

# Lockdown News Issue Seven

*Brought to you by the Dorset section VMCC*



Here we are, yet again, still in lockdown. Well, here in Dorset section we can't do very much about that but what we CAN hopefully do is entertain you with another edition of LDN! Grab that drink (notice I've stopped saying coffee, it's too painful to even think about now), settle back and enjoy.

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First, its Andrew Rae, section stalwart and the man now *permanently* in charge of all our show events; what a guy he is!

## **The Trophy Hunter**

Many years ago, when resident in Aberdeen, it became a habit to participate in the VMCC National Rally at Blairgowrie, an event I would highly recommend. At some point, more by luck than judgement, I won a regularity award and from this a bit of an obsession developed.

As any of my friends will tell you none of my machines would win a concourse class so initially my target areas were the regularity classes where I evolved the devious technique of entering one of the smallest classes (three wheelers) which also enabled the further cheat of the use of a co-pilot to aid with the workload. For many years this system worked well with a good few successes and a growing collection of rosettes, but the obsession continued to grow - I wanted more! What other trophy was up for grabs, that was within my range of talent, for me to set my sights upon?

At around this time came the first of several work-related changes of location. Firstly, to Bishops Stortford and the idea of the furthest distance travelled award germinated in what I laughingly call a brain. There was one snag with this plan, there are no written rules dictating how to qualify for this particular award and this, naturally, led to several spectacular failures - no, let's call them *adventures*.



Attempt number one from Bishops Stortford to Blairgowrie on a mock trials Ariel outfit a VH model of mostly 1954 vintage. A two-day journey northbound mainly overtaking queues of stationary traffic on the A1 using the grass verges, best cruise speed of around 45 mph. A pleasant outing with no technical problems and overnighting in a tent on Doncaster racecourse where my hip would confirm the going to be firm! Did I win the award?



No, a determined fellow rode from Morpeth on the day of the event! Was this a clue to an unwritten rule? Never mind, like Robert the Bruce's spider I will try again.

Another employment change to Llantwit Major, South Wales, leads me to attempt two. This time a very scenic route on B roads through central Wales, across to and up through the Pennines and the Borders of Scotland. Once again over two days, this time on a 1971 BSA B25ss, best cruise of around 55 mph.

Another fine journey and the only technical snag being the oil pressure warning light coming on at low rpm during the last few miles of the return trip - eventually traced to a faulty pressure relief valve spring. Did I win? No, a hero had journeyed all the way from Somerset. I am not aware on what timescale, and also had taken in the Strathendrick and Trossachs Rally at Crieff on the previous Saturday and enjoyed a holiday in mid-Scotland for the intervening period which may have invalidated my attempt, maybe another unwritten rule? However, a useful experience which can only improve my chances when it comes to attempt three.



You may suspect by now I was getting a bit of an obsession. Too right! Thinking I had worked out all the unwritten rules I was ready for the ultimate assault for the Furthest Distance Travelled award.

I should explain that these attempts were spread out over a period of a good few years giving me time to brood and plot for success, and in all fairness my next idea did raise a few eyebrows particularly those of my very patient wife. After yet another employment-based move, the plan was to depart from Solihull

on the day of the event and ride all the way to Blairgowrie to compete in the event and due to time constraints, ride south to Penrith before overnighing. The main cheat being this time I would Ride my, just, 25 year-old Moto Guzzi T3 850cc (*barely eligible junk, it's tantamount to cheating- ed*).



And so, it was five minutes after midnight that I departed and rode up the M6 etc. to beautiful Central Scotland, a painless trip - no that's not quite true, I got muscle ache in various parts of the anatomy But I arrived in plenty of time for signing on and enjoyed a glorious day of riding in the event. At the End of the run I stand around expecting the usual presentation ceremony with a quiet glow of Confidence, as it had been a 400-mile journey all on the day. Here I run into an unforeseen snag, as The Central Scottish section of the VMCC had adjusted the format a little and the awards were to be Presented later at an evening dinner, a splendid idea except that I had accommodation booked in Penrith and a deadline. And so not knowing the outcome of my venture, I headed south.

Did I win? YES! Third time lucky, and the said trophy arrived a little later by post.

Finally, to the MZ connection. The snag with trophy hunting is it can be addictive and after the initial High I was getting withdrawal symptoms. I felt just a little uneasy about winning the Distance award on a relatively young 850cc Moto Guzzi, it was too easy, it should be more of a challenge so why not repeat the exercise using a neglected 1977 MZ TS 250/1; there should be just enough time to cover the distance prior to the final signing on time of 9 am.

