

FISHTAIL WEST

**The Magazine of the
Velocette Owners Club of North America
March & April 2018 no.225**



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**Submissions for
 FISHTAIL WEST
 due: last day of EVEN
 numbered months:
 Next Issue due 30 April**

**Club dues \$30 a year, starting
 July 1, 2016.** U.S. funds only. Please
 make checks to VOCNA. Memberships
 run from January to December. Send
 dues, address changes, membership
 applications, enquiries, etc. to
 Membership Secretary Debbie
 Macdonald.

*This newsletter often features items from
 older motorcycle magazines, including
 photographs, drawings, cartoons etc. Where
 possible I acknowledge their source. Often
 these items are often from "MotorCycle" and
 "MotorCycling", and the current copyright
 holders are Mortons Motor Cycle Media. I
 thank them for their use.*

**Front Cover: Ride on. photo by Stella
 Meredith. see pg 23**

**Back Cover: Viceroy knows no limits.
 photo by Don. see pg 24**



**VOCNA Spring Opener
 Saturday, the 19th of May, 2018
 Rancho Veloce
 1681 Partrick Road,
 Napa, California 94558
 see page 5 for more information**

*The technical tips, views, and opinions
 expressed in this newsletter are those of the
 authors and do not necessarily reflect the
 position or policy of the editor or any of the
 other VOCNA officers.*



Prez Sez...

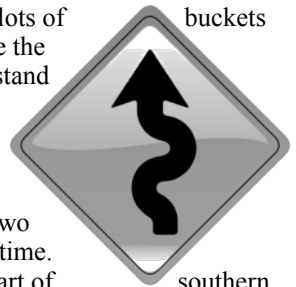
Best Motorcycle Roads I've Never Ridden

By Cory Padulla

Well boys and girls it is time to get those Velos out and get them ready for the rally of the century.

I should mention though that a few things are moving along at a pace akin to wading through molasses in winter. Dealing with some of the organizations has been a bit trying. Let me put this in perspective, for the last 4 months I have been living in southern Mexico. Down here when trying to find out when something will be done, the standard answer is '*manana*'. For those not familiar with this term, it loosely translates to 'tomorrow'. But what one needs to know is that the Mexican version of tomorrow does not mean the literal 'day after today', it is more of a notion or concept of some period of time that is in the future, be it a day or a week or a year. So in practical terms it means if the plumber says "I will be at your place *manana*" to fix the hot water tank that is spewing gallons of water everywhere, go out and buy lots of buckets as it might be the *manana* that means tomorrow or it could be the *manana* that means the day after tomorrow. Once you understand and accept this, all will be well. The problem I am having is that I am not dealing with Mexicans and I keep getting told tomorrow, and tomorrow never comes. That said all is progressing so not to worry about the rally, worry about that magneto that has been giving you starting problems the last two outings because the chase truck may be running on Mexican time.

As I meander around the countryside down in this part of southern Mexico, I have on several occasions driven a road known as Hwy 175 which goes from the beach town of Huatulco, Mexico to the state capital Oaxaca, a 260 kilometre journey that takes 6 hours. Every time I drive this road I think to myself, this is one of the best motorcycle roads I have never ridden. I have ridden many twisty roads over



the years but this road has them all beat, and in spades. The road starts at sea level, rises to 9000 ft, traverses several ridgelines with spectacular views on each side and then drops down to plateau at 5000 ft until the final destination is reached. The average speed is 42 km/hr or 25 mph. The drive is extremely draining because of the relentless number of corners. The road for the most part is in very good condition but there is no corner speed signage or guard rails. An oopsy can result in a very long decent down the mountain side. There is one particular 60 kilometre vomit inducing section of the road that takes 2 hours to traverse by car. That works out to 2 hrs at 30 kms per hr (20mph). There are no straight stretches just this continuous black snake writhing through magnificent scenery. This is not a sport bike road. In fact a high performance sport bike would be one of the worst bikes to take on this road, racking right up there with a heavily laden touring cruiser. Humped over with 200 hp at your wrist on this particular piece of pavement would be a very scary experience. The road is very narrow and sometimes 'shit' happens such as a small rockslide leaving rocks and gravel in your path, a vehicle coming the other way deciding to take a portion of your roadway or a chunk of the road missing as it has just fallen down the mountain leaving a car sized gap. A kneedown balls to the wall effort would not be a wise decision, besides you would likely get passed by a few of the locals riding their 150s with the chickens strapped on the back. That would be most embarrassing. In my mind this would be a good Velo road, just pick a gear, gentle throttle roll on and offs, little shifting and braking required. Although the 9000 ft rise sounds intimidating, it is gradual to moderate. The sit up and beg riding style would be perfect but trust me, you will be thoroughly worn out at roads end. Unfortunately this is a remote area and as such getting a Velo down here isn't going to happen. But a 250 can be had very cheaply and someday I will ride that best motorcycle road I've never ridden.

Okay stop reading this drivel and get back to wrenching your Velos. See you soon at the Best Velo Rally Ever!

2018 VOCNA RALLY

3rd week in July in North East Oregon

Arrive Sunday July the 22nd.

Ride Monday July 23rd - 27th

Saturday the 28th Show and Shine followed by the AGM.

Accommodations:

Baker City, Oregon (5 nights)

Sunday July 22nd

Friday July 27th

Monday July 23rd

Saturday July 28th

Tuesday July 24th

Best Western Sunridge Inn

1-541-523-6444

Mention Velocette Club when booking

Camping on Best Western grounds Rates - TBD

John Day, Oregon (2 nights)

Wednesday July 25th

Thursday July 26th

Camping at Fairgrounds – Rates TBD

Many motels available:

Best Western

Dreamers Lodge

Budget 8 Inn

Americas Best Value Inn

John & Sue Ray Most Cordially Invite You to Celebrate

***The THIRTY SECOND Annual
Velocette Owners Club of North America's***

Spring Opener

Saturday, the 19th of May, 2018

Rancho Veloce

1681 Partrick Road, Napa, California 94558

Schedule of Gala Activities:

9 am-ish: Start of the 100 mile Napa Valley Reliability Trial.

NEW!!! 9:30 AM: Breakfast Buffet at Hop Creek Pub, Napa \$20 per Person

1 pm-ish: Jovial Post-Ride Concours d'Oilgance.

3 pm-ish: Big Feed & Silly Awards

BREAKFAST: \$20 per person incl. non-alcoholic beverages, tax & tip.

CASH ONLY paid to the Pub.

POST-RIDE GATHERING & BIG FEED: \$30.00 per person.

RSVP

(707) 344-2221

e-mail: clubman@velocette.org

Directions: Google Map (will get you close) or Email Us.

IF YOU HAVE A LARGE RV OR BIKES TO UNLOAD, TURN INTO THE DRIVEWAY AT THE BARN. UNLOAD BIKES THERE. DO NOT BRING LARGE RVs OR TRAILERS UP TO THE HOUSE!!

(You'll have a struggle to get them turned around!)

Suggested Accommodations:

1. Our place. Some room for tents & RVs (no hookups or facilities, though) and some floor space.

Friday arrivals are quite welcome. Cheap. (i.e. free.)

