

MANCHESTER '17' MOTOR CYCLE CLUB - MAY 1969 NEWSLETTER

No time, space or money for waffling introductions this month, just read on

Keith and Hilary are the proud owners of Manchester '17' blankets, thank you very much. Keith says he would like to go to Jersey some time - to see what it's like!

Did you see that paragraph in the motor-cycle press? A road trial with 20 entries over 210 miles will now cost £20 for A.C.U. authorization etc. This is indeed a tough squeeze on small clubs.

After a very wet Saturday, April 26th, Sunday dawned cloudy but dry, Keith's club run to Ainsdale sand races was on! Pity Keith didn't make it! After the Training Scheme we parted for quick lunches or to collect bikes and passengers to meet at the M62 about 12.30 p.m. At 12.50 p.m. Paul, Jerry and Trevor were still missing. We later learned that Trevor had stripped his magneto drive sprocket just round the corner in Sale.

We set off up the motorway and the East Lancs. road, stopping to rebuild wilf's Mini and pick up Paul's goggles. Alan was doing an 'AA' man at the Oates breakdown and Moses nearly had us all off doing the honours for Paul. Jerry joined us on route.

At Ainsdale we met up with Margaret and Christine and that's the last we saw of Len. Sand-racing was interesting but not too inspiring. For the record, Moses, Paul, Jerry, Dave L., Len, Alan and myself were on bikes; wilf, Malcolm, Chris. and Margaret in the cars.

Hot news, and not so good either, from Jerry. One of the large insurance groups are considering withdrawing from motor-cycle insurance altogether, starting by not underwriting any more two-wheel cover. This has apparently been brought about by the threat of compulsory passenger insurance.

I have a feeling something big and nasty is definitely brewing up for motor-cyclists. Moses has just received his insurance renewal notice which has new clauses for further restrictions on his policy. His main worry is one which clearly states that no cover exists if he rides in rallies or road trials as well as the normal - "reliability trials." What's more, despite a further 10% 'no claims,' his premium has gone up quite a bit. I think we are in for a tough fight during the next twelve months - not to be forced off the roads by more costs and restrictions, which seems to be becoming an "open" government policy.

Frank's slide show is to be postponed until after the T.T. This is owing to lack of contributions, and a convenient date for the show (HINT)

On Saturday April 19th, Jerry, Paul S, Moses, Alan and myself went over to the Pennine Rally site near Keighley. Malcolm Saunders and Jim Phillips were going for the weekend and tell their tale elsewhere, but we returned that afternoon to go to the speedway. I had a bad day. My ailing main bearings took a hammering and I suffered some sort of internal shake-up as a result of a pot-hole near Denshaw. Just missing a cat at Mossley gave me a practice "emergency stop" for the motor-cyclist's worst fear which happened later at Sowerby Bridge - an A35 pulled out in front of me from a left-hand side street. We all left some rear tyre on the road, and I was livid as I chased the culprit to lecture him, pointing out that besides my trajectory down the High Street his B.M.C. tin door would not have helped him much if I hadn't been able to stop!

WANTED

Grass-bike (No two strokes) and leathers for 6 ft. rider.
--Alan Kempster, 24, Cadnan Drive, Peel Hall, Manchester 22.
or Club nights.

The following rally and show reports by Malcolm Saunders and Alan Kempster will, I Hope, make interesting reading without duplicating the motor-cycle press articles.