A little potted history of this machine, it was acquired for fifty pounds minus a dynamo rotor, and despite Having been in storage for some years, was up and running pretty rapidly and MOT issued. A bargain I thought, then followed a period of bad luck. First a small end failure pretty much wrecked the engine, resolved by Fred Rogers at Winsford and I got on with running in the rebuilt motor. Right At the end of the 500 miles it developed an electrical problem giving a running distance of around 5 miles prior to the loss of ignition. Much cleaning of contacts, exchanging components and seeking advice failed to resolve the problem which I am sure was only minor but I lost patience and threw the cheque book at it and fitted the 12v electronic MZ-B SYSTEM - an absolute transformation and I have no regrets, it's excellent now. The ignition snag was resolved about 3 weeks prior to the 2004 Scottish National leaving little time for fine tuning and building up confidence in its reliability.

The National Rally attempt followed the previous format northbound and was very straightforward. The only MZ generated snags being a high fuel consumption around 45 mpg and this was probably due to a heavy right hand and no time to fine tune the carb prior to departure leading to conservatively rich Settings and also an indicator fault caused by a poor contact on the in line fuse holder, cured by rolling The fuse in situ.

The journey up was dry with no tech stops though I ran onto reserve once, prompting more frequent Fuel stops. Arrival in Blairgowrie was in good time, around 7.50 am and in glorious sunshine. I get Myself signed on and I have a late start at 11.11 am so plenty of time for a traditional big breakfast In town, then return to pitch tent, admire the machines and watch the early departures.

The Concourse judges were very polite about my outdoor living and somewhat scabby model, never mind the looks - it does the job!

Off on the regularity run, the day becomes a little showery but I only get damp in the afternoon. I find the work load high, after many years of two crew sharing the navigation and time keeping doing both Solo requires some concentration. Curiously enough there were no volunteers to fill the pillion of my MZ. After the run I relax and socialise as the riders slowly disperse, again this year the awards are to be presented at the evening dinner and this time I am ready, my tent is pitched. Dinner was a truly splendid affair at the Angus Hotel in town but it is curious how fellow motorcyclists with whom you have spent the full day dressed in helmets and waterproofs are so hard to recognise in jackets and ties!



Anyway, did I win the Furthest Distance Travelled Award as hoped for? No. A serious long-distance Vincent rider came all the way from Wells, Somerset but the Central Scottish section very kindly presented Me with the award for Most Meritorious Achievement - a delightful surprise and another trophy! After A leisurely ride home on the Sunday I was back in time for a celebratory pint at the local and Contemplation of the weekend - 900 miles on the MZ, due to the lower speed the trip left me with no Muscle pain and an enormous amount of respect for the machine.

As regards to the chasing of trophies, with hindsight they are really only a motivation to get out there and use our machines the way they should be; no regrets though.

So, what shall I have a crack at next year??

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Next, Chris Biddiscombe tells us about his love of flying saucers, little wonder we have crop circles around here, with nutters like these living amongst us...

### **THE CARLO SPECIAL**

In 1999, Yeovil decided to twin with a number of European cities, one being Samerate in Italy; the link being helicopters - *Westland/Agusta Samerate* was a few miles from Agusta factory in Northern Italy.

As I was a member of the Westland bike club at the time (*before following the shining path to the mighty Dorset section -ed*) and word got around that a party of Italians were coming to Yeovil and would we like to meet up? So, with a gathering of the Mayor, Council and Yeovil twinning, the biker gang arrived and a good time was had by all. As a planned return trip had been suggested for the following Spring, it was felt this would be a good ride and my name was duly added.

So, off we set about 12 bikes, with a few wives in tow; about 20 people in all. The Mayor and Co flew ahead to prepare the Italians of our arrival, as it turned out we were welcomed like returning conquering heroes; it seemed they liked motor bikes - maybe something to do with MV Agusta?

Good friends were made, the Parianis and the Bonfiglios becoming family friends for the next 20 years. At the first banquet, after the best ravioli and a number of bottles of red wine we all met up with Arturo Magni, former team manager of MV racing team manager. Would we like to go and see his factory? well it was only 11pm after all and so of we all jumped into the back of his van.

This pattern was followed for the next 20 years, restaurants were opened midweek until midnight, followed by 'do you want a gelato?' which meant a 20-mile trip to Lake Como and walking the shores at one o'clock in the morning.

By 2013 my thoughts turned to an Italian classic and as Amando Bonfiglio had something like thirty or even forty motorcycles, I asked if anything was available.

