LNCMC Newsletter July 2025

Chairman At Full Chat

It’s the start of July now, and we are mid-way through the Summer events at the time of writing. June saw two successful events in the Carr Cup Testing Trial and the Spry Sporting Trial, held at a new venue, which worked well in the conditions. Next up is the Motor Traders Trial on July 6, an ASWMC Car Trial round, and this year we switch back to Waterloo Farm, North Petherwin, where we had run the event for several years with the kind permission of Simon Oates' long-term passenger John Werren, who we very sadly lost last year. We are very pleased as a club to be welcomed back to the family farm for this year's event.

Looking ahead to the autumn, our Tamar Trial planning is being ramped up now at this time of year, with sections being scoped along with the logistics, so watch this space for more info in the coming weeks.

Hope everyone has been enjoying the generally nice weather we've been having, and as I have written a report of the Carr Cup I won't ramble on too much in this piece and look forward to seeing many of you at an event soon.

Simon R

Carr Cup 8th June

Initial fears of the date being too much of a clash with a variety of other things were alleviated in the week leading up to the event with a flurry of entries.

Twenty-four starters on the day, and the venue kindly provided by the Greene family again, is excellent for this event, a huge field with little in the way of 'hazards' for any damage.

The weather was kind, not overly hot, but a fine spring/early summer day. We also benefited from ample offers of marshals, which were greatly received.

Six tests were run twice each in the morning, followed by a lunch break with catering kindly provided again by Vic's Mobile Catering, which proved popular. We are again pleased to have them at our next event.

A few tweaks to the tests for the afternoon and time for three rounds before a mid-afternoon finish. The event seemed to go down well, thanks to Darren & Andrew for clerking and to Lisa and Lorraine for the paperwork for such a smooth-running event once again.

Bike entries were a bit low due to a number of factors, but included three youngsters on solos and Tony Fry on his big road bike on a road tyre (brave man). Three chairs provided

great entertainment as always, with very little time separating them. A host of front-wheel drive production cars competed along with Adrian Booth's TR, and young Oliver Cape driving a very smart Austin 7 Special.

Congratulations to Phil Thomas for taking the Carr Cup just edging out Tom Greene, and Joe Martin for winning the John Pope Cup for Solos, along with a well done to the other award winners.

Thanks to all for entering, officiating, marshalling and of course to the landowners - a good, relaxed day was had by all.

Simon Riddle

Spry Sporting Trial 14 June

Alan 'Murt' Murton had located a potential new site for a Sporting Trial at Willtown Farm in Broadwoodwidger, which is in the next valley to his property and owned by his friend Dave Petherick.

On our first visit we identified a couple of good steep fields with banks and well-spread trees. A decision was made to run the ASWMC Championship round on the Saturday immediately prior to the Camel Vale Calvin Trial to make another great Devon/ Cornwall trials weekend.

Then Murt, Roger Teagle, and I visited the site on the Monday prior to the event thinking we had made a mistake as the ground was hard and bone dry. It looked like we would need to run on 10 psi tyre pressure limit, but rain was forecast.

Fortunately, the Gods were on our side as by Friday there had been something like three inches of rain. Murt, Andy Prosser, and I proceeded to lay out on Friday morning during a break in the rain. Andy's fresh eyes and imagination enabled us to set out six very good sections, and there was even more heavy rain overnight.

We had an entry of nine with Alan Baker and John Cole coming down from Gloucester, and the welcome addition of Sam Teagle on his first Sporting Trial. I was ruled out for a variety of reasons but marshalled at the beginning. There were only three or four marshals including Hilary Carrott and Karen Warren, who both kindly stepped in at last minute (Saturdays are always difficult). On that basis, we decided to run three hills four times before lunch, then another 3 x 4 in the afternoon, on free tyre pressures.

Needless to say, Thomas Bricknell was virtually unstoppable and way out in front. Thomas dropped just 11 points to win the Spry Trophy, next was Alan Murton on 49 to win Class 3, Colin Flashman and Roger Bricknell (still showing why he has been a multiple British Champion) were third on 65 points. There were no retirements, so everyone was able to compete on the next day.

