

Editorial

As we are all aware, Ralph Venables passed away at the beginning of February. I feel very privileged to have known Ralph for many years and am pleased to have regarded him as a friend and one who has given me much encouragement in the production of this magazine. It seems very odd to think that no more will I hear the booming voice from the other side of a valley calling for my presence at the feet of the master. I was rather hoping that I would be able to make it down to the Haynes Museum to attend the 'memorial meeting' but this wasn't to be for several reasons, one of which is that I don't travel too well these days - a bit like a cheap wine!

In the true tradition of trials, the route to the museum from the A303 was marked with left, rights and SOs, interestingly though a nice touch was achieved by just having an image of the 'cap' on the card.

The Eastern Centre was represented by Mick Brown, Derek Clampin and Dave Bickers. Dave had pulled off a bit of a scoop. He had found, somewhere in Suffolk, the Allard that Ralph drove in the fifties and early sixties and had borrowed it for the day and made quite an entrance with it as of course many there remember seeing the vehicle in an earlier stage of its life and no doubt being driven shall we say quite swiftly!

There were, it is estimated, between three and four hundred who attended the 'wake' and as one might expect, there were some quite remarkable reunions. One of these was Gordon Jackson astride his ex works bike of which I am hoping to have a picture for the next issue of this magazine assuming that the Thorington chemist does his stuff.

A real blast from the past was the presence of Tony 'Fred' Godfrey, a very well known character, road racer, and jazz drummer from the sixties. Arrange the achievements in any order. Seems that he hasn't lost his sense of humour which is and always was similar to Tony Hancock.

Anyway, I hope to have a brief write up regarding the 'do' for next month's issue.

The perennial problem is with us again. Observers, or rather the lack thereof. Our president has put pen to paper or rather computer to printer and provided

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From noon

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Pre 65 solos • Pre 65 sidecars • Twin Shocks

Youths • Twin Shock sidecars

some thoughts on what we may need to do if we don't get more co-operation from our membership.

The electronic age has arrived! I don't know whether it has been brought on by the series of articles that Tracey is writing or whether there is some other more mundane reason. However, suffice to say that emails are beginning to flood into the editorial offices and I have included a selection for your edification.

A superb day at Snaque Pit even down to the weather as long as you weren't in line with the Siberian Mistral which had found its way to the Essex Suffolk border. I must admit that the section that Angie Bennet was observing was at least two overcoats colder than some of the others! Now, this brings me to observers again. With a club having almost 150 members who it is assumed have some affinity with the Pre65 trials scene it would seem to be a great shame that we couldn't muster a few more observers at the Snaque Pit and had to rely on the regular observers, both riders and non-riders, to carry out the duties.

Our section plotters were somewhat worried that the going on the Sunday would be a bit on the claggy side. Whilst setting out on the Saturday the frost 'came out' and boots suddenly became very large and heavy, definitely not the sort of going that Cubs and C15s enjoy. Thankfully there wasn't a frost during Saturday night Sunday morning so the 'going' turned out to be in prime condition.

Have you noticed that the Harwich area seems determined to become the mecca for Bultacos and Ossas. Where do they find them all? As each event takes place there seem to be yet more of them on the scene. I am very pleased that Harwich is once again on the motorcycling map as far as competitive riders is concerned. From being a hive of activity in the seventies it went through a quiet time until recently.

This year's Phil King trial was what you might call upset by the weather. Here in downtown Boreham we didn't suffer too much from the snow other than to miss out on postal deliveries for a few days as it was supposed to be too dangerous for the posties to deliver the mail. Don't remember that being the case when we had 'proper' winters such as 1963. From what I have been told it would appear that little or no consideration was given to the weather conditions and the going under Michelin/Pirelli so much so that someone of the calibre of Mike Smith only managed to get through 3 sections all day. That I am afraid is a trial of unwarranted difficulty but perhaps you know or have different ideas.

Now to a trial that was very much the opposite of the Phil King. The Southend club did the Pre65 movement proud with their event at Royal Oak Pits. A good trial and good weather all combined to make a trial that suited everyone, so much so that the President went clean (yet again - he went clean at the Snaque Pit!). I hope the Southend club are able to put on a similar event next year and if they do then they deserve to get a much bigger entry - just read the emails.