2. Closest Motel: Embassy Suites 1-707-253-9540

3. Zillions of B&Bs and motels in and around Napa.

Velocette Owners Club of North America
Financial Statement
As of December 31, 2017

BALANCE SHEET

	<u>Dec 31 2017</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank of America Checking	9,476
Editor's Impress Fund	1,000
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>10,476</u>
 LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Prepaid Dues 2018-2020	1,955
Total Current Liabilities	<u>1,955</u>
Equity	
Retained Earnings	6,638
Net Income	(644)
Total Equity	<u>7,281</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>9,236</u>

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

	<u>Jan - Dec 2017</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Velo Hats	360
Membership Dues	6,822
Total Income	<u>7,182</u>
Expense	
Awards-Aussie Rally	77
Filing Fees	10
Fishtail West	5,811
Internet	202
Office Supplies	298
Postage - Non FTW	41
Velo Hats	90
Software	160
Web Design Services	337
Total Expense	<u>7,026</u>
 Net Ordinary Income	 156
 Sierra Rally	
Rally Receipts	13,836
Rally Expense	12,752
Net Sierra Rally	<u>1,084</u>
 Net Income	 <u><u>1,239</u></u>

Eastern News

Greetings from the East, where I looked with envy at the pictures of decadent Californians riding on New Years Eve. In the sun as well! On this side of the continent New Years Eve high spots were shoveling snow and deciding how many layers to wear to combat double digit below freezing temperatures.

Still it's an ill wind etc so I took the opportunity to do a few tasks which have been waiting for far too long. A tap was run through the chain adjuster bolt holes in the swinging arm (1/4 BSF) so now I can adjust the chain without rounding the adjusters off.

I also discovered that the rear brake shoes, despite first appearances are not symmetrical and if assembled upside down on the brake plate don't fit properly in the brakedrum. Learning by doing – got to love it.

The bike show season is upon us, Ducati continue to embrace ugly (shame) and Honda have shaved 90 lbs from the weight of the GoldWing. Yes that's ninety pounds, almost half the weight of a BSA Bantam and it's still a huge beast.

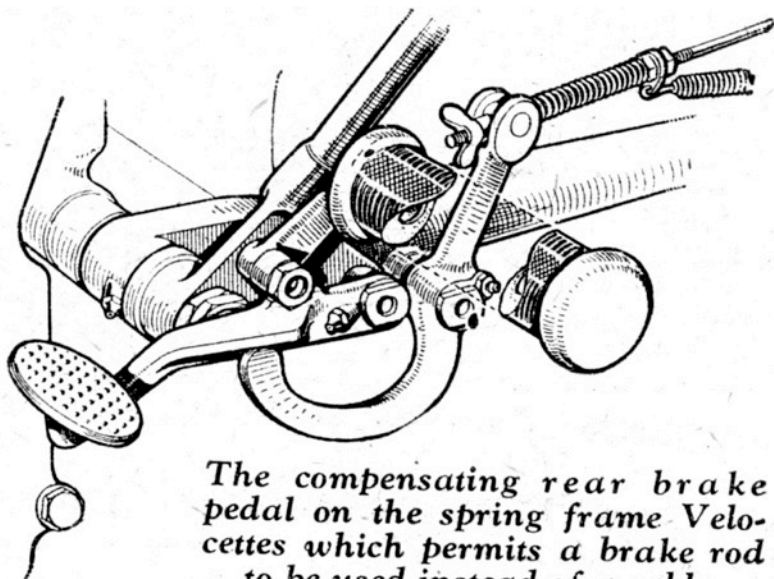
Yamaha on the other hand offer a device with two normal size front wheels, close together, each with it's own pair of fork tubes. I will admit it is one heck of a solution but can anyone tell me what the problem was?

John McCron asked about the Prestolite dynamo – I confess that your humble servant wrote about this in 1996 in FTW 100. The article gives installation details and part numbers for the Bosch regulator, belt and pulley. I scanned the article and a circuit diagram for John, if anyone else would like the information just send me an email. (address inside front cover) and I will send it along. *(reprinted on following pages)*

I have to say I have been very pleased with this setup which has been working happily for more than 20 years now. Fits in the original location, looks the part and does the job with more than enough watts.

I have had earlier 12V experience with a Bleazey alternator and a Criterion alternator and I think overall the Prestolite dynamo is better in a number of ways.

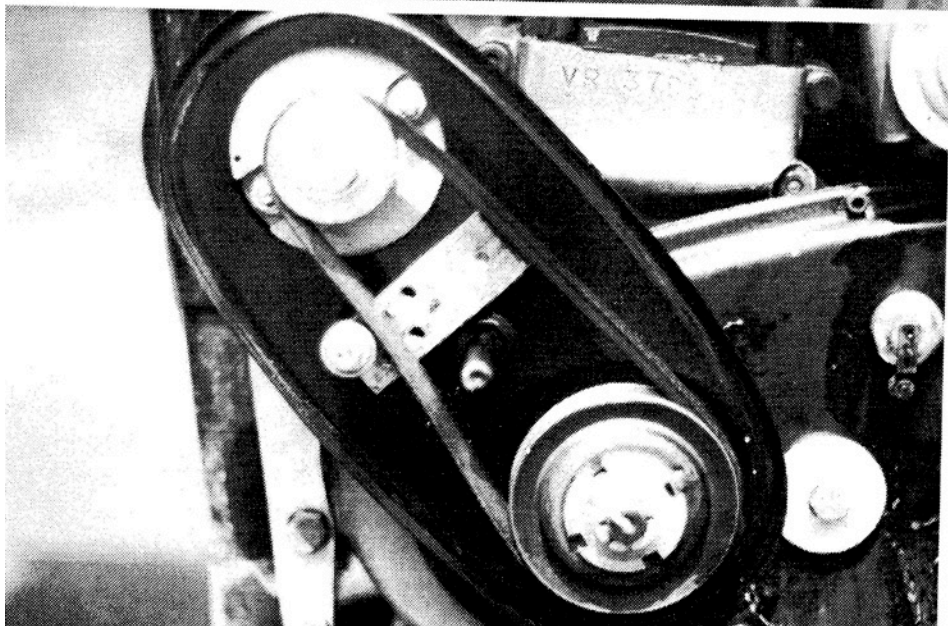
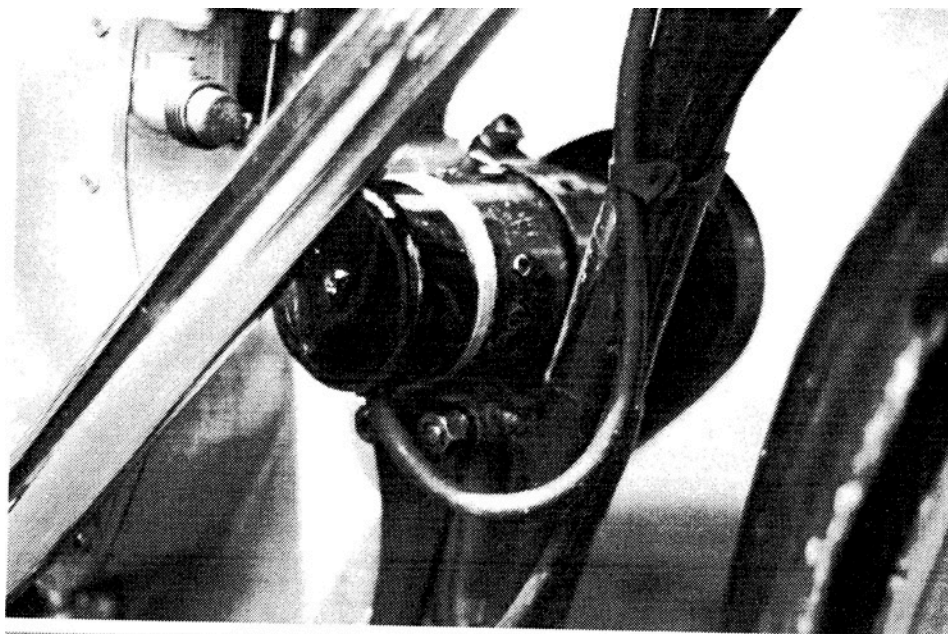
Ride safely
Andrew



The compensating rear brake pedal on the spring frame Velocettes which permits a brake rod to be used instead of a cable.

