

Established 1988

# THE OILY RAG

May 2019



**Honda Valkyrie F6C  
Toby Meet-up Easter Sunday**

## Editor's Bit

This edition includes a couple of items referring to the decline of the British motorcycle industry in the 1960s and 70s. A subject close to my heart and it's good to see still being researched today by Exeter University. Please take the time to help with a research project by completing the survey referred to (online only I'm afraid) on page 6.

**Volunteers** - The club is also in need of volunteers for the roles of Membership Secretary and to act as marshals for the Dartmoor Run. Please make yourself known to a Committee Member if you are able to help.

This month's recommended website is a YouTube video of another motorcycling master at work: [https://youtu.be/GL3Yv\\_GXnrw](https://youtu.be/GL3Yv_GXnrw) In 1983, at the age of 49, John Surtees took his Manx Norton to Amaroo Park in Australia and took on the local fellow veteran riders...and won. John (1958 Manx Norton) finished less than one second ahead of TT and Ulster GP riding local Jack Saunders (1962 Matchless G50) and Jim Scaysbrook (1961 AJS 7R). Once a racer always a racer!

*All items and articles by club members are welcome for inclusion in future editions. My contact details are in Who's Who on the last page of the magazine.*

*Andy Heathwood (AH)*

**Cover Picture:** Literally over-shadowing other bikes at the Toby meet-up on Easter Sunday was this well kept Honda Valkyrie F6C. With a 1520cc flat-six cylinder engine this could cause a serious inferiority complex in some and cylinder envy in others.

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## Police Motorcyclist

My mention last month of receiving a 'ticking off' from a motorcycle copper in my youth elicited this image from Brian Sussex – I'm now getting 'flashbacks' ☺. *AH*



## My Motorcyclography – Ray Martin

### What was your first motorcycle?

A 1952 Norman 98cc. 2x gears operated on the handlebar, a rigid frame with puny telescopic forks and a “performance” bulge on the exhaust pipe. As a relief from riding a pushbike 6 miles to work in Tavistock it was pure bliss. Purchased from Al Brotherton in Plymouth for £39 (on H.P.).

### When and where did you pass your test? Was it your first try?

Test was in Plymouth aged 16 years and 4 months. The test was around the hilliest parts of Plymouth and a lot of ‘paddling’ was done. When the examiner leapt out from behind a garden hedge, for the ‘emergency stop’ test, I was riding over a grit-filled gutter and promptly fell off. However, I still passed first time!

### What are your current bike(s)?

- My beloved 125cc D1 Bantam (pictured below)
- Honda CD185 twin (very civilised and reliable)
- Suzuki A100 (rebuilt from dismantled over 3 years by Mike and I)



### Of all the bikes you’ve owned which was / is your favourite?

I had a very smart Excelsior Talisman twin 250cc two stroke which was very smooth and had a great siamesed exhaust note. After my Norman it was fantastic. When I got called up I was expected to go to Cyprus and sold it, only to get a home posting at Topsham barracks, so bought a little D.O.T. to tide me over.