IDES OF MARCH RALLY - 15-16th MARCH

Leaving Wythenshawe on Saturday afternoon, myself with Mike Woodward as pillion, and a friend on his Starfire set off for Monyash, Derbyshire. After passing through Macclesfield and going up to the Cat and Fiddle, the weather changed to low cloud (what I still say was fog) snow, and a bitter cold wind which didn't help things any. I've never seen the weather change so quickly. It was sunny in Macclesfield until we started to go upwards. We were restricted to 30 m.p.h. as it was dangerous in the fog. We stopped at a pub in Buxton for a pint and a warm, where we met with three other motor cyclists. We later left the pub, all travelling together. We arrived at the site at 8 p.m. and I was the first to go through the gate where there was at least 12" of mud which you had to cross. Of course it was pitch black and foggy, I was freezing cold and couldn't even see it, so I got about four yards and the bike went down in it, poor Mike fell off and ended up covered in mud. The others behind me had realised what the field was like so took more care, they went on down the site and left me to pick up my bike. After pitching the tent where best we could we went to the local pub where songs galore were coming out and pint pots were like gold. Everyone was sitting on the floor singing his head off. After leaving the pub we went to the tent to get some shut eye, which was difficult in the bitter cold. Throughout the night it rained and then froze over. By morning conditions were terrible. I actually saw one lad melting the ice off the carburettor on his Bonneville with his primus stove.

Just before dinner on Sunday we broke camp and when we took the poles out of the tent it stood up by itself-frozen solid. Everybody had trouble starting his bike as they were iced over. When I got home I took the tent off the bike, and by now it had been on the bike 5 hours exactly but it was still completely solid. I vowed never again to go on a Rally in such treacherous weather; not that I knew what I was heading for beyond Buxton, which I didn't even know was on the moors! I couldn't have picked worse weather for my first Rally and my first time ever to go camping. All in good fun I suppose.....

MALCOLM S.

T H E S H O W

With no outstanding memories of the Belle Vue show last April, I reluctantly agreed to go to the Brighton show with Jim Phillips and Malcolm Saunders over the Easter weekend. After agreeing, I looked for every excuse not to go, but in the end the good weather and the fact that Veloce would have a stand there gave me the touring bug. With the starting time set at 5 a.m. on Sunday, we sorted out our camping gear, thinking it would be necessary to spend two days on the trip, the main reason being the likelihood of a breakdown if we were to try and do it in a day.

On Sunday morning I set off for Malc's arriving 15 minutes late and hoping that he had been waiting patiently.

Just as my arm was about to fall off with knocking on the door a bleary eyed Malc. let me in with yawns of "what time is it?" and "the alarm couldn't have gone off." After half an hour we managed to get going in the direction of Macclesfield, expecting Jim to be out on his Bantam looking for us. But at 6 o'clock when we arrived at his house, I remembered from past experience that when one owns a bike made by the B.S.A. - Triumph Group, (Jim has two) you don't have much time for maintaining your alarm clock! Knocking rather louder this time I found that Jim wakes up about twice as fast as Malc.

We eventually started moving down the A34 towards Brighton with Jim on my pillion. Making good time, we decided to try and get back the same day. A stop just the other side of Stratford-upon-Avon gave us a chance to stretch our legs and as we were discussing each others' aches and pains, two 500 Velos shot past, two up, and going in our direction.

THE SHOW - continued

They must have been going to Brighton if up at that time of day, and we set off after them. We caught up and rode with them for about ten miles but we could not stay with them on the hills and we didn't see them again until Brighton.

Next we were passed by two lads from Hazel Grove on 175 and 305 Hondas. We saw them again several times including when they were stopped at the roadside just south of Guildford. They waved frantically but we just waved back and sped on, never thinking that a Honda could have broken down.

Brighton was soon in sight, as were also thousands of bikes coming and going. Unfortunately a lot of the bikes had big white Avon fairings and were waiting down side streets - which I found out almost to my cost.

With great difficulty we found somewhere to park our bikes and headed for the nearest nosh shop, immediately afterwards making for the Hotel Metropole.

At last we were at the show, and the first stand we met was that of B.S.A., highlighted by the new Rocket 3. There was one on a turntable and one made available for sitting on, but it was not noticeable that B.S.A. were interested in publicizing their new Daytona records. Sitting on the new 3, it seemed to be very wide at the tank and seat but yet very comfortable. A notable point was that the headlamp switch was very easy to use, being a flick-switch on the nearside headlamp bracket. Finish, in red, was very good and at just over £600 I do not think it is overpriced, my only quibble being that it is surely about time bikes were offered in a wider range of colours. Other B.S.A.'s of interest included John Banks' 500 c.c. scrambler and one of the Army 350's. The other B.S.A.'s were not attracting very much attention however, the 'new' Bantam looking just the same.