Extra Electricity by Andrew Harris (FTW 100)

Once upon a time, in 1983, Ellie Taylor wrote in FTW about a 12V dynamo which is the same diameter as the Miller/Lucas one. This seemed attractive as a lighter and more compact replacement for my alternator, as well as having the sophistication of field regulation. Last winter I visited the local outboard motor breaker where a 40hp Johnson supplied the necessary. The armature needed to be shortened to clear the belt cover and extra thread was cut for the pulley nut before having it overhauled at a local shop. It is easiest to do all the armature work before going to the overhaul shop as it is

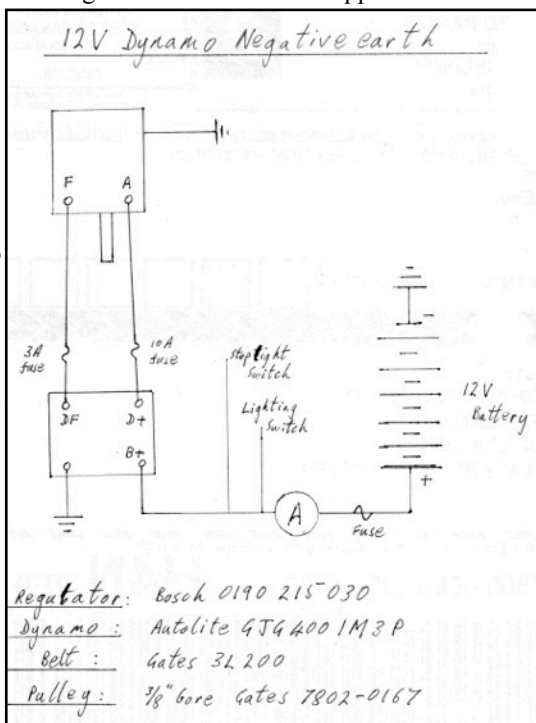


awkward to refit the armature with the brush mounting plate in place. The direction of rotation (anticlockwise viewed from the drive end) is opposite to the normal direction, I understand the overhauler needs to alter the internal wiring.

The installation is compact and looks pretty standard. I hope the photos will reproduce. The end cover is made from a (plastic) Magic Baking Powder container – just the right size. As acquaintance is going to turn up a cover from alloy as soon as he repairs his lathe. Don't cut the clamping bolts short if you want to fit an end cover. The extra bolt length was used to hold a fixing block filed from a piece of aluminium (aluminum?). The end cover is attached using a 10-32 screw into a tapped hole in the block. I also fitted nyloc nuts ($\frac{1}{4}$ x20) to the fixing bolts to resist vibration.

The unit develops peak output (approx. 12A) at 7,000 rpm, so I arranged it to run at twice engine speed by fitting a 1.5" dia. Pulley. This is an off the shelf item with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " bore which must be opened out to $7/16$ ". Having just removed an alternator I was surprised that output is zero at tickover. However as soon as you move away the regulator kicks in and a charge is indicated. At 30 mph in top gear head and tail lams are just balanced.

A tip of the hat here to Derek Belvoir for supplying the Bosch regulator part number. This item was I believe supplied to H-D so should be robust enough for our application. *Caveat emptor*: the local auto electrical retailer tried to sell me a rebuilt regulator for \$56. The price of a new Bosch item is \$38. Go figure. The regulator has a circuit diagram printed on the case-useful.



Here are the part numbers if you want to try this:

Dynamo: Autolite GJG 400 1 M 3 P.

Regulator: Bosch 0190 215 030

Pulley: Gates 7802-0167 (Your bearing retailer may need to substitute a Browning equivalent for this)

Belt: Gates 3L200

Idler: sealed bearing RA4ZZ/1E (I know this bearing is probably running faster than it really should but so far there have been no problems.)

Idler adjustment is by moving the $\frac{1}{4}$ x 20 screw holding the bearing to another hole in the $5/16$ " thick aluminum block seen in the photo. Block is secured by two 10-24 cap screws from the rear side.

Belt tension is probably not too critical as we are only looking for about 40% of max output – unlike the 6V systems of blessed memory which had to give about 100%.

Added March 2018: I should have said that I found the belt tensioner to be unnecessary, I took it off just after writing the article. Andrew Harris

A Disaster Ride.

by Tun Kenney

There is a small group of aging motorcycle riders who get together in Ojai almost every Sunday at 7am with what appears to be a goal of finding a great place to eat, and maybe riding some interesting roads. When we all started riding with Pat Peddicord, the group all rode old British bikes. Over time the composition of the motorcycles has morphed to ones that don't leak oil and have electric boots.

I hauled out my 1966 Endurance, and was pleased to see Olav on his Thruxton at the meeting place. Very pleased, as two Velos can sync in ways that must be heard to be appreciated.

Last Sunday was a special ride, as we toured over state route 150 to Carpinteria, which has just been reopened after a severe fire scorched the bushes, leaving a Mars like landscape. We followed the familiar road, but it felt very different, as there is no vegetation blocking the view through corners. We first circled around Lake Casitas, which is very pond like these days, and descended the Santa Barbara side, turning on a small side road (Gobornador) above Carpinteria. At first the road seemed the same as it always has, winding past small farms and horse property, but it became obvious that the recent rains had spread a thick layer of mud where it bordered what is usually a small creek bed.

I gingerly piloted my old Endurance through the slick mud (hey.. it is supposed to be a dirt bike, right?) with the rest of the group following. It was difficult to keep focused on the road and ignore the massive destruction the mud wrought in this small slice of the world. It was just a taste of the tragedy that occurred in the more densely populated Monticito, just a short ways up the road.

After winding around on the back roads, and passing warning signs about how there was no way to Santa Barbara on the route, we retreated to the frontage next to the 101 (which was closed for North bound traffic).

We ended up in Summerland, as close to Santa Barbara as we could get. Our target restaurant was closed tight, along with most of the other business establishments, so we headed back into Carpinteria on the freeway! I tried to get close to Olav and his Thruxton so I could hear the resonance.

We found a place in Carp that was not able to accept Credit cards, but the cash



brought us good food, then we headed out home on various routes. The Velos went in different directions in Ventura, and the largest concentration of Velocettes in the region was disbanded.
left: Usual SoCal Suspects.



Jeff Ward and Amy Thigpen ride from Berkeley to the start of the Delta ride in Rio Vista. photos by Jeff Scott

Delta Ride 2018

Saturday February 23

Three brave Veloists, Howard Johnston (1964 Endurance), Jeff Scott (1961 Endurance), and Jeff Ward (1966 Venom) joined the BSA club for the annual ride up the Sacramento River Delta. Their courage was tested not by joining riders of other marques, but in facing the bracing weather. J Those Californians who don't ride in below 40 F weather were able to drive to the start under the Rio Vista (HWY 12) bridge and then ride in sunshine for the rest of the day.

Other VOCNA club members were present including, but not limited to Roland Badertscher, John Sims and Gus Varetakis. Don Danmeier organized the ride. This year he tried to keep it simple: go up and around the corner. Take the Ryer Island ferry, go around the island and take the other ferry. Turn and go up, go up, go up. Stop at the BBQ Proper and Taphouse for a break. Then go up, across the bridge and down the other side. Have lunch in Isleton.

Just be on the lookout for riders from former Delta rides still wandering around this complex landscape!

