

Shetland Classic Motorcycle Club Newsletter

Summer 2020



From Behind the Bars

“It seems I have been nominated to be the new club chairperson, so I hope I can do well for the club and it’s members. I do not wear a wig or use twitter like one world leader so that makes me different from him and I won’t go in the huff (that much).

The club is for all to enjoy and if there is something we can or should be doing please let myself or the committee know.

The title for my bit may seem a bit odd to some, but I am most definitely not locked in behind bars, at least not yet, if anything the bars we hold onto gives us pleasure and freedom from our everyday lives and every journey is an adventure.

As some of you know I like Ariel motorcycles, they are simple to work on, dependable and very usable. There is nothing better than riding an old classic motorcycle on what I would call a fine washing line day, dry with just a lar of wind, on a nice road such as somewhere out the west side of Shetland or on the west coast of Scotland. The buzz I get when the bike and myself are bimbbling along at somewhere between 35 to 45 mph and enjoying the scenery is second to none. Reaching your journeys end, it gives great pleasure too.

There are some great ride-outs planned for the coming season, first off being the usual chippy night out to Frankie’s in Brae. This is usually well attended but can be getting dark on the way back. Good test for Joe Lucas the prince of darkness, certainly true going by my candle-lit headlamp.

I would like to encourage more older motorcycles and smaller ones to take part in the club runs, I for one will be on my Ariel 350 Chugga bug as I call it.

For some who would like to try their hand at an old timer, there is always Brouster, the 1932 Model A Ariel, with hand change, for the use of club members. It would be great to see it out on one or two of the runs. I would also like to see if we could encourage some of the classic Japanese owners to take part in the club. A lot of the bikes I grew up with are between 40 to 45 years old, and I’m sure we would all know someone who owns one.

We have a new website and newsletter editor, Colin Nicholson, and he will welcome any reports or restoration stories, whatever you feel worth putting in, never mind if you think you’re writing is not up to scratch, none of us are book writers.

Thanks, must go to Birgit Wagner for her good efforts at producing the website and doing a good job of the newsletters.

Finally, I must thank Gordon Stark for his efforts over the past three years as the Chairman, prior to that he was secretary working alongside Chairman Joe Gray for many years. Now Gordon has taken over the office of treasurer for the club, Joe is on the committee, so between them I think myself and the club will be in good hands.”

Update August 2020

I had written the above in March before the current situation came upon us, so I hope this finds that yourselves and your families are managing to keep clear of this awful virus. We are all trying to do our bit by self-isolating and social distancing.

Which brings me onto how we as motorcyclists can do our bit for the NHS. I don't know if you have been following the news, but you would think that going out on our bikes is a great way to have pleasure in isolation. But the problem being, if we were to have an accident, it will take NHS resources to respond, and could lead to potential unnecessary exposure to the virus, should a hospital stay be necessary.

We are now officially allowed out on our motorcycles, but please take care when out and about as the virus has not gone away. The rules at the moment allow groups of 15 people from 5 different households to meet which does not lend itself to group/Club ride outs. Most people are aware that the Club ride outs have not been happening, and our Summer calendar for the year is now almost gone.

There was mention of going out in smaller groups, but I felt that this would not look good in the public eye, as we as a club have to follow lock down rules. If people wanted to go out in smaller groups it is possible to phone around and organise an outing out with the Club. We hopefully will be free another year to do the runs we had planned. I was looking forward to two in particular, the backwards round Shetland run and the run out to Houbansetter.

I know this newsletter is a bit late, but with Covid-19 and computer problems, it has been held back, but hopefully we are now back on track. Colin plans to do a Summer and Winter newsletter so please help him to give us something to read. Another casualty of Covid-19 is that due to a misunderstanding/misinterpretation of the lockdown rules and the fact that we as a club are basically in shutdown mode, we have lost two committee members, one of them being our treasurer.

So, with this in mind, I am going to make it clear. As a club, we have to suspend all activities until such time as the lockdown rules change and allow us to meet socially in larger groups.

With the loss of our treasurer, we will need to find a willing volunteer from the club membership to fill the gap. This process should normally happen if we have an EGM or an AGM, but with the way things are going, this will most likely be next year.

Normally we would have a Winter calendar for our Wednesday night meets; these will all be suspended too unless the rules change.