While on the B.S.A. stand Malc. had got himself lost, and we found him trying to get near to the C.B.750 on the Honda stand. He did not have much success and we did not have the time to waste. There was another 750 up in the air which could be easily viewed and also heard through the surrounding telephones. Most people listening did not believe that they were hearing the 750, it was much too loud; more like a 250 works' four coming out of Governor's Bridge. In my opinion, the colours (a choice of a dingy metallic yellow or green) and the price at £650 was enough to put me right off them. It seems that the disc brake is just a gimmick, as on the M.V.4 roadster, and they have given the impression that it is a touring bike just to answer any queries about its' handling at high speed I suppose. Although the engine and quality are good and on looks alone the bike may well be worth £650 compared with the B.S.A. and Triumph threes, I have a feeling it will be a flop if it can not be proved on the race track, especially in the Production T.T.

Other interesting Hondas were the new CB.450, with the small tank, at £399 19s. Od. and the race-kitted 350 twin - as yet not for sale.

Triumphs were next, boasting of their production race successes, with two Tridents, one to try for size and another revolving on a turntable. The Trident, unlike the Rocket 3 has a usual width tank and feels more normal. The finish, as with the other multi's, was very good - this one in Aquamarine (green). The Trident, and some of the twins, were fitted with a very attractive new style carrier by Moto-plas. The other new Triumph on show was one of the Royal Signals' 500 c.c. display machines. All the rest of the range have detail improvements mainly to suit the American market and all the twins are supposedly more oil-tight.

Yamaha's stand was not attracting many people, so we gave it a miss. We wandered in on Suzuki next, giving a passing glance at the Cobra-finished in a very similar yellow to the CB.750.

We inspected a Gaunt Suzuki 'trials' but it still had steel bars, and an immaculate Crooks Super-six with fairing in works' colours - very nice. As on Honda's and Yamaha's stands, there were possibly new bikes there which did not interest us, although we noted the absence of the Super-Six twin in standard trim.

Greeves were next, or what was left of them. At Manchester, if I remember rightly, they had 7 or 8 different models. Here they had 7 or 8 Griffons, (250 and 380's), only one or two ports distinguishing the two types.

THE SHOW - continued.

A.J.S. did not have such an extravagant display with only one Y.4 and one 37.A.T trials, but made up for this in the number of girls! The bikes were displayed on top of glass cases and were difficult to touch, never mind sit on. By looks, both are well turned out, though I don't think the trialer will do anything that 37.A Cotton or Sprite with Cerianis couldn't do better.

Norton Villiers had 750's to suit all tastes (if you've got four to five hundred pounds). The Commando definitely needs a new engine, or the present one needs a face-lift to bring it up to date with the rest of the bike. The finish of the barrel fins on the Nortons was very rough. Otherwise the bikes were well made, especially the new Interpol Commando for police work. Also there was the Mercury, new Commando Fastback and new Commando S.

Duckhams had plenty on display, including a 7.R. engine and one of Helmut Fath's fours. Puchs had the Dalesman 125 T. trials and 125 MX scrambler on display. Both were very posh, with their leather-bound seats and alloy-tanks, but still no alloy 'bars. With continued success the scrambler will be very popular in America, pity it isn't an all-British bike. Vintage Puchs were also on show, characteristic with their famous split-single two-stroke engines.

Upstairs, a glance at Screen and Plastics revealed nothing new for big bike fans, so we gave them a miss. This had to be the case with many stands not mentioned, for we only had two hours to spare if we were to get home the same day.

At the A.A. stand we met the two lads from Hazel Grove. They were thinking about joining there and then as the throttle cable had snapped on the 305!

While Malc. and Jim bought their badges, (Malc. bought two - typical of rockers?), I had a look at Motorcycle Mechanics' stand. Although maybe not the best in motorcycle journalism, their stands at the shows are certainly the most interesting by the press. This year they had a new Hagon grass-tracker and their '£100' Triton 'Coloured Sound', which although a little tatty now, was a good machine suitable for racing and must have given a lot of enthusiasm to would-be road-racers.

Well worth a visit, CZ. had the new 250 and 360 Moto-Cross machines with two roadsters also under this badge. Same make, but with the Jawa badge, were six roadsters with no notable changes. The Jawa badge is now on the E.S.O. speedway bike which has oil in the frame and a different crankpin, but a grass-bike does not seem to be on offer.

Next came the highlight of the show, for me anyway; the Velocette stand. Alas - only 500's in the range now, (if you forget the LE). Although now with coil ignition and still 6 Volt, they even impressed Jim and Malc. with their undoubtably more superior finish than any other make on show.

Houldsworthy had the Campagnolo disc-brakes on show, but were not able to boast any racing successes. Ken Craven still shows a wide range of equipment despite the decline in touring.

On the next floor we were greeted by another Triumph 3, this time MCN's "Find the Ball" Prize. Churchgate were doing well with a "fully polychromatically-fibre-glassed" CB250. Then Maico had their 125 I.S.D.T, 125 Road-racer, 250 scooter and 360 Moto-cross all of which were on loan to the importers, (must be selling well). Ian Kennedy showed an immac. customized Norton and a beautiful Vinton (or is it Norvin, Moses?) and he seemed to have goodies for everything else as well.

If you thought we were mad for going all the way there, we noticed quite a number of Belgian, German and French riders, much to our surprise.

We left at 4 p.m. and when we reached the bikes I found that at last my oil tank box mounting had broken off after being cracked for 3 months.

We set off to get to Stratford before dark, and although we lost our way (and Malc.) a few times, we arrived by 7.30 p.m. Over a pint, Malc. made his excuses for his '67 Tiger 90 not being as fast as a two-up '62 Viper. Such rubbish as "singles are always faster than twins" he said, (one up to Moses I suppose).

THE SHOW (continued)

After an hour we were off again but we managed to lose the A34 in Walsall and ended up in Wolverhampton. Pressing on home we had a lot of trouble with very strong headwinds which marred the perfect motorcycling weather we had had all day. We all got home around 11.30 and were very glad we did not have to use the tent. After dropping Jim off I found that upon arriving home my mileage was 499⁴/₁₀, but I just couldn't keep my eyes open to run round the block and make it 500. (P.S. Toots - I didn't run out of petrol all day.)

ALAN KEMPSTER.

BRIGHTON DAY RUNABOUT 6TH APRIL.

On Sunday morning the alarm failed to ring at 4.30 a.m. At 5.15 a.m. I was awakened by a continuous knocking at the front door. Ramming a round of toast and half a cup of tea down the hatch, myself and the Velo-Maniac left at 5.45 a.m. to meet the Bantam-Demon Jim, only having to awake him as well; going worse along the line he only had a glass of milk before leaving. Incidentally, the Velo-Maniac (Alan Kempster) awoke his mother to make him a hot breakfast.

Leaving Macclesfield at about 6.45 a.m. we passed through Birmingham that early that we could have knocked everybody up. Beyond Birmingham, instead of the lights being green for go, they were white crosses. As I have never seen them before I was rather confused at first. Passing through Walsall we started playing ring-a-ring-a-roses around the roundabouts not knowing which sign to take, on the way we stopped twice for a 2 minute leg stretch and once for petrol. Arriving on the road into Brighton Alan was lucky not to be stopped by a speed-cop who tailed him. Alan's lookout - Jim - was no doubt asleep on the pillion!

