

Down Memory Lane 2021

Cedars Inn, Barnstaple

Friday, 1 October 2021



At last, we are holding the much postponed and rescheduled

Down Memory Lane Luncheon 2020

A Tribute to Derek Rickman – 1933 to 2021

Derek Rickman died on Saturday, 3rd July 2021. He was 88 years of age. He was an ardent supporter of “Down Memory Lane” and had attended every event since the first in 1996.

Derek (with brother Don) became a legend in his own lifetime. He was one half of the duo known right across the world, from Cardiff to California, as the Rickman brothers.

When the giants of the British motorcycle industry, notably BSA, Triumph and AMC, rebuffed their attempts to improve the existing competition motorcycles offered by these companies, the brothers went their own way.

What started, in 1959, as a pair of bikes just for Derek & Don became a fledgling industry almost overnight. Four years later they were producing scramblers for the best riders in this country, as well as leading riders from France, Belgium, Holland and Sweden.

Rickman Engineering and the Rickman Metisse were born, and the rest is history. Derek was the driving force in the business, ably supported on the engineering side by Don.

Between 1962 and 1985 Rickman Engineering produced nearly 17,000 complete motorcycles and frame kits, a significant number going for export, mainly to the USA. As a result, the company were awarded the Queen’s Award to Industry for services to export in 1974.

Then in 2007, Derek was inducted into the AMA Hall of Fame in Columbus, Ohio. The citation describes members as “the people who build and race motorcycles.” “I can’t think of a more deserving recipient.

R.I.P. Derek.

DG



The man that made it happen – Ray Cooper

I am sure our regular attendees of Down Memory Lane luncheons will join me in acknowledging the dedicated work and commitment put in ever since its inception in 1996 by this lovely man.

Ray is a wonderful friend to us all and although handing over the reins to myself and my assistant, Liz Ford, is still at hand with his experience and guidance when needed.

To use his own catchphrase – having reached nonagenarian status – “The newness has worn off!” We know the feeling Ray – but you have been an inspiration and we all owe you a huge vote of thanks.

CFD



With apologies to Ray for the quality of this sneakily taken photo!

Down Memory Lane - 2021

Introduction

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you all to this Max King inspired luncheon. This is the 13th such occasion, which is running a year late, following "pandemic issues" which we are all too familiar with.

We are pleased to have a NORTON/WASP Motocross (Scrambles) sidecar outfit on display here today and wish to pay tribute to this branch of the sport. Never enjoying the same publicity or support as solo competition sidecar competitors were a tough bunch and provided some stunning action. Amongst today's guests we have a few that have been closely involved in the hay-days and hopefully will have a tale or two to tell. Personally, there is no sound on earth to match the grunt of these "big twins" accelerating out of a slow corner!

We hope you will enjoy your meal as much as renewing old acquaintances. Wishing everyone good health.

With best wishes,

Colin



Max King's Inspired

Down Memory Lane Luncheon

*"Never regret a day in your life:
Good days give happiness,
Bad days give experience,
Worst days give lessons,
And the best days give memories."
Let's make this one of the best days!*

12 noon	Assemble
12.30pm	Carvery selection for lunch
	Choice of sweets
	Coffee
2.00pm	Introduction and Reflections by Colin Dommett and Mike Jackson.
	Further tales might be told!
4.00pm	Tea in the Orangery
5.00pm	Depart

The Cedars Inn, Barnstaple

Thank you to Mitch and team for hosting this year's event.



SAFE SOCIALISING

Social distancing throughout all our pubs, for our guests and our teams.



CLEANING MONITOR

Increased cleaning in every pub, all day, every day.



LOOKING AFTER OUR TEAM...

...so they can look after you. Our teams will have training on safe working practices, hand washing, as well as temperature checks on arrival. All our pubs will have regularly reviewed risk assessments, in line with Government Guidelines.



HAND SANITISERS

On entry and throughout all our pubs.



REDUCED CONTACT

Cashless tills, protective screens at the till and being able to Order & Pay on our app.



Determined young man on a Greeves is Alan Domett, cousin of Colin, putting in a spirited climb in the 1966 National Beggars Roost Trial. Alan had a good ride to finish 9th overall on 31 mks, from the usual huge entry

Three Wheels On My Wagon

Two abiding memories from my short-trouser spectator days are of Phil Nex (Tom Sawyer BSA) and Geoff Ward (Taylor Matterson AJS), winning all three solo races, and both sidecar races, at two different Southern Centre Scrambles – this was in the early 1950s, and about a year apart – with Nex dominating that year's annual SCACU Champion-ship event at Idsworth, near Waterlooville, and Ward pulverising all and sundry at Aldworth, in a Regional Restricted meeting on yet another downland course, near Reading. Yessir, Sidecar MX, as it later became to be known, was a highly popular feature of countless events in the Southern, South-East & South Midland, and Wessex Centres, bearing in mind that this branch of the sport didn't really catch on nationally, nor was every West Country and/or northern track entirely suitable for 'chairs'.