It all sounds doom and gloom, but every cloud has a silver lining! One or two projects have been coming along, as can be seen on the new Facebook page which has helped to keep some club contact going. So please use it and share items that you think could be of interest to others.

Wishing you all safe and well,

Dean Mitchell.

Summer Runs Trophy 2019

Once more, Lewie Tulloch's name has been added to the Summer Runs Trophy, who is pictured here receiving the Trophy from outgoing Chairman, Gordon Stark. Well done to Lewie, the outright winner in 2019, who will have custody of it for a year longer than expected, as no runs will take place in 2020. If life returns to some sort of normality in 2021, will we see any challengers for this title?



Rare Bikes in Shetland No. 34

In the 1930s, large V-twins were popular sidecar haulers, and here we have a good example in an early 30s Matchless, Model X, with 982cc side valve engine.

The Model X was made through the 30s until 1940, but like most V-twins, was not continued after the war. It was made in two versions, and depending on year, I think this could be the standard one, as the other featured chrome wheel rims and nickel-plated cylinder barrels!

I haven't been able to ascertain what gearbox was fitted, but judging by the size of the hand change control gate, I would think it is the three-speed version. With plenty of low-down torque from the large capacity engine, that would have been more than adequate even when coupled to a sidecar.



There are no details of who actually owned the bike, but the lady posing in the saddle is Nessie Williamson. The photo is taken down at the foot of Hay's Road at Freefield, Lerwick, in front of the large stone-built building which is still there.

I bet that twin fishtail exhausts made a lovely chuffing sound when pulling hard!

Joe Gray

My first road-legal “motorcycle”



My first road-legal motorcycle was a Yamaha FS1E 50 cc moped, made to look like a proper motorcycle. It was classed as a moped because it was fitted with bicycle type pedals which could be used if the need should arise, but was really only a loop-hole to get around the performance moped laws at the time. The pedals were parked in a way that they became the foot rests, a cotter pin was removed and one of the pedals was reversed and hey-presto you have a pedal cycle, just like mopeds used to, such as the Honda PC 50. Mind you, trying to cycle the Yamaha “Fizzie” as it was more commonly called, was like attempting to do yoga! My knees just could not get any movement into them whilst sitting on the saddle, and as for standing up, it took a lot of effort to get it to move and keep it moving.

My “Fizzie” was bought new in 1976, R-registered and bright red with go faster Yamaha block decals on the tank. The exact model was an FS1EDXA, with disc brake on the front and auto-lube for the two-stroke oil from a separate tank. It also had two dummy down-tubes to make the appearance of a big bike, despite only 4.8 Bhp and 3.6 ft/lb of torque.

There were three popular Japanese sports mopeds at the time: the Yamaha FS1E; the Honda SS 50 (more on this a bit later) and the Suzuki AP 50. For a 16-year-old, it was a great way to get around, and most could do upwards of 50 mph! Many a duel was had here on the roads of Shetland! Inevitably, the Honda SS50 was most popular here due to the fact there was a local Honda dealership. I had actually ordered a lime green SS50 through John Ratter of Thulecraft, only to

go back in and cancel it as my Uncle who was a motorcycle dealer in Aberdeen, said, "What did you do that for? I could sell you a "Fizzie" cheaper." So that was how I came to be on the Yamaha. The Suzuki AP 50 was the quickest of the three, in both acceleration and top speed, but nothing could compare to the reliability and hardiness of the SS 50 in the hands of us young hooligans.

I had just started my apprenticeship with the Malakoff and needed some transport, hence the Yamaha. I vividly remember the day I picked it up from the "Steamers Store" at Holmsgarth. Prior to riding it, the only other motorcycle I had ever ridden was an old Ariel VB side-valve of some 600cc. I was instantly amazed at how much power this small bike had, even though I had to run it in for 500 miles, at 30 miles an hour. However, the miles soon were done as I was never off of it, and used it in all weathers to go up and down to Yell to see my parents. Howling gales of wind were not great, unless directly from behind, when top speed could go up by as much as 10 mph. Conversely, into a strong head-wind, it was a struggle to even get to 30 mph!