The Frating trial is fast approaching and the closing date for entries will soon be with us. Yes, it is an enter BEFORE the day event where everyone will be given a start time. I know that this is a love it or hate it trial, dependant upon whether you like traditional trials or a ride around Raydon, so if you don't intend to ride why not come along and lend a hand by observing - your help will be very much appreciated.



Ian Preedy 275 B.S.A. ('Little ERIC')

Currently 'er indoors isn't very happy with the number of entries that we have received. We need quite a lot more to do the event full justice.

March is quite a busy month for the club as we make our visit to Chattisham on the 30th. I expect that Ted will be giving out more information following the AGM or if not then we will make sure that everyone is made aware following the Frating trial.

Mike Harden and his merry men have another Plonkaround scheduled for Raydon on March 22nd so there is no excuse for lack of practise or outings in the month of March.

Looks as if there will be an Eastern Centre trial taking place outside the confines of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk during the Summer months. Our favourite traffic warden, Joanie, a member of the Ilford club, is intending to organise a trial on her brothers land down in Kent. I understand that all permissions have been granted and Joan will be the clerk of the course. Now, this could turn out to be quite a special event as I do believe it coincides with a rather special occasion but I shall endeavour to keep you informed as the time gets closer. Suffice to say that I have enjoyed my rides at this bit of land but it isn't perhaps at its best during the wetter months of the year.

What do you know about the Red Thunder energy drink? Our Presidente has become an addict. Does it contain any performance enhancing drugs? No I don't mean that sort of performance, I know he is now a grandad but I mean the sort of performance that allows him to go 'clean' two weeks on the trot. Firstly riding the Arsfield at Snaque Pit and then mounted on Little Eric at the Southend trial. I gather that it is in order to purchase Red Thunder by the box! Now, if it has this sort of effect . . .

Jaspar made his first appearance at the Snaque Pit but didn't take part in the proceedings as the clutch was doing a bit too much slipping. I understand that Jaspar is a high performance variant of the Arsfield, having a Velocette piston with crown finely honed to fit the combustion chamber as against the flat top used in the Arsfield. I am sure it wont be too long before Roger Finch gets all the teething problems sorted.

Well by the time most of you read this the AGM for 2003 will be over. A new world duration record may have been set by Ted in carrying out the business of the meeting in record time but what will be certain is that many of us will be very satisfied with the chilli and curry!

Best wishes,

Jim

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Secretarys Scribblings

Welcome to the AGM edition of the Scribblings. Well done to all of you who will be presented with club trophies tonight.

Congratulations to Graham Braybrook who won the 2002 Eastern Centre ACU Pre-70 Trials Overall Award and the Two Stroke class and to Stephen Parker who won the Pre-Unit class.

Congratulations also to Andy Spreadbridge for his success in the Gentleman's Route Section of the Greeves Riders Association Championship.

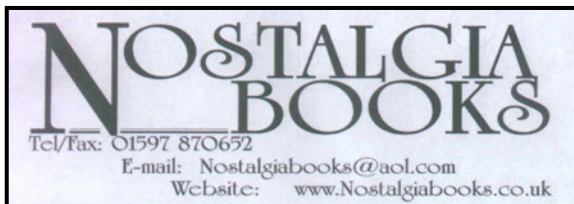
Went along to the Kings Oak, High Beech to see what was happening at the Vintage Speedway Magazine 75th Anniversary get together of old speedway riders and bikes. Although it was a cold wet Sunday morning there were lots of people there. There were several tents full of old bikes, riding colours and photographs outside. From time to time some of the old bikes were started up and you'd catch a whiff of Castrol R. A large room inside the pub had been set aside for tables full of memorabilia and a collectors fair. All in all an interesting morning.

You may have noticed that we were absent from the Snaque Pit trial. This was due to the fact that Roger had entered an enduro at Foxborough Quarry. Not sure that this was a good idea 'cos although he enjoyed the outing it took all week to clean the bike and riding gear - it was so **very** muddy.