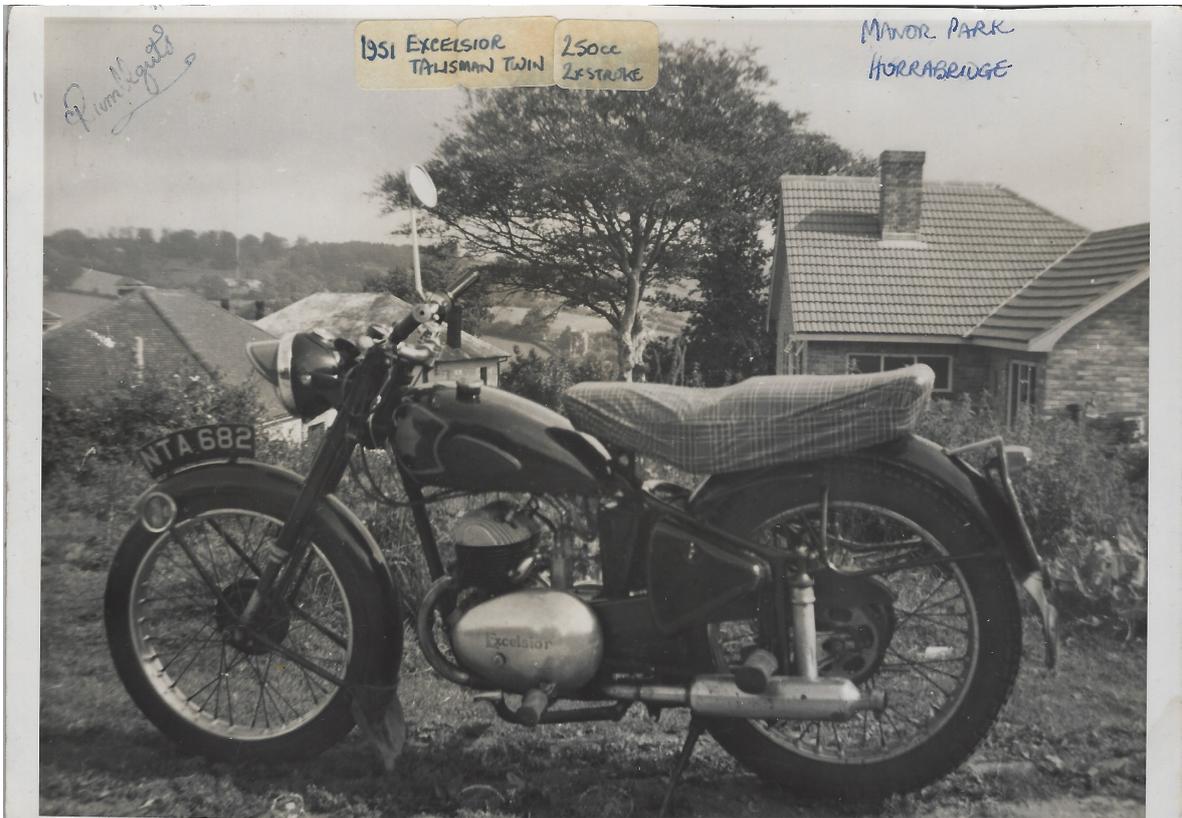


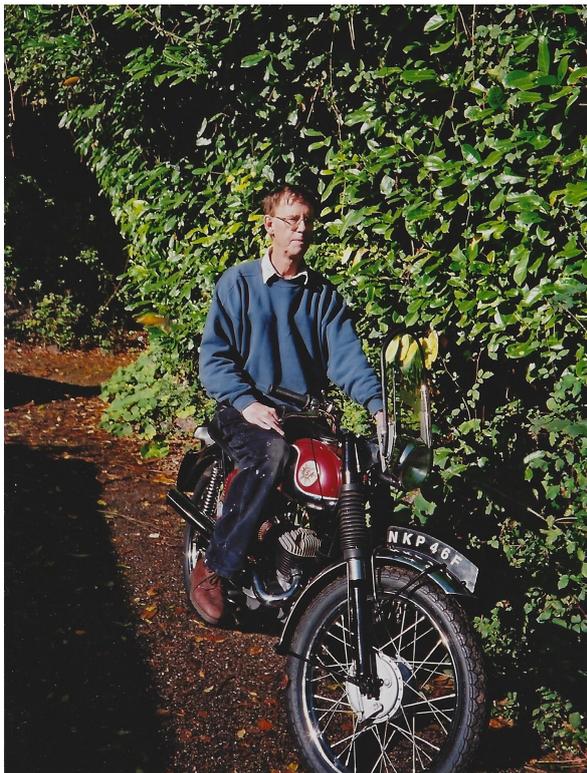
Figure 1: Ray's 1951 Excelsior Talisman pictured at Horrbridge

**What's your favourite motorcycling memory?**

My friend Colin on his LE Velocette and I were riding to Holsworthy when Colin overtook me and hollered 'follow me!' He shot round a tight corner, rode the bike up a steep bank, and fell into a field. Luckily no injury and no harm done. How we laughed!

**Do you have any motorcycling related future plans?**

I've ridden some great bikes over the years (64 years) and have always had a bike since age 16. So my only plan is to keep riding and enjoying the Club for as long as I can get my leg over (or is that another dream!).



Ray pictured on a BSA Bantam D10 sports.