I remember one really wild November night, I set off back to Lerwick with Billy my "adopted" brother on his Suzuki B120. It was so windy, we decided to go through Brae in order to get some shelter from the weather. Not far from Brae, the "Fizzie" had enough! It was misfiring and running badly. He towed me to Brae using bungee cords, and we knocked on the first door we came to and asked to use their phone. So I called my foreman, the late Gerald Murray, who came in his works van and rescued me to my lodgings in Lerwick, while poor Billy continued down on his own. The problem

turned out to be the awful metal shrouded plug caps that bikes came with back then. The spark had been tracking down it in the heavy rain.

I took great pride in my wee bike, as was shown by the box of spare parts that went with it when I sold it to Michael Jacobsen from the west side. I did not like to have any damage on it, so there were loads of indicators, levers, and even a front mudguard with a scratch on it.

The wee "Fizzie" had served me well until I reached 17, when I could get a big real bike. At the time, learners were allowed to ride up to a 250 on a provisional license with L plates. My ones always seemed to have blown away until the day of my test!

Once again, Thulecraft was to be my dealer of choice, and I ordered a red Honda 250 Dream. Well, guess what? My Uncle said the same as last time, "What did you do that for? I could sell you a Kawasaki KH250 cheaper." Oh dear, poor Mr. Ratter! I went back to Thulecraft and cancelled my order yet again! He got the last laugh though. My Kawasaki melted the middle piston, as they used to do quite regularly. This time, no circlips came with the gudgeon pin, so I thought I would try Thulecraft, but I only got one foot in the door! "Out!" was roared at me. There was no way he was going to help me! I wonder why?

I never did order another bike from Thulecraft, as Kawasaki had gotten a hold.

Dean Mitchell

Boe to Bäretswil...and back!

No-one can deny that being a member of a good many, probably too many, petrolhead clubs has its advantages. Previously, both Shetland based 'classic' clubs have organised tours to interesting events, museums, etc. and last summer it was the Shetland Classic Car Club that pulled out all the stops, not to mention probably tufts of hair from the poor old organisers as well, to put on one of the very best trips I've ever sampled.

So it was that on the second weekend of August 2019 ten cars and a hired support van embarked on the NorthLink ferry to Aberdeen for what turned out to be an epic drive all the way to the Swiss Alps and back. Oldest vehicle was a 1963 Humber Sceptre and the newest (excluding the van) was my own 2008 Vauxhall convertible. That these motors completed a trip in excess of some 2000 miles with no significant breakdowns still boggles my mind.....a Mini-Cooper fan-belt requiring adjustment and a 54 years old Ford Zephyr breaking its speedo cable being the only issues worth noting.

First stop was at the East Fortune Museum of Flight where thankfully many of the exhibits are housed indoors as 'pi5hing doon' doesn't fully describe the weather in the afternoon. Very well worth a much longer visit than we had time for, the collection of amazing aircraft, including Concorde, engines, historical artefacts, etc., could easily take a day or two to properly absorb.



Thankfully, the weather improved for the journey down to Bamburgh Castle the following day and a pleasant run down the A1 was enjoyed by all. Arrangements had been made to display the cars in the



castle grounds but Bolts' Citroën was deemed not to have sufficient 'street cred' and was banished to a distant carpark. Although we were treated to a fascinating guided tour of the castle, its displays of ancient features, armaments and collected items including a late 1860s 'Boneshaker' Velocipede (pictured), the icing on the cake for many of us was the 'technical' exhibition, housed in an adjacent building which featured the connection between the castle's owners, the Armstrong family of Armstrong Siddeley fame, and its connection with the aeronautical industry. On display were examples of the company's military hardware and aero engines.



Docking in IJmuiden the journey started in earnest and everyone quickly acclimatised to driving on the right and arrived safely at Aachen to visit the Cathedral (ceiling pic. left) and Treasury Museum next door. Relics in the Treasury (pic. right) relate to the Emperor Charlemagne who ruled much of western Europe in the late 8th. and early 9th. centuries. The cathedral, built in the early 800s by order of the emperor, proved



an absorbing place to visit with beautiful examples of early medieval architecture. Leaving the city in the late afternoon proved less easy than on our entry earlier. Traffic lights and a none too compliant sat-nav all contrived to split up the convoy and sister and I soon found ourselves very much on our own...and lost! Adding the good old AA atlas of Europe to the mix of navigational aids saw us on our way after half an hour or so of faffing about/swearing, etc. and a, wise as it turned out, decision to leave the scenic routes and go for the autobahn. We were somewhat surprised on our arrival at the Schloss Burgbrohl Hotel to find that we weren't more than a few minutes after the others! An utterly gorgeous old-fashioned building situated in beautiful countryside (see view from our room window, right).



