

Classic sidecar news

Welcome to the second edition to the sidecar newsletter, I hope you thoroughly enjoyed the first copy and are all glad to be back racing or even just attending the meetings, having spoken to a few of you, you all seem keen to help us out trying to encourage more people back to fill those grids and the CRMC were lucky enough to get a few more sidecars at their Cadwell meeting and they also got a full grid of sidecars at Darley with is good news so let's keep spreading the word and getting those sidecars out there. We also have another treat for you all this edition, we have a guest writer who is sharing his experiences with you, if you would like to share your experiences with everyone or have a funny story etc, you'd like to tell everyone then please send it through and we'll add it to one of the following newsletters. We also have some more news for all you sidecar people out there, if you have a "sitter" outfit you are more than welcome to race with the CRMC so get in contact and book your space on the grid. Also guys and girls I just wanted to let you know about another meeting where classics are able to race and yes it may be a long way but it's another meeting in a year of uncertainty, its down at Lydden in Kent it's the sidecar burn up and if you are up for it then please contact simone@lyddenhill.co.uk for you entry forms and regs, please note that if it gets cancelled you will get a full refund.

We have a guest writer for this edition and it is with great thanks that we have an article from Peter Mann on his own experience of passengering and an article from his dad Steve Mann about the more mechanical side of racing.

In future editions of these newsletters I will hopefully be adding sections from you guys and girls out there, so feel free to email me I will be asking for things like: how did you get into racing? Your outfits, rebuilds etc.

Now onto the race report by Ian Johnson.

Darley Moor 22.08.2020 with CRMC.

Darley Moor, our second meeting in the very troubled 2020 season and we were back to having reserves. OK, Darley isn't the largest of grids, but never the less great to see so many crews supporting the class. Faces and outfits from the past such as Dave Crawford and Dave Baxter on the ex Stuart Digby Imp, new faces such as Allan Schofield and passenger Matthew Rostron, they topped the initial lap charts on their first outing with the CRMC, but they were bumped into second place on the grid by Sean Hegarty and James Neave. Rob Cook and Sister Emma were back out after some slight tweaking; hopefully the bike would feel better than at Cadwell. Danny Quirk had left the Vincent back at home and was now a passenger for Bob Dawson. It was great to see so many 750s out with this much British iron; they will soon need their own class! Vince Worthington and Mark Todd heading the 750 grid times (Ok on a 650XS Yamaha).

Race 5

Unfortunately the race was red flagged almost straight away when the 55 outfit of Rod and Darren Chapman flipped their outfit at the first bus stop. Rod returned to the circuit battered but OK, though his son Darren stayed a while in hospital to check out the menu for a few days; hopefully we will see him on his feet soon. Several outfits failed to make the start, including the 15 of Allan and Matthew after showing great pace in the practice. Sean and James led from the start, followed by Tony Thirkell and Trevor Johnson (no relative). Dave Gristwood,

passenger of the 5 outfit, jumped ship at Park Corner, leaving Mike Bellaby to ease the outfit back to the paddock single handed. Dave was battered but able to continue with the weekend's racing. Nick Houghton and Erica Latham were in a strong third place till lap 5 when Erica lost her grip at the hairpin and also tumbled out, damaging her crash helmet and ending their weekend. According to her Dad she has a very small head, the rest I can't repeat! Midfield Bob and Danny were having a great battle with Ged and Kevin Abrahams.

P1 750 winners were Vince and Mark, P2 Bob and Danny and P3 Sean and James.

Race 15

Sadly there were a couple of empty grid spaces, the two Daves' broken break disk stopping them from playing, but the 72 Norton of Ian Champ and Jordan Forest made it to the grid and saw the chequered flag.. perfect! Allan and Matthew initially chased Sean and James, but on lap 3 the yellow BMW spun at the hairpin losing them a lot of time. Tony and Trevor claimed the second place but it was the number 5 outfit of Mike and Dave, who had started from the back, making their way to the front with haste, taking second away from Tony and Trevor on the last lap.

Vince and Mark took the P1 win ahead of Matt Cox and Martin Beresford, with Ian and Jordan 3rd. Sean and James took the win from Mike and Dave. P2 winners were Bob and Danny.

Race 25 – Sunday

It was great to see the 42 BSA of Shaun Motsun and Lizzie Quinian on the grid after an overnight dash back home to pick up a new ignition system to breathe

life back into the motor. Andy Nourish was back after his electrical gremlins, but would retire on lap 3 with gear box issues. The Abraham's Vincent retired also on lap 3, as did Steve and Pete Mann on their 880XS Yamaha. Rob and Emma finally made it to the finish aboard their Honda CB750.