Luckily the Southend Club trial at Danbury was a much more civilised affair. Still a bit muddy here and there with one water splash section but nothing as claggy as the previous weekend. The event attracted a good entry of pre-70 solos and sidecars, modern sidecars, twinshocks, clubmen, modern novices, beginners and youths. There were a few queues here and there but as it was a lovely sunny day everyone was quite happy to sit chatting until it was their turn. A great event - thank you Southend.

Club subs are now due for renewal. They remain the same as last year - £8 for club membership + newsletter and £15.50 for club membership + newsletter + Eastern Centre Gazette. Thanks to those who have already renewed - we look forward to hearing from those of you who haven't!

Heather



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Harley Girls



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emails... to the editor...



Jim

Please would you be kind enough to pop these few lines in the next T&T

Gorden and myself would like to say a big THANKYOU to all those people who had worked so hard with making Sundays trial one of best events to be held at this venue (Snaque Pit).

This also goes for those folk who restored the damage done by the pedal cyclists but the biggest THANKS must go to the brave band of observers who braved the bitter cold weather to make our days riding possible.

Finally thankyou Graham for the loan of the chicken, it only pecked me once on Edies section

Eddie Hood

The Editor

On behalf of several EFA members listed below, I have been asked if I would convey our thanks to the S&D.M.C.C for the trial which took place on Sunday 23 February.

The ten sections were laid out with just the right amount of difficulty for all abilities, incorporating three routes, of which I am sure all who participated thoroughly enjoyed.

We are all looking forward to a return visit next year, with hopefully even more pre-70 riders to support a well organised event.

With kind regards

Jeff Fincham

Roger Finch

Ian Preedy

Albert Dove

To the editor,

Along with the undersigned I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Southend & DMCC for the trial at Royal Oak Pits, Danbury on 23-02-03. With the ten varied sections that had been laid out there was something to suit all riders of various age and ability. Looking forward to next year's meeting which will hopefully be well supported by pre-70 riders.

Regards

Kevin Goldsmith, Jason Sigournay, Peter Sigournay, Graham Braybrook.

Learn to love your Computer...

by Tracey



Well this month I want to go over the subject of internet search engines and one way that life can be made easier in finding things on the internet. As I'm sure you'll all agree, at least those with PCs will, the internet is a huge microcosm in its own right and there are so many things that can be found out there. As a result finding what you want is likely to be very difficult without a search engine. But what is a search engine?

A search engine is a means of finding what you want on the internet and there are many, many available to use. So how do you know what the best ones may be. There are also some which are more suitable for us here in the UK as opposed to others for use by Americans. Some search engines are better for searching for specialised sites such as scientific and maths subjects. There are yet others written for specific countries in their native language. However, although I know of many search engines and have links to them, I am certain there are many more that are completely unknown to me, possibly running into hundreds! So what are the most popular? Even more, what are the best?

There are several which come out well and produce results quickly. Of those I know, there are some which stand out more than others. However, this is primarily personal preference. The most popular search engines include Yahoo, Altavista (UK and USA version), Excite, Lycos and Netscape. Search engines such as Yahoo could be described as content search engines since it has easy access to specialised topics which have been collected together thus making it easy to find whatever you require very quickly.

The best though for my (and Jim's) personal needs is Google. I came across this search engine several years ago when I was test driving the Opera browser as it has it built into the program. I'd never heard of it before this but on trying it I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was so fast, it even told you how fast the search took and I'm talking about literally fractions of a second. I have just done a search for Ralph Venables and it came up with over 3,000 pages in 0.14 seconds. Since finding Google I've stayed with it and it has never let me down. Google even produces a toolbar that can be installed into browsers which makes it a doddle to search for anything. These

Please Note:

The closing date by which all articles and adverts to be included in the April issue of Trials & Tribulations should reach the editorial office is Monday 24th March.

Material for inclusion in the magazine may be supplied in the following forms:

handwritten • typed • computer hard copy • fax • email • floppy disc

If providing computer hard copy, a font size of 12pt minimum is preferred whilst articles supplied on floppy disc should be saved in text format.

days I tend to use the Mozilla browser (on which Netscape is based) but there is also a Google toolbar for that as well.

