

Classic sidecar news

Welcome to the third edition to the sidecar newsletter, this will be the last newsletter for 2020 but not to worry we will be back next year with plenty more and hopefully we'll be able to cover more classic meetings to keep you in the know, so with the already shortened race year now completed for 2020, let's get to work and start preparing for what we're hoping to be a brilliant year in 2021. So without further ado we'll bring you the final race report from a slightly chilly and wet Lydden, and you'll also find further down in the newsletter a printable copy of next years race calendar for all the classic meetings which are all provisional at the moment and you will all be advised to what changes have happened to the calendar in any of the following issues but for now feel free to print out the copy for your garage wall and I've tried to colour code it to the individual clubs so at a quick glance you can what and where.

And we encourage you to write to us about your projects be it, fixing up an old bike that maybe hasn't seen the outside of a garage for a few years or your experiences that you have during race meetings or even if you want to write to us about your winter preparations so fitness or anything, we will also invite you to contact us if you need any help on anything again from bike maintenance to fitness I'm sure we can find you a solution, this edition we have a couple of guest writers and it is with great thanks that we have an article from Emma Cook on her own experience of passengering and an article from one of our newsletter team Steve Mann about another of his projects which I'm sure you'll find interesting and is a good way of getting the younger generation in this fantastic sport but I won't ruin the surprise I'll let you discover it for yourselves further down in the newsletter.

Over the winter break we'll still try to produce a newsletter for you all so why not send in a photo or two of you at a meeting either spectating, racing, spannering, even

just of the bike or you just being you! We'd love to see your snaps so go on send them in. So before we finish for the year we do have some bad news which is that the TT 2021 has been cancelled but we're not sure about the Southern 100 or Classic meetings so keep your eyes peeled and we'll let you know when we know. So the last thing I like to say is we here at classic newsletter would like to say Merry Christmas to each and everyone of you and have a safe and happy new year in which we hope to see a lot of you back on track.

Now onto the race report by Ian Johnson.

Sidecar burn up from Lydden Hill.

Well that's the way to end what has been a crazy year, at Lydden on a cold wet October day. The best part of Lydden of course (apart from the new food outlet) is the ability for a spectator to see all the on track action.

Practice started in the cold and damp at 10.36. Unfortunately Ian Champ's Norton failed to leave the collecting area, but sixteen outfits, Classic and BEARS, headed out. It didn't take long for Sean Hegarty and James Neave to set their best time, just three laps earning them on the grid. Lap three also saw the demise of Juan Christian and Julie Hardisty, Norton powered, a bad start for Nortons as on lap four Ian and Debbie Salter pulled off at the hairpin. Steve Mann and Phil Wade on the immaculate JPS Yamaha set their position three grid time on lap six. Vince Worthington with Mark Todd put their Yamaha just two spots back, one in front of Brian Gray's NSU Or was it a Honda... Seventh was Pete Allebone/Sharpe with the fabulous sounding three cylinder, two stroke Saab just two spots ahead of Danny Quirk and Weston's thundering 1272cc Vincent. Pole position went to the 98 BEAR of Gagg/Hase in a time of 54.404.

Heat 9

Just when you thought it was drying out more damp stuff.....

Lap one

Taking advantage of his front row start Sean Hegarty and James Neave powered the Christie Honda into an early lead, Brian Gray and Jason Pitt, definitely Honda powered, were also on the move ahead of the 80 and 17 outfits, both Yamahas, and Brian would make it as far as third place. The 196 Saab of Allebone/Sharpe was going well, up to seventh, despite their back row start, till on lap five the gremlins attacked.....Juan and Julie were going well, the Norton now behaving and the Vincent of Quirk/Weston holding a good eighth, despite being surrounded by BEARS....

At the flag it was Hegarty/Neave then Gagg/Hase and third Gray/Pitt.

Heat 18

According to the officials it was now cloudy but dry, the same front row just opposite sides. Sadly the Saab, despite some vigorous pushing, along with the 72 Norton, still refused to play...Hegarty/Neave shot off again into the distance leaving Gagg/Hase to chase, then a gap back to Gray/Pitt. Danny Quirk's Vincent along with Mr Weston seemed to like these conditions, by the end of lap one they were up to fifth from their fifth row start ahead of both Yamahas. However on lap five Steve and Phil managed to squeeze the MRE chassis passed the Vincent. The pace being set by the lead two outfits was impressive ...

At the flag it was again Hegarty/Neave from Gagg/Hase and Gray/Pitt third.

