

newsletter No.19,

February, 2021

## VMCC Warwickshire Section Newsletter

I trust that you are keeping safe and following government guidelines. To inform and entertain you this month we have Simon's Matchless, David's progress with the Ricardo and some safe riding tips. And, following David's regular contribution, an item from ex club president and ex section chairman, Harry Wiles.

### Chairman's Chat: And what book would you like to take?

At the end of Radio Four's Desert Island Discs, the guest is asked 'and what book would you like to take with you on your desert island'? Well, I suppose the best book would be the one that you never tire of reading over the years. My choice and recommendation is "Sons of Thunder", a Motorcycle anthology. This is a collection of motorcycle writings from a wide range of authors including Roald Dahl, T.E. Lawrence and Ted Hughes, to name just a few. The common theme being the unique excitement and emotional experience offered by one of mankind's greatest inventions. This is my book for packing away on holiday or dipping into, whenever I need to be reminded that I am not the only looney addicted to motorised two wheels - albeit, the older varieties. Here are three fine examples of the books contents: Don Whillans. "Solo by Motor-Bicycle" from Rawalpindi to Lancashire in 1960. Thomas McGuane. "Me and My Bike and Why" Concerning life after purchasing a 500cc Matchless motorcycle. Theresa Wallace, "The Rugged Road". In 1935, along with her friend Florence Blenkinsop, rode from London to Cape Africa aboard a 600cc Panther motorcycle combination. Occasionally, we all need our fix of motorcycling and escapism, especially in these difficult times. Hopefully, you have a book that you often dip into and is a firm favourite....maybe you would like to recommend a book for our readers? And of course, on Desert Island Discs they also ask what one disc would you like on your desert island...well, mine would be 'A day in the life' by the Beatles..... So what's yours?



# My Introduction to motorcycling and what that led to. By Harry Wiles

## Part 1 of 2

My father was an insurance agent and he used to do his rounds on an NSU Quickly which he allowed me to take my test on at the age of sixteen, although I passed my test first time my parents refused to let me have a bike of my own so when I reached the age of seventeen, along with many other engineering apprentices to bolster our meagre wages, I joined the Territorial Army but only went in on the understanding I could be a dispatch rider. The unit I joined was a Royal Artillery Battery which had 25 pound guns as their weaponry. In the Battery there were four guns, the guns had a big round platform hung under the main chassis so the gun could be swung round 360° when in place at a firing point, this was held under the chassis using up and over toggles. When on site the platform was lowered down and the gun wheels pulled up onto it, the gun was detached from the lorry and a bar about three feet long and two and a half inches in diameter, that was strapped to the side of the chassis during transit, was inserted into the end of the chassis to use as a lever to rotate the gun on the platform when in action.

Along with the guns there were a host of other vehicles making quite a long convoy. There were three dispatch riders in the Battery using BSA M20's, the army issue crash helmets were made of steel and very hot in sunny weather but if you were caught not wearing it you were put on a charge even though crash helmets were not compulsory in civvy street. Our job was to escorting the convoy and we had the power to stop traffic to allow the convoy to pass through cross roads and other tight spots. Not only did we stop traffic we used to pick up cigarettes etc. for the troops on route, they would beckon from the back of the wagon and tell us what they wanted and we would stop at the next convenient shop and get it. This back fired one day as we were on our way to Salisbury Plain for our two week annual camp, which turned out to be a most eventful one. There were no motorways in those days so it was a cross country trip on the way there.

We were on our way into Warwick when the boys in the back of one of the gun towing trucks started waving to me, thinking they wanted me to buy something for them I started to pull up towards the back of the wagon, at the time we were just approaching the canal bridge in Warwick, it is the steeper one of the two bridges heading in from Leamington, the truck disappeared out of sight as it crested the bridge as I rode over the top of the bridge, to my horror, the aforementioned bar used to turn the gun was tumbling end over end towards me, to this day I do not know how I managed it but I lifted the front wheel of the bike trapping the bar under it and still stayed on board the bike, it turned out the lads were trying to tell me the bar was coming loose.... *To be continued in the next edition*



## *Matchless G3 rebuild by Simon Dudfield*

*"There's always something sent to try us."* is a much - used phrase and appropriate when progress on the refurbishment of my Matchless G3 was halted unexpectedly. There were many little hitches to overcome. The 350 cc Matchless was bought by Frank Parker about eight years ago. It was dismantled and about ninety percent complete. In 2017 he offered it to me. With a burst of enthusiasm the frame and cycle parts were powder coated. Within a few months it was a rolling chassis.



Then it ground to a halt when two other motorcycles needed repairs. On the eve of lock down ( 22/3/20) said repairs were completed. As Franks motorcycle stand was unoccupied and a project was readily available, the Matchless was duly installed in the garage. (We worked independently in the garage to comply with Covid restrictions), leaving notes or emailing, when required. Frank had agreed to rewire it when I purchased it from him. That's when the fun started. The new harness and ignition switch I bought were incompatible. The lighting system was ok So the ignition system was modified.

