



ONCE UPON A TIME or KNOW YOUR CLUB

Once upon a time a group of seven Yeadon motorcyclists, two with pillion passengers, met one Sunday in May 1926 (note the date) for a Sunday run up Wharfedale. The objective was to watch riders in the Yorkshire Central Trial climb or attempt to climb Park Rash near Kettlewell. (You can now take your car over this lovely moorland road into Wensleydale and Middleham passing the old pub of James Herriot fame at Horse houses without trouble), but in those days the organisers of the London-Edinburgh run had horses standing by to pull cars up the hill.

The intrepid explorers then returned to Kettlewell for a five-course lunch at 26/6 (£1.35) each. This lunch was enlivened by one gentleman tackling his fish course with a dessert knife and was afterwards seen to negotiate the apple pie with his fish eaters.

The afternoon was spoilt by a heavy rainstorm, and it was a cold and miserable procession of budding clubmen that made its way back to Yeadon. However, their enthusiasm was not dampened, and a meeting was called for later in the month.

After the wet start recorded last month, a meeting for Yeadon motorcyclists was arranged for June 1926 at F & H Crofts Garages in Marshall Street which was attended by 28 would be Clubmen. The seating arrangements. To say the least, they were limited and there was keen competition for the use of oil drums, buckets and trestle tables. (Just fancy a meeting without any beer).

However, despite the primitive arrangements a full complement of officials was elected and a complete set of rules worked out. Mr. Harry Lamb of The Clothier's Arms, Yeadon, was approached and agreed to be the first Club President.

The Yeadon and District M.C. was now established with headquarters at The Clothier's Arms and was officially affiliated with the A.C.U. Yorkshire Centre on the 22nd of March 1927. The affiliated fees being 1/6 (7 ½ p) per member (it is now 25p) and subscriptions 5/- (25p) per year (NB: I have the affiliation document).

Your Club now has a proper committee and officials organized their first 'Super Sporting Trial' and called it 'The President's Trial' which was reported at the time as follows:

'A well supported and arranged event. We offer our heartiest congratulations to our neighbours the Horsforth & D.M.C. who came in force and, incidentally, collard two of our best awards. The severity of the course is now well known but we may say that every rider who completed the course within the time limit has every reason to be proud of his performance. (How's that for encouragement). The large crowd who congregated at Dob Park in the afternoon (presumably after the lunch stop) was an illustration of the immense interest which is taken in the doings of the Club not only by motorcyclists but by the general public. (Just think about this next paragraph). We now suggest that another trial be arranged to open to all who organised, marked or checked in any Club Trial. We should have 15 or so entrants and the event to be run by those who have so far competed but not officiated.



Results:

1 st	R. Smith	494cc Triumph	Horsforth & D.M.C.
2 nd	W. Seasons	499cc Triumph	Horsforth & D.M.C.
3 rd	J. Gilbert	498cc A.J.S.	Y. & D.M.C
4 th	R. Wood	499cc Rudge	Y. & D.M.C

It is unfortunate that our No. 1 magazine does not give details of the route apart from Dob Park, but no doubt Pock stones Moor would be included. It must be remembered that these lads used their ride to work machines fitted with standard tyres and lights and that there would be a time check at each end of Pock stones, so that to cross the Moor in 20 minutes was quite an achievement.

Incidentally our longest serving President, Gerald V. Williamson of Menston, took over that office in 1932 and his enthusiasm and hard work during his nine years as President built up the activities of the Club until his death in 1940 as a result of an air crash whilst serving with the R.A.F.

Well to get back to 1932, our fixture list for that year listed 27 motorcycle events from April to October, (the winter events being mainly social activities such as dances and suppers) comprising 10 Camping Weekends, 8 Social Runs and only 6 Trials actually organised by the Club.

The Club possessed its own camping gear at that time, and we would set off after work on the Saturday afternoon, (yes, we worked a 5 ½ day week in those days) with wives and girlfriends to Morecambe, Cayton Bay, or other East Coast resorts, returning on the Sunday evening.

And what are Social Runs you may ask. Well, we would set off on a Sunday morning for a run to say Scarborough, the Peak District or Runswick Bay with as many as 20 machines. Most of them having a girl on the pillion and led by the captain with the rear covered by the whipper-in to take care of stragglers. At the end of the day the run usually ended in a local pub for a jar and a natter.

One popular run was to Park Rash near Kettlewell which was then an unmade road consisting of loose limestone rocks and the lads would make attempts to ride up it, feet up which in fact was quite difficult with standard machines having girder forks and no rear springing. Incidentally, I was reading in the August copy of the Dalesman that in the 17th Century the Coach Road from London to Richmond came through Skipton, up Wharfedale and up Park Rash into Coverdale to Middleham and Richmond, passing through the villages of Horse houses, presumably so named as a station for changing horses.

