



Quarterly Quest

April 2007 Vol.3



East London & Essex Section
News Letter

Section News

The Early Days.

Back in the December of 1981 Kevin O'Brien placed the following in the November addition of the Jampot

“ So now I have had a dig at everyone else's conscience, you had better put my name on the list. Equally if anyone would be interested in starting an East London/Essex Section why not give me a bell on 01 593 2743. “

January 1982 saw the first section notes appear reading as follows.

East London *Members in the area of South Essex or East London who would be interested in Club runs on their bikes plus an occasional get-together for a pint are asked to contact Kevin O'Brien on 01 593 2743. The inaugural meeting has been held and, with a little more support, a suitable local will be chosen for regular meetings.*

With a current membership of two (Kevin and Andy, from Rainham) both singles-types, there is an urgent need for at least one other member, a twin-owner, to balance the discussions! We look forward to hearing from you.

March 82

The progress was slow with just three signed up Me (KB) Andy and Frank and we meet at the White Bear a very well used watering hole in Stanford Rivers with local British Iron.

May 82

Having now had two section meetings we have increased members to six new additions being Nick Taylor, Richard Smith and Pete Smith.

July 82

Mays meeting saw a further two faces Dave from Loughton and Cedric from Harold Wood. Landlord banishing us to the back room as our helmets were not well appreciated on the floor of the bar.

August 82

Another good meeting with Dave and John arriving for the 1st time on their AJ's. We are growing with each meeting, this time we were seven.

Section News

October 82

Saw four riders from the Kent section and one lone rider from the Hertfordshire section (Lionel on his big twin).

November 82

Our first event outside of a club meeting as we attended a charity show at South Woodham Ferrers.

The meetings went from strength to strength throughout 1982 and continued to grow thereafter to the healthy number of members we have today seeing a record 45 at club night 22nd February 2007 this being the year of our 25 years as the East London and Essex Section.

Our thanks go to Kevin for his initiative in forming the Section back in late 1981/1982.



Section News

A day at the Squadron with Danny Difazio. (Classic Bike)

It was a very windy but sunny day at The Squadron when we met for the photo-shoot for the twin's article to be published in the Classic Bike magazine. After visiting the restaurant for refreshment, courtesy of Roy, Danny outlined for us how he wanted to conduct the day's proceedings. There followed a long routine of solo riding shots of each bike/rider present around the airfield perimeter track, followed by a number of different types of group formation riding shots in very close company, which was very entertaining (who needs the White Helmets)!. All this was filmed by Danny hanging out of the back of Roy's car!. After this session we returned to the restaurant for a quick lunch break and to warm up as it was a very cold day. We later moved on to the pictures required of each bike and rider present which finally completed the day. It was, as usual, a good fun day with lots of laughs in good company. The following are the members who took part.

G Thompson 1959 G11, A Burnett 1960 G12 CSR, R Green 1960 G12 CSR, G Bister 1960 M31 CSR, V Sayer 1956 M20, D Nicholls 1960 M20, R Mathers 1954 M20, D Fox 1954 M20.

Pat Gill also took part but it is understood that his bikes, a Silver Arrow and a Model X, will be featured in a separate article.

Dennis

Section News



A Dubious Purchase

If you saw an advert like this -

1965 Matchless G2 250CSR. One owner, last used in 1969, 14,000 miles from new, kept covered in a garage since - £230

you would climb over people to get to it first, wouldn't you? Well this is just how it was described to me by a good friend, and I said "yes please" without seeing it. When it turned up on Kelvin's trailer, I could have cried, not Kelvin's fault – as this was how it was described to him by **his** friends friend (a friend of the owner who had died), but I thought – "its probably only surface rust".

We unloaded it into my back garden in the dark, so it was next morning before the true scale of the decay became clear. Never mind, I thought, its only done 14,000 miles, so it will be mechanically sound – **oh yeah, how wrong could I be?!**

Head off revealed the cylinder full of rust coloured soup which had rotted the standard bore to beyond a + 60 rebore. Timing side casing was full of "mud" up to the points cover. The space between the crankcase and drive side chaincase was full of oily mud up to the crankshaft. Wheel rims holed in many places, fork stanchions were rotted almost through to the fork crown. Carb appeared to be made of ali oxide. The seat base was a slab of iron oxide, and so on and so on.

So obviously the bike had never seen the inside of a garage, but with the help of the blasting cabinet I stole from Roy, verbal and documented specifications gleaned from various members, £1,300 worth of replacement parts, and a pile of work – its back on the road!

