



**Southern Sporting  
Motor Cycle Club**

**CONTACT**

JANUARY

2014

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## Editor's piece

Well, we're now into the New Year, but not before a bunch of us chose to celebrate Christmas at the annual SSMCC party. Thanks to Kathy Frost for whizzing around with a camera and catching some great shots, although weirdly, they seemed to get more in focus as the evening progressed! Some of us still use snail mail to deliver our Christmas cards and packages, so spare a thought for all those posties who have fought their way through wind, rain and snow over many years for us – I thought it would be appropriate to include an article on the history of the Royal Mail motorcycle. Also on my mind is house-moving and decorating, so I was chuffed to find an appropriate picture which I've included in the 'Bits and bobs' section, together with a "blast from the past"! This month's Contact is shorter than usual, due to no recent club runs, but please keep sending me your articles, pictures, news etc. to keep this publication rocking and rolling!

**Amoret Whitaker – Editor**

## President's piece – Year 2013 plus

The training scheme had a slow start at the beginning but in the later part of the year we had a few more pupils. It will be interesting to see the difference between last years and this. The Benevolent Fund allocated another £500 to the scheme, so to make even a surplus the scheme needs to make over this amount.

With Robert Wood still ill, Russell Sommer not on the scene, the make-up of new instructors is very unlikely, so we will still be relying on the old guard. So all I can say is sorry to the likes of Richard Davidson, Heather Wallace and Estelle Potter who would like to become CBT Instructors.

Once again I would like to thank all the people who have helped in one form or another at the scheme. Will the scheme last much longer? If we can pay our insurance premiums then we will at least have another year. But we will need another garage before June of 2014!

We have had a few new members this year so the subs are still covering the cost of the club but we still have to thank the committee members as I still do not see many bills coming in from them. Remember, you are not there to subsidise the club!

Chris Booker will be giving an account of the clubs finances. I think (in jest) we should look into these very carefully as he has recently bought a brand new Honda Fire Blade!

As you are aware the clubs off road trial made a surplus which went into the schemes coffers. This is not a facetious question. Do you still wish to run the scheme at a loss to the club of about £500 a year?

We have had a few social events this year, thanks to Doug – do you want more and, if so, what? Please make your suggestions known.

There was a good list of club runs this year. Shame about the weather. Those of us that went on the Belgium run had a great time. It could be repeated in 2014 – Mick and Dave are looking into this so if you are interested, let them know now so they can get a feel for numbers.

Well, Contact has certainly come to the fore. Looks more and more like an expensive magazine you could buy off the middle shelf. I would like to thank Amoret for her wonderful work on it. Also to thank all the people who sent in articles, pictures and anecdotes.

Snowy has been out and about to the motorcycle shops supplying them with leaflets for the scheme and directing us to the correct café for Saturday breakfast to avoid the Rugby.

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014 in the room over the Adelaide pub in Park Road, Teddington, will be held the AGM at 20.00 hours.

All posts are free to be applied for; do not feel you would be treading on someone's toes if you were to apply for one of the jobs. If more than one person stands for a post then a vote will take place, which believe it or not is a good thing. It means people are interested in what happens to the club and would like to make some decisions.

If you won awards last year could you please start to return these? They should all be in my possession by the end of January 2014.

Thank you for your continuing support.

**John Mason – President and Chairperson**

## **Dates for your diary**

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> January</b>                | Ice skating, Hampton Court |
| <b>11<sup>th</sup> January</b>               | Training Scheme restarts   |
| <b>19<sup>th</sup> February</b>              | AGM, The Adelaide          |
| <b>13<sup>th</sup> April</b>                 | Pioneer Run to Brighton    |
| <b>27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> April</b> | Club trip to Ypres         |

**Watch this space ....!**

## Training Scheme update

Whilst a full report of activities will be available at the AGM in February, I thought I would just to pen to paper to let you know we made it through another year.

We've managed to match the number of pupils that we had in 2012, but only because we had some late starters and sudden retake opportunities.

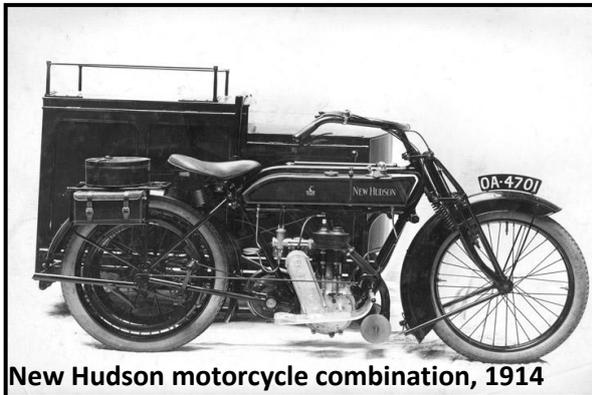
Unfortunately I was contacted by the DSA with regards to wanting to see five of our instructors for re-assessment. Fortunately for us, we had a new CBT pupil that could be used whilst these re-assessments took place, as it is always better to be doing it with 'live fish' rather than stand-ins. It has meant that Mark, bless him, has had to put up with three different instructors teaching him over a similar number of weeks. The good news is that they should all get at least "satisfactory" reports (or better). So that is: Ian Slater, John Mason and Russell Sommer seen, with only Richard Barnett and Rob Wood to be looked at in the New Year. Rob's assessment will have to wait until he is fit to stand around in the playground. Mark should be safe in the New Year as we have another new pupil due to start that can be used.

I published in last months' Contact that we were looking for a new home for the Scheme's bikes. It's still a little early to confirm, but hopefully, through the help of a club member, this problem may well have been resolved. I'll be able to report more at the AGM.

So whilst we may still be on borrowed time, we will at least be starting the New Year with a Training Scheme.