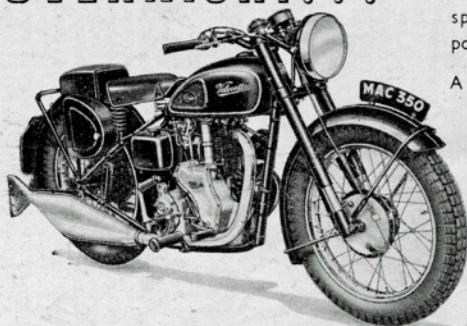
In many ways this was a "run what you brung," ride – or maybe a "run what you got running." There was a smattering of just about all kinds of bikes from a 2-stroke BSA to Triumphs, Nortons and at least one Harley, BMW, and Yamaha.

Every year this ride offers challenging surfaces atop levies as well as calming rides on ferries, and amazing back road perspectives on California history.





OVERNIGHT...



Featured above is the
MAC 350 O.H.V.

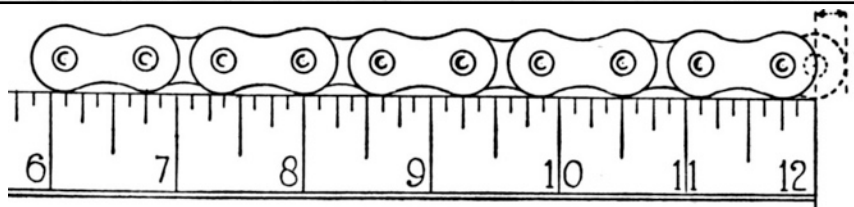
Unlike mushrooms, Velocette motor cycles did not grow overnight.

Many years of research, plus experience gained from those grinding tests of stamina—the T.T. Races—have contributed to the sparkling performance and reliability of the post-war Velocette.

A machine you will be proud to own.

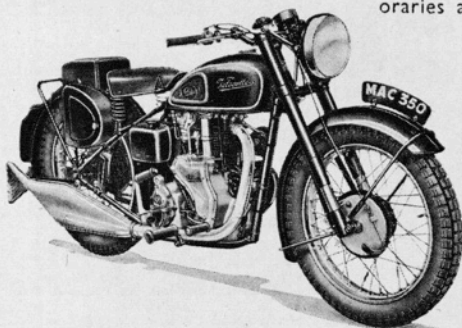
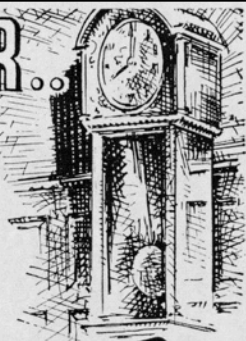


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OLD TIMER...

Year after year the Velocette will give trouble-free motor cycling. First class materials and workmanship—that is why so many "Old Timers" are seen on the road still giving reliable service when their contemporaries are redundant.



Featured above is the
MAC 350 O.H.V.



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**NZ Velocette Register
Annual Rally 2018 –
Cromwell February 16-18**

Velocette riders share a bond that goes around the world. Last summer Fred Mork from California aided and abetted in getting Neville Mickleson to visit from New Zealand. Neville was able to participate in AHRMA racing at Willow Springs and Sonoma Raceways. Later in the year Neville and Cheryl came on the North American rally. Cheryl was an ambassador for Velocettes and spread good cheer everywhere she went.

In February 2018, the favor was returned. Fred and Gretchen Mork went to New Zealand to participate in the lower island rally and to take in other motorcycle events, such as racing at NZCMRR Pukekohe Classic Festival on February 2-4 February 2018 and the Burt Munro Week February 8-11, 2018 in Invercargill.



Fred & Gretchen
Mork

Neville Mickleson



Neville was recovering from a broken collarbone. Instead of immediately hitting the road, he enthusiastically gave a tour of his garage. His father Jack and brother Craig also dropped by. Turns out motorcycling is a family affair for the Micklesons. Jack, midway through his eighties is still racing!

The first event on the Mork's itinerary was the 39th Annual NZCMRR Classic Racing Festival at Pukekohe Park Raceway. Here more familiar faces and VOCNA rally participants such as, Keith and Colleen Canning from Australia, and Caryl Sanson joined the party.



There were many Velocettes at the raceway including the Eldee Velocette. This double overhead cam 250cc Velocette became famous racing in Australia in the 1950's under the capable hands of Les Diener. Diener started with an MOV and created the bike he wanted to ride. In the 21st century, Chris Swallow races the bike in New Zealand, but not at this meet. The races were called off. Everyone present is competent in riding in the rain, but the rain made some track sealant come up and this made riding on the track unsafe.

Road Trip! The Mork's plan was to catch the ferry to the south island and drive to the very southern town of Invercargill for the Burt Munro Challenge, drive north for the Velocette Rally and then return to the north island. They met all their goals, but also had unexpected adventures. Road closures due to such things as jack-knifed big rig, a hurricane and mudslides, provided more than a little excitement. All along the way they met helpful people. In fact one of the highlights of their trip was a small bed and breakfast they never would have found if the weather hadn't forced them to stop.



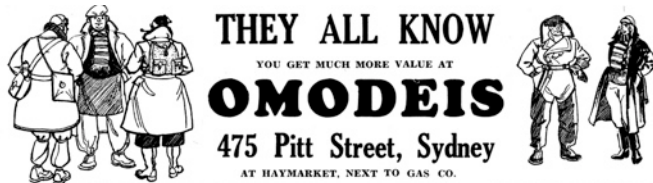
Above: The ELDEE

Below: Neville's father, Jack Mickleson at 86 is still racing. This year both the MAC and Jawa gave trouble - a bent exhaust valve on the Velo and a broken ignition wire on the Jawa. photos by Fred Mork





Above: the NZ Velocette Register tent and line up.



Below: Ready for the sand race. photos by Fred Mork





Above and
Below:
NZ Velo
Rally 2018

left: Fred
Mork with
Cheryl's
dad at
Bridal
Falls.

photos by
Neville
Mickleson



Santa Anita Park May 5TH 2018

An artistic illustration of a jockey in a blue and red silks riding a dark brown horse. The jockey is wearing a blue helmet with the number 18. A motorcycle is strapped to the horse's back. The background is a light, textured wash of colors.

THE Californian '18

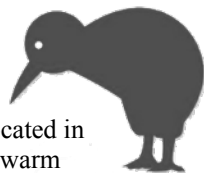
A Celebration of Sound, Taste & Speed

Santa Anita Park welcomes **The Californian**, a one-day celebration of sound, speed and taste that combines the prestige of a concourse motorcycle show with the excitement of horse racing. Coinciding with the 144th running of the Kentucky Derby, the afternoon will include family friendly activities such as a petting zoo, food truck rally, a live art installation and live music.

The Californian welcomes the Velocette Club of North America and invites you to proudly display your motorcycle(s) with a code that will get you 50% off of registration. Just enter MOTO18 by clicking on the "Enter Promotional Code" in the upper right of the Eventbrite ticket selection window when it pops up. Vending and sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Brady Walker 310-980-7129 info@bradywalker.com www.thecalifornian.us

Morks in New Zealand continued.

On the way they stopped at the National Toy and transportation museum at Wanaka airport. Once they arrived in Invercargill, they toured Transport World, a truck and transportation museum as well as the E Hays Motorworks collection. The latter, located in a hardware store includes a tribute to Burt Munro. A perfect way to warm up to the Burt Munro Challenge.