Amando was an Italian who would wave his arms a lot, jump up and down and then take you out for dinner so you were never sure what he would do next, so little was forthcoming until a few days before we were due to depart. He then showed me a MV leaflet from Carlo Ubbiali (9 times world champion) who had some bikes for sale. Would it be an ex-works DOHC 250, I mused? Sorry NO, mostly small bikes and scooters, but there was a *125sports* which looked complete.

Now I was not looking for a 125 but it looked good and belonged to an ex-world champion so I asked how much? Carlo wanted over £2000 (top price), he wanted cash *and* he was not going to sell it to an Englishman! But this wasn't a problem, just like a lot of things in Italy, you just need some lateral thinking. My friend Amando would



therefore buy the bike and just not tell Carlo it was destined for me; so, did I want to purchase a 125 unseen for cash? Yes of course I did!

The money was sent by a friend's son who worked for Agusta in Italy and a few months later Amando called to say he had the bike, so a round trip of 2000 miles in my van with my friend Tony co-driving got us there in 20 hours. The bike looked ok, but having paid top money I asked if Ubbiali had any history of the bike. It transpired this was Carlo's own bike which he built in the factory out of a 125cc engine and a new 150 frame and running gear; he'd owned it for 50 years, used it to ride to work on and as a pit bike when racing. Things were looking promising.

We were then asked how we were getting back home? Up through Switzerland, I offerered. NO NO NO! Customs will want to know where the bike came from! I took their suggestion, hoping this had nothing to do with the tax man, and we returned via France. I've never been checked before or since at customs with any other bike bought from Italy, but this was the first one and so we took the long way back to the UK.



Back home, let's see what we have. Clean the tank and carburettor - it starts 3rd kick, running like a sewing machine and has continued to do so for the last 7yrs (I had to clean and adjust the points once). What else? a new exhaust to replace the racing pipe, tank painted, but the rest left alone, including the silver painted

wheels. The little MV had lights but no wiring loom so a friend made a new one and after getting the MV owners club to sort out the dating it was on the road.

This bike had a racing exhaust, no speedometer nor lights and was never road registered. But being an ex-world champion, being stopped by the *Polizia* would never be an issue, it would be they who were requesting autographs, after all.



So, to the road and for a 125 it went well, maybe Carlo breathed on it but after a near miss with a Range Rover it was felt the brakes and wheels needed looking at. On telling this to a friend he said he had a Suzuki front wheel from a T500 and why not check to see if it would fit. The wheel spindle was the same and other than the brake plate being the opposite way round, it was all fitted with little difficulty, requiring only the fabrication of a brake arm. This simple job

sorted the brakes, wheel rim and speedo drive- well, nearly. The drive was double the speed so my 120km rated speedo would go right round to the stop! MV owners club to the rescue again and a second-hand 180km unit was installed. I've ended up with an ex-world champion's 125 that starts first kick stops on a sixpence and will do 160 downhill (*still won't catch the secretary's new Stella- or will it?- ed*).

I would like to think Carlo would happy if he knew an Englishman was ragging his (works bike) around the Dorset lanes.



Ciao,

Chris

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Section member John Young (*no, not that one, nor the other one, I mean this one-ed*) with the Douglas that he's yet to campaign on our runs but looks 100% ready for combat, happens to have a close family connection with one of the more famous names in motorcycling. He's kindly shared this story, along with photographs from Bruce's personal collection. Please enjoy.

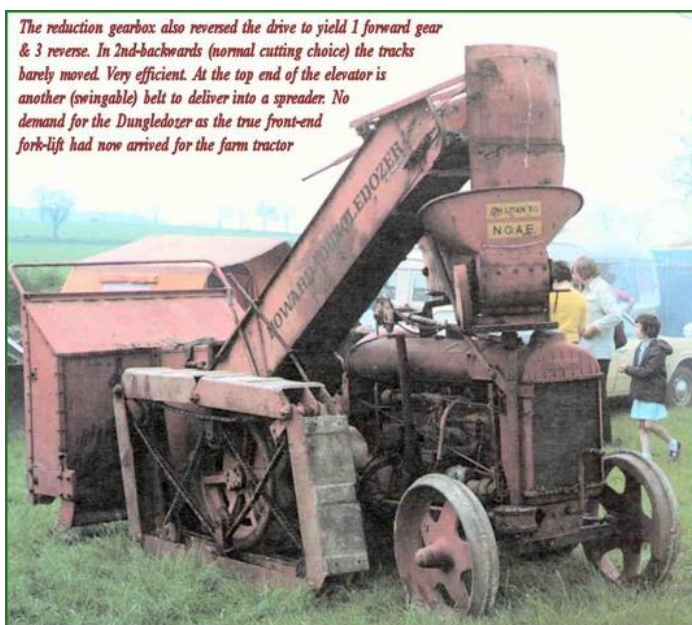
## Bruce Main-Smith

Many of our section members will have heard of the name Bruce Main-Smith through his publishing of pamphlets and reprinting of manuals for motorcycles. He also had other strings to his bow. Born Gerald Bruce Main-Smith in 1929 into a family with an engineering background he inherited his father's engineering interest and his mother's bravado.

