

Aldermaston Nomads Motorcycle Club Newsletter September 2017

As I write this Newsletter on the Autumnal Equinox and officially the first day of autumn I feel this is truly the start of the trials season. The smell of mud baking on a hot exhaust and the quandary of whether to use 3rd or 4th for that slippery climb (Bernie Schreiber would advocate the lowest gear – but what does he know?). So this is a great time to tell you that the Nomads closed to club trials championship series starts on Saturday 7th October at Ellison's/Headlongs, about ½ mile south of Thatcham railway station.

Closed to Club Trials championship

For those of you unfamiliar with our Closed to Club Trials Championship, it works like this: Points are awarded in each class, depending on finishing position, 20 points for 1st, 17 for 2nd etc. All four or five rounds of the series count towards the championship. At the end of the series, the riders with the most points in their class become our club champions. Don't be put off because it's called a championship, the trials are set out to suit all abilities; wobbler to expert.

Matters Arising

Since the last newsletter, Anne and Brice Haines have kindly hosted the club Barbeque on 15th July.

Following up an action from the AGM, a few of the committee met with some of the Surrey TRF on 6th July to discuss how we could develop our partnership to run the Pathfinder trial. This was a very productive meeting, with the TRF very keen to develop their involvement with organising and running the event. They have subsequently had the blessing of the TRF and the key players; Kevin Greening, Steve McCormick and Murray Laban, and have become Nomad members – welcome aboard fellas! We will continue to develop this partnership through the winter with regular Pathfinder Committee meetings.

From the Archives:

By way of introduction to those of you who weren't Nomads in 1964 (or perhaps even born!) a bit of additional information: Tony in the following article is our Treasurer, Tony Jeffery, and along with Mike and Margaret Slatter formed this great club of ours – Mike was chairman right up until his passing last year. Tony's sidecar outfit was a bit special, a 998 vee twin Vincent Lightning shoehorned into a Wideline Norton Featherbed frame. I'm sure you are thinking that this doesn't sound much like a trials outfit and indeed it doubled up as a road racing outfit. You are probably also wondering whatever happened to such an interesting beast? Fear not dear reader, it is in capable hands awaiting "a rub over with an oily rag". I'd check that clutch if I was you John!

An account of the last Sunbeam 200 Long Distance Trial by the club's resident bard, Dick Steels, taken from a Nomads club magazine in 1964.

The crystal night shimmered its sparkling starlight over the silent buildings. From out of the shadows came two strangely clad figures. Moving quickly and carrying suitcases, they raced towards their waiting vehicle and stored themselves aboard. With a roar it burst into life, shattering the pervading stillness and with ever mounting revs screamed off.

No, this was not a scene from an American airbase which had just been given a four minute warning, it was Boundary Hall on the evening of the start of the Sunbeam 200. As tradition dictates, the other three Nomad entries had long since departed, but "Old Lightning" and his ever-patient passenger had still several tasks in

hand before they could leave. Having accomplished these, there followed a frantic chase across country to a garage near Hartley Witney which I would prefer to forget until the experience comes in handy at Silverstone or Cadwell Park. When I did finally open my eyes, we had arrived at the garage and I saw a milling crowd of bikes and entrants madly completing last minute adjustments, amongst them our Nomad compatriots: Mike and Margaret, Garth and Dick, and Doug and Frank. Scrutineering over, (we had left the tax disc behind in the rush) the entries rolled away at minute intervals, our team starting at 12.04, 05, 06 and 07.

After 17 miles of A30 had passed, we turned off and started "mixing it". The lights test and first time control were negotiated safely, and the engine starting test could not have gone better though I did hear later that the marshal never quite recovered, Flying Finish just about describes it. One mile after Salisbury time check 2 saw us waiting 10 minutes or so to clock in with Mike right there with us and Garth not far behind. Doug and Frank decided they would prefer to go to Southampton soon after the start and it was some time before we saw them again.

Then followed a really magnificent 13 mile thrash across the Grand National course I think, at least it seemed like it. On a really hardened and rutted dirt track, the outfit bucked and reared and Tony was doing a grand job keeping us in one piece. Behind us we left a 200 yard dust cloud, through which we could distinguish the lights of Garth and Dick doggedly following. The time control at the end of this section was located in a quarry and there was nothing for it but to fall over the edge. As someone commented later: "I would not have even walked down it in the daylight". Again we were early and so spent a thankful few minutes chatting and smoking with the marshals. Poor Mike and Margaret had turned off at "Beechers Brook" somewhere and again were a considerable time in re-finding the correct route.

Off again, only this time on more metalled roads to the breakfast halt with a few minutes to spare. Here it was ages before anyone also arrived as Garth had got lost on the last little bit. A shame as it was really the easiest section and it meant that three of the four Nomad entries were already disqualified on time penalties.

After breakfast, all four Nomads were reunited and at about 5 am set off again refreshed and ready for anything. Being the only Nomad left with a chance of a place, we galloped into the number 1 spot again and 40 miles later surprised the marshals by appearing for the brake test. They had only just arrived, but explained that with a dead engine, we had to start on a line at a given signal, freewheel down the hill and stop across another line. We did as directed, and when the dust finally settled, the amazed marshal was still holding his stop-watch aloft peering intently through the haze to see where we were. I somehow think he stood in a more advantageous spot for the next competitor.

At this point things were going really well for us. The Vinny purred (?) along, we were miles up on time and the sun was shining. Alas our self-confidence was nearly our downfall. I slipped up in the navigation and took Tony 10 or 12 miles down the wrong road. When we realised this, it meant we had to do another 20 miles or more in half an hour. The road was not bad; two cars could pass in most places provided they watched it. Anyway to cut a long journey short, we were at the control with 10 minutes to spare and I was of the opinion that Tony had finally woken up! This was the last time control before the end and so we moved on to the four special sections and a go-stop-go test.

Kersham Lane was difficult. It was a very narrow, steep track deep rutted on either side with carefully placed logs and stones to upset the unwary. Mike and Margaret had a good go, but failed and although more spectacular, Garth and Dick went the same way, Dick being unceremoniously deposited at one spot and Garth giving a good aerobatic performance by lying in the section balancing the outfit on his feet. No Garth, you are not supposed to carry the outfit up the section! Doug and Frank tried without success, losing a lot of traction and sliding into the bank. We got no further either as, though we started off well, the combination was really

too wide and we hit one bank with Tony's footrest. It neatly restyled the footrest, but knocked the Vinny out of gear, bringing us to a halt. Our fairing too, had some excess pieces removed. Altogether, not a successful section for the Nomads.

Ackland Lane saw us in trouble again, as the Vinny's old ailment of firing on only one cylinder returned. The section itself was not too difficult and the Nomads did better on this one. Tony took us up on one cylinder (masterly!) slipping the clutch frantically. I do not think the Vinny liked it though as the clutch was never the same again.

The go-stop-go test was no trouble with the brute firing first kick and so we passed to the Southern Wood. This was a nice little section which had been thoughtfully wetted to make it more interesting. As I mentioned, the clutch was playing up, so although we made the ascent, we had to struggle. The others too sorted this one out.

Beggars Roost! What magic that name conjures up. If you remember, I went all the way to Land's end last Easter to see this famous hill – and came back none the wiser, so you can imagine how I felt. Actually, unless we had had time to stay and watch some others tackle it, I still would be unable to tell you much about it. Tony took a quarter mile run at it, and with people and marshals leaping for their lives ploughed on. They had craftily marked a route up it which we did not, of course, see until we were on it! I closed my eyes and hung on (my usual procedure when things get hectic). When I opened them I just caught a glimpse of some "section Ends" cards flashing past. Tony had done it! Leaping out of the chair, I did a native welsh dance of glee and threw an open mouthed marshal into the air. For me life was complete. Thank you Tony.

The others were less fortunate than ourselves on this section, but re-united we all made off for the finish, clocking in about 10 am. That stalwart group of wives and followers, who were our travelling house and wardrobe, were there to meet us and under a blazing sun we pitched camp near Parracombe. Basking in the sun my world was sweet and I loved everyone. To the tempting rumour (later confirmed) that we had won the sidecar award I drifted off into a peaceful sleep, one arm around "my chair".

This trial was also the occasion when June Bogie and Ray Baker were taking all the competitors camping gear to the finish at Parracombe in June's minivan. When they reached Porlock Hill it was so heavily laden that the van had terminal wheel spin, so Ray took over and drove in reverse all the way up the hill.

Don't try this today!

Classified Ads

Have you got something motorcycle related to sell? Bikes, parts, gear etc. Let me know and I'll ensure it goes into the next newsletter.

If you've got anything for the newsletter, please call (0788 402 6475) or email (jim.gould281@btinternet.com)

Forthcoming Events

2017

- 7th Oct Round 1, Club Trials Championships, Ellisons, Thatcham
- 11th Nov Round 2, Remembrance day trial, Pickling Yards, Mortimer
- 30th Dec Round 3, Christmas trial, Pickling Yards, Mortimer

2018

- 5th Jan MCC Exeter long distance Trial, Popham Start
- 29th April Pathfinder , 3 stage trial, Frith Hill, Deepcut, Frimley Green

Please keep an eye on the Nomads Website which Ian does a great job of keeping up to date.

[Aldermaston Nomads MCC | Welcome to the Aldermaston Nomads website.](#)