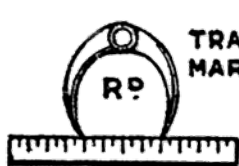
According to the website, the Burt Munro Challenge is held annually in February in Southland, New Zealand. The Burt Munro Challenge features a number of racing disciplines including a Hill Climb, Beach Racing, Track Sprint Racing, Speedway, and Street Racing. Fred watched the beach racing which started at 3 p.m. The race track consisted of two poles set into the sand. Riders made it into an oval track with no outside perimeter. With the eyes of a racer, Fred studied cornering techniques. The next day, he watched the closed circuit races. Street racing was scheduled for the following day, but Fred and Gretchen chose to go to Stewart Island instead.

Fred didn't have a motorcycle lined up for the Rally, but things worked out as they so often do. He rode organizer, ride organizer, David Tofield's 850 Norton. As the only non-Velo British bike rider, he even won a prize! There were 20 to 30 bikes, and most of them were BMWs, but it was truly an international rally with seven Aussies, two from the USA and four from the UK attending.

The day started off wet but turned beautiful. The route took them into Arrowtown which is a quirky old gold rush town. Then they rode to Wanaka home of the Warbirds and Wheels Museum and Retro Diner. After lunch they rode home ride home along the shores of Lake Dunstan.

After the rally festivities concluded, Fred and Gretchen returned to their road trip. They had an exciting time dodging a hurricanes and road closures. This lead them to a highlight of their trip, a wonderful bed and breakfast they never would have found if they weren't caught between mudslides. Fred had to navigate tight twisty roads in the dark in order to catch the ferry on their return to the Micklesons' home on the North Island. Neville had recovered enough to get on a bike and show off his backyard. Fred got on a BMW and in only five minutes they were out of town and on beautiful two-lane roads.

Next year Neville is organizing the New Zealand rally. Book your tickets now.



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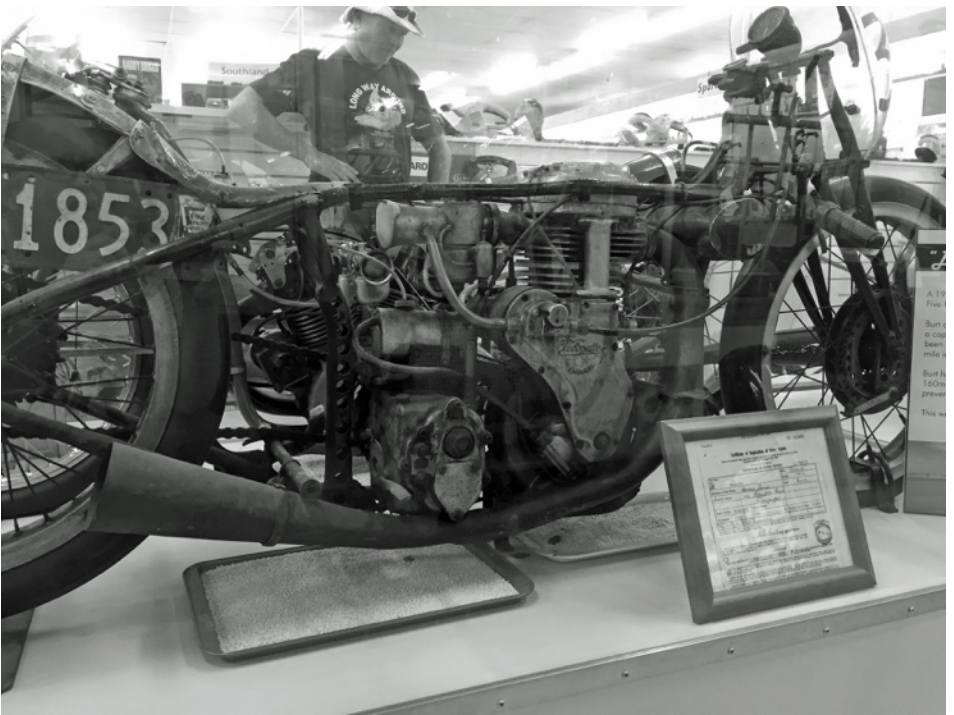
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Voice mail: 781-644-7338

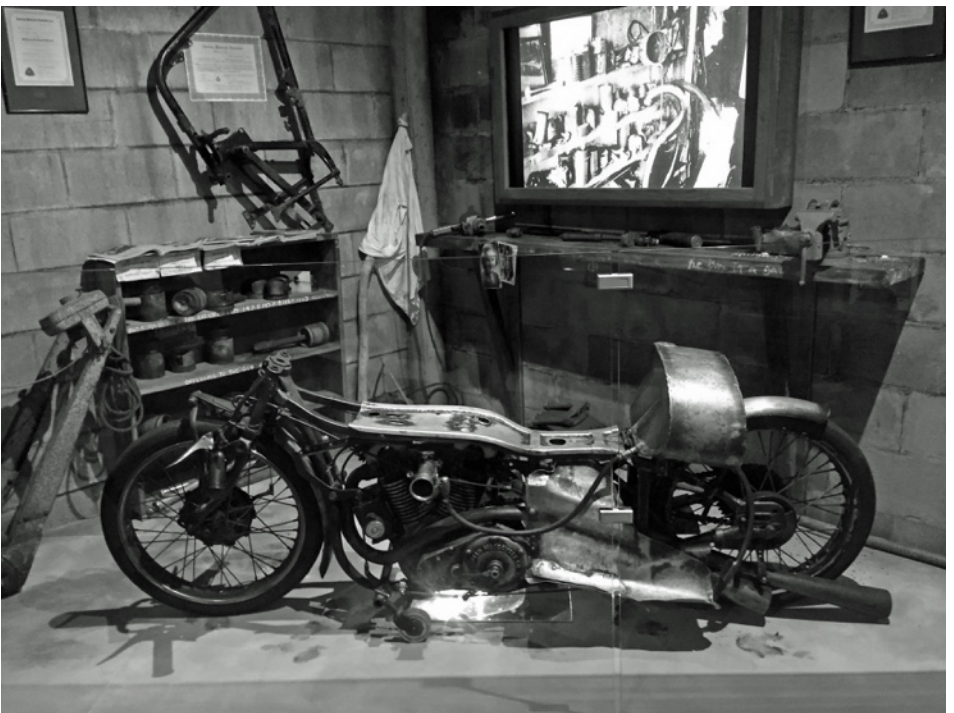
E-mail:

velocette@nocharge.zzn.com

Web: <http://velogb.tripod.com>



NZ's Burt Munro and the World's Fastest Velocette: 1936 MSS 500cc Velocette. Burt developed the bike over many years into a 650cc bike that runs on methanol. The bike has been times at 138 mph and has done a standing quarter mile in 12.3 seconds. Below: Burt's workshop reimagined. photos by Fred Mork





World's Fastest Velo 21st Century

Sorry about the lack of info on the Big Velo's progress this year, but as usual its been a bit hectic, putting the bike in the box today and looking pretty good. But no end of dramas in the last couple of weeks - first run on the dyno gave the best ever power.... and then it all went downhill. I consulted with my friend Jay Upton at Sprintex and made slight changes to the fuel mix and ignition and needle and boost ratio, then on the next dyno run almost broke the hold down straps - about double the power we had at Bonneville a few years back.

Now all we need is to finish packing up, drive a few thousand kilometres, live in the dust, salt, heat and flies for a week, for there to be no other problems, crosswinds or rain, for the salt to be in good condition, for the moon and the stars to be in alignment, etc, etc.

A heartfelt thanks for everyone's support,
Stuart Hooper"

editor's note: this is happening as we go to print. Keep your eye of FB for more news

Got Photo?