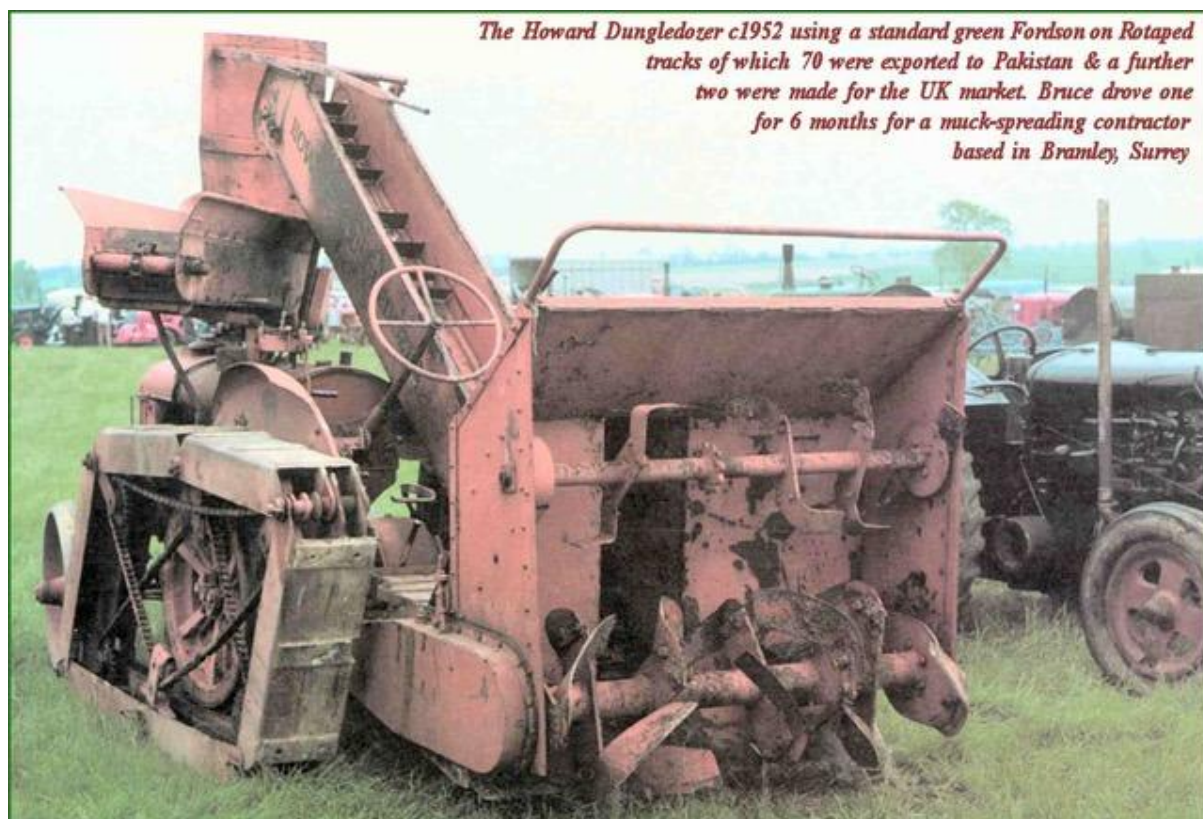
His father was the chief designer of 'Fido' - Fog Investigation & Dispersal Operation F.I.D.O. - British Pathé <https://www.britishpathe.com> > video > f-i-d-o. which was intended to keep runways clear of fog for bombers taking off and landing. Later his father was involved in the development of atomic weapons. Bruce's mother was from the Nettlefold family who made screws and other threaded fasteners. She was a very accomplished motorcyclist and motorist and was the first person to drive a vehicle to the summit of Plynlimmon in Wales. This was in a Bullnosed Morris with rear wheel brakes only – quite the feat.

Bruce was packed off at an early age to boarding prep schools. Later he attended Farnham Boys Grammar School and lived at home.