Back on the road, and another 140 or so miles down it, we arrived at the Auto & Technik Museum, Sinsheim. The title hides its light under a bushel somewhat. It is an astonishing extravaganza of aircraft, vehicles of every type and even trains and boat engines! I'll confine myself to the bikes...mostly.. just because space dictates. Arriving at the museum one is almost overwhelmed by the sight of TWO supersonic airliners on the roof of the building....an Air France Concorde and its Soviet 'twin' the Tupolev TU-144.



And so, to the bikes. First to catch the eye an Indian V-twin circa 1919/20, resplendent in scarlet paintwork and exhibiting quarter elliptic front and swinging arm rear suspension, but overshadowed to my mind by a 1921 Mars. Of exceptional rarity, this



machine was displayed in a glass case making photography quite difficult. I'm including a couple of none too clever pics. reflecting the amazing paintwork details (and the glass unfortunately!) and quality of the restoration. Fitted with a crank handle started partially blower cooled 956cc Maybach flat twin engine mounted 'fore and aft', it featured a box-section frame and extravagant design features.



Next to catch the eye were Ardie and Zundapp post WW2 two strokes. Well restored, these exhibited typical continental features such as individual seats (Zundapp) and pressed steel girder forks (Ardie). Another very tidy Ardie BZ 350 on display is one of only 500 made. Just as happened here in the UK, its



demise in 1957 was hastened by the popularity of mini cars. The cycle pacer Burdin, pictured on the left, brought tears to one's eyes at the thought of riding it without reinforced trousers..!

Whether or not drivers of this 1910 Monocycle wore protective clothing is not recorded. Manufactured by Erich Edison-Puton in Paris, the machine is powered by a single cylinder De Dion engine of 3.5 hp. Fully restored to working condition, at least one man has been bold enough to be filmed riding it. You can see footage of his remarkable feat on the museum's excellent website www.sinsheim.technik-museum.de by following the links to 'motorcycles'. The intrepid pilot is reluctant to raise his feet though....unsurprisingly! Perhaps also unsurprisingly it didn't become an overnight commercial success and few if any were actually sold.



Another gem in this astonishing place.

I haven't cropped this photo of the NSU Bison 2000 ...yes 2000cc of him, just to leave in view what must be the most eclectic display on show anywhere! The NSU is based on the 1939 600 OSL model and has been stretched firstly to one and then to 2 litres in order to get a world record for the largest single cylinder motorcycle in the world. This example is the only one ever produced apparently.

Few museums don't have an example of a BMW 'boxer', the late 1920s 500cc R 47 shown here being one of the best. All the exhibits in the museum have been prepared to the same exceptionally high standard. I've only featured some of the motorcycles in the museum. Others include MV Agusta, Honda, Mauser, Harley-Davidson, Standard and a BSA A75 Rocket Three 750.





Finally, a non-motorcycle treat to whet your appetite! This high speed 42 cylinder (seven banks of six) Schiffsdiesel-Sternmotor, made by JSC Zvezda in St. Petersburg in the USSR and fitted to gunboats and small combat ships, had a swept volume of 143 litres, 168 valves and produced 4000 hp. Weighing in at 5.5 tons, this four-stroke monster could guzzle its way through 150 gallons of diesel per hour on full song!

In the next issue, a peerie look at Mercedes-Benz, Stuttgart and a great museum at Boxenstop Tübingen.

G.A. Jacobson

Editor's footnote

I hope you've enjoyed this issue of the SCMCC Newsletter, and the first one that I have had any involvement with. I would like to be able to say that all the changes were intentional, but I have to confess that a fairly spectacular hard drive failure just before lockdown, saw me without a means of completing it as a March issue! So here, for the first time, we have the *Summer* issue instead.

My thanks to all the contributors, who I'm sure you will agree, have done a great job

Colin Nicholson

in providing some very informative and enjoyable reading material. But like any editor, I'll always welcome new writers with material for future editions! So, get your thinking caps on, put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and share something motorcycle related with the rest of the Club members.

Finally, I'd welcome your feedback, along with any suggestions for the types of things you'd like to see included in the future.

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