## Club Matters

### Twice-Weekly Meet-ups at the Toby Exeter

These are continuing to take place on every Sunday and Wednesday meeting at 9-10am.

The following photograph is of some of the bikes assembled on Easter Sunday when around 12 members (including partners) were present. The two new Royal Enfield Interceptor 650s look quite at home among the other classics new and old.



**Membership Secretary:** Chris Ellis is stepping down as Membership Secretary at the end of May. Nominations to take on this important role are to be made to Chairman Mervyn Green or any other committee member before the club meeting on **Tues** 7<sup>th</sup> May.

**Club Evening Ride-Outs:** The second of these will be held on **Tues** 7<sup>th</sup> May leaving the Twisted Oak at 7pm prompt to return for the club meeting starting at 8pm.

### Monthly Club Sunday Ride-Outs

**May:** Following the ballot a run to Minehead is being planned for 12<sup>th</sup> May leaving the Toby at 10:00 prompt. Times for those wishing to include a train ride are; departure from Minehead at 12:30, arrive at Bishops Lydeard at 13:50. Return departure time is 14:40 from Bishops Lydeard arriving back at Minehead at 16:00.

**June:** Voting at **Tues** 7<sup>th</sup> May club meeting for Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June run which is *Fish & Chips on the Beach*; No.1 Plymouth Hoe, No.2 Weymouth, No.3 St Ives or No.4 Dartmouth.

### Darts Farm (Estuary League of Friends): Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June

The club will again be supporting this event. For details and application form please see this link <http://www.estuary-league-of-friends.co.uk/classic-car-show-2019/>

### Dartmoor Run 28<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Preparations continue with work on administration and publicity. The Lord Mayor has been contacted and will attend the event. The sub-committee will meet again on 3 June.

### Volunteers to marshal the Dartmoor Run

Around 15 marshals are required. Please give your name to any committee member if you are willing to help. Adrian Evans will be the event's Chief Marshal.

## Please Note:

**Next Club Meeting is on TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> May**

(due to Monday 6th being May Day Bank Holiday)

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## April Sunday Club Run to Cheddar Gorge

Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> April was the day of the club's second monthly ride, Having met at the Toby in Exeter and, although cold, it was off to Cheddar.

I joined the group at Cullompton because my Bonnie had let me down. So it was back to old faithful the Enfield Bullet (one made in Redditch) and off we went to Taunton. Around the back of Taunton and Bridgewater and across the Somerset levels.

The levels held some surprises with the bikes and riders shot into the air as we hit some unexpected dips and bumps in the road. It certainly made for an interesting few miles.

Soon we arrived in Cheddar. Having located the toilets, and then a café, we had refreshments and a warm up. Then we headed for home via the Minehead Road, Bampton and Tiverton. We were led by Graham Adams with Steve Trevena bringing up the rear.

I have to say the trip was well planned and executed. I had no problem staying with the group on my old Enfield. Nobody got lost or left behind thanks to Steve's vigilance. The only thing not under control was the warm weather that was ordered. Instead we had a very cold wind. But all in all it was a good ride through lots of different countryside. If future rides go as well I think we should have some really good times.

Thanks to all who participated.

*Report by Mervyn Green.*

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## University of Exeter Student Project Survey

Glen Jonata of Exeter University is researching the decline of the British Motorcycle Industry as part of his studies, below is a link to his online survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LWY59LQ>

The survey should take about 2 minutes to complete. Will club members who were around during that era please consider completing the survey. Please also feel free to send the link to friends who might wish to help the project.

The club will be inviting Glen to present his findings.

Thanks to Steve Adcock for providing this information.

## *1960s and 70s Decline of the British Motorcycle Industry*

This has always been a topic of great interest to me as I lived through this event as I'm sure many other club members did.

The subject is well covered in the following books:

1. The Strange Death of the British Motor Cycle Industry by Steve Koerner. Published by Crucible Books, 2012, £20. ISBN 978-1-905472-03-1
2. The Giants of Small Heath by Barry Ryerson. Haynes Publishing Group 1980. ISBN 0 85429 255 1
3. Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry by Bert Hopwood. Haynes Publishing Group 1981. ISBN 0 85429 459 7

I recently stumbled upon an account from a wider economic, industrial and political context.