P1 winners were Vince and Mark, P2 Bob and Danny and P3 Sean and James.

Race 35

Another great race, sadly overshadowed by Ged and Kevin's accident on the last corner of the last lap after another enthralling battle with Bob and Danny. The Vincent went straight on at Paddock Corner, both crew members were taken to hospital, with Ged able to walk to the ambulance. We wish them both a swift and full recovery! At the time of writing this Ged, with one good hand, was checking out the state of the outfit, which fared far better than I thought it would, due to the heavy impact.

The Christie Honda with Sean and James took the win; 8 seconds ahead of Allan and Matthew, whilst the P2 winners were Bob and Danny after a great race with Ged and Kevin (till the last corner). P1 were Vince and Mark, just 0.3 seconds in front of Shaun and Lizzie. It was definitely touch and go, who was going to make it to the last corner in front.

It was another great weekend racing, for the sidecars. To all the injured parties – Get Well Soon from all the sidecar crews. A big thank you to team Nourish and Hegarty for helping out team Abrahams in their time of need. Stay Safe and we will do it all again at Pembrey (Covid permitting). Please stay on the outfits and on the track, it is much less painful and less stressful for those watching! And a big thank you to Doug Perkins for his generosity!



Mike Bellaby and Dave Gristwood had a rather mixed weekend.



Rob and Emma Cook doing well for a novice crew.



Rod and Darren Chapman had an unsuccessful weekend, speedy recovery guys hope to see you back out soon.



Sean Hegarty and James Neave had another successful weekend.

Passenger for dummies,

By Peter Mann.

20 laps, 360 corners, 3 blisters, 2 bruised legs, 1 set of ruined leathers and 2 HUGE smiles. That's Cadwell Park summed up for me and my Dad Steve Mann, but what did I learn as a rookie passenger on one of the most demanding tracks in the country? How long have you got?

I woke up Saturday morning to the familiar sound of generators, butterflies in my stomach and a twitchy sphincter trying to make me hide in the toilets all day. The weather was perfect and the bike was running sweet, but I cannot deny I was scared.

Practice kicked off and I just felt wrong on the bike. I was rusty to say the least. I felt heavy and stiff and I'd pretty much forgotten everything I'd learnt from my first few rides. I'd reverted back frantically throwing myself around, rather than moving purposefully from one position to the next. I could tell Steve had lost confidence in me which was causing him to lap slower. The passenger/driver relationship was in tatters and something needed to change.

We pulled into the pits and there was no excited buzz from either of us and we just sat and sulked. We both had things to blame; my leathers felt too tight, Steve's glasses were blocking his vision, it's been a hard year blah blah blah. When things aren't going well, you'll always find an excuse, you'll always find something or someone to blame, but in reality, I was to blame and I needed to sort it out.

I decided to go and chat with Mike Bellaby and Dave Gristwood, because there's nothing better than a reality check from experienced racers who have no verbal filter between them. The first thing they said was "stop over-passenger the bike". This advice is

REALLY important for any passenger who's learning or struggling on a demanding track. You simply cannot get all the way out on all the lefts, and you really don't need to climb over the back for all the rights. It's sometimes impossible (e.g. Hall Bends) and by trying too hard and over-passenger, you're just making it harder for both of you -less is best, but do it well. Dave then went on to tell me about thinking ahead and preparing for corners earlier and staying in position longer. This is great advice, but you can only do this if you know the track like the back of your hand. So, my advice is to study YouTube videos and put a track map up in your van so you can visualise every corner and every movement you need to make. Don't just learn the track when you're out there - you don't have time and you're doing yourself no favours.

I then spoke with Steve's regular passenger, Phil Wade, who told me to try and feel what the outfit is doing and make small adjustments to see how it affects the handling. I was pretty shocked when I tried this on right-hand corners - just a few inches forward or back can be the difference between sliding or gripping. And by learning this, you're allowing your driver to confidently push the boundaries, because he knows if he gets it slightly out of shape, you can bring it back in.

Mike then kindly offered to give us a tow in the next session so we could study his lines and learn from Dave. The first thing I noticed about Dave's style of passengering was how slow and calm he was when moving from one side to the other. No panicking, no rushing, no elbows on the tarmac and definitely no throwing himself around. Mike and Dave looked at one with the outfit and simply disappeared into the distance. The advice finally started to sink in and I knew what needed to be done come Sunday.

Race 1 wasn't perfect but we didn't expect it to be. We just wanted to put into practice what I'd learnt and race our own race. That's what we did and the smiles started to sneak back on our faces.

