

Friends

Please read upwards from the bottom of this message. It is clear now that Roger Bibbings – who less than three months ago was asked to join the Board as Chair and take the Club in whatever direction he wanted, but refused the post after initially accepting – is complicit in a full-blown conspiracy to undermine the Board. That is bad enough, but what is truly alarming is that the activities of the group that he and Peter Fielding are leading are based on fundamental misconceptions about what the Board has done, is doing, and has been intending to do. This group appears to be prepared to go to any lengths necessary to stop things that are not actually happening, regardless of the consequences of their actions. They deserve the victory they now have: may it give them both the pleasure and the opportunity which they denied to me. My message to them is: be careful what you wish for; your conspiracy is now exploded because your nefarious and unconstitutional activities have given me the excuse to walk away. Please now have to good grace to take control of the Club, run it as you see fit, and spare anyone else the persecution to which you have subjected me.

Like Chris Smith from South Cumbria Section, I too have had enough of all of this. I have wasted nearly two years of my life in a completely fruitless endeavour to help an organisation that fundamentally does not want to be helped. I have worked extraordinarily hard, to the detriment of all other aspects of my life. I have kept going in the face of adversity in the hope and belief that it will get better, but it isn't getting any better – if anything the pressure, the nastiness and the misconceptions are getting more and worse. I have kept going out of loyalty and a sense of duty to an organisation of which I have been part all my adult life, but am now at a point where I have been maligned, stamped on and poked at too many times by grumpy and vicious old men who refuse to take the responsibility and workload themselves but who nevertheless expect to be able to direct and instruct those naive enough to have stood forward. But no more. I hope the VMCC does survive in a recognisable form, but I doubt that it will. Over the last year it has had a Board with a level of competence and willingness to act that is far more than it has had for most of its existence, but the letter-writing old men have worked tirelessly to undermine progress and resist change. They now win: I have had enough. I took on the role of Chair with reluctance, accepting that at the time there was no alternative. I have done my best, given my all, and in return have largely faced accusations, foulness and false presumptions as to my intentions and motives. Every joy I have ever taken in old bikes has been soured and distorted by the spirit-crushing experience I have been through.

Please take this message as notice of my resignation from the VMCC with immediate effect: I would be grateful if someone would instruct Calvin Loach to remove me from the membership list on Monday. Please ensure I receive no further email or postal correspondence from the VMCC.

Following the despatch of this message I will be deleting the chair@ and bob@ email accounts from my mobile phone and computer, and will thus not receive any replies sent. I mean no personal offence to any of you, but I do not wish to hear from the VMCC again – please leave me in peace to rebuild my social life around something new. To Gordon Mowat, Ian Goodhall and Pete Fisher from the Forum – thank you for your kindness and friendship, but please now delete my membership of the Forum. To Mario – you now have the master login for the Club's Facebook setup, please change

the password and remove me from the page and Group. To whoever has the misfortune to be appointed as Chair in my place, I admire your bravery and wish you better luck than I have had. There are a number of matters with which I have been dealing, most particularly perhaps the final stage of negotiations about a replacement for the Footman James Insurance Partnership (I have got the VMCC close to an extremely positive outcome which I will be sad not to see through to completion), and on an objective basis I am of course happy to brief you as a handover process. I have collated all the VMCC-related files I hold, and will be sending them all to Mario with an assurance that I have retained no copies of anything. To Tim Ryan, my Section Secretary: please remove me from the Clyde Valley Section email circulation list; good health and safe riding to you all.

For the record, I joined the VMCC at the age of not quite 21, in the early summer of 1976 – nearly 45 years ago. I had been using a 1949 Triumph 3T, which I obtained as a straight swap with the dealer for a 3-year-old Honda 500/4 which I had hated, as my daily rider. It broke a con-rod just below the small end. I went to the Triumph dealer seeking spares, and his response was a chuckle, a shake of the head and a piece of paper saying “Vintage Motor Cycle Club, contact Titch Allen” with an address. I wrote seeking help, and received back a lovely letter – the first of a good number over the next 25 years – enclosing a membership form. I returned that with, from memory, a postal order for £3.50. Two or three weeks later, a couple of Oxford Section members turned up on my doorstep without warning “Titch says you need a replacement engine for your 3T, that’ll be £30 please”, and I was in. I migrated around the country through my work, sometimes being a really active section member, sometimes not. Soon after moving to Scotland in 1989 I was steered towards the post of Area Representative for Scotland, a post I then held for two years. During that time I came under pressure from Titch to try and establish more Scottish Sections, and am pleased and proud to have played a key role in getting both Edinburgh Auld Reekie, and Clyde Valley, off the ground. Also during that period, I was able to use my professional knowledge and contacts in the museums world to initiate the process that led to the Triumph, Norton and other factory records being transferred to the VMCC by the Science Museum. I have been largely inactive at Section level over the past fifteen years or so, because I have worked away from home for most of this time. In 2018 I responded to the call put out by Alastair Alexander, an old acquaintance and a lovely person, at a time when the Club absolutely could not get people to stand for office as Directors (now I fully understand why), and stood forward. Alastair meant well but with hindsight my decision to stand was one of the worst decisions I have ever made. It brought me nothing but a vast amount of work and a lot of grief. And now my membership of the VMCC is at an end.

The Club’s members will want to know why the Chair resigned. Perhaps the good guys amongst those reading this message will win out over the bad ones and ensure members get to know the truth. I have resigned because I have had enough. I stand bloodied and bowed, my spirit utterly broken by the vile-ness of the organisation I idolised for decades. The Club’s future is partly now once again in the hands of the old guard, those who failed before. And it is partly in the hands of those who stand on the sidelines shouting instructions, but who run a mile when asked to take on work and responsibility. To the many of you at Section level who are decent people joined by a love of old bikes, I salute you and hope for your future in the hands of the blockers, the wreckers, the critics and the accusers who now hold power within the Club. Stay well, and safe riding.

BOB CLARK

formerly, Chair