When you install the toolbar there is no need to go to the search engine web site to enter your search term. Instead you just enter it into the toolbar, press Go and it comes up with the results. The toolbar installed is shown in the graphic below/above and as you can see it installs itself below the Internet Explorer toolbar in whatever it is installed. Once installed you quite simply go ahead and use it, i.e. enter your search term and press the icon to the right of the entry field.



So where do you find this toolbar? First go to www.google.com and on the Home page, select the services and tools links. When displayed, scroll down to the tools section and you will find a link to the Toolbar there. Click the link and you are presented with a page giving the benefits of the toolbar and at the bottom of the page is another link allowing you to get the toolbar. However, this actually displays a page asking you to agree to the terms and conditions. Once you agree, another link takes you to a page describing the two different versions available. We always take the advanced version as we have had problems with the standard version but the advanced version has always been fine for us. It is then just a case of letting Google install the toolbar although there may be a few things to which you may need a response. You should now be all set to go ahead and use the Google toolbar.

Jim and myself have found the toolbar to be very worthwhile installing - I'm sure it has saved us many hours over the time we've had it installed. One important thing I haven't mentioned is that by using the toolbar, you can also search the current site by entering your search term and pressing to search the site. There are also a few other features that quite frankly I don't use but really, its a case of just having a play to see what you can do - and don't forget to right click the toolbar!

As for how you use a search engine so much is dependent on the engine itself and can vary from search engine to search engine. It is a question I have asked myself from time to time but which almost always has an answer available on the search engine site. What you enter can be quite involved and depends so much on the way the engine has been written. The best thing to do if you are unsure what to enter or how to enter it, is to look for the help which is available on most search engine sites. This will generally give you all the information you need to enter your search term. There may also be an advanced help page which will go that little bit deeper in providing help. However, since each search engine may operate in different ways, I feel it would be inappropriate for me to even attempt to cover such a subject. I've attempted to point you in the right direction. I leave it to you to continue from there.

As always, if you have any questions about anything I've said then please get in touch and I will do what I can to help. Even if its not Google you use I may still be able to help as its not that difficult to find your way around a search engine - and I may have a better idea of what to look for than yourselves. Till next month then.

A PRESIDENTIAL OBSERVATION...

Another very successful year has passed, how quickly they go these days. Your committee have worked hard and continued to run some excellent trials for us all to enjoy. Heather tells me that we have a membership of over 140 which these days is very good, our membership are a credit to the E.F.A. and trials in general. Our popularity could be due to our laid back approach or maybe its because of chairman Ted's iron rule! But in common with most other clubs we have one big problem. In a word its observers, or rather the lack of them!

A year ago we said if the observer situation did not improve we would have to introduce some form of riders ballot. At the recent Snaque pit trial just three people volunteered to observe. It was a good trial and we had 72 entries. What are we, as organisers expected to do. The E.F.A. is over twenty years old and most of our regular observers have been doing the job from the start. And some of these hardy souls need a rest.

Our Thumpers Trial and Frating are not such a problem, it is our club trials that are the problem. With the large entries we are getting, more sections would be advisable. This would stop some of the queuing. Some of our observers love to be involved, this is great, but we must stop press ganging people week after week who for once would like to walk round and watch friends or husbands perform.

In general we would arrive at the start of a club trial, we would call for volunteers and if for example we were two short, all riders would go into the ballot, two would be chosen and their entry fee would be refunded. Once they had done their one stint as an observer they would not be included in any more ballots for one year. The only riders not to go into the ballot are those members who bring an observer with them. We cannot expect our people to work for weeks to run a trial, then on the day only have two or three observers, and then literally have to force people to man the vacant sections.

We would welcome any helpful suggestions on how to improve on the ballot system or any other ideas on how to keep the section manned. We intend to start the ballot in the Autumn (October). I have spoken to several club members and all agree that it is a good idea, time will tell though.

Ian Preedy

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Too Hard when its Easy?

After reading Terry Warrens report on this years 'Talmag Trial' in the 'Trials and Motocross News', it was clear that many past winners did not get a look in this year! So does this mean it's 'too hard when it's easy'?