**Any rally, ride or just good shots of you
on your velo for our redesigned website
velocette.org**

**Please send to
webmaster@velocette.org**

**When sending photos in jpg format
indicate rally, year and info about bike**



Velocette Rally Yosemite 2005



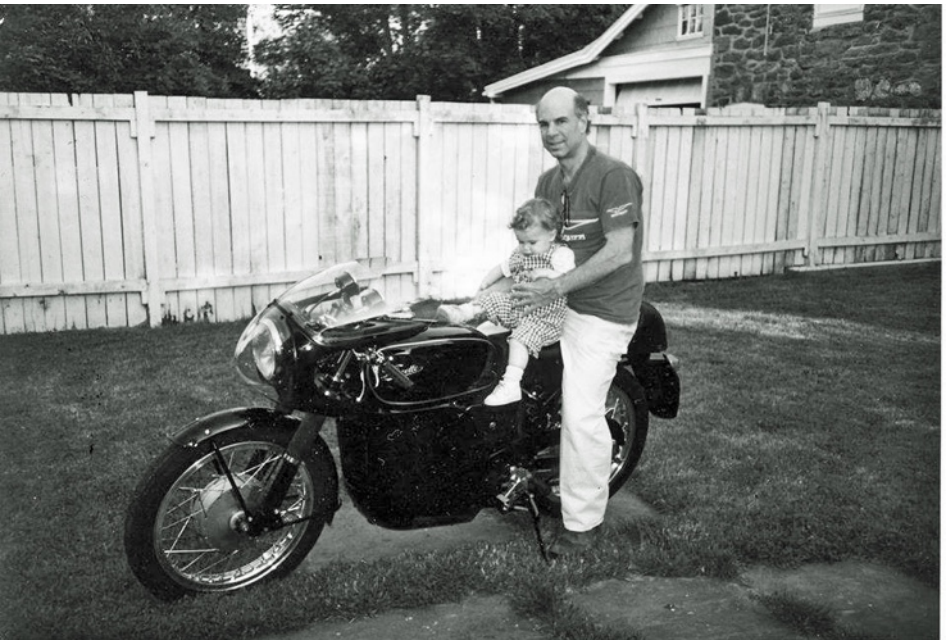
I'm Stella in Parksville. I thought I would let you know that Dave lost his courageous battle with Lewy Body Dementia on January 19th.

We had some nice memories of the Velocette Clubs, both the English and North American.

DAVID W. MEREDITH May 10, 1945 - January 19, 2018

Ran out of Road

One of our members, Chuck Gershwin passed away on January 10. Submitted by Doug Strange.





No Limits: the Viceroy

Here are some pictures of the Viceroy on a tour of southern Colorado. It did OK getting to these elevations. The most interesting part was heading back down the grades. The brakes were put to more use than any Viceroy ever had. The one picture is the engine for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad that runs from Chama, NM to Antonito, CO. Chama is the village I spend the Summer in and is a good center point for some fabulous riding roads. The Viceroy fell off the center stand and broke the windscreen. Some pictures are without the windscreen. I had another made and all is well now.

Don





Howard Johnston on the Delta Ride. photo by Jeff Scott

Dateline San Jose California March 11 2018:

Big Day in Life of Newbie Velocette Owner

by Howard Johnston

I had a feeling when I woke up yesterday: This Could Be The Day.

The day I start the Velo on the 1st kick.

Very little empirical data at hand to back up this feeling - last time out (NorCal BSA Club Delta Ride) the number of kicks needed to get going was closer to 100 than 1...

Still, the early spring sun was shining warm in a crystal blue California sky, and as I pushed the bike out of the garage, I felt the unmistakeable presence of The Force. Ancient ritual followed to the letter, as taught to me by Yoda himself (aka Jeff Scott) - tickle the float chamber mercilessly until she weeps, push the engine through the prescribed number of revolutions needed to coax sufficient air and fuel molecules into the stone cold lonely combustion chamber, precisely locate the crank within a half-degree either side of the nirvana position, crack the throttle exactly the right amount, then and only then proceed with vigorous prod, while repeating a silent mantra to the gods.

Over the past 4 months and 400+ miles since the Endurance came back together with numerous refreshed and revived internals, this procedure has produced exactly the same results: a gentle woosh of oiled metal in motion, followed by The Silence Of The Void.

BUT NOT ON THIS DAY!

On this day my brothers Fire & Fury spat forth from the business end of the megaphone and away I rode!

OK, there were no witnesses to the event, so I'm not ordained into the sacred brotherhood just yet. But it did happen, and like the unwitnessed falling of a tree in a forest it has absolutely no significance for anyone anywhere... Except, that is, for one solitary Velo rider, for whom it was a giant leap forward on the path towards enlightenment.

And oh yeah - it turned out to be a great day for a ride in the hills!



HEROES by Mirek Sharp

Oh ya, had a trip out to one of my heros – Herb Becker. Guy is a genius. I attached some pictures. The two characters are Herb Becker on the left, and Peter Svilans on the right.

I have known Peter for over 35 years. He has restored a number of microcars such as a Messerschmitt and he currently owns a 1930s something Raleigh (micro-car) as well as a nice Moto Guzzi. He is a good mechanic, but his speciality is interiors and he can re-create anything leather and make exactly as it came from the factory. He also has a Healey and was part of a team doing Healey restorations. He has done so many that he can tell when two seats were upholstered by the same person just by the way the folds and pleats are done.

Herb I have known for about 20 years. He is one of the most extraordinary mechanics I have ever met. Started with hot rods in the 50's but moved onto motorbikes. When I first met him he was in the middle of development program to extract as much horsepower as he could from a Norton twin which was fitted into a race bike he campaigned. His goal was to win the ARMHA 750 class at Daytona, which he eventually did. A tool and die maker by trade, he hand-builds everything in his shop; cranks, pistons, rods, engine cases, the lot.

The bike in the foreground is a project he is working on with a friend to see if they can break the world land speed record for a 250cc side-valve engine. This is an engine that was not meant to go fast, so it is a challenge. The hot rod is his. About 8 years ago, he abandoned the Norton race bike project after winning Daytona. First he restored an early 1958 dragster, just for kicks. He got permission to run it on a quarter mile strip once, as it did not meet any current safety requirements, then he sold it. Then he decided to build a replica of the first hot rod he had as a kid, and that is the one in the picture. He had no money back then, but typically sank what he had into the engine. So the engine is beautiful, a 427 cu in Olds with triple Rochesters, built to

perfection it probably makes well over 300 HP. The body he painted with a brush and roller, because that is what he did as a kid. I think it is so cool.

Behind him on the wall are a few drag bikes. The orange one (top) is a restored Hagon. The other is more of his amazing engineering where he hooked up two Norton engines in a frame and added a supercharger! It takes some doing to get them to run together.

It is about the people as much as the machinery, and I love hanging out in Herb's or Peter's shops and just yacking about cars and bikes. Herb has made parts for me when they have been unavailable – a nice resource! Thought it might interest you. Here is a link about Herb when he was inducted into the Canadian Motorcycle Hall of Fame: <https://canadianmotorcyclehalloffame.ca/inductees/2011/herb-becker>

Hmm, a Velo connection? Well Peter loves my Velos, but his only bike is an old Guzzi. Herb loves anything bike and I am sure he has done lots of little Velo-related machining for me on mine, but the only thing that comes to mind is that he trued the upper shock covers on the Woodhead-Monroe's so they did not scrape up and down the chromed lower parts. He has made up custom washers and spacers and made me replica's of some of the factory tools, for example the tool to assemble the swing arms. Over the years there has been all kinds of little jobs he has done that were for all my bike, Velos included. That should be enough to get him in FTW!