All of the control cables were made. The head steady fixings completely mystified me. I left Frank with that task. He made the studs on the mangle ( pet name for the lathe !). The threads on the crankshaft were damaged. We ended up putting a grub screw in the locknut . Then loctite for good measure.

As the project progressed we discovered some of the parts weren't original. For instance the Triumph speedometer. Or the 12v horn - not much use on a 6v motorcycle. The footrest mounting bar was a work of art. It had been broken and was repaired by welding on another threaded piece of bar. Except the replaced end was coarser thread than the original !!! . On the plus side the original alternator charged and the rectifier rectified. The engine and gearbox needed no work.



I tried to keep as many parts original as possible. So the wheel rims, handlebars, levers and exhaust pipe are slightly rusty. And the petrol tank, mudguards and side panels are slightly scratched. Amongst the paperwork that came with the G3 I found



an MOT certificate and tax disc from 1978-9. Assuming it came off the road then and hadn't run since, It had been dismantled for twenty five years.

With a spark, fuel and oil returning it was time to start the engine. First kick ....nothing... second kick.... it spat back .... third kick ....she started..and filled the garage with smoke. I had put a squirt of oil into the plug hole!! It soon cleared and settled into a steady tickover. Thanks to Franks' garage and guidance ( and mangle) she lives again. Of course, it has yet to be test ridden. Hopefully it will be ok and in due course go on longer runs, when our freedom is returned. The previous owner to Frank lives nearby. He has been surprised at our progress as he doubted he'd ever see it on the road again. O ye of little faith!



# Motorcycling in the rain: 10 tips to help you stay safe

BY **FRAZER ANSELL** - NOVEMBER 12, 2020



The winters can be long, hard, cold and very wet for bikers in this country, but how can you stay safe while motorcycling in the rain?

Manufacturers have striven to make bikes safe but the manufacturers can't do everything. You will ultimately have to rely on yourself and your own skills to stay safe while motorcycling in the rain. The team at Bikesure have come up with 10 tips and techniques for wet weather riding.

## 1. See and be seen when motorcycling in the rain

Just about the most important thing when you're motorcycling is to see and be seen — that's just as important in fair weather as it is when the heavens have opened. Check your lights before every trip and if any bulbs are fading or gone, replace them. You should also ensure you wear something high-vis, get an anti-fog visor, and ensure your wind shield and mirror are clean.

## 2. Check your tyres

To keep safe when motorcycling in the rain it is imperative that your tyres are in good condition.

Make sure they have sufficient tread and the correct air pressure. Get in the habit of inspecting them and checking the air pressure every time you go out on your bike. Remember that tyres take longer to warm up in the rain — some riders swerve to warm them up but that rarely works. Stop and go riding is the ultimate technique to warm tyres, and can help put heat in them quicker in the rain.

Have your brakes checked regularly too. If you don't have the know how to do it, learn, or go to a garage.

### 3. Get waterproofed for motorcycling in the rain

Comfort is a big issue when motorcycling in the rain but it's not very comfortable riding if you are soaked through to the skin. If you get wet and cold you will tire more easily and get distracted from the job in hand, staying safe on your bike.

Invest in some good quality **waterproof gear**. As well as over-trousers and a jacket you will need waterproof gloves and boots. And wear plenty of layers beneath them to maintain body heat in the worst that winter has to throw at us.

### 4. Double your stopping distance

If you're riding at 50 miles an hour in good road conditions it will take you about 175 feet to stop, that's roughly the length of nine cars. In the rain your stopping distance will lengthen significantly and there is always the chance you'll go into a skid if you pull up suddenly. Double the distance between you and the car in the front to stay safe when motorcycling in the rain.

It's good technique to ride with two fingers covering the brakes and, always in the wet, apply both front and rear brakes simultaneously, gently but firmly, smoothly and progressively.

In fact, all transmissions on the bike should be smooth to avoid the risk of skidding. No aggressive acceleration, hard braking, or sharp corners, take a smooth line in the road.

### 5. Corner: slow in, steady out

Cornering in the wet is no different to cornering in the dry, except you need to do it a little more slowly. To negotiate a bend or corner you need to steer and adjust your body position to lean gently into the corner. Your speed will also play an important part in your ability to corner safely in the wet – it's "slow in, steady out" when motorcycling in the rain.

## 6. Watch out for skid hazards when motorcycling in the rain

Rain makes the road surface slick, and some areas are much more dangerous than others — painted lines, manhole covers, and metal bridge expansions can be perilous.

Avoid standing water and puddles too. They're not too hazardous in themselves, but they can hide what lurks beneath. A puddle can cover manholes, road markings or potholes, so try to avoid riding through them if you can do so safely.

Oil is hazardous in the dry as well as the wet but at least in the wet you can see it because it exhibits a rainbow sheen on the road – you won't find a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow so avoid it when motorcycling in the rain.

## 7. Find a dry riding line

If the rain stops and you see a dry line in the carriageway, usually the wake of car or lorry tracks, use it to your advantage.