Race 2 was creeping up and I told Steve to give it everything he had. I promised to do my job so he could do his. No excuses. No moaning. Just balls out racing and having fun.

We started at the back of the grid, and by the end of the first lap we'd worked our way into 8th place by using Steve's skills i.e. brake later than the guy in front and hold on tight! Everything just seemed to click. All the advice was working and I felt as if me and the Yamaha were screaming in perfect harmony. I knew we were going faster, but it all felt easier and I just wanted more! I wasn't having to think much or make big movements, I purely concentrated on how I could make it handle better as smoothly as possible. Steve was getting faster and faster so I knew I was doing something right. We ended up in a battle with Ged Abrahams for a large chunk of the race and somehow managed to squeeze past him on the final lap. There was less than 100th of a second between us at the finish line. It was fantastic and we'd knocked almost 5 seconds off our qualifying lap and 3.5seconds off Dads fastest ever Cadwell lap!! The buzz, the smiles and the cheers were back. I'd officially earned my place in the chair and I cannot wait for more!

See you at Pembrey.

Pete Mann #80



Photo credit: PJM Photography



Photo credit: Neil Kirby



Photo credit: Charlie Fox cf_photos__

An article from Steve Mann about how he may be able to help you transform your engine into a race engine:

Sidecar racing appealed to me not as a way of satisfying a need to compete, (as I was now well into my 60's), but as a way of riding around the iconic race tracks frequented by the British Historic Racing Club and Classic Racing Motorcycle Club. My passenger Phil (or as I prefer to call him, my co driver) and myself used to race a blown Triumph outfit on grass. Obviously our natural choice of first outfit was a Triumph. A twin engined version was sourced from the Old Bike Mart, and after a nine month period of restoration we were ready to race. Our first outings were with the BHR with some success. The bike attracted a lot of interest; in fact so many people were asking about the specification that I had a spec. board made up to stop me losing my voice by lunchtime! Needless to say the old competition bug reappeared, and we decided to do some CRMC meetings. We found the competition a lot stiffer here and another outfit had to be found. We opted for a Yamaha XS650 based bike. In its first form the motor, bored to 750, was relatively standard but still reasonably competitive. The tuning potential of this motor was obvious and as the power rose to 75 BHP another chassis from Mike Richards was purchased. We were now competitive and in 2019 won the P1 championship and the race of the year with CRMC. I became obsessed with developing these engines and the motor has been stretched to 880cc with a 90 bhp at



the wheel. This now allows us to compete in the P3 class. For us sidecar racing has changed from 'a good idea after a few beers'

to becoming an obsession. We love everything about it. What could be better than developing a race motor, visiting the best tracks in the UK, competing, socialising with likeminded people and sharing the experience with a friend. The level of help and friendship we encountered as new racers was brilliant. We were able to source parts and technical help from other teams as we were learning the ropes.

Retuning to the YAM.XS topic, if your outfit requires a change of power plant I highly recommend these motors. I have found them to be very reliable and highly tuneable. They can be bought on Ebay for around £500 and can be turned into a race engine for about £3000. I am happy to share my tuning knowledge of these engines with anyone. Tuning parts are readily available in the UK from Rick Forte at Smedspeed, Heiden Tuning in the Netherlands and several other worldwide outlets. If you are thinking of sourcing a complete outfit check out 'Steve's Place' online in the 'for sale' section. So if you are up for joining us you may even get some racing in this season. Footnote. WARNING sidecar racing can be addictive! If I am able to offer any advice with XS and brit bike motors please drop me a line.

Steve Mann: mandymotors@hotmail.com

NEED HELP!

Don't know where to get certain products from check out our help page for some useful contacts and if you know of any others please email Sam with their details and they could be added too.

Lubricants:

Silkolene FUCHS

Website: www.silkolene.com

Email: contact-uk@fuchs.com

Tel: 01782 203 700



Upcoming Events.

September:

5th -6th Croft Battle of Britain (No big wheelers)

26th-27th Pembrey CRMC

October:

24th-25th Lydden Sidecar burn up

End of season awards nights:

5th December CRMC

Suspension:

Maxton

Website: www.maxtonsuspension.co.uk

Email: info@maxtonsuspension.co.uk



Glass fibre (fairings):

Jon Perkins

Tel: 07780850531

Chassis:

Mike Richards

Email: mike@mrequip.net

Tel: +447960390827

If you know of any other helpful contacts get in touch in Sam and we'll get them added to the page.

For more information on the different clubs please see their website:

CRMC: www.crmc.co.uk

BHR: www.britishhistoricracing.co.uk

All photos courtesy of PJM Photography. Check out their website for more photographs:

www.pjm-photography.co.uk

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