I believe that the originators [perpetrators, perhaps] of this spectacular sport were Jack Stocker and Bill Turner, with the latter working for the former in the useful position of workshop foreman at Stocker's substantial dealership in Reading. From my fading memory I think Bill was the first ever British S/Car Champion, after the ACU officially recognised this type of racing in the late 1950s. The sport evolved of course with a wide variety of chassis, but it was the following types of engines which seemingly predominated within the capacity limits of the period. Single cylinder Ariels were widely used in 500cc days, followed by pre-unit Triumph twins after 650s were allowed; then, when the limit was increased to 750cc, it was Norton's turn, and I know from personal experience in the early 1970s just how many sidecar drivers approached us at the factory, seeking to buy complete engines. Wasp of course, were frequent customers at our Spares Dept, and many Norton Dealers in the south of England regularly had little difficulty in selling written-off crashed Commandos. Nothing is forever of course and after the capacity limit was raised above 750cc it was Yamaha's bullet-proof XS-650 motor [converted to around 850cc] which set the pace.

In April 2000 I was privileged to host an Evening Forum in the National Motor Museum's theatre at Beaulieu with a panel consisting of Len Crane, Mike Guilford, Roy Price, and Nick Thompson, each of whom had won an ACU Championship. It was a lively and entertaining occasion further enhanced by the fact that some of their ultra-brave former passengers were in the audience. It is no surprise that Sidecar Cross abounded with characters, such as hard-charging Rufus Rose (Triumph) in the early days, together with be-whiskered Dave Treleaven (Norton) and his distinctive bumble-bee helmet. I can but conclude this brief snapshot by stating how the Sidecar Scrambles community made an unforgettable contribution to our sport...during what will always be known as The Golden Era!

Thank you to OMJ for this contribution

Following on from this, a recent WASP Classic Celebration took place at the Bennetts Hill circuit in Berkshire, and it attracted over 40 entries – all on lusty 4 stroke outfits. The event was put together by the enthusiastic Mortimer Club, together with Mark Ramplee and Steve Cook. Spectators (the biggest crowd seen at this circuit) loved every minute of the competitive, spectacular and frenzied action and the sounds were pure magic! Look out for next year's – you will love it!

CFD



Robin Cox at the Tor Clubs Scramble in April 1967 on his home-built Cochise.

The Red Marley Hill Climb

Easter Monday 2020 would have been the 20th anniversary of Red Marley Revived had it not been cancelled. Often described as a "freak" hill climb the original hill was discovered by the late Len Vale-Onslow MBE and first run in the pre-war era when the region was home to most of the major motorcycle manufacturers of the day. By 1970 entries had declined to the point where the event was no longer viable. In 1971 the Birmingham club pulled the plug and the old hill fell silent – or so we thought.

Fast forward thirty years and into the breach steps the AJS & Matchless Owners Club with the gem of an idea: Red Marley Revisited in 2000, a single meeting to raise money for local charities.

The meeting was an outstanding success: an entry of nearly 150 solos ranging from a sprinkling of 1930s Rudge etc. in the Pre-40 rigid class, to nearly 30 Metisse of the Triumph, Matchless and BSA variety in the Pre-70 over 250 class. Several Past Masters were also prompted out of retirement/semi-retirement including Arthur Browning, Terry Challinor, Ken Sedgley, Ros Fraser, Sammy Miller, Chris Horsfield, Peter & Paul Taft, Scott Ellis and Jim Aim. Equally important a crowd reputed to be in excess of 5000 enjoyed the action. They had their money's worth and so did the local charities.

It was intended as a one-off, but it was so successful that it has been repeated every year since 2000 (except for 2001 - Foot & Mouth). A new hill nearby was discovered and the modern version of Red Marley took off. The entry is packed with riders from the classic era and spectators come by the thousand. During this period over £100,000 has been raised for local charities.

Looking back at some of the meetings during the Golden Era (1950-1970) of Red Marley I have selected two which I think are worthy of recounting here:

In 1952, on a day spoiled by torrential rain, the 350cc class was won by a 17-year-old lad riding a new 350 Norton scrambler. His name J.V. Smith; Bill Nicholson was 2nd and Brian Martin 3rd both riding factory BSAs. Bill Nicholson went on to win the Unlimited class and the Invitation Race with JVS third in the Unlimited – still on the 350.

Then in 1961 on a day that was dubbed "Martin's Marley", Brian Martin (then BSA Competitions Manager) swept the board. Over 5000 spectators turned up, despite the rain and sleet, to see Martin take the 250cc class from Chris Horsfield, the 350cc class from Bernie Andrews and the 1000cc class from Gerry Goodwin (a grass tracker and Red Marley specialist). Strangely, the Experts Barred class was won by a certain S.H. Miller!!

Sadly, no Red Marley this year but I'm sure it will be back for 2022.

Thank you to Dave Gittins for this contribution.

Bryan "Badger" Goss - 1940 to 2021



A tribute to Bryan "Badger" Goss

One thing is for sure, if you ever met "Badger" you will not have forgotten him. It is likely that he would remember you as well – he had an incredible ability to remember names, no matter if they were fellow riders, their wives, even their daughters!

He was also one hell of a rider as well. The No. 46 racer soon became tops in the lightweight classes, and it was not uncommon to be mixing it with the BSA Gold Stars and Triumphs in the unlimited races. Initially taken on as a works rider by COTTONS, however, the COTTON management could not afford to keep "Badger" in the team and rivals GREEVES signed him up as a "retained" works rider. Later, Swedish HUSQVARNA's were the chosen mount and later German built MAICO's.

Short in stature but larger than life, just as I said in the beginning, Bryan Goss – you will not be forgotten.

R.I.P.

**Many thanks for the support
of everyone who has helped
to make today possible.**