and the Ariel was exchanged for a Leader for trips to work etc. and this grand little bike gave me a further two years of trouble free riding - on roads.

I think John Hartle must have taken pity on me for he lent me his C.15 B.S.A. whilst he was racing, but because of various other commitments including the R.A.C./A.C.U. Training Scheme every Sunday for half the year, I only ever rode it twice!

The first time was O.K. except that I couldn't ride it as it should be ridden, and the second one was queer to say the least.

Nev Johnny and myself had made one of our many excursions into Wales and this particular trial was a two lap affair. The first lap was fine and we all arrived back at the Landrover for a quick brew and a "butty" and the Beeza wouldn't start. What's more, it defied all our combined efforts to make it start and Nev and John rushed off to complete the second lap whilst I had further attempts to start the Beeza. That was the one and only trial I failed to finish in and it turned out to be my last one as well.

The C.15 wasn't touched until the following Saturday when it was given a good clean before returning it to its owner and I just gave it an idle kick - and it started!

As far as I know it never missed a beat after that and left three completely baffled bods wondering what the trouble had been.

Then came the 250 Sports Honda, and this was by far the finest road machine I've ever owned - it gave not the slightest trouble in 20,000 miles and not a whisper of an oil leak from anywhere. I actually had that bike for over a year before I put any air in the tyres - I think the Japanese air must have been frightened to come out in this country!

Seriously though, it handled better than any bike I had owned before, was better braked, and the self-starter brought an instant response even on the coldest morning. During the time I had it, the brakes were adjusted about three times and the clutch cable once, and a new rear tyre was fitted at 14,000 - and the wheel really is quickly detachable. The only thing that gave me trouble was the rev counter - after about 18 months the needle broke off. The thing would rev to 10,500 in the indirect gears (9,000 was supposed to be the maximum) it did about 95 to the gallon and I would estimate about a maximum speed of around 95 although I have had over 100 on the speedo a time or two.

I suppose I have been lucky really for in 28 years, I have owned 5 Triumphs, 7 A.J.S.'s 3 Ariels a B.S.A., a Velo, and a Honda, and have never been involved in an accident (apart from falling off now and again) and never been let down on the road with anything that couldn't be repaired on the spot.

I have done 350,000 odd miles on two wheels on my own bikes and ridden loads of bikes belonging to other lads, met the nicest crowd of people one could ever hope to meet amongst the motor cycling fraternity, and am now waiting for a win on the pools so I can buy another Trials iron.

You cannot possibly recall all your experiences over 28 years or you'd fill a book, but if this article or series of articles interests you, then I am happy.

I promised Dave I would do this for him, but I'm afraid he's had to wait quite a while, and I can only hope one or two of you will pick up a pen and write something for the Newsletter, you will be surprised how much you can think of once you start.

WILF EARLAM

§ § § §

The club has a trial on Sunday the 28th May. The Start is at Booth Farm at 12 o'clock and is closed to club. Johnny Roberts needs at least a dozen volunteers to act as observers, so please try and help out.

§ § § §

Unfortunately the plans for a grass track mentioned in the last issue, have fallen through, and this is due to a technicality in the Lancashire and Cheshire Car Club's lease for the track in question.

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On Tuesday, June 6th, at the Moss Vale Hotel, Urmston, there is a Social Evening being organised by the Vintage Motor Cycle Club. The evening starts at 8 p.m. and there will be a hot pot supper for which a charge of 5/- is being made, payable at the door. All club members are invited and if you wish to go, please give your name to Christine as soon as possible.

§ § § §

It says in the rules that we should print the names of any new members in the newsletter, so here they are:-

J.D. Warburton
A.D. Baskeyfield
A. Hankinson

§ § § §

Don't forget the more articles we get for the newsletter, the more interesting it will be for club members, and the quicker we can produce one. We cannot print a newsletter without having anything to put in it, so come on lads and lassies get your pens and pencils out and get writing.

Also keep your eyes out for a new Scramble Course. People keep moaning and asking when we are getting a new one, but I notice that they never suggest a place, because they have not bothered to look. Everyone seems to leave it to the committee, but we are not geniuses, and cannot produce one just like that!

The Editor (Moses)