



Newsletter of the Mighty South London branch of the **TRIUMPH** Owners Motor Cycle Club

First off, a couple of reminders - the MSL Bike Show & BBQ will be on Tuesday 16th June, Princess of Wales, 8pm. Next Tuesday, 26th May, is a club run to The Compasses, Gomshall.

Another date for your diary - June 21st the Met Police are running another 'Bikesafe' day at Hendon. Last years' event was excellent, a really good day out. Meeting time/place to be arranged. You can find details at <http://www.bikesafe.co.uk/nationalshow2009.html>

The VMCC magazine gave a free ad for the Barcelo Island Hotel. Situated close to the factory, Triumph helped in the bar decor, with Triumph bits, and the loan of a Speed Triple. It boasts "glass-fronted bar, hi-tech lighting, and plasma video screens. The bar stocks a large range of beers, wines, and Champagne." Sounds a real bikers pub. Anybody want to organise a run up there?

BSAOC

Once again we've been invited by the BSA Owners Club to their fish & chip run. This is on June 6th, meet in the car park opposite Park Place, Three Kings Piece, Mitcham 4pm for a 30ish mile run (with a half-way stop somewhere) & back to Mitcham for the fish & chip supper at around 7pm. The singing vicar will be in attendance again! All for £4.50 a head.

The Runs

First Tuesday night run of the season saw, I'm told, 25 bikes out. A couple more joined us at the Rat, which was quite full even before we got there, due to other attractions - TV showing some geysers chasing a pig's bladder around, and a poker tournament in the other bar, so a lot of us hung around outside in the cold and dark. Good beer, good food, noisy barmaid.

Fleet Lions, May 4th

A reasonable turnout, the usual stop for breakfast resulting in the usual late arrival at Fleet. Service has never been quick at Jack's, but they were after setting a new record this time, and by the time we got to Fleet, all the other entrants had gone on their way. A few specks of rain put off all the modern bike riders so they all went home and left five of us rough, tough, fearless, all-weather bikers (nerves of steel, will of iron, knob of butter etc) on "classics" to potter around the course, catching up with the runners and riders at the half-way stop. Nice to be out on the old bike again.



Breakfast stop on the way to Fleet

Southern Classic Show, Kempton Park

Our allocated space gets smaller every year. We had about 10 feet to squeeze in seven bikes. I think our highlight of the day was when a gentleman from the Velocette Owners Club came over and told us he had a Trophy like Brian's, but better. He also had a Speed Twin like Roger's, only better, and had owned a Bonneville like Tim's, but better, of course. He was obviously trying to make up for a very big inferiority complex or, as Brian helpfully pointed out, a very small penis.

Pioneer Run (from our own veteran, **Bernard Joplin**)

After leaving the trusty Triumph for fifty weeks, I decided that it was about time to make sure all was well. I had made my mind up to do a few jobs during the year, as usual all left to the last minute. So before I interfered with it (still with last year's oil and petrol in the tank by the way) I gave it 3 or 4 turns of the pedals, and away it went. Now was the time to take the spanners to it. I managed to locate some valve springs from a veteran Triumph supplier and that job was done, all that I wanted to do then was to fettle with the ignition timing and we were ready to go.

Sunday morning at the start, it was good to see all you guys as usual. Thank you for all your support! The run gave me no real problems, although there was quite a lot of traffic this year due to the very nice weather. I don't think that I went through a red light (which had to be a first), therefore it took about 3 hours with the inevitable coffee stop. My start time was 9 am and I was at Brighton at 12 noon. So it looks like I can get away with not looking at it for fifty-one and a half weeks this time! Thanks again, **Bernard**.

A Voice From The Past (Mark Bennett)

Quite by chance I came across the MSL website when looking for some TSS engine parts recently and from there it was only a click away from seeing your 'Thunderbird Times' articles.

Many congratulations on keeping the magazine running for such a long time and especially now for publishing it on the web.

For my sins I too was once the Editor but this was in the late 1980's through to the early/mid 1990's. I remember that we created it as an eight page monthly newsletter to supplement the 'Nacelle' and as something to hand out at the Bike Shows we attended. We organised a competition to find a name and it was Penny Gifford who came up with the idea of the "Thunderbird Times" – nothing of course to do with the fact that she rode a TR65 Thunderbird - but everything to do with the fact (she said) that it was three 6T Thunderbirds that were famously ridden 500 miles at the Montlhery Circuit in France to launch the bike, in the same year that the T.O.M.C.C. was formed in 1949. It was also from here that we created the picture for one of our first MSL T-shirt designs.