Vic



Look it's been sick



| <u>January—June 2007</u> | | Venue | Time |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| 11th January | Thursday Club Night. | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 14th January | Sunday North weald Jumble | North Weald | 10.00 AM |
| 25th January | Thursday Club Night. Ron West Talk | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 8th February | Thursday Club Night. | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 18th February | Sunday North Weald Jumble | North Weald | 10.00 AM |
| 22nd February | Thursday Club Night Alan Jennings Talk | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 8th March | Thursday Club Night. | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 22nd March | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 25th March | Sunday Club Run To Ardingly West Sussex TBA | | 9.00 AM |
| 1st April | Sunday Eastern Counties Meet Finchingfield TBA | | 10.30AM |
| 12th April | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 26th April | Thursday Club Night. Fish & Chips | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 6th May | Sunday Club Run | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 10th May | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 13th May | Sunday Jericho Cottage Bike Meet | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 24th May | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 24th-28th May | Fri- Mon 2007 International Jampot | Germany | |
| 3rd June | Sunday 8th Classic bike show Kenebworth TBA | | 9.00AM |
| 14th June | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 16/17 June | Air Britain Fly-In. Squadron North Weald | | |
| 18th June | Monday Run To Kent Section | TBA | 6.30PM |
| 24th June | Sunday Cressing Temple show | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 28th June | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |

| <u>July-August 2007</u> | | Venue | Time |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| 1st July | Sunday Club Run To Battlesbridge | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 12th July | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30PM |
| 15th July | Sunday Club Run | TBA | |
| 26th July | Thursday Club Night BAR B Q | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 29th July | Sunday Club Run | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 3rd/ 6th August | Fri - Mon Jampot Rally Suffolk Woodbridge Suffolk | | |
| 9th August | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 19h August | Sunday Club Run | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 23rd August | Thursday Club Night/ invite Kent Section | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 26th/27th August | Sun/Mon Countess of Warwick Show | TBA | 9.30AM |
| 2nd September | Sunday Classic bike Festival North Weald North Weald | | 9.30AM |
| 9th September | Sunday Plumstead | | 9.00AM |
| 13th September | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 23rd September | Sunday Club Run | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 27th September | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 7th October | Sunday Coalhouse Fort Tilbury | TBA | 9.30AM |
| 11th October | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 25th October | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 28th October | Sunday Change of Clocks Run | TBA | 10.00AM |
| 8th November | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 11th November | Sunday Remembranced Sunday | Squadron | 10.00AM |
| 22nd November | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 1st December | Saturday End of Season Dinner | TBA | 7.00PM |
| 13th December | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |
| 27th December | Thursday Club Night | Squadron | 7.30 PM |

Technical topic 12 Volt Conversion... A View

MY experience of twelve volt conversions of our AMC machinery looks at two solutions, neither of which are particularly "original".

1) JG conversion unit

This is a twelve volt conversion of an early type short (window) dynamo often referred to as a 60 watt unit. I used this conversion on a 500 single with sidecar about 6 years ago. I don't know if these are still available but they are exceptionally efficient. It replaces the volt-age regulator unit and has bolts which directly fit the same holes. As it is an aluminium casing it best goes under a dual seat but if you are not worried it is clearly waterproof and could be placed anywhere.

The JG unit does require rewiring (but not rewinding) of the dynamo connections in to a different configuration, so it is not an instant fit solution.

My experience of riding at least 10,000 miles with this conversion is that it is almost perfect. With a 500 on a 350 engine cog (it does have a double adult sidecar attached) I have never had any real trouble with the lights. I do not tend to drive with the lights on during the day but I do use it at night. The advantage of the higher engine speed due to the lower gearing is offset by the fact that when the lights are on it is lit like a Christmas tree, with a 40 watt head light, plus 20 watt side and tail lights, plus 36 watt indicator lights. It seems to give it little trouble even with a standard small and cheap twelve volt battery. I do tend to turn to sidelights if stuck in serious traffic jams at night but otherwise this has been trouble free. In particular the wear on the dynamo brushes seems to be much reduced due to lower current. Power balance is at just over 32 mph with all these lights.

I have been so impressed by the unit that I immediately purchased a spare one when it came up some years ago against any problems with my existing unit. I have not had to use it yet.

2) Alton 150 watt alternator

For my ride to work bike, a 350 G3L, I wanted to be able to ride with full headlights day and night after a number of near misses. The Alton alternator (*From Mr Paul Hamon, Agence Formats, 12 rue Amiral, Linois, 29200 Brest France*) is the most magically engineered replacement for your dynamo. The cost is high at around £250 when I bought it 18 months ago (the current high value of the pound may reduce that cost) but it does come complete with its own regulator unit. This means that it compares with about £100 for a rebuilt dynamo and £35 for the twelve volt regulator for the conversion suggested last month but I can guarantee that it won't produce the 150 watts of this unit!

The Alton unit is designed to look like the later long type dynamo. The only difference is that the end of the unit has some vent slits in it, the drive end looks identical. This is fine if you are fitting it to a machine with a B52 gearbox and a non WD engine.

The problems I encountered with fitting it to a WD engine and a CP box were as follows;

The unit was too long to be fitted with the normal dynamo sprocket, but the shorter mag-neto sprocket is perfect as it has the same angle on the taper. You have to use a self locking nut (the squashed aluminium type) to allow the necessary clearance for the chains in the primary gearbox. This requires a bit of ingenuity to lock up but once done the whole thing stays in place without difficulty. (The Woodruff key is only there to help you lock everything in place not to maintain the things once you have done so. Think how hard it can be to break the taper lock when you try to get a dynamo sprocket off.) Because the Alton alternator has wires coming out of the centre rather than the end the problem is compounded and you have to cut slot in the dynamo fixing strap. This does not show. If you are fitting it to a WD motor there is the additional problem that it has to be held against a cradle as with the later engines because one end of the unit is only a spun soft ally cover. This problem can be overcome by slightly opening up the offside engine plate hole for the dynamo (or fitting a later engine plate on that side) and fitting some packing behind the dynamo to hold it firm against the engine.

I have sent clear advice and diagrams to Mr Hamon who in any case supplies very informative diagrams and instructions in very good English. None of these problems exist for the later engine with the CP box. When I had trouble with my unit, I made a mistake whilst fitting it, Mr Hamon replaced it, with further advice and without any argument, and actually apologised for me making a mistake!

How does it perform? Like magic I feel that I could illuminate the moon. I am currently running it with a 40 watt headlight bulb and 5 watt tail bulb. In 4th gear it levels out at 28mph and by 30mph it is charging at 3 amps! The equivalent 500 single engine speeds would be 32 and 35 mph. However, provided you ride the bike even a little faster regularly, you will keep the battery well charged. It will readily run a 55 watt headlight but the bulbs are more expensive and I had trouble with a series of headlight bulb failures (solution in another article but nothing to do with the Alton unit). There has been one problem associated with the power it puts out. It is too much for the Cyclon dry cell batteries (which I recommend but only for the "occasionally used" bike as they seem to be very sensitive to over charging). If the battery fails or you blow the in-line fuse, all the power from the Alton unit is directed to the bulbs and consequently immediately blows them as the regulator seems to rely on a positive voltage from the battery. Despite all the problems I have identified I think this solution is the one I will follow for all my machines in time. It means you can fit modern 12 volt lighting and if you fit a modern reflector you can have halogen lights which make it like daylight. The early VW Golf headlight unit (from the Golf which has 4 lights fitted in the front grill- you want the outer unit) fits an early AMC small headlight unit. You have to grind off three fitting tags and gently fold back the internal rim of your headlight unit. It then fits perfectly and can be bought for a snip with all the wiring fittings and often even with a bulb, at your local car breakers. The unit has a flat rather than convex glass appearance but otherwise looks good. If you ride regularly at night you will not believe the difference, as not only can the modern bulbs be fitted but the glass itself focuses the light in a much more effective way.

They Always Look Better In Photographs!

In my previous article *Lightweight Leanings* about the trials and tribulations with my Matchless G5 I included a photograph of said beast, taken at the time I first got it at the start of 1994. Looking at this picture I must say that it seems to look quite smart at first glance. Its funny how a photograph always makes things look better and especially when looking for damaged paintwork or rust patches. Careful study of the picture however will show the silver painted wheel rims and spokes, along with the same silver paint on the suspension unit bottoms. What it does not show though is the same silver paint used on the silencer (which immediately burnt off and thereafter went rusty) and the chrome on the handlebars, which had been polished through to the nickel and beyond in some places. Indeed, the bike was no-where near as pristine as it looks at first glance, but that didn't matter to me then, I was only interested in how well it ran and for sure it not only ran very well but also started very reliably – always a massive plus in my books. The cosmetics could always be dealt with later. When I took it for its first MOT while in my ownership, the tester commented that it was nice to see an old bike that was still being used as a workhorse. In fact I was not using it as my workhorse (all my workhorse bikes tend to be instantly recognisable by their humungous size top boxes) but I didn't like to tell him so and spoil the illusion.