The biggest gripe was that this year's trial was not tough enough. **But who for and on what route?** As I ride a girder fork bike I compete on the easier of the two routes, which also happens to be the competitive route for the sidecars as well. Not only this, but more importantly its also the Sportsman's route for solo riders, which, by its very nature is laid out in a friendlier style.

When the results were published, there were three riders on 'girder fork' bikes who were clean. Very similar to years gone by, so not a lot of difference there. Two of the 'sidecar boys' had remained clean so the special test (which is a real old fashioned blast) was the decider for the above two groups. The 'Sportsman's' class, which is the second biggest class in entry numbers, had seven riders who were clean. But this matters not a jot as they are just riding for the fun of it. Also quite a few better riders on the day decided to downgrade to ride the easier route rather than the harder one, so this probably increased the number of cleans normally recorded in the 'Sportsman's' class. The 'telescopic rigids' compete on the harder route and four cleans were recorded. All those agile lightweight 'unit construction' bikes 'must' compete on the harder route, but it was surprising that only one clean ride was recorded in this group. The pre unit rear sprung class probably has some of the most experienced and determined riders around who are there to give it their best shot. Yes! This was a little loose as no less than thirteen cleans were recorded, which must have cost the Talmag Club a tidy penny in first class awards.



Roger Finch 500 Jaspar

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So what is the Talmag Trial all about then? Well for many others and me it's a day to firstly enjoy and secondly to reminisce. So I would put spectator appeal near the top of my list and this they prove by attending in their thousands. Obviously they do not want to miss the rare opportunity of seeing old and 'almost authentic' bikes in action. There are also many occasional riders out there who like the pleasure of riding once or twice a year on sections suited to rare and mainly un-competitive machines. The Talmag is now probably the only event left (other than long distance trials) where they can do this safely and with extreme satisfaction and no bruises to body, ego or machinery. So for these gentlemen and lady riders please do not toughen up the sections or we will loose that unique laid back 'good old days' atmosphere. There are plenty of other challenging trials that better riders can compete in for the rest of the season.

To sum up, the 2003 'Talmag' had sections, which were nicely laid out, with cambers, sweeping turns and uphill blasts. It was almost like going back in time to the style of those famous old events that suited heavy and slightly modified 'roadster' type motorcycles. I know of at least one rider who rode as a 'Sportsman' last year on his HT 500 and he thought it too tough, but to be fair this was mainly due to last year's unusually wet day. He fell off a few times in 2002 whilst collecting many fives. He has since sold his trials bike and has now taken up boating. Another one lost forever? I hope not because I have told him how much friendlier this years trial was. Lets hope I can persuade him to come back to trials, because we need all the riders we can muster.

Dave Blanchard

BECAUSE WE ARE MEN

- If you put a woman on a pedestal and try to protect her from the Rat Race you're a male chauvinist pig.
- If you stay at home and do the housework you're a pansy.
- If you work too hard there is never any time for me and the kids: if you don't work hard enough you are a good for nothing layabout.
- If she has a boring repetitive job, with low pay, that is exploitation; if we have a boring repetitive job with low pay we should get off our butt and find something better.
- If a man gets a promotion ahead of her that is favouritism; if she gets promotion ahead of him that is equal opportunity.
- If we mention how nice she looks that is sexual harassment; if we keep quiet that is typical male indifference.
- If we cry we're a sheila; if we don't we're insensitive.
- If a man thumps her that is wife bashing; if she thumps him it's self defence.
- If he makes a decision without consulting her he's a chauvinist. If she makes a decision without regard to his feelings she's a liberated women.
- If he asks her to do something she doesn't enjoy that is domination; if she asks him it's a favour.
- If we appreciate the female form and frilly underwear we're sexual perverts; if we don't notice we're poofers.
- If we like a woman to keep in shape and shave her legs that is sexist; if we don't care that is unromantic.
- If we try to keep ourselves in shape that is vanity; if we don't we're slob;
- If he buys her flowers he's after something; if he doesn't he's forgetful.
- If we are proud of our achievements we're up ourselves; if we aren't we are not ambitious.
- If she has a headache it's because she's tired, if he has a headache it's because he doesn't love her anymore.
- If we want it too often we're over sexed, if we can't perform on cue there must be somebody else.