You know how the story goes, after WW2 the lucky Germans with their industries bombed flat received all those Marshall Aid dollars to restart from a clean sheet with new equipment. Similarly Japan received much American support and both Japan and Germany had no defence costs since neither were allowed weapons or armed services. This contrasts with Britain being practically broke and still trying to maintain a worldwide defence presence and re-starting manufacturing with worn out and obsolete equipment.

The difficulty with part of this argument is that Britain actually received the largest share of Marshall Aid of all the European nations<sup>1</sup>. Britain received \$2.7<sup>2</sup> billion whereas Germany got \$1.7 billion<sup>3</sup>. So what happened? Well it turns out that the post-WW2 Labour government used most of the money to 'pay the bills' rather like the Conservative government of the day did in the 1980s with the revenue from North Sea oil.

Although for part of the post-war Labour government's expenditure at least we had the NHS and many new and affordable houses to show for it. Much money (7.7% of GDP compared with 2% today) was also spent on maintaining armed forces and bases around the globe. Looked at from today's perspective this expenditure would seem difficult to justify. As a proportion of Gross National Product investment in industry and infrastructure from the Marshall Aid money was a third less in Britain than that of West Germany.

So an opportunity to rebuild war-torn industry, roads and railways was missed which helped sow the seeds for industrial decline through the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

This included the sad demise of the motorcycle industry which still included some brilliant engineers and which had such a proud history.

However, in all this I do try to keep a sense of perspective since Norton's twin-cylinder TT winning bike of 1907 had a Peugeot engine, Norton frames for the 1973 Commando 850 MkII were made by Verlicchi in Italy and Triumph was founded by a German,

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1 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/marshall\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/marshall_01.shtml)

2 <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2017/06/12/whats-the-context-us-secretary-of-state-proposes-a-marshall-plan-for-the-reconstruction-of-europe-5-june-1947/>

3 MP for Shrewsbury Daniel Kawczynski repeated the myth 'No Marshall Plan for us only for Germany.' in a tweet as recently as February this year.

Siegfried Bettmann. Triumph's first motorcycle was built in 1902 with a Belgian Minerva engine.



A 1950 poster produced by the US government's Economic Cooperation Administration to promote the Marshall Plan in Europe. Commons Wikimedia

Globalisation and movement of people and goods, whilst an increasing phenomenon, is by no means a new one. Of course the motorcycle industry phoenix has partially risen from the ashes and we have Nortons, Triumphs, Royal Enfields and AJSs today, albeit many of the bikes being manufactured in Brazil, China, India and Thailand. At least the intellectual property for some of the motorcycle industry remains in Britain.

Given the 'interesting times' that we live in I couldn't resist including this 1950 poster produced by the US government's Economic Cooperation Administration to promote the Marshall Plan in Europe.

AH

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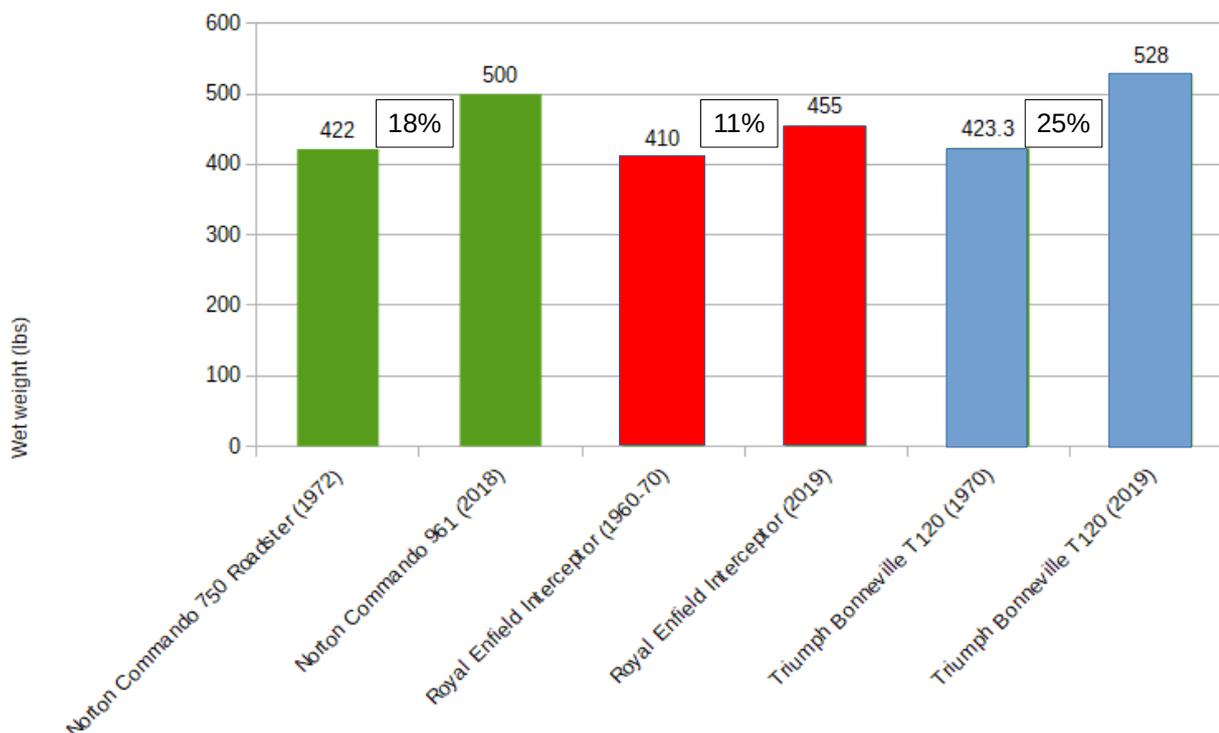
## *Putting on weight*