**Heather – Training Scheme Organiser**

# Royal Mail motorcycles



New Hudson motorcycle combination, 1914

During the early part of the twentieth century, experiments were made in the use of motorcycles. In 1903, a motor tricycle was on trial in London and in about 1910 a postman on a rural service near Watford used a petrol motor auto-wheel device attached to a bicycle.

By 1913, some Post Office staff used private motorcycles for their official duties.

They were paid an allowance of three pence a mile for use of the vehicles. The following year, motorcycles were provided by the Post Office on an experimental basis. Twenty heavy motorcycle combinations were bought, comprising ten New Hudsons, six Douglases and four Rovers. They were all single cylinder machines of 3½ horse-power with wicker or metal side-carriers. They were introduced on rural collections and deliveries to replace postmen on horseback. However, between 1914 and 1919 the experiment was suspended, due to wartime petrol rationing.

In 1919, the use of motorcycles by the Post Office was resumed, and more powerful, twin cylinder, machines were introduced.

In 1920, another trial with the auto-wheel device, attached to a bicycle, took place in Douglas. The start of the 1920s was the beginning of the Post Office's motor transport scheme, during which it purchased Matchless, Triumph, BSA, Enfield, Douglas, Clyno and Chater Lea motorcycles. BSA was found to be the best for price and quality and acted as supplier to the Post Office for a number of years.



BSA solo motorcycle near Tavistock, 1929



Motorcycle messenger, 1930's

In 1924, light solo motorcycles and light motorcycle combinations were first used experimentally to carry post. The combinations were slightly more expensive to operate but were more satisfactory and by the early 1930s were gradually replacing the solo motorcycles. By 1925, 400 twin cylinder motorcycles were in use, in all types of postal work.



**BSA Bantam 125cc motorcycle, 1965**

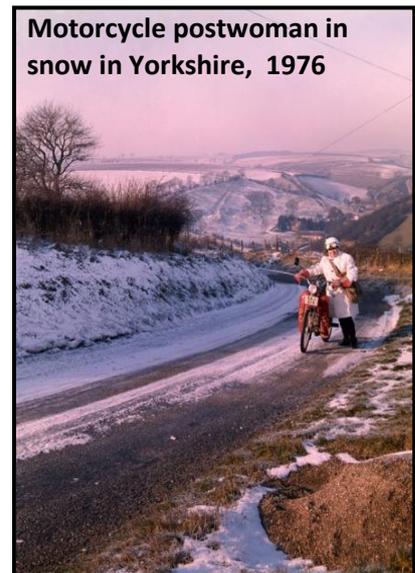
The GPO was slow to adopt solo motorcycles for telegram deliveries, although such machines were used widely in the 1920s for other postal deliveries and telephone work. A committee of enquiry was set up in 1919 to examine telegram delivery arrangements in London and its final report in 1921 proposed a streamlining of delivery arrangements but concluded

that there was little scope to use motorcycles except perhaps in the outer districts of London on Sundays, where few delivery offices were open and distances to be transported were much greater than on weekdays. An article in Irish Times in December 1929 highlighted the introduction of 22 motorcycles in Dublin. This led to their use being re-examined in Great Britain with experiments in 1930 using motorcycles borrowed from other departments in London and in Glasgow. Further trials, this time using machines owned by the delivery boys, took place at Bournemouth in 1930 and Cardiff in 1931. Eventually it was concluded that motorcycles would give rise to economy and to an improved delivery service, and an order was placed with BSA for 130 solo 250cc 2.49 h.p. solo motorcycles for delivery in 1933.



**BSA Bantam 175cc motorcycle, 1970**

Until the 1960s, companies such as BSA and Raleigh supplied motorcycles to the Post Office. In September 1967, fifty Raleigh Supermatic mopeds, modified for Post Office use, were introduced. Earlier trials of mopeds had shown they were suitable for rural collections and deliveries, deliveries on housing estates on the outskirts of towns, patrol and inquiry work and telephone kiosk cleaning. In the 1970s, BSA and Raleigh gave way to makes such as Honda. The Honda VT500 was used from 1988, and the Kawasaki GT500 from 1989. The Honda SH50 City Express moped was used from 1993, mainly for low volume deliveries in towns or rural areas.



**Motorcycle postwoman in snow in Yorkshire, 1976**

Source:

<http://www.postalheritage.org.uk/page/motorbikes>

## Bits and bobs



Looking to upgrade your bathroom with a nice bit of chrome? What a great combination!

Sourced from:

[www.facebook.com/bennettsbike](http://www.facebook.com/bennettsbike)



### A blast from the past!

Great to catch up with past SSMCC member Phil Hayter last week who was over here visiting his family for Christmas, from Perth, Western Australia, where he has lived for a number of years.



**Biker Thought for the Month ... *Remember the time when sex was safe and motorcycles were dangerous?***

## SSMCC Christmas Party

Thanks go to Doug Chaney, our Social Secretary, for organising the annual Christmas bash, held again at Harrison's Hotel in Shepperton. There was a pretty good show of faces, with just a few absentees, either due to illness or prior engagements. Chilli and I did our best to capture a few shots of people during the course of the evening ....





# Caption competition

## Winning caption:

Snowy celebrates the 50th anniversary of Dr Who in his own inimitable way!

## Best of the rest:

'You ain't seen me right?'

Fears increase for Superman's wellbeing, as both his health and stealth appear to be in severe decline.

'Today I'll mostly be smoking Seagulls!'

So Snowy really is the Doctor!!!

Snowy takes every opportunity to show his disapproval at the law against smoking in public places.



## January's picture

Send your suggested captions to me at: [a.whitaker@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:a.whitaker@nhm.ac.uk)