To my disappointment, no Kawasakis of any description were at the show. Most disappointing, not seeing their latest model - the 3 cylinder 500 c.c. - claimed to be the fastest and most powerful road machine in the world according to the Motorcycle papers. I think they must have forgotten about the Münch Mammoth regarding power alone. By the way, I have actually seen a B.S.A. 3 in the display window at Walten & Combes in Altrincham - the first one I've seen outside Brighton.

The trip there took 6 hours approximately, at a distance of 247 miles exactly one way. Arriving at 12.45 p.m. we departed at approximately 4 p.m. only stopping at Stratford upon Avon after driving for 141 miles. At Stratford we went into a pub at 7.50 p.m. for a pint and a 'nosh up'. Many faces turned our way as I attacked my 'butties' as though I hadn't eaten for a week.

From Stratford to Ringway I had a further 106 miles to do and it took us approximately 3 hours to do it. The wind had built up to gale force and as I was solo I was doing an Irish jig at times in the middle of the road.

Alan and I parted ways at Alderley, and he headed for Macclesfield to take Jim home. At 11.45 p.m. I arrived home after a very tiring but interesting day, although less wind and the presence of the Kawasakis would have made it perfect.

MALCOLM SAUNDERS.

THE PENNINE RALLY 16TH - 20TH APRIL

This was my second Rally.

Upon leaving Wythenshawe Jim and myself set off for the Pennine Rally (Triumph against B.S.A.) Going through Manchester, Oldham, with the Triumph in the lead the going was O.K., but blow me I let Jim on his Bantam take the lead just before Huddersfield and he took the Huddersfield by-pass which wasn't signed for Bradford, so off we went in the direction of Halifax hoping to see a sign of some description that we might recognise. This I was the first to notice, a sign for Brighouse was my claim. Blasting my air horns to their full extent I caught Jim's attention and we turned back and took the sign. Upon doing this the journey continued without any more blunders from the B.S.A. merchant, apart from Jim trying to fill up the Bantam with B.P. Auto Diesel fuel!

THE PENNINE RALLY - continued.

In Keighley we met up with a few friends from the '17' who had been to the Rally site but I don't think they could afford 10/- to get in - after getting so far the petrol must have taken its toll! Talking about intelligence, there were five of the colleagues in question, on FIVE BIKES, economy doesn't enter this and they didn't even offer to tow Wilf Oate's bike to the scene. What a shame, never mind, it might have vapourised at the sight of daylight! Leaving Keighley going our own way we arrived at the site and paid our ten bobs then pitched the tent. We were immediately jumped upon by someone who had come by himself but had no tent. (Mike Woodward in question) Near the site was a transport cafe so sandwiches were done away with and meals taken care of. At night we dived into the pub where other "grease" were chanting out dubious songs in the presence of ladies. This didn't last for long, as they were refused beer, so they left shouting a few things on their way out. At the pub on the other side of the camp the police were called in. Just a few spoiling it for so many. At approximately 10.30 p.m. Saturday night the bonfire was lit and a couple of idiots climbed up the outside of it, if it had fallen in they would have made wonderful human 'Guy Fawkes'. A few got rather drunk, whether to make themselves sleep better or not I don't know. At about 11.45 p.m. yawns all round meant bed for some, myself included.

At 8.30 a.m. we rose and went to the transport cafe for breakfast. On the way back to the camp Mike Woodward was doing 85 m.p.h. showing off as a friend was alongside him, but Mike was rather sick when this friend, whom he had got to know at the camp, opened it up a touch more and left Mike in the dust. The bike was a 500 c.c. Cobra. The lad had come from near Birmingham, a total of 95 miles which took 4 gallons of petrol. You can tell who owns one of these Cobras as you'll always see them at a petrol station. We later left the camp and headed for home after watching a few rally events.

We came home and called at the Skyways for a drink. After a chat in there we gave the Cobra owner his directions home then went our own way.

Next Rally - The Robin Hood Rally - end of May.

MALCOLM AND JIM

Dear Con-Rod,

In reply to your paragraph in Tappet Clatter about my proposed 4 cylinder bike, I would like to clear up a few things. Firstly the engine is an A35 and not a Ford. Secondly regarding your kind offer of roller skates for frame sag, these will not be required as a firm of furniture castor makers have offered their support. If this fails I can always write to B.M.C. for full works "support" (that should solve the sagging problem)! The fantastic weight is easily solved. I will paint the cylinder block with the same paint as Nortons use on the Commando cylinder barrels-(that's light)

As far as handling is concerned my wife has promised to follow me with a mobile crane to lift the back end round corners, and as far as being ugly goes, someone has to compete with Dave Moses 'Vincent'.

T A P P E T C L A T T E R

P.C. IAN.

Apparently P. C. Ian is not using a Ford engine, but an A35 engine in his special. My apologies to Ian. His letter does not answer my question though. Why is he building it?

Quite a few club members are Speedway fans and go to Belle Vue almost every Saturday. Personally, I find Speedway a little boring from the spectators point of view. Short races with only four riders all dressed alike on virtually identical machines does not add up to much for me even with the occasional "good" race. Most speedway spectators seem to support one team or another rather than individual riders, and this gives rise to a football-match type of atmosphere unlike any other sort of motor sport I know. One great drawback of Belle Vue in particular is the appalling number of thefts of bikes or components from the car-park. No bike of mine would ever find itself at Belle Vue.

TAPPET CLATTER - Continued.

Did you notice the Velo scrambler, complete with hydraulic steering damper, at Wincle on Good Friday!

It was very nice to see so many big four-strokes doing so well on a course which must favour the flyweights. All I need is to see a few 350 Ajays etc., in our next trial, and I might even enter myself.

For the benefit of any new members who cannot quite follow the club-room discussions, I have compiled a short '17' vocabulary:-

- To do a Barbara Castle - to do 70 m.p.h.
- " " Jim Phillips - to do an 80 m.p.h. wheelie on a Bantam!
- " " Paul Sandbach - to give up racing a standard machine because of the expense, and spend a fortune on converting it into a racer for road use!
- " " Moses - to spend 3 years building a bike in the cellar and then dismantle it to get it outside!
- " " Dennis - to be stopped for speeding and be told: "You're old enough to know better".
- " " Paul Tootall - is to run out of road into a pub car-park and pretend you are stopping for a drink!
- " " Alan Kempster - is to run into a wall whilst looking into the sky for rockets!
- Break-down - stop for smoke whilst Moses repairs his bike.
- Fatigue fracture - Triumph
- Handlebar - "don't touch me!" (Think about it)
- Footrest - coast down hill whilst pushing bike home.
- Piston - cloudburst without oversuit.
- Mirror - anti-summons device
- Flywheels - road wheels after spindle snaps
- Con-rod - clever chap
- Brake-plate - "Next time you'll wash and I'll wipe"
- Chain guard - Reynold's commissionaire

Finally, if you know where to buy cheap nylon tights, please contact the bar maid at the Red Lion or Paul Tootall.

CON-ROD

John Roberts (home 427 4586/business 480 3346) wants bikes:- C.15, A.10. Road Rockets, Triumph Cubs, 6T, T110, TR5, TR6. Good price for clean models. H.P. accounts settled.

Will members please look out for (1) a scrambles course (2) a cheap source of duplicating paper, envelopes and Gestetner stencils.

Dave Rowland has found friendly farmers near Chapel en le Frith. We hope to run a trial there - possibly open to Centre - in mid-July.

SHAW M.C.C. at the Red Lion - MAY 20TH.

The club badges will be slightly delayed (apologies) Should be on sale in a fortnight. For those who don't yet know, (to their cost) Jim Phillips made over £12 in a £240 24 mile charity walk on Sunday 27th. Well done Jim! Of course, Jim will be used to walking - owning a Bantam - but he turned down suggestions to walk across Africa in aid of club funds!

FOR SALE -- 1966 Greeves Anglian Mech. perfect. Genuine 4,000 miles.

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E D I T O R:-

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ROMILEY, Cheshire.