The weather held, the sections were superb, and full credit to Andy Prosser for his setting out skills.

Judging from the feedback at the end, this was an excellent club trial and we think that the site could be used next year for the Northgate Trial being a BTRDA Championship Round, and running approximately one month earlier.

As always, many thanks to the landowner (who was exceedingly accommodating) and, of course, the marshals.

Mike Wevill

Tyre Changing Equipment Review

The tyre changing rig and the wheel balancer

Regular tyre changes are part of the price you pay for trials riding, and this is particularly true if you use the same bike for other purposes. At 65 years old, my knees are getting a bit tired (groan) of being slammed into the sidewalls of recalcitrant Pirelli MT43 4.00-18s, so I decided to invest in something that would take the pain out of the task.

I cannot justify the cost of the Rabacondas that you see in action in the pits at the ISDE where tyres are removed and replaced in seconds by exhausted riders at the end of the day, but I found a lower-cost alternative.

Enter the Warrior tyre changer/bead-breaker rig, which I got in a package along with a Warrior wheel-balancing rig and a couple of Michelin-style tyre levers from Demon Tweaks https://www.demon-tweeks.com/uk/tools-workshop/garage-equipment/motorcycle-tools-equipment/wheel-tyre-equipment/

The Chinese-made equipment arrives in two boxes and with no instructions as to either assembly or use…just poorly-rendered monotone illustrations on the boxes themselves.

Luckily, it all bolts together in a fairly straightforward manner, but you need to put the arms for the wheel-balancer in the outer holes of the base to accommodate the hubs of most motorcycle wheels.

To use the tyre-changer, you remove the big wingnut on the central spindle and drop the wheel (with the tyre deflated and rim-locks/security bolts released (not like in my picture!) onto it before replacing the wing nut and tightening it down.

You then set the spade on the lever so it will press down on the area of the bead immediately adjacent to the rim, and work your way around by rotating the wheel. Once you've broken the bead/rim seal all the way around, rotate the wheel so the spade is directly opposite the tyre valve (assuming you use inner tubes), shove the valve up into the rim, and use the two levers to lift the tyre over the rim with one each side of the valve while the spade holds the bead opposite into the well of the rim. The hooked ends of the Michelin-style levers engage with the tyre bead and reduce the risk of catching the tube.

Work your way around the wheel until the tyre bead is completely clear of the rim, then flip the wheel and repeat for the other side. The wheel should now be loose inside the tyre, and you can remove the tube. Remove the wheel from the rig, hold it vertically upright, and push the wheel down into the tyre, then fold the top of the tyre down and pull the wheel up and out.

You can also use the rig to fit the new tyre, using the spade to hold the tyre bead into the well of the rim while working opposite it with the levers, starting with one either side of the valve. Again, the notched end of the lever will grip the bead without stabbing the tube. I can't over-emphasise how much easier the Michelin-style levers make the job.

Now on to the wheel-balancer.

Imbalance just seem to be something that comes with chunky tread and security bolts, so a lot of people don't bother to balance off-road motorcycle wheels. This is a mistake in my opinion. You may not notice the vibration from an unbalanced wheel off-road, but your wheel bearings certainly do. And on a long-distance trial they add to the fatigue that can grip you on road sections, and will also contribute to high-speed weaves, corner chatter, and other nasty wobbles.
The Warrior rig comes with a small strip on stick on balance weights, which are practically useless for our purposes, so get a set of the brass weights that bolt onto the wheel spokes (available on e-bay etc).

First job is to use the handy spirit level on the base of the rig to ensure it is on level ground (the feet adjust to level the rig if required).

Then fit the spindle through the wheelbearings using the supplied cones to centralise the wheel. Tighten these into place when they are pushed as far into the wheelbearings as possible, so the wheel is held firmly.

Gently lower the spindle onto the rig's bearings. The wheel will rotate so the heaviest part is at the bottom. Note the highest point on the rim and fit a weight on the nearest spoke to it. Rotate the wheel again. It the wheel comes to rest in the same position, either remove the weight you fitted and fit a heavier one, or if it is already as heavy as you can go, fit another weight to the nearest adjacent spoke. If the weight ends up at the bottom, fit a lighter weight.