His father was by then working at the Royal Aircraft Establishment. When he left school he was too young for the forces so went to work for the Surrey War Agricultural



Committee driving tractors and an incredible machine called a Dungleozer, which lifted manure from dung heaps and loaded it into spreaders. Some were built for export but only two worked in the UK as front loaders for tractors were already being introduced. To get around Bruce bought a 1928 350 cc pushrod Ivory Calthorpe for £5. He ran it for a year and then sold it for £15.



His long-term girlfriend was Moira Brunton but her mother wasn't keen on the 'ginger nob with a motorbike' and they went their separate ways. Moira eventually married someone else as did Bruce, both later being widowed, Moira in 1991 and Bruce in 1993. A year later. They were reintroduced by a friend and got married.

After his tractor driving job which he so enjoyed he once told me he'd have paid to do it he enlisted in 1949 for pilot training in the RAF and eventually passed out on Harvards. He was due to start jet training but after seeing a friend killed in a crash before his very eyes he bought himself out.



In the meantime Bruce had been one of the original thirty eight motorcyclists who met on 28th April 1946 at the Lounge Cafe on The Hog's Back to found the VMCC.

While we are on the subject of The Hog's Back.....He was a great friend of Mike Hawthorn. BM-S had an HRD with big Busmar sidecar. He eventually removed this lump and re-gearred the bike for speed. On the way home one evening Hawthorn pulled alongside him on his Comet, gave Bruce 'the finger' and opened up expecting Bruce to be unable to keep up with his





sidecar geared bike. BM-S was in fact in third gear but Hawthorne assumed from the sound of the bike that it was in top. He didn't know that the HRD was about to blow him off the road with its new higher gearing which it promptly did.

Bruce's next job was right up his street as he became a staff reporter on Motorcycling magazine under editor Bob Halliday. Here he was able to test ride any number of new machines plus he was allowed time off to ride for the Norton works team as long as he wrote reports on his races for the magazine. He worked there for twelve years until the merger with Motor Cycle when he and a number of other staff left because they weren't happy with the new regime.



He then started his own firm B M-S Publishing over the next years until selling up in 1991. He wrote forty six books on motorcycling, published the Kieg Collection of photographs, all three volumes of his great friend 'Titch' Allen's Vintage Road Test Journals, and hundreds of reprints of workshop manuals and handbooks. Something many of you may not know is that he also wrote a regular item for Railway Modeller Magazine and had a strong interest in electronics, railways, traction engines, buses and lorries.

You may wonder why I'm writing about BM-S. My connection is that my girlfriend in 1966 was Moira's daughter by her first husband Peter Holloway and by coincidence we did much the same as Moira and Bruce did. We went our separate ways for thirty three years and got back together in 2000. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that my new father in law to be was B M-S!

BM-S and Moira's final home was at Blackfield near Southampton and on one visit there I was told "George from the Vincent Owners Club is coming over." How surprised was I to see George 'Ginger' Matthews from Fareham come through the door who was an old pal of mine of forty years or more from steam traction engine circles. All that time and I never knew that George had been a successful racer of Vincents!

BM-S had a stroke in 2017 from which he never fully recovered and in April 2018 he fell down the stairs at home (he would never use the stairlift) and sustained a head injury resulting in the onset of dementia. After a spell in Southampton General Hospital he was moved to Casterbridge Manor nursing home, Cerne Abbas where he pulled his bike onto its stand for the last time on 6th October. The funeral at Yeovil Crematorium was like a who's who of the motorcycling world with representatives from the Vincent and Velocette clubs and many others



One of Bruce's greatest achievements was in the 24 hours at 100 mph world record of 1961.

Here's his report in *Motor Cycling*:

### **Velocette's 24 HOURS AT 100.05mph.....**

The managing director of Veloce Ltd, Bertie Goodman and "MotorCycling" journalist Bruce Main-Smith headed a team of French riders for the successful attempt and his report in "MotorCycling" follows. This record still stands to this day even after BMW attempted to wrest it from Velocette until their bike was scrutinised after the attempt and found to be not 500 but 600cc! *(the cads! Just wait until I confront those BMW riders in our section -ed)*

### **OUR 24 HOURS AT 100.05**

Bruce Main-Smith on the main straight.....

WELL, we did it! World's Records at both 12 and 24 hour levels have been broken-by driving a virtually " stock Venom" at full bore. Absolutely against the stop, for all those arduous hours, both by day and by night at Montlhéry, near Paris last week-end.