Race Shed **by Neville Mickleson**

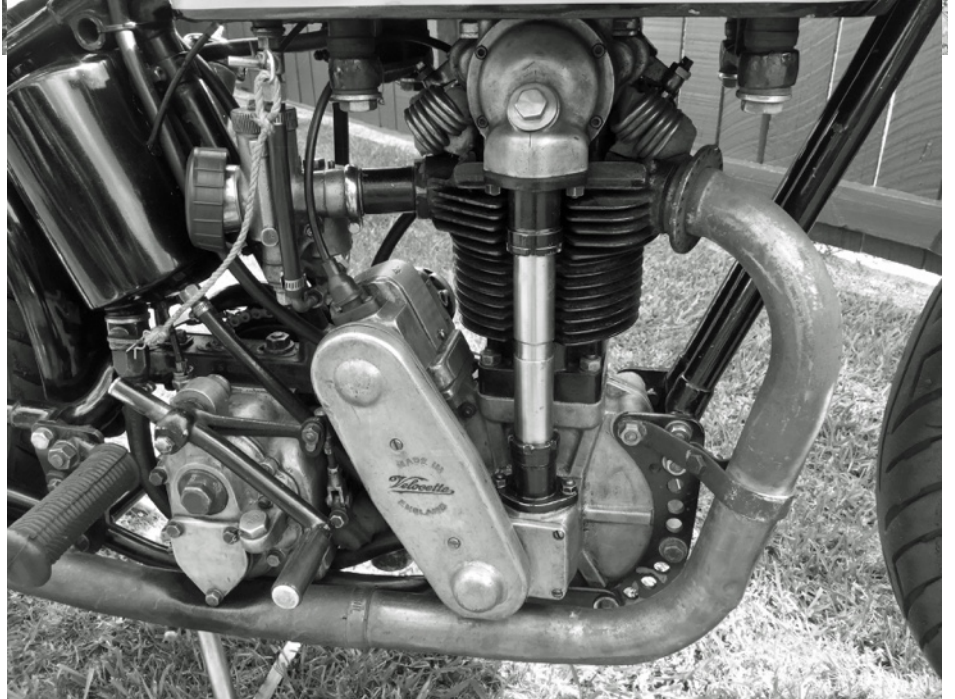
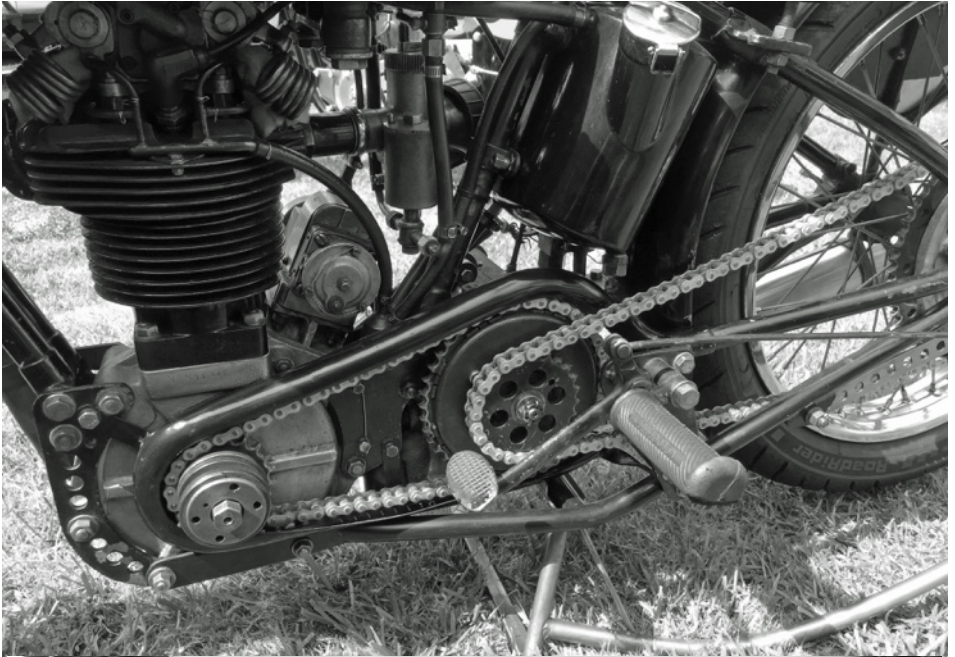
My 1932 MK4 KTT has quite a racing history, both here in NZ and on the IOM where it came 10th in the Junior in 1932 ridden by Charlie Williams (Peter Williams grandfather). It was then refurbished by the factory and sent to NZ, landing here on the 23 Dec 1932. It was purchased by Elgie Perry for grass track racing and hill climb competitions local to my hometown of Hamilton in the mid North Island. After WW2 a very good rider, Paul Clarkson found the engine in the back of Len Perry's motorcycle shop and used it very successfully in beach racing. Barry Stanley had it next using it for grass track racing, then it went to Wangarei in Northland where the engine was put into a scrambles frame.

With the first Classic Festival at Pukekohe being planned, Pete Butterworth from Auckland (who is one of the founding members of the NZ Classic Motorcycle Racing Register) returned the engine to the correct type twin downtube frame and found some of the rest of the correct running gear. What he couldn't find he made and the bike first ran again in 1980. It was used for a few years by him, his son Kevin and brother-in-law Paul Hayes before being parked up in the early 90's.

I had been racing the Featherbed Venom for Pete for a few years and persuaded him to get the KTT going again for me to use. It was such a lovely thing to ride and was immediately on winning form. Three years ago he said he was going to start moving his bikes on as, at 83 he needed to find good homes for them. Pete hated the thought of it going into a museum and knew that I would continue to "Use it as the Maker intended". I jumped at the chance to own it but at the very next meeting it broke the crankpin. I was extremely lucky to catch it before any further damage and had intended to do a rebuild over the winter break anyway. I pulled the engine down and refurbished it adding some of my own touches, mainly to make it oil tight...well, as oil tight as an open rocker bike can be. I made a stronger crankpin with better oil feed to the bigend and modified the crankcases to take modern metric mainbearings. It already

had a MK8 conrod which was a bonus as the original rods are a bit fragile. I sleeved the bottom bevel gear and put a double lipped seal in to stop the oil in the vertical shaft from draining. Pistons are unobtainium so I welded up a good substitute to get a better combustion chamber and modified the cam box to give better oil retention.

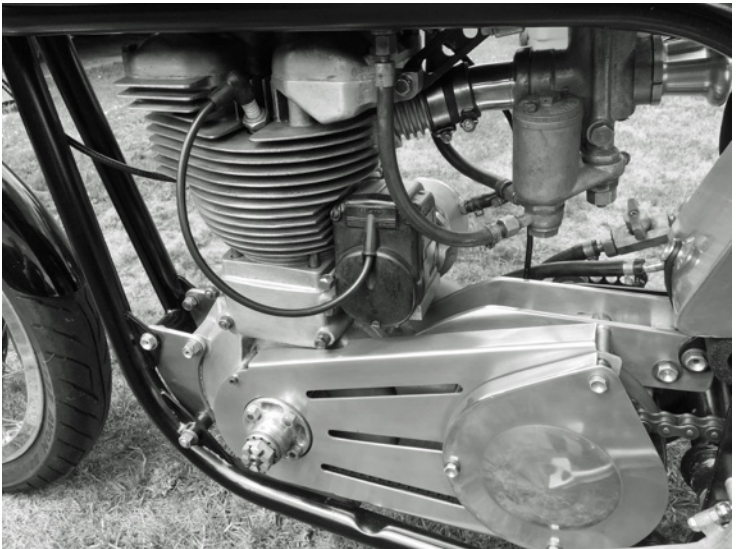
Pete was stunned when at the next meeting the only place there was any oil coming out was at the engine breather onto the primary chain.