Over the years it is not just the riders who have maybe put on a few pounds. I returned to regular motorcycling in 1998 after a time in the doldrums occasionally riding various small bikes, e.g. Honda C50, CZ175. One of the first things I noticed was how heavy bikes seemed to have become.

The bikes were of better quality than the Nortons, Triumphs and BSAs I had owned and ridden in the 1970s but this had partly come at the cost of increased weight. Much of this is accounted for by multi-cylinder engines, electric starts and balancer shafts on newer twins but I always wonder if weight is being largely ignored at the design stage.

These observations on bike weight were born out when I decided to look at some real data for old and new versions of some famous models. 'Wet' weights are compared as data are available for all models and years.

Make, Model, Year	Wet (lb)	Wet (Kg)
Norton Commando 750 Roadster (1972)	422 <sup>4</sup>	191.4
Norton Commando 961 (2018)	500 <sup>5</sup>	227
Royal Enfield Interceptor (1960-70)	410 <sup>6</sup>	190
Royal Enfield Interceptor (2019)	455	206.5 <sup>7</sup>
Triumph Bonneville T120 (1970)	423.3 <sup>8</sup>	192
Triumph Bonneville T120 (2019)	528 <sup>9</sup>	239.5



**Drawing 1: Graph comparing weights of old and new models showing percentage increases**

Comparing the weight differences for the old and new models the Royal Enfield stands out as only increasing the weight by 11%. The new Triumph Bonneville by contrast weighs 25% more than the original.

Data on adding an electric start indicate that this alone can add at least 11Kg, e.g. for the Alton bolt-on kit. When Norton added an electric start and made other changes, e.g. left-hand gear change and rear disk brake, to the 1975 850 Commando (MkIII) this added 21Kg increasing the weight by around 10% compared with the MkII.

Once rolling of course the weight differences are rarely a problem but manoeuvring around the garage, parking or turning at low speed can be an issue. Personally I find any bike too much over 200Kg can occasionally make it a bit of a handful. Maybe I'm just beginning to feel my age! *AH*

4 Norton Manual 1973 Section A. Cycle Guide Mar 1971 has a Roadster tested at 419lb herb weight with ½ tank of fuel.

5 Cycle World April 2016

6 Wikipedia

7 RE website kerb wt. (oil, no fuel= 202Kg). 1 imperial gallon weighs approx 10lbs or 4.54Kg). Wet=kerb plus 1 gallon fuel.

8 Cycle World March 1969 has 420lb wet weight for a Tiger 650. This data from bikesz.com.

9 Cycle World Nov 2016 518lb no fuel. Plus 10lbs for 1 gallon of fuel=528lb.

## Exeter Services (Local bike-related services. Additions welcome)

General engineering & machining	C M Engineering Components Ltