

# The Cotswold Section



## Newsletter

Covid19 Issue Lockdown week 2



Chris Harvey enjoying his ride through the Cotswolds on the AOMCC's Pre 1931 Run in 2015,  
a happier and sunnier time!

Photo taken by Justyn Baker

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The purpose of this mailing is to occupy the thoughts of members of the motorcycling fraternity during the current crisis when non-essential riding might be deemed to be unlawful. Articles may be technical, thought provoking, humorous, accompanied by images, etc, but definitely about our hobby of motorcycling. Please feel free to share the contents with any other interested riders and send appropriate material to me at the above email address. Thanks!

## **From the B190**

The VMCC magazine is sent out each month, read in about an hour, and put down so that members have to wait 28 days for the next one to arrive. The purpose of reviving the Newsletter is to provide members with some appropriate reading matter while the non-riding “Rule” is imposed. Maybe you were lucky to get a ride in before the March 16<sup>th</sup> declaration, in which case, how was it? And what was good about it? Maybe you are in lockdown in your shed trying to resolve a problem and wishing you could contact someone to discuss it with. It might be that you have resorted to have reading afternoons where you catch up with going through the books gathering dust on your study walls and want to tell others why they too should get a copy and read it. All these ideas might stir you to share your musings with others. This Newsletter is a chance for you to do just that!

*Reg Eyre KOB*

**A Ride in 2050** – This article was not published in the VMCC as it was considered political. I was on my way to a meeting of the VMCC at a reasonably close teashop on my Wee-Way electric scooter. The infernal combustion engine has been banned by all nations for about ten years now and all machines used on the roads in the UK have to have a government authorised electronic control unit fitted so that speeds, distances and whereabouts can always be available for scrutiny. The meeting today is to chat with a bicycle rider, who has managed to remove, or he may have said bypass, the official chip and he claims to have been recorded as doing just over 70mph on his off road bicycle. All meetings of the club are discussion groups or guest speakers talking about ‘the old days.’ Most people have forgotten about the use of petrol and even our own club gave up fighting the government over limited use of historic vehicles that used flammable fluids for propulsion because of the harmful effects on the environment. While pondering the past, I managed to hit a pothole, which caused a huge wobble, causing me to lose control and crash into the roadside hedge. “That will be another three points on my licence” I mused, knowing that the ECU will have recorded the incident, as well as the time and place. I brushed the undergrowth and road gravel off my approved over-suit and cursed the authorities who agreed that no more money needed to be spent on the upkeep of roads since no-one would be allowed to ride or drive at a fast speed, i.e. less than 30mph. Having composed myself, I preceded to survey the damage and thought I could easily pull the scooter back onto the road, before the authorities noted my ‘incident’ and automatically send the recovery vehicle, which would cost a small fortune. As I pulled the machine through the neat hole I had made in the hedge, I noticed a large rubber tyred wheel just behind where the scooter had been. I found this almost unmoveable and decided to return with a friend who might help me pull the wheel out and hide it in my garage. I then left hurriedly for the meeting. Rick and I returned to the scene later the same day and used his ‘car’, (huh! A plastic 3wheeler with a Dyson electric motor from a vacuum cleaner that he had persuaded the government to use now he was a Singapore citizen), and we used the car with a tow rope to pull out a rusty wreck of a 1927 AJS 350cc side valve motorcycle. We quickly loaded the mostly complete machine into his car and hurried back to my workshop to unload, and hide it. It was an incredible find! However, if the authorities found out I had it they would scrap it and I would have to pay a huge fine and serve time in prison.

Rick and I would meet occasionally after messaging each other using 'masscomm', an electronic messaging service monitored by a government force so that no one could receive nuisance calls and criminal activity would be monitored. These meetings were signposted to discuss historic events, but were, in fact, our spanning sessions. The AJS had a bent front wheel and slightly bent front forks but it was substantially complete. There was even some smelly petrol in the tank!

We took about a year repairing the machine and 'making good' the damage and then considered what we could do. We were both over-excited and wanting to see if it would run, even if we had to use the stale fuel still in the tank. This was a difficult urge to fight. The government had allowed us to replace engines with chipped electric motors for two years but then had imposed harsh conditions and restrictions for use only at authorised gatherings and dated controls then had to conform to 'modern' fittings for 'safety reasons'. Eventually, all motor vehicles were scrapped except for a very few in museums, which had to be immobilised and secured in positions so that they could not be moved.

Apart from the new acquisition in the garage, life continued as normal except for an announcement that the Science Museum were going to hold a symposium at Wroughton where they used to house their automobile collection, now scrapped by order of the government. This caused a huge furore from the wider public who had lost so many freedoms; it was beginning to sound more like a backlash and possible overthrow of the government. The Science Museum wanted to explain to the public how motoring had grown spectacularly and died very quickly within 150 years. One of their problems was that they could only show images of any vehicles and not have an example on show because they had all been scrapped.

Rick knew of a librarian who could be trusted to hold discussions with to see if we could provide an exhibit, namely, the 1927 AJS. The original idea was to say that we would build a replica with the electric motor hidden inside the engine cylinder. What we wanted to do was show the original and even start the engine. This was radical thinking, but we both thought it would be worth the fine and imprisonment, and we all would be able to hear sounds no-one would have heard for many years.

Our link to the Library at Wroughton was discreet and private and we soon found that we had agreed to be part of a major showing and talk at the symposium. The fateful day arrived and we had shipped the AJS inside a crate labelled as "books for delegates" and put the crate on the stage ready for an unveiling at the opportune time. We had been programmed for the second slot, after a research chemist, who had been working on a new fuel called something like phenolhydrobendeside, which apparently would work in a slightly modified internal combustion engine, if only we had such machines to try this fuel. Especially since he had designed it so that the combustion products would only be hydrogen and some oxygen that could be recombined as water. We also found out that there might be some anti-government protest that would take place at the symposium.

On the day, the scientist bemoaned the fact that he could not test his new fuel, but felt sure it would work. There were mutterings in the hall about the fact that there were no examples extant which could be used and the massive cost and waste that the public had to put up with at the loss of their personal transport.

It was now our turn. The Chairperson explained that the 'replica' we had made was in the box and would be revealed, with full dramatic effect at the end of our session. We then used a computerised display of the rebuild of the AJS without showing any of the internals of the engine, or of the alleged fitting of the electric motor.

The images were applauded, including the fake tax disc, when we walked over to the crate. We had already rigged up a rope to the roof to raise the top and sides so that the machine would be fully exposed to the audience and the plan was for me to mount the machine and kick start the motor, which had been suitably primed at the carburettor and all the levers in their set positions. I leapt aboard the machine to great applause, and in one swift movement kicked the AJS into life. I have never heard such loud cheering with the engine making smoke that added to the ambience, and after a very short time it stopped, even though the audience were running toward the stage. Apparently, some had noticed that government agents had crept into the hall and were making their way to the stage. Before they could get close enough to arrest us, members of the audience whisked us away and other people wheeled the AJS to relative safety.

We were caught and imprisoned, which we had expected. However, sufficient numbers led protests to have us released and the full story was revealed.

It now appears that the scientist has been employed to conduct further tests using 'our' AJS to see if the motorised engine could play a part in our motoring future. Rick and I will hopefully be able to return to our families with a blemish on our criminal records. But hey, we have got a 1927 AJS to play with and I will ride it next year in various events in the Western Region.



### **Keeping Ourselves Occupied 1**

Today we have had our own version of the Felix Burke. I texted Andrew a question for each checkpoint and told him it was £1 for each correct answer. He got 8 from 12 right, (with his 'ask a friend' being his younger daughter 7 year old Alice). Cath and I matched his score and we have now donated £24 to the premature baby group that Cath knits and sews for. Helps towards their postage and it kept us amused for a while.

Cheers

*Steve Sumner, Hereford*

## Perhaps a Thought?

I asked Robert if he might consider emailing all Felix Burke entrants a set of checkpoints from a previous year, plus the distances between checks, and an old set of questions. We could then work out our routes of 60 miles and 12 checkpoints and answer the questions, in a virtual FB event and 'earn' our 2020 badge. I reckon that might be worth letting the Section keep the entry fee for 2020. His response was not printable but.....

## Keeping Ourselves Occupied 2

I have another plan that is also slowly coming together that involves a Minerva clip on engine, fingers crossed.

We have some motorcycle based re enactments in the pipeline as well. This is our Lawrence of Arabia racing a Biplane.

Idiocy rules

*Steve Sumner, Hereford*



*(Who won? – Ed)*

## Report of a Ride – before CV19

A little while ago, I became the latest owner of a 1959 Ambassador Envoy, with a 197cc Villiers two stroke engine. The Ambassador marque was founded by Kaye Don, an ex-Brooklands motorcycle and car racer based at Brooklands. The range of machines he produced used the Villiers engine because of the lack of available four stroke engines, but he tried to make his machines a degree or so 'better' than the more usual James, Francis-Barnett and Excelsior machines fitted with the same

Villiers power plants. Hence the Ambassador, which was formerly owned by Keith, has deep effective mudguards, a substantial frame, 3.25 x 17 tyres, a fitted dual seat and adjustable rear suspension. Keith had already had the engine and gearbox refurbished by Villiers Spares Limited and had stove enamelled the paintwork which, together with the re-chromed wheel rims, new tyres and brakes, meant that here was a machine that was all ready to ride.

My first ride showed that the engine wanted to be fully warmed up before tackling a local hill, but once warm, it would proceed with some gusto and the brakes easily coped with slowing down duties.

I proceeded to go out on small runs on local lanes to get used to the handling and found that there was hardly anything for me to adjust, such as hand controls or cable runs. This is a really 'nice' machine for not hurrying anywhere and just following your nose to take different turnings to see where they come out and enjoying the sights and sounds of the locality.

I started my motorcycling with an Ariel Leader, which had a twin two stroke engine, and never had a small two stroke single cylinder such as a BSA or a Villiers engined machine. This Envoy is therefore a new learning experience into getting the best performance out of a small engine. I would think that people thinking of getting a 1950s machine to participate in events such as the Felix Burke would really appreciate this type of motorcycle. It is light, manoeuvrable and comfortable and is well capable of not causing riders of more ancient machinery any problems.

*"Little William"*