You've balanced the wheel when it stays where it is put after rotating it half a turn or so.

Make sure the grub screws that secure the weights are fully tightened, take the wheel off the rig, and refit to the bike.

Take the bike out for a short spin and marvel at how smooth and comfortable it is now. Then do a last check on the grub screws, and pat yourself on the back.

Richard Simpson

The Devil in the detail

Off with the old…

…and on with the new

This is a cautionary tale, concerning my greed and poor attention to detail.

A few years BC (Before Covid), I found myself with some money to spare. I had worked for a Ducati dealer in the 1970s, and a first thought was to buy one of the glorious bevel-drive V-twins that had made such an impression on me back then. No chance…you were talking the kind of money that would buy you a terraced house in South Wales.

OK, so how about a newer Ducati…well there were some Monster money pits available at my kind of price, but all would need more cash than I had spending on them to get them decent. Or there was the visual horror that was the Multistrada Mk 1…oh God, no. But anything decent, like an 888 or 916 Superbike, was already beyond my reach.

So, on to plan B. An Aprilia Mille. A 1000cc V-twin contemporary and rival of the 916 in the glory days of World Superbikes, but apparently more practical and reliable by far than the Dook as a road bike. Prices were still affordable, and presumably could only go up. And I'd owned an Aprilia before (650 Pegaso) and it had been 100% reliable and a great bike to ride.

So, I found a Mille for sale at a local independent dealer. Good nick and in the correct glorious red on black colour scheme, and fitted with an Aprilia Factory Racing titanium exhaust to boot.

See it, want it, buy it. Kept it under cover most of the time, but pulled it out for the occasional ride on dry, sunny days. And that's where the trouble started. Hot day + slow riding in holiday traffic = locked back brake, with a solid pedal.

Investigations reveal that the brake master cylinder is concealed under the fairing and bolted directly to the engine crankcase. No wonder it gets hot!

There is an aftermarket kit available that relocates the MC and its remote reservoir to the footrest, with the MC now vertical and in the airflow. That should do it…except it doesn't. While the onset of the problem is delayed the brake still overheats, with the fluid boiling, the caliper seals crisping and the whole lot smelling like a drum-braked lorry that's just been driven fully loaded down a steep hill.

So, I decided to throw more money at the problem. A genuine new Brembo MC, and as the old caliper is now suspect and new genuine ones both expensive and difficult to find, a replacement caliper from HEL, made just down the road near Exeter.

New parts fitted, and I start on the tedious task of doing a complete bleed on a drop-in (underslung) caliper. It takes hours, so I resort to pressurising the reservoir by cutting around the valve of an old bicycle inner tube, hoseclipping it to the reservoir, and pressurising the system with the aid of a bike pump. Works a treat.

Feeling very pleased with myself, I am wiping the reservoir cap clean prior to refitting it over the little rubber boot when I notice something. There are two tiny indentations on the underside of the cap. Finally, something clicks in what's left of my brain. Are these in fact points where there should be vent holes in the cap?

Because heat from the engine is making the brake fluid expand in the reservoir, but the air-tight lid is preventing the pressure being relieved by movement of the diaphragm. When the brake pedal is released, there's nowhere for the fluid to return to, so it remains under pressure between the master cylinder and the caliper.

I use a Dremel to create two pin holes in the cap at the marked positions, and take the bike for a test ride in the heat of the day, bedding the new brake in carefully by riding slowly and making repeated gentle applications. The brake doesn't lock up, although I am getting decent heat into the caliper and disc, and the engine coolant temp goes to over 90 degrees C. In its previous state, it would have overheated and locked.

So, that's fixed it. But did I really need to throw all that time and money at the brake, or could I have fixed it in five minutes with the Dremel?

I'll never know.

Last question. What's happened to the bike's value?

Well, it's not been a good investment so far. Values have remained unchanged, or even dropped slightly since the end of the Covid bike boom. Never mind, it still looks very pretty in the garage and 'rides lovely' (as they say in Wales) on the road. Value things for what they are, not what you think they might be worth in the future.