In the mid 1980's things were very different in the Club. When I first joined MSL we used to see about half a dozen people at the meetings. The branch was chaired by Bill Pye who, with his wife Barbara, together must have weighed almost 40 stone and rode around on a (very strong!) T160 Trident. They've both passed away now but another famous face was that of Mike Avel, one of the founder members of the Club, who was still active even after 40 years. I remember he was keenly interested in film and when down for the Annual General Meetings would always arrive with new photographs or film reels of people and the club meetings from the 1950's and 1960's. It was he, incidentally, that helped successfully force the Club Committee to return the sectioned display engine to the branch by insisting that when it was presented to the Club in the 1950's that MSL was the Club and that it therefore belonged to us. I guess that the only one left from those days would be Rob Maynard, unless Dave Tester still shows his face through the door.

Bit by bit I remember the branch going from strength to strength. With a small nucleus of friends, having chief mischief maker Langley Gifford at its centre, we were regular rally goers attending a new one almost every other weekend during the summer and autumn months. These were usually in the UK but also occasionally abroad and it was from here that we built a core of dedicated members. We rode almost every week of the year and it had to be truly diabolical weather for us not to arrive on bikes every Tuesday night at the Kings Head pub next to Merton Bus Garage. When the rally's weren't on we used to have stands at many of the local bike shows, or ride out to the coast for Rock 'n Roll weekends, or regularly go and see bands during the winter months and plan for annual trips to the Isle of Man. One of the few things in fact that we never managed to do was replicate the ride up to Edinburgh and back as they did in the old black and white film "The Leather Boys" from the Ace Café with Johnny Briggs and Rita Tushingham.

Members came and went of course but strong characters that spring to mind from those early days were Jon with his two ratty old Tridents of which only one ever worked (after a fashion) and Aiden who never talked about his Triumph but became evangelical on the subject of his Norton Commando. Then there was Fred and Zena with their ex-police Triumph Saint, and Graham Biggs with his super quick, super clean T120, who went off to race a Ducati. There was John Osborne with his pals, always up to no good in a corner, scheming like Fagin and his gang from Oliver Twist. Then Steve Mullins, who must have lived in every bedsit in South East London with his T140 under a tarpaulin outside and who eventually left for Malawi, and Colin (Sparky) Sparks who always had the most immaculate bike and a van that came in incredibly useful for hauling all our gear around. There were lots more of course, and most, I suspect, will have fond memories of those times and many will still even have their bikes stashed away in various states of disrepair in their garden sheds and garages.

At one point when acting as Treasurer I remember collecting 50p subs on a regular Tuesday night meeting from a record 72 members. In fact MSL became so popular that we had to hold a special meeting to explain that the workload was just too great and we could no longer cope – we had too many members!

Of course the revenue from all of this was welcome but an unintended benefit. From collecting the weekly subs, raffle monies, and with profits generated from the big annual Christmas parties and Summer Barbeques we had thousands of pounds in the kitty and I distinctly remember Bill Pye encouraging us to buy a vintage Triumph for the branch to use on the Pioneer Runs. We never did of course, but it was a great idea at the time.

I'm sure that much has changed from those days which, whilst to some might seem like yesterday, in fact happened 20 years ago. The memories are still bright and we had enormous fun. Instead of Hinckley Triumph's in the car park it was filled with Meriden's finest, consisting of Bonneville's, Tiger's, Thunderbird's, Trophies, plus Trident's for those that could afford them, and a sprinkling of super rare Tritons.

They would have been ridden by people of all ages but the majority of us were in our 20's or early 30's. None of the bikes were standard since all had a habit of breaking down unless regularly fettled, and many of us did quite high mileages despite having very little money in our pockets. They were good times then, as I'm sure that they are now. Best of luck with the Branch and it's great to see that the enthusiasm for Triumph is still there.

All the best, **Mark Bennett** (aka Mr. Sheen).

NOW AVAILABLE
60th Anniversary T-shirt.

A mere £3 of your hard-earned cash will get you one of these superbly designed (!?!) shirts. Available in M, L, XL, & XXL.

Should you be an MP, it can of course be claimed on expenses.

Your choice of black shirt with yellow print, or yellow print on black shirt.
See Robin.



Forthcoming Attractions

May 26 th	Club Run to The Compass, Gomshall http://http://www.thecompassesinn.co.uk/findus.html
June 6th (D-Day)	BSA Fish & Chip run, 4pm Commonsides West, Mitcham.
June 7 th	Eastbourne Lions Charity Classic Motorcycle Rally
June 13 th	Bracknell Classic Motors Show
June 16th	MSL Bike Show & BBQ
June 20th	Cranleigh Show, Rykas 1100
June 21st	Met Police Bikesafe Show, Hendon

THE CLUB:

Meets at the Princess of Wales, **98 Morden Road, London SW19 3BP**
(020 8542 0573) every Tuesday from 8.30 pm.

Runs leave the pub at 8.00pm sharp, 4th Tuesday of the month, April to Sept.
Please ensure you have a full tank of petrol.

CLUB CONTACTS:

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