## 8. The first few minutes motorcycling in the rain are the worst

The first 10 or 15 minutes are the worst when you're motorcycling in the rain because oil, fluid, fuel and muck is deposited on a road over time. When it rains, these deposits mix with the water and sit on the road surface making riding more treacherous. But they usually wash away within 10 or 15 minutes. With that in mind, take a breather, pull over, rest up, and see out the first few minutes of the storm before continuing on your journey.

## 9. Think ahead

The earlier you identify hazards — puddles, slippery road markings, corners and oil spills — the more time you have to adjust and minimise their effect. Remember, in the wet your braking and stopping distances are longer.

If you don't think ahead and are slow to react to corners and other hazards you will have to brake sharply which is something you really should try to avoid when motorcycling in the rain.

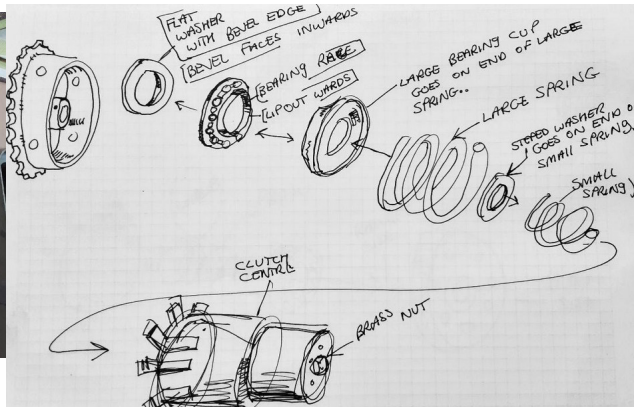
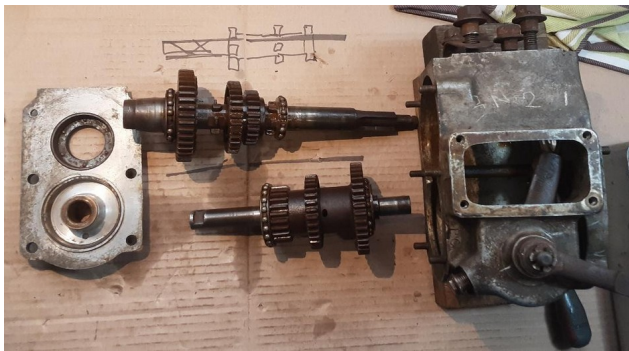
## 10. Hold your horses when motorcycling in the rain

You want to get there safely, it doesn't really matter how quickly you do it! Slow down to stay safe when motorcycling in the rain. By riding a little more slowly you're putting less stress on your tyres and traction is less of an issue. It also gives you more time to react and adjust to possible hazards.



## The Ricardo files... continued. By David Kendall

For what seemed like the first time in ages, I managed to wheel out my 1927 Triumph Ricardo project into the sunshine. My first impressions was that she 'scrubbed up well'. Gone were the layers of grease and oil that once covered this machine from front mud guard to rear number plate. Instead, before me was the dull twinkling of original Nickel plate and the lovely mellow time-worn paint finish, untouched since leaving the Triumph factory in the centre of Coventry all those years ago. She now wears new tyres and associated sundries supplied by "Vintage Tyres". The front brake shoes have been re-lined with original material..... carried out by "Villiers Services" of Dudley. And the bottom end is now fitted into the frame after having the crankshaft expertly re-built by Robert



Thomas of "Partsmade". In the meantime, I have re-built and refurbished the gearbox... not before making detailed drawings and sketches..... more Picasso than precision.... on the back of pieces of old cardboard, to aid in a successful reassemble. While the gear box was on the bench, I found I was in need of some new ball bearings and gearbox grease, to help keep the pinions turning and the gearbox running smoothly into the future. Thankfully, help was only a phone call away to "The Vintage Bearing Company" at Burton, who supplied all my transmission prerequisites - including vintage oil, gearbox grease, and new bearings. The gearbox now sits patiently in the frame awaiting a reunion with the engine, via my recently purchased primary chain (one of the few parts missing when I acquired the bike). However, before Christmas, I ordered lengths of inner and outer cables, plus associated nipples, and I will busy myself by learning the art of making my own cables (valve lifter first).... but only when the weather warms up!

### Secretary's shorts

I have just closed my John O'Groats to Lands End fund raising for 'Save the Children' Huge thanks to all who contributed to the total of £1074 + gift aid!!!!



Not a lot else to report. I'm still looking for an unwanted bike lift table to buy.

My collection has not seen a lot of action. The **Bridgestone** and **Bonneville** remain untouched this year.

**Triumph Tiger 90:** The electrical short seems ok now. The speedo rear drive was not...(driving) so a new one was purchased. It didn't fit so I 'fettled' it until it did! Once the battery had been boosted it started first kick. I tested it locally and all seems fine now. I can, once more, tell how fast and far I am going!

**Triumph Tina:** I nearly lost it off my home built 'table'- about a foot tall- whilst trying to replace the engine mounting bolt. It survived and is once again ready to try to start!

We are always in need of articles, however short or long. We also have room for information on items you may wish to buy, sell or give away. We await your contribution.

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