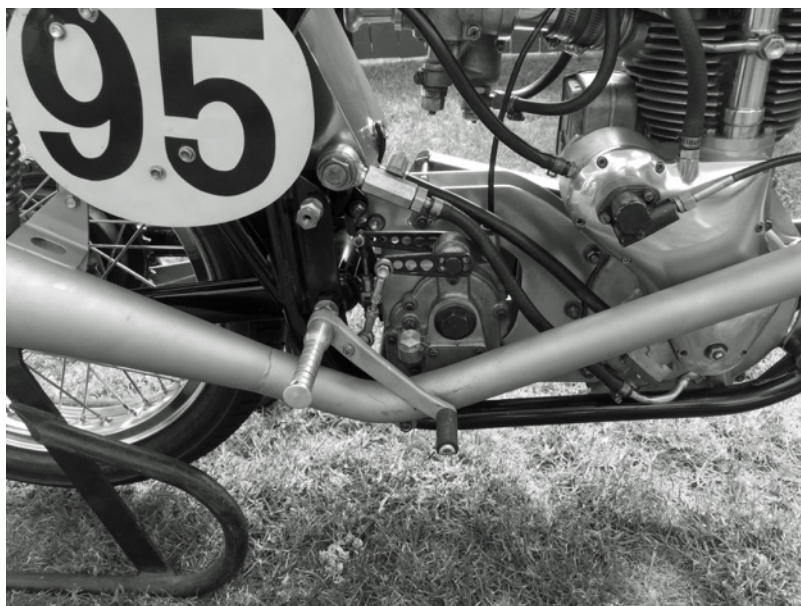




Next to come into the stable was the McCandless Replica Venom (Pete hates the N word) and soon after I also pulled it apart to do a refurbishment. Pete had built a really good clubmans class bike for his son Kevin to ride in the early 90's but an accident resulting in bone and skin grafts to his wrist saw him no longer able to race, so I began campaigning the Venom for them. Although a very good mechanical build the bike was always in my opinion a bit scruffy so a complete tear down, repaint, and mods to only a couple of things to make the bike my own was in order. Pete was obsessed with weight and almost everything is made of aircraft grade alloy including a lot of the fasteners, tipping the scales at 271 lbs with a half tank of fuel.

The engine runs straight-cut timing gears with alloy support plate, squish type piston at 11.2:1 compression ratio, twin plug head, Lucas rotating armature mag, 1-3/8" GP carb, belt primary drive and Pete's own made crankcases and produces 40.1 rear wheel HP on 100 octane petrol. The 4 speed gearbox is a pre-war KSS case



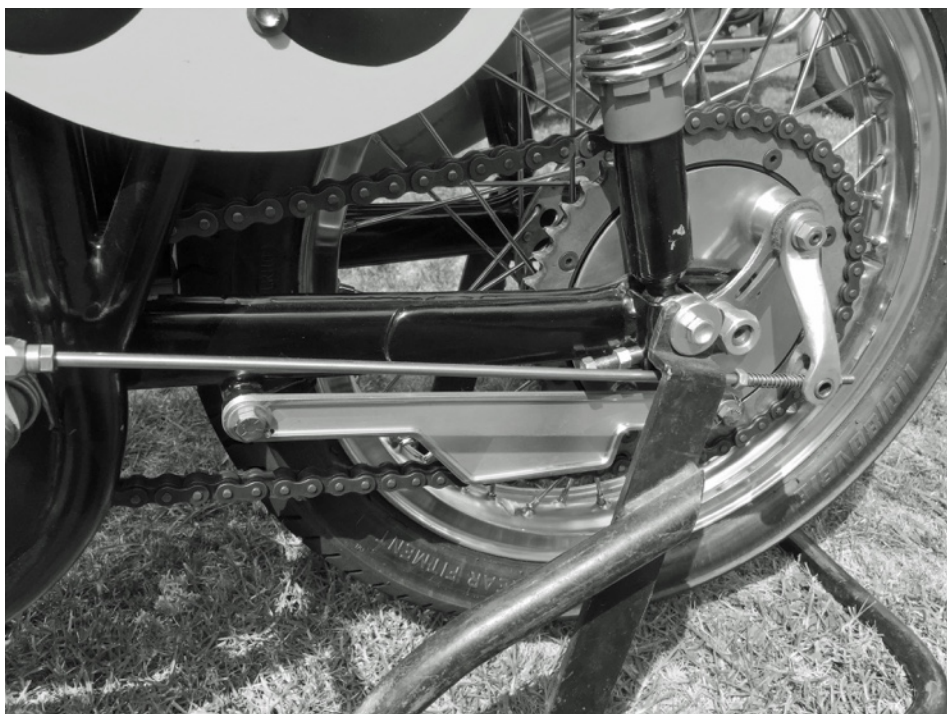


(3 lbs lighter than a post-war swing arm box) with a close ratio Thruxton type gear set. As this is a clubmans bike the gearbox is it's biggest drawback with gearing for some tracks a real compromise. Pete also made the rear hub

spool in alloy and the front brake and hub in Heat treated LM25 and it really is good considering it's only SLS (another clubmans rule here in NZ).

Both bikes are normally at the pointy end of the field with the KTT winning all races entered last season except one (broken primary chain) in our Pre-war 350 class. I came second in last season's championship due to missing one meeting when I came to California to race for Fred Mork last April.

Cheers Neville





OverHeard Kami's

Guess that last letter intimidated you all. Since then, my email box has been woefully empty of letters appropriate for this newsletter.

So back to the basics.

The good news is that I've not heard of any Velocettes being harmed in the California wild fires or mudslides. When Tim Kenney evacuated he had to make a tough choice: he could only take one bike. He chose his MAC and left his Thruxton and Endurance behind. All survived.

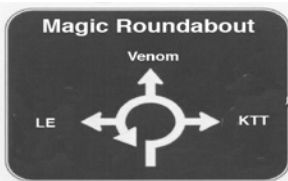
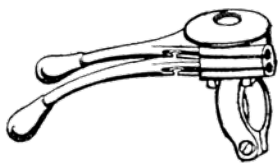
The bad news is that AHRMA will not be hosting any events at Sears Point, Sonoma Raceway this year.

Interest in the 2018 Baker, Oregon Rally is growing. Neville and Cheryl will be coming back from New Zealand. Yeah! Hopefully a few other international riders will be committing

soon to the ride. Dave Smitty may finally have a bike ready. Now there's a lad always full of surprises. Dave Roper, who's been a member of this club for 30 years, is also finally going to participate in a rally. Registration will be in the next issue and online.

Send any queries to the editor, Lanoras@gmail.com. In the meantime check out the beautiful new Cycle World! Wow!

Speaking of Lanora, she and Kim Young went back to school: American Supercamp Motorcycle Technique school. You go girls! Ride in the dirt! Kami



Divorce Sale.

- 1961 BSA Super Rocket. Nice upgrades. Ready to ride, and ride well. \$6,500
 - 1956 BSA Goldstar. AHRMA premier 500 class bike. Ready to race, and see how you go. \$9,000
 - Will include the ex wife for the asking price.
- Kevin Burrell Ph.415 518 8066



Wanted: Manufacturere-Dealer Promotional race win posters and photos of the 40s-50s & 60s. Usually from California. Examples include John McLaughlin's Velocette wins at Catalina. Also anything on Big Bear, Greenhorn and Catalina races. R.E. Rogers rogersr.e.65@gmail.com

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