For quite some time I enjoyed riding around on the G5 without needing to do anything other than fill it with petrol. Right from the start of my ownership it has been fuelled with only unleaded and I've not noticed any detrimental effects, so I was well pleased with it as a bike to use rather than to just look at. My wife Pam was not so taken with its virtues though. Along with quite a few models that Plumstead have produced, my bike has a rather abbreviated dual seat and one two-up trip of 20 or so miles each way, to Maldon, was enough for her to say that it was the last time she was going to ride on it. Sitting right on the back of the seat it was not only uncomfortable but she felt that she was always going to fall off the back, a feeling made worse by the fact that I had no carrier behind for her to hold on to. For pillion comfort it did not compare in any way to my Francis Barnett, or indeed any of my other bikes. Never mind, I would be using the G5 mostly when I was on my own in any case and I still had other bikes when the two of us were going anywhere. The cosmetics though were still not attempted, or even started. I did invest in a new chain though and eventually replaced the Avon rear tyre which, although still having plenty of tread left I knew to be about 40 years old because the tread pattern was previous to the SM type which I remember Avon introducing when I first started riding in 1964. Neither of these improved the looks though they did give me peace of mind.

There was a time quite a few years back, when I imagined that I would restore a bike properly one day. I truly believed this at the time and even made a few attempts which got partially completed before impatience took over and it either ended up back on the road in whatever state the cosmetic work had reached before the urge to ride it overcame me, or I passed it on to a new owner. While a bike was running well though, there was no way that any cosmetics were going to be attended to – and so the G5 soldiered on with the rusty silencer getting worse and the paintwork more chipped and scratched. At one event when I arrived Roy even had the cheek to say to me that he thought I would have cleaned it before the event. Although I could see his point the cheek was that I had cleaned it, it was just that it didn't look any different afterwards, but then again it has not had any magneto failures or flat batteries either. If there is anything mechanical which needs sorting then it gets done, but I guess that it is just not in my realms of enthusiasm to include cosmetics in the list of necessities.

For some time now I have accepted that I am a “maintainer” rather than restorer. I fix the mechanics that need to be done (and no more than that) and try to keep as much rust and corrosion as possible from the cycle and engine parts, then enjoy riding it. I have to admit that because I have to work on my bikes outside (because I have filled up the garage with bikes inside, leaving no room to work) it needs a nice day for any work. Then when we do get a fine day I resent having to work on a bike when I could be riding. So I often get out another bike and go for a ride instead rather than waste a good “riding day”. I find that there are quite a few others like me, although it is sometimes difficult to believe when we see rows of immaculately restored and lovingly looked after bikes on show at events. So we tend to resort to an inbuilt defence mechanism when approached by someone who asks, “why don't you restore it?” with words such as “patina”, “originality” and “history” along with the partial truth of “I would rather be riding than polishing” which sound so much better to both the listener (and myself) than “I can't be bothered” or “I haven't the patience to try a good cosmetic job”.

Nevertheless, occasionally things to get added to my bikes which improve the looks a bit. A few months before the G5 came off the road for gearbox repairs I replaced the rusty old silencer with a shiny new one and I have since got a proper left hand toolbox side to replace the wooden replica (made by the previous owner – a very neat job actually). I have now fitted a cover over the gap between the engine and gearbox, as there should be and never has been while I have been using it and my newly hand painted petrol tank will be resplendent with shiny new badges when it once more takes to the road. As to whether it will look any better in a photograph though is doubtful. It wouldn't even show a new ammeter, if I ever getting around to changing the one currently fitted on which the needle fractured and dropped off due to vibration in about 1996.

Colin

Photos of the Quarter



Photos of the Quarter



The Next Quarter

April 2007

Sun 1st Easting Counties meet Finchingham

Thu 12th Club Night

Sunday 22nd Drive it Day Section Run TBA

Thu 26th Club Night Fish and Chips

May 2007

Sunday 6th Section Run

Thu 10th Club Night

Sun 13th Section Run Jericho Cottage

Thu 24th Club Night

Thu 24th/28th International Rally

June 2007

Sun 3rd 8th Classic bike show Knebworth

Thu 14th Club Night

Saturday 16th Air Britain Fly in North Weald

Monday 18th Section Run To Kent Section Meet

Sunday 24th Section Run to Crossing Temple Show

Thu 28th Club Night

Section Committee

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