Trials in the 1930's were of three types, Main Road, Semi-Sporting and Sporting.

The Course for Main Road events were all on tarmac roads at an average speed of 20 mph and each rider was issued with a Route Card giving mileage to and time of arrival at each



check point. The penalty allowance being 5 seconds early or late, the one mark for every 10 seconds outside the allowance. We solo riders had to read the Route Card held in a transparent case held around the neck, keep one eye on our synchronised watch carried in a container strapped around the waist and keep the other eye on the road. It was quite easy to get lost, and if you had to stop to read your Route Card difficult to average even 20 mph, especially in the rain.

In later years when cars took over from motorcycles in these events the assistance of a Navigator made life easier for the driver, except in most cases of husband-and-wife crews, (well known for a difference of opinion between and right turn and a left turn).

Well, that's enough for this month, more about our Trials and Tribulations next time.

I told you about the main road Trials and Social Runs of the 1930's in our last issue, so now we come to the Rough Stuff:

There were two types of Trial – The Sporting and the Semi Sporting, of the two the Sporting Trials were of the Scott and Ilkley Grand National type, though admittedly not as rough as the present-day events, I remember the Ilkley Grand National starting from Licks Car Park in Otley in 1936 used such sections as Dob Park Splash, The Washburn River a West End (now under Thrusscross Reservoir of course). The same River at Hoodstorth (opposite Pees Wood) and Denton Moor. The last section being one of the gullies at the eastern end of the Chevin, where I had to retire with a burnt-out clutch. The Scott Trial also used the Footpath from the Skipton – Harrogate Road up Cat Craggs and the Centre Team Trial had one section on Poxtons Moor, the splash across the road at Harden Gill, where Alan Jeffries and I were the only two riders to lose no marks!! (lucky me) the Y&G team finishing second to Bradford. We also won the West Yorkshire Group Halifax Shield that year.

The Semi-Sporting Trails were easier in that they were mainly over tarmac or unmade roads, such as the road from Malham over to Arncliffe and Mastiles Lane with sections through ditches at the roadside and time checks with an allowance of one minute early or late and a mark lost every 10 seconds outside the allowance. The Course being anything from 50 to 75 miles in length and petrol at 1/7 (8p) per gallon.

Also, during the 30's the Clubs greatest achievement was the winning of the All England National Rally in 1935 led by our President Gerald Williamson and seven members who each covered 700 miles. The scoring system being miles covered by all members multiplied by the percentage of Club Members entered in the event. Riders had to visit as many control points as possible. The Maximum of 700 miles had to be covered between 8:30am on Saturday and 11am on Sunday, which gave an average speed of 25 mph and a sore backside even with the extra foam rubber padding in the saddle. Remember there were no rear springing and smooth motorways to give an easy ride.

We also won the rally in 1936 and 1937 as a result of which our then Secretary Jimmy Gilbert pointed out to the A.C.U that having won the Rally three years in succession we



should be allowed to keep it and (surprisingly?) the A.C.U agreed to this, so the Trophy is held by the President each year until it goes on the table at the Annual Dinner.

So those were the activities of our formative years under the leadership of our Presidents – Harry Lamb (1926) Jimmy Ives (1927-30) Charlie Rothera (1931) and Gerald Williamson (1932-40) with membership increasing from the original 26 to 140 and closing with a small Annual Dinner at The Royalty on Yorkgate in January 1940 after the outbreak of World War Two.

So, to conclude this episode here is the final effort from our first Secretary, Sid Kirkbright, alias S. Keamo (The Polar Poet):

A man on a new Federation
Encountered a train near the station
His brakes went amiss
Friends, please accept this
The only intimation

The history of the Club up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 was reported in last month's Motor mag, but before going on to activities in the Post War years I would like to mention three notable achievements: - Firstly the winning of the Halifax Shield for the best performance in Group Trials in 1936, and runners up in 1937 losing out to Bradford & D.M.C by a mere 12 points.

The Yeadon Guiseley Club Team of F. Clayton, W. Hinchliffe, & D.T Smith also finished second to Bradford in the Yorkshire Centre Team Trail in 1936, their team I believe was Alan Jeffries, Eddy Flintoff and Charlie Helm.

Another triumph during these years was winning the A.C.U National Rally (open to all A.C.U affiliated Clubs in England) in 1935, 36 and 37 and as a result of this feat we persuaded the A.C.U to let us keep the Rally Trophy. It is now kept by the President during his term of office and put on display at the Annual Dinner.

How was the Rally organised? Well, after sending in his entry form each rider received his number plate, control card, and a list of all control points throughout the country. For maximum mileage he had then to plan his route, to start at 8:00 am on Saturday morning and to finish at the final control between 9:00 and 11:00 am on Sunday morning, a maximum of 27 hours travelling time, visiting as many controls as possible and the overall speed not to exceed 27mph.