Frenchman Georges "The Fox" Monneret (seated) and Bruce Main-Smith of *Motor Cycling* ready for the 1961 Velocette 500cc worlds 24hr record at 100mph

For a push-rod " 500 " on a mere 8.75 : 1 c.r. to scuttle round in flying laps of the 110 m.p.h. order, on perhaps the worst track anywhere, is something of which not only Veloce must be very proud but the entire British industry.

The 24-hr. record has not only been wrested from a foreign machine-and by nearly four mph but it has been hoisted to over the 100 m.p.h. mark. If only

you could know the appalling condition of the track and the organizational handicaps over which the Velocette triumphed you would realize just what this record means.

As a participating rider, I can report that the machine had to do more than stand continuous full-bore-it had to go quickly enough to make good deficiencies arising front insufficient preparation not attributable, I am glad to say, to anyone hailing from this side of the Channel.



*No more record-breaking these days . . . Flashback to 1961 and the Velocette 100 m.p.h. record. Left, Georges Monneret; right, Robert Laconte. The mechanic is Jack Passant*

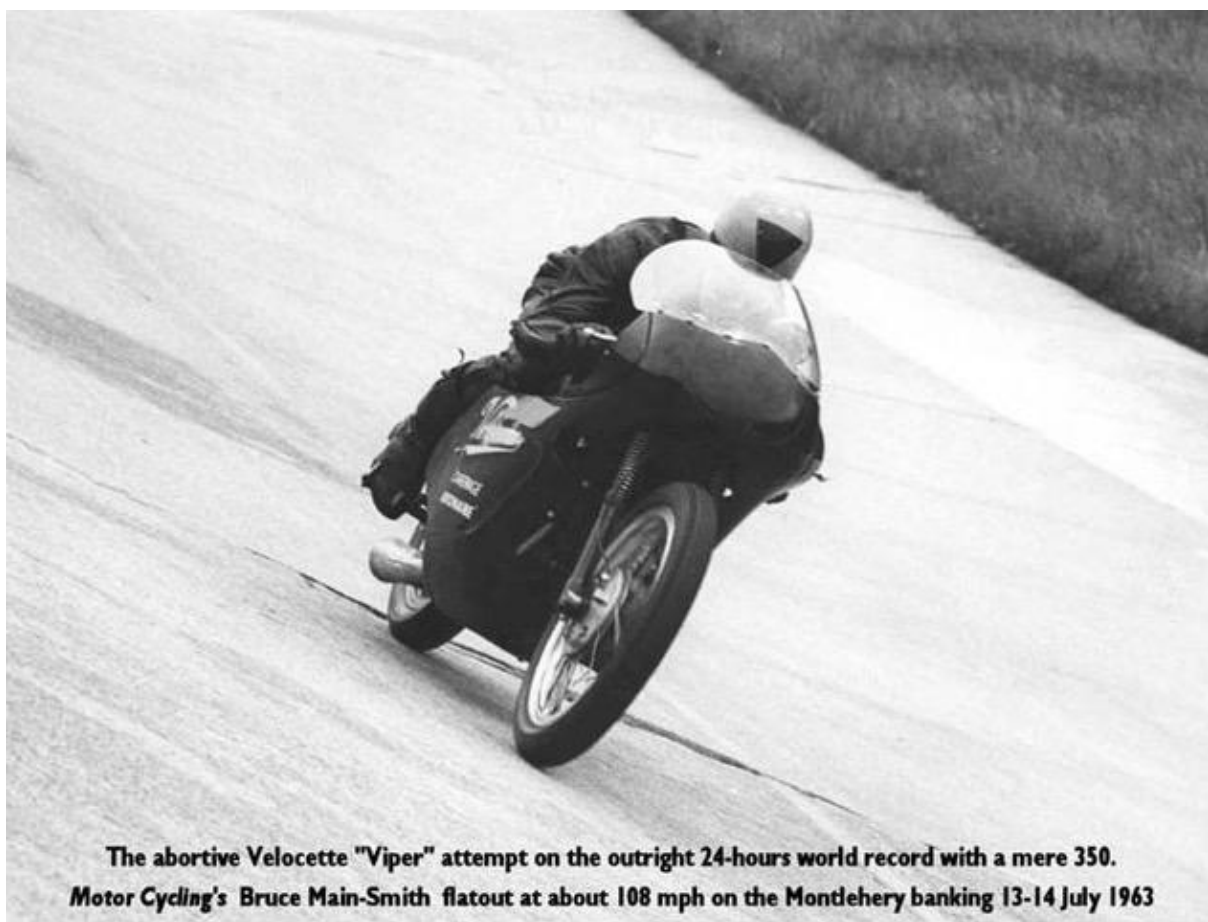
Veloce spent months carefully proving an almost standard "Venom". As any private owner could do, they took it from stock as a normal "Venom Vee-line Clubman," tuned to give both torque and power rising to peak at 5,800 to 5,900 rpm. Using the 1 3/16" in. Amal G.P. as rich as possible, it developed 39.8 bhp. On its 3.92:1 top gear it was able to lap at 110 to 112 mph. which it held for all of every lap-no throttling back anywhere for anything other than pit stopping. A good lap is done in 52 sec. and a poor one in 54½/55.