Heat 24

So the question being asked was, how do you stop the 33 outfit?... The answer appears to be get Sean to chase some F2/F1 outfits around in a fun last race on Saturday. He may have embarrassed quite a few, but the puffs of smoke I saw as he changed down, going into Devils elbow, led me to believe his CRMC Championship winning run had put too much wear on the Christie Honda.

With Hegarty/Neave out, Gray/Pitt missing, the cards were shuffled...OK on the front row we still had Gagg/Hase who could now see empty track in front but Danny Quirk/Weston were chasing. In the world of Yamaha, Vince was in front of Steve, well for one lap.. and eventually out on track was the 72 Norton of Ian Champ/McCallum, the BEARS were packing the front on track. Sadly we lost the Vincent on lap three after an incident..

At last Gagg/Hase saw the flag ahead of the Whitaker/Wilkins BMW and in third place the Yamaha of Mann and Wade.

The Final

Back to damp and cloudy, with the 33 out, Gagg/Hase found themselves alongside the 7 Honda of Gray/Pitt (back from wherever) but also further back was the 72 Norton....out in front to complete lap one was, as ever, Gagg/Hase but now chased by Gray/Pitt. The Yamaha boys were still astern with Vince ahead of Steve running fourth and fifth but Allebone/Sharpe were coming fast, by lap three the Saab was into fourth on the road.

At the flag Gagg/Hase took another win 7 seconds ahead of Gray/Pitt with Whitaker/Wilkins third ...A fantastic fourth place for the Ex Richard Holmes Saab despite Pete's 10 sec Jump start. Top Yamaha honours to Steve and Phil just 6 secs ahead of Vince and Mark...

A great end to a really dodgy year.. Big thank you to Lydden Hill Motorsport Club for running the event, and a massive thank you to everybody who helps support Classic sidecar racing.

Paddock to Passenger a sibling's tale.

Well as I write, it is Thursday before the fated Pembrey weekend. The plan was to take a few days off work, get the van and kit ready for the off and then the long drive to Pembrey.....ok the hour and a half drive to Pembrey. Now there's a distance I can get on board with, sorry all but Pembrey is the closest track to me and marks an annual respite from the 5+ hour drive to all the other tracks, for 'old girl', my two-tone VW camper. But it was not to be and instead I look out at a rainy, no sunny, no rainy, rainbow adorned sky and thought I'd write about my CRMC journey so far.

Robert (Cook) #31 my younger brother by 18 months has always loved motorbikes, putting together photos for his wedding a few years back, I was spoilt for choice with photos of bike trips, various two wheeled contraptions, that no self-respecting parent should let their child ride and even a three wheeled one (see photo, I wouldn't be a dutiful big sister if I didn't include a mildly embarrassing photo of said younger sibling!).

Harwich, where Rob lives has a great bike

club and has been his second family for a long time. I started going to watch him race in 2009 travelling across the country from Cardiff each month, freezing in a cold tent but warmed by the amazing comradery, generosity and spirit of the 'Arij racing team (That's 'Harwich' racing team to the uninitiated, no one says H in Harwich, there is an irony there, I know). The team was huge, 6 solo's 2 sidecar teams and a host of supporters and pit lads and ladies keeping everyone fed, watered, oiled, fuelled, mechanically sound and providing the occasional bump start.

Now, a little slimmer in numbers, we're down to just 3 sidecar teams and Pete (Esworthy) on Parade ☺, the rest of the racing gang pursuing other paths. It's an expensive game racing; money, time and takes a lot of

commitment but the draw is clear, you can feel it in the air, amongst the rattle and hum of the engines, the anticipation at the start line and the adrenalin flushed faces at the finish. Only racing can produce such an array of emotions in

such quick succession. For me, Darley more is to blame, they allowed sidecar parade one year and Rob dared me, "Go on," he said "It'll



The 'Arij Racing team circa. 2012. Including #55 where it all started.

be fun, Rod (Chapman) will look after you, just lean out, like this, "as he leaned to the right nearly falling off his chair. "Fun?" I scoffed, Rodney Chapman is one of the most experienced riders I know, calm, quiet and not red mist prone. I had no doubt in his abilities to keep me safe, but leaning, how do I do that? It'll probably rain anyway, I hoped. The next morning, donning borrowed kit, out I went into the bright Darley more sunshine (really?), Rob buzzing around me, nervously checking my helmet was done up. "You don't have to move just sit in the middle he won't be going THAT fast". As I wondered how fast 'THAT fast' was, I was ushered to the start of the grid and we were off. At that time Team Chapman #55 was a 998cc Imp and pretty quick on its wheels. Around we went, 'Pretty good' I thought, Rod checked in with a thumbs up, I returned the gesture I'm fine, thank you for asking. Of-course thumbs up doesn't mean Are you ok? It means Are you ok to go faster? I quickly found out how fast 'THAT fast' was, as the air caught under my slightly generous helmet and I spent a lap nodding like a dashboard Churchill dog. I recall a similar experience with Rob as his pillion on a rather quick trip down the A12 one night. Half way home he tapped me on the leg in what I thought was a reassuring gesture, turns out the ride had been so easy he was concerned I had fallen off a few miles back and he was checking I was still there!

Jump forward to 2019, Rob was racing solos; a K4 350twin and an GSXR 750 beast that he wasn't enjoying, he had also stepped in as passenger for Rod (Chapman) on his Triumph T140 (750cc). The race time-table at Pembrey had resulted in Robs solo race being immediately before the sidecars and they needed someone to jump on the outfit, ride around the paddock to the holding area and help in-case it stalled. I was drafted, a fledgling part of the team ☺.

On the way home on Sunday Rob texted:

"How do you feel about being a passenger with me?"

"Ok" I said "Let's do it."

Rob wanted to sell the GSXR, apparently biker evolution dictates the next step is a

sidecar, although I'm not sure this is Darwinian wisdom. Now there is one thing about Rob, once he gets an idea in his head about something it will inevitably happen and if you tell him it can't be done it'll probably happen quicker!

Robs next three texts

1. "I've found an outfit' it's a Honda CB750, Rod and I are going to look at it."

2. "We've bought an outfit."

3. "I've entered us for testing at Mallory."

Better get some kit. Now I don't know if it's just me but finding motorcycle racing gear for women is tough. Nothing fits the end! Just in-case the designers from RST, Danaise or Alpine Stars, are reading this (why wouldn't they be), please bear in mind that despite what you see in the press we are not shaped like Malibu Barbie!

Kit bought and worn around the house (including an awkward 40-minute yoga session after Googling 'How to stretch motorcycle leathers', 500 mile round-trip to for an ACU classroom, licence, dog tags, manual read, rules checked and even bought some fireproof base-layers.....yes I know but it is in the rules, and as it turns out, is very itchy!

As the country went into COVID-19 lockdown the season dwindled, then Cadwell arrived and finally we gathered. The familiar rattle and hum returned to the countryside and the peace the rabbits at Cadwell had been enjoying all year was broken by the start of the season. Nervous? Are you kidding me? I had pinned my hopes on testing or at least one race before Cadwell, instead this was our first time out as a team, first time on the bike, Robs first time driving and my first as a passenger, parading aside. "Why are you doing this?" Someone had asked "Because um.....errrr.....it's fun" I said nervously.

"Because you should do something that scares you every-day." Rob had said triumphantly, "You know like the song - Wear sunscreen" he beamed. Actually, written by Mary Schmich of the Chicago

Tribune then adopted by Baz Luhrmann in 1999. So far this epilogue of life lessons had meant that I did indeed wear sunscreen and had a pretty good handle on my old bank statements. However, nowhere in these words of earthly wisdom does it say, sit on a tea tray attached to a 750cc engine going at Mach 1 and lean out with head and shoulders an inch off the ground – I checked!

“Cadwell Park is one of the most technical tracks in the country, shame you had to do this as your first one” said a well-meaning member of the team. “Technical?” I gulped. Luckily for me, help was at hand in the form of Darren Chapman and Della Bufton. Both accomplished passengers and full of great tips. Not sure what I would have done without them. With some expert advice and a lot of dry practice manoeuvres under my belt, Practice 1 was here. The bike was skipping all over the place, lurching me unexpectedly in all directions, it felt fast, unpredictable and I couldn’t find a rhythm. Unfortunately, the back brake seized on Park Straight on the first lap and we were out. On closer inspection the frame had also cracked under the pressure of the tow back to the paddock. Rob was frantic; I was so full of adrenaline that I wasn’t sure what day it was. Over to the lovely chaps at Gristwoods for a fix, some nifty welding from ‘Stumpy’ our resident go to guy and we were back in the game.

Practice 2 was a no go but we managed.

Practice 3. Despite Robs best efforts the bike was still lurching and jumping, lesson 1 was over and I had new instructions; “You have to watch out for outfits coming behind us and tap me to let me know which side they are going to pass us on, so we can move out of the way.” Rob instructed. What about the looking forward, and the leaning and the

holding on, although not too tight because of arm pump and the watching other riders to learn when to lean and the breathing and the not falling off, I thought.

“How do you feel?” asked Rob as we slowed on a yellow flag

“Exhausted” I said

“Already?!” he exclaimed, shaking his head, in fairness it was only the second lap.

“It’s an opportunity to free my mind from the daily drudge. On the track I won’t be thinking about what’s happening in work, or worrying about anything just the corner and staying on, it’ll be meditative, kind of” I said, trying to reassure my puzzled friend. “It’ll be fine” I said, “much safer on three wheels.” I chose not to tell many people about my new hobby especially non-bikers and NHS friends and colleagues, and especially those in X-Ray, who, after I mentioned that I might do my CBT a while back, shared a Grey’s anatomy of motorcycle related broken bone stories.

I know the risks and choose to heed but not think too hard about them. That must be the case for everyone. Life is full of risks, I know the risks of flying, crossing the road, and eating yoghurt that is a couple of days over the use by date– (if it’s not fizzy it’s fine, right?) and still do it. Risk mitigation is the key; fly with a reputable airline, look right and left before stepping out and store yoghurt in the fridge and sniff before eating, that kind of thing. I was more than aware that our mitigation of a test day hadn’t happened and practice was gone, I only had a couple of laps under my belt and here I was - race day. It would be faster. I was petrified.

I wobbled in the paddock, I wasn’t ready the bike was lurching all over the place yesterday. “I can’t do it, will you go for me? I’ll do it next time, after lots of yoga and strengthening exercise, maybe some weights,



I'll let him (Rob) down, be too slow to move, fall off, please do it." I pleaded to a patient Della (Bufton). "No" she said calmly. "You HAVE to do it".

Harsh I thought, tears burning the back of my eyes.

The race was tough; we were in the way of the whole pack.....twice, much slower than the rest of the field. The jumping was gone, and the bike felt better. We both worked hard and I found a rhythm, although I missed a couple of the quick corners. Finally we got the bike round to the finish. Rob was so delighted he grabbed my hand and we soared victoriously passed the chap waving the chequered flag, (who incidentally must have been exhausted as he'd been waving that thing for over a minute by the time we came through!). The bike had the last word as it veered sharply to the right without Rob's steady hold and headed for the barrier....he got a sharp slap on the back for that one!

"You don't look happy" said a disappointed Rob after the race. "Hmmm, I'm relieved?!" I said. Truth is I was happy for Rob after spending the whole Autumn, Winter and Spring fixing up the dilapidated outfit, up late the night before and early that morning to stop the jumping, welding the frame and getting her back out in time. For our fledgling team, a completed race, even in last place, was still a victory. As it turned out we were the only ones in our class and as such, we came first.....and last. Rob held his cup victoriously, huge consolation for the effort he and the team had put in.

"So? How do you feel?" said Della when we got back.

"I feel much better, Thank-you" I said gratefully, knowing smiles all round.

So what did I learn;

- 1. That Pete Mann was right, it's not easy and everyone finds it tough at first (CRMC mag issue 2) - I did think about letting go at one point Pete*

and drifting away, opted for closing my eyes instead which PJM got a great photo of, turns out (oops - it was just a brief moment honest).

- 2. That Honey leather moisturiser really does work to soften those new leathers.*
- 3. That despite there being other ways to bond with a sibling such as trips to the zoo, pub or picnics, racing is also a great option.*

The team bosses Debbie Cook and Janet Chapman, where would we be without them and of course Aunty Del'.



Thanks to everyone for their patience with our little team on our first outing. Look forward to seeing you all next season. May the centrifugal force be with you!



Here we have an article from Luke Haskins.

For over 25 years my family has been road racing all around the country, my granddad (Roger Hill) started racing solos and surprised my young dad with a racing motorcycle (1990ish) to join him the team was called shoestring racing, after about 6 years ish they both decided it would be more cost effective to start sidecar racing which changed the name to shoestring sidecar racing, my dad as the passenger (mark Haskins) and my granddad as driver, they started with a early f2 chassis with a Suzuki GS engine which they raced in the forgotten era class which would now have transitioned into the classic class if it was front exit that is... they then brought a ex TT classic rumble outfit which they fitted with a gs1000 motor they had many of years racing fun all around the country and championship success, until the money ran out...

I turned 16 and my granddad said 'why don't you get a ACU licence for passenger' so I did and at 11 stone the outfit flew around Mallory, unfortunately at

this point the class had disbanded so my granddad brought another rumble outfit this time a F2 but the engine was problematic and money and health forced us to stop and then sell both outfits, skip 2years and my granddad still had a itch for racing so he brought two rd 250 LC racing motorcycles for me to join him like he had done for my dad in previous years, we had a good season on those and again the class got disbanded because the earlystocks took over, again

fast forward this time fast forward 14 years and I have got a itch that I haven't fully scratched, so remembering the fun times passengering and my dad saying the team should of gone to classic racing, I hunted for around two years for a complete front exit dooy upper, as times previous

we are still going to be known as shoestring sidecar racing team.

Facebook sales pages prevailed and I found an old front exit convoy sidecar that was plastered in black hammerite and was crying to be saved, £500 pounds later and I'm painting it with paint stripper and inspecting what I have purchased.



As anything racing needs some grip and a few brakes I purchased three tyres which

Ian J/ Mike R and others advised and fitted them, unfortunately the front end was too narrow to fit the tyre let alone a half decent brake calliper, lucky for me the sidecar came with a spare front end that with a little adjustment we fitted it with a mocked up ap rep calliper, After more advise from a lot of you all new discs were brought and machined to fit and we are closer to a complete front end, next is the mud guard and fairing mounts!



Also brought a period fairing which was originally from a Norton outfit and placed it on top of the outfit it has potential...

Sort of brought two ish xs650 engines for £200 which we just positioned in the hole to see if it will look ok...

Luke

Keep your eyes peeled for more updates on Luke's progress.



Photographs courtesy of Luke.

Inspiring future generations.

Lockdown isn't funny but it does mean that I am able to get on with myself indulgent sidecar projects without feeling too guilty. My wife does remind me from time to time that there are a few household jobs that I am ignoring, but the trick seems to be to do just enough on the house to allow me to slip back into the workshop unnoticed !.

During a recent visit to sidecar bloke Ian Johnson's workshop I discovered a very poorly looking children's sidecar. It had been used and abused and was in a sorry state. Josh my Grandson loves sidecars and I couldn't resist Ian's kind offer to restore it. I pulled the tired motor out and started to strip it. When

looking for parts on line I noticed that you can buy a new complete motor from China for £54 delivered! .Great I could concentrate on repairing the fairing and cycle parts. It took about three weeks to complete the project. Needless to say Josh and his sister love it. Josh recently could not be found late one evening and was discovered out in his Dad's

workshop polishing it!. We now need to find a kart track willing to let him use it, as running it around an industrial estate on a Sunday with his sister hanging off the side is not ideal !.

I think we can definitely say that racing is in the blood with Mann family and it will good to see they continue with sidecar racing for many years to come.



Photographs courtesy of Steve Mann.

Upcoming events 2021



**BRITISH
HISTORIC
RACING**
VMCC Ltd



March:

19th - Mallory Park (test day) - BHR

April:

10th-11th - Mallory Park - BHR

17th- 18th - Castle Combe - CRMC

30th- 2nd May - Demark - Camathias Cup

May:

8th- 9th - Mallory Park - CRMC

8th-9th - Henglo - Camathias Cup

15th-16th - Darley Moor - BHR

28th-31st - Pre-TT Billown - S100

June:

12th-13th - Pembrey - CRMC

12t-13th - Anglesey - BHR

July:

2nd-4th - Spa - Camathias Cup

3rd-4th - Cadwell Park - CRMC

25th-26th - Pembrey - BHR

31st- 1st August - Donington Park - CRMC

August:

7th-8th - Cadwell Park - Camathias Cup & BEMSEE

20th-22nd - Gedinne - Camathias Cup

September:

4th-5th - Anglesey - CRMC

25th-26th - Cadwell Park - BHR

October:

2nd-3rd - Croft - CRMC



Photographs courtesy of
PJM photography.

NEED HELP!

MAXTON

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



Suspension:

Maxton
Website: www.maxtonsuspension.co.uk
Email: info@maxtonsuspension.co.uk

Glass fibre (fairings):

Jon Perkins
Tel: 07780850531

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

Chassis:

Mike Richards
Email: mike@mrequip.net
Tel: +447960390827

Caption this

Caption 1.



Caption 2.

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

To get in touch with one of the sidecar revival team please see the following email addresses.

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