These are just some of the reasons why MEN are all so . . .

"Bleeping" confused . .

Diary of a Re-cycled Trials Rider

Part one-(Getting started again after 20 years)

December 1996

A chat with an old friend who I met up with by chance, whilst working in Colchester leads to a discussion on pre-1965 Trials. I am told there is one on Sunday at Thorrington (the Thumpers). Ask "Him in the garage" if he wants to go and take in the scene. He agrees to a Sunday out. Much enjoyment is had by all, amongst ribald comments from folicly challenged, bearded, older gentlemen. He meets up with an old college friend and this leads to an invitation to have a go at a trial at Raydon in January, by sharing friends' bike.

January 1997

"Him in the garage" enjoys his trial and doesn't ache too much the next day. I tentatively suggest maybe he ought to take up trials again!! Trials and MX news appears again on the paper bill and much scouring of adverts begins. Whoopee! Time to go skip-ferretting* again.

February.

Re-cycled Trials Rider rides a borrowed twin-shock bike at the Snaque Pit - the bug has now really bitten. Meetings of E.F.A. are attended. Meanwhile I'm searching local libraries for books on old bikes during my lunch hour.

March.

A proper pre-65 bike which is 75% complete is acquired from an E.F.A. member. Many nights will now be spent 'tarting it up'. Wonder if it will look as good as Grahams? More bike jumbles to attend to find the bits, (the only events I know of where you don't queue for the ladies'). Wives should definitely get in for half price as we haven't quite reached Senior Citizen status yet. Still I now know what to buy him for birthdays and Christmas.

Joking apart it is nice to see old faces and what a lot of 'characters' there are, some of whom still look same as they did 30 years ago! The scene is much as I remembered from the 1960-70s apart from all the Royal Enfields and riders dressed like Christmas trees (whatever happened to black?).

** Skip-ferretting to the uninitiated, is looking in grotty places for odd bits of bikes, scrap metal etc. beloved by men.*

As Rolf would say "Have ya gissed who it is yit?"

R. G. VENABLES MBE

1914-2003

By now you will all have heard of the passing of Ralph (Raffe) Venables, described by Jeff Smith as "Motorcycling's best friend". In my old home patch, the Southern Centre, he was affectionately known as "Veggy" and we dubbed him the "Trials Riders Patron Saint". Now he can quite rightly take this title up.

I was very saddened when Jim Woodmason telephoned me with the news of his death. So soon after being asked to bring his life story up to date, and so soon after talking to him on the telephone in mid-December, to check my facts about the 1962 Southern Experts. As he told me the John Giles horn saga, his enthusiasm, wit and attention to detail were as keen as ever.

We will all miss this irreplaceable friend of motorcycling who, of course, knew all the Aces of our sport but also always had time for the novice, beginner, riders wives and club workers. If you ran a good event he would praise you, if you ran a duff event he would let you know!

Two happenings that I remember well, both at starts of National trials, may amuse you.

One was at the start of the John Douglas trial at Winford in Somerset. We were all queuing up at the start to sign on, get scrutineered, etc. when we heard Acker Bilk on someone's car radio. Raffe ordered it to be turned up! and everybody to be quiet and listen! When the number finished we were all informed that Ackers birthplace was in the next village of Pensford. Years later I learnt that Raffe was an authority on traditional jazz and had a huge record collection.

The other happening was at the start of the Hoad trial, nr. Petersfield in Hampshire. Raffe was scribbling furiously in his notebook with his usual short stub of a pencil (I never saw Raffe with a complete pencil), when a well known Yorkshire rider commented "Hey up! can't you afford a proper pencil". To this Raffe promptly replied "Of course, but think of the money this one has made me!" I think this reply also earned a lot of respect from our Yorkshire friend.

Raffe published his last column in December 2002 and his last trial report was published in "TMX" on January 10th 2003 at age 88 and less than one month before his death. Let me conclude by repeating what I wrote in the December "Trials and Tribulations", "Remember, this was a man who has worked tirelessly for our sport since before the last world war"

We will miss him!

Mick Brown

End Thought . . .

Never Underestimate The Power Of Stupid People In Large Groups