Now a word about the circuit de vitesse de Montlhéry. It is a bowl-shaped, concrete-banked slice of medieval punishment. It has two minute straights, and two torture-inflicting pieces of bump infested purgatory described as high-speed banking. On this anti-clockwise course is painted a yellow median line which is the official distance. One must not go below this according to the regulations.



In fact, at 110 mph the line is about the lowest point of the banking at which to ride and during the actual attempt most pilots were about a yard-and-a-half higher to avoid the bumpier track lower down. One is then too high and stays up by leaning over to the right (relative to the banking), which unfortunately hastens tyre wear.

The bankings are concrete, cast in 25-yd. sections. Between some of them it is possible to insert one's clenched fist, often the flat of the hand, and regularly do we see daylight through the gap from the yellow line to the top. The two straights are flat and hardly worthy of the name. There is a rapid change of contour from banking to straight. I had under 10 practice laps, of which half were done at night by the standard illumination of 50 car headlamps provided by Marchal ; the "Venom's" electrics were dispensed with.



This was totally insufficient for an utter stranger to Montlhéry. It was a thoroughly chastened B.M.-S. who came in from his last permitted practice period and I was seriously doubtful of my ability to do more than 10 laps at a stretch, let alone an hour's worth (60 laps). Back at my hotel I stripped off in front of a mirror to study the extensive bruising on the rib cage. On the strength of the few laps on the second session (in the dark). the riders

were selected. the faster ones to be used. They were Pierre Cherrier. Alain Dagan, Bertie Goodman, André Jacquier-Bret, Robert Leconte, Bruce Main-Smith, 55-year-old Georges Monneret and Pierre Monneret.

For weeks beforehand it had been insisted that March 18-19 would be excellent weather. Therefore, it was not necessary to make use of the perfect days immediately preceding. At 7.30 a.m. it was raining. By 8.27 the attempt was set in motion by Georges Monneret who was supervising matters for the French end.

Georges dashes round in the 51-52 second bracket. His son Pierre takes over and is even quicker. I walk round to the back half of the course invisible to the control tower (a wood intervenes) and study la ligne de Pierre. Riders meanwhile change over every hour and the speed remains well above 105 m.p.h. To run for longer intervals would not be possible anyway with a touring tank of 3.7 gallons capacity.

Dunlop's Dennis Durbridge wields his depth gauge during pit stops and estimates tyre consumption at two front and four rear, and notes that wear was related to riders. The rear was actually changed at six hours in three minutes. a tribute to the Velocette q.d. wheel system.

At 5.30 Georges is in the saddle again and has some trouble starting. Carelessness in filling the tank from the two polythene buckets of Esso has left a pool under the machine through which the machine's driving wheel rolls. Consequently, the rear wheel skids. After dark Alain Dagan takes over and Circulates in 52.8 sec at 107.8 m.p.h. When Pierre Monneret pulls in at the end of his stint, in which the 12-hr. record has fallen, both tyres and the rear chain are changed and I am kitted up to be dispatched. On attempting to select bottom cog for the bump start it is realized that the internal gear mechanism has been bent by some rider stamping on the pedal.

Jack Passant has the trouble rectified and the total deficit is 33 min., all of which I have spent outside in the dark to help the eyes. I hop in the saddle, shout Allez.

Allez, the feet of the pushers patter, the motor catches first drop of the clutch and I feed it in doing a cautious entry on to the dark circuit. To save the clutch I drive through the megaphonitis to get onto the trumpet and, although I cannot see the rev-counter in the track lighting, I know the power comes in at 4,500.

I take it very easily through the gears and hope that the gearbox trouble is nothing very serious and that the box doesn't lock up. As I come down the home straight I am on full song in top and the motor is running superbly, not a tingle of vibration and giving an impression of utter indestructibility.