The Competitor's score was the total mileage covered plus two points for every control visited. 700 miles and over gained a Gold Plaque, over 600 miles a Silver, over 500 miles a Bronze. The Club's score was the total points of our riders multiplied by percentage of members competing. To give an example, in 1937 our President – G.V. Williamson and seven members won Golds, but Bill Cowling and myself were not so fortunate. We started from a garage at Woodside, Horsforth and called at Huddersfield, Manchester, then Warrington



(where Bill came off on some greasy sett, of course it was raining in Lancashire, and broke a footrest which lost a lot of time making repairs) on to Chester and into Wales where we stopped at Bala for lunch at 2pm having covered only 124 miles in 6 hours.

We pushed on then through Dolgelly, Aberystwyth, Builth, Brecon to Monmouth where we stopped for some tea having covered the next 160 miles in 6 hours. It was dark now as we pushed on through Cheltenham, Oxford and Northampton to Wellingborough where we had great difficulty in finding the Control and losing a lot more time and did not reach Cambridge until 3:30am having covered this section of 167 miles in 7 ½ hours which put paid to our chances of winning a coveted Gold. Then between Cambridge and Thetford I actually fell asleep on the bike so we had to pull up for a rest.

Dawn was breaking as we started the last lap, (determined to exceed 600 miles for a Silver) through Norwich, Kings Lynn and Boston to the finish at Skegness, a distance of 163 miles in 5 hours. A grand total of 613 miles in 24 ½ hours, at an average speed of 25mph including all stops, trials and tribulations. Not a high average but then there were no motorways of even dual carriageways and it was more of an achievement than it would be today with faster and well sprung machines. We enjoyed it in retrospect.

Did you know that Once Upon a Time Y & G catered for Scrambles? Well, we did and our first event was a rather haphazard affair on some land near Dawsons Corner on the Leeds-Bradford Road at Stanningley. I am afraid I have no records of this event and don't remember much about it.

However, when we then transferred our attention to Yeadon Moor (or Rawdon Common to give it its proper name) where we ran a series of 12 events between 1953 & 1962.

The first event was the Coronation Scramble in May 1953 which attracted an entry of 29 riders, including Pat Hird, Stan Crosswaite, John Morton, J.K Hirst and Tom Wortley. The machines they rode being 3 Triumphs, 8 Matchless, 1 Ariel, 3 Nortons, 5 B.S.S., 5 Dots, 2 A.J.S., and 2 Royal Enfield's, sadly practically all out of production now. The award for the best performance of the day being the Filtrate Trophy presented by Edward Joy & Sons Ltd. of Leeds and now used as a Trials award.

1954 saw two restricted Scrambles in May and August with only 24 entries – Ray Dell, Eric Atkinson, Peter Fletcher and Peter Gaunt were among the entries.

In April 1955 we ran our first ever Group Scramble and the entry soared to 64 including 7 sidecar outfits for the first time. I remember this one as I scrounged a practice ride in Roy Cunliffe's 500 cc Ariel outfit and oh boy did my legs ache after only one lap of that bumpy course.

Up to the 1956 event we charged admission at the gate but that year the Lord's Day Observance Society stepped in and in future events all we could do was to flog programmes to raise the necessary cash.



1957, 1958 and 1959 saw three Group Scrambles with entries of 57, 66 and 98 respectively but in 1960 we ran the first of our Television Scrambles, one of the very first Motorcycle Scrambles in the country to be televised by ABC-TV from Manchester who sent Murray Walker and Dennis Parkinson as commentators. With a record entry of 99 the star of the meeting was Arthur Lampkin on his 250, 350 and 500 cc B.S.As and amongst the riders in the programme I notice F. Pickles and Pete Edmundson (Horsforth). P. Hird, Ron Fairburn and Barry Robinson (Y&G). This was a real money-making event with TV fees, advertising banners, programme adverts, catering rights, car park fees and programme sales, all of which involved a lot of pre-race organisation and support from Members, and if you don't mind me boasting a little, a free flight to the Isle of Man to the T.T. for my efforts as Secretary of the Meeting.

In 1961 another Scramble but not televised this time. However, in 1962 we ran our second TV event which was great success with racing on both Saturday and Sunday with 111 entries. There were two foreign machines an Aermacchi and an N.S.U but the Japanese had not yet arrived, so we were able to watch all the old faithful's.

However, this proved to be the last Scramble as some of the local residents threatened us a week before the event with legal action if we did not cancel the event. Seven days to cancel the TV, the adverts, the entries etc., it was just not on, and we persuaded them to let us run the event on an altered course for the last time. The Committee agreed to this as in view of the amount of work involved, members were losing interest, the TV people were turning to other clubs and the A.C.U. were taking an interest in the financial profits from the Television Companies: (D.T.S.).