Frankly, at 110 mph up on the bumpy banking, in the dark on a strange bike and track I am genuinely frightened. The lights at the pits come round amazingly soon on each lap, but the punishment from the bumps is awful. My nose and mouth run on to the chin pad on to which I press my head to keep it behind the screen, through which I look for the entire lap. I can just see the yellow line. I cannot use either the main footrests or the pillion ones properly, but pull a

muscle in my right thigh when I try the latter. I try to relax the arms completely, as Pierre advised me, but find this difficult to do, though I know it is quite safe, for the Velo is steering over the atrocious surface in the way this marque always does, taut, waggle-free, 100% safe. But I have to hold on to the bars for how else to keep on?

The pits signal that my speed is good, but I wonder how long I can stick it. I get to know exactly which bumps will cause the front forks to deflect fully and where these " friends" will be. Anticipating them with the certainty of their presence I find to be bad and try to forget.

It seems an eternity. I watch a bright star gradually sink below the north-west banking and reason that some slice of time must have elapsed. But how much? The noise from the mega. chases me round the track like a wild beast. I decide to pack it in. No, keep the British flag flying-show the French that we too can do it...

I manage three laps on the patriotism theme. Next I try the 'Duty to the Readers' one. Also good for several laps. Then I'm paid to do this (So help me!)---result, more laps. Then argue with myself about whether I use opposite lock to lift up from the banking. By now (though I do not know, of course) some 45 min. have elapsed. The next problem is the sameness of the course at all points. The rhythm of one's fast, regular, monotonous progress. I realize I am getting hypnotized by the pattern of what I see. I look at the Velocette, the fairing, the red lanterns, the illuminated score- board and the stars, always coming back speedily to the yellow line 3 ft. to my left under the spinning front wheel. After 52 minutes - some 60 laps that is - I know it would sabotage the attempt if I continued. I come in, remembering the advice to shut off very early because of the misjudgement that results from the monotony of set high speeds. Somebody helps me off the bike as I shout *un autre pilot*. An English voice says "Good show!" - Mentally I thank him for his kindness. but know that 60 laps is not a full stint and feel that I have let the side down.

Another Frenchman goes out and is pulled in after several laps as not being quick enough. André Jacquier-Bret lasts for 35 laps and retires with eye trouble. Pierre Monneret does a full stint at 106.9 mph., the scoreboard says. Cherrier tries his hand and after a few 105.6 mph laps gets off the trumpet in a low gear and

crawls. He ignores pit signals and after three laps comes in talking of fog on the course-eyes once more. Georges Monneret fits a stint about here while I cat-nap and he too packs in after half an hour with blurred vision-but he's fast. Robert Leconte, a little slow it is true. stays on for a long while.

At 5.30 a.m. I go on again. Just my luck to get the time of lowest ebb of one's vitality.

I last 30 laps but seek consolation in seeing 105, 106 and even 109 mph. on the scoreboard and being officially credited with the fastest night-time lap of 52.4 sec. Bertie Goodman, who has not ridden at Montlhéry before in the dark, sets a formidable full stint of 54-sec. 105.5 mph laps. Alain Dagan does yet another hour of rapid, consistent laps.

After the dawn I offer to go out again-less frightened now, know the track a bit better and some blimps like old friends. Bertie puts in another hour. Then Monneret Snr. again, to beat the mileage of the old record by 8 o'clock. Another 10 minutes and he is stopping with cold hands. Dagan staunchly jumps on and finishes the remaining time.

I watch the official measurement. The engine comes down in perfect shape. I feel damned tired. I make for my hotel and the largest, softest bed they have to offer.



A little tale BM-S told me about this event was that they had their tyres in a small garden shed to which the Guinness Book of Records scrutineer had the key. At a brief piston to change tyres the scrutineer undid the padlock but couldn't open the door. After a lot of

banging one of the French riders emerged pulling on his leathers closely followed by a rather flushed French girl with her blouse undone. That nearly lost Velocette the record!

Tremendous stuff, thank you John!

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And that's just about it for this edition of LDN. I'll assume that there will be an 8<sup>th</sup> and, sorry to have to further report, there will be part two of my early adventures in motorcycling- being seventeen. That just leaves me with the quiz from last week, what was this?



The answer of course- it's a piece from one of these!





Oh look, here's a picture of some cheating rogue on a BMW, doubtless trying to beat Ago and claim his records as well as Velocette's! Looks like he may have overshoot, or perhaps he's taking a shortcut; typical of the type and not to be trusted...

Hope you've enjoyed this issue, keep well and stay safe and hopefully we'll all be back to riding and not reading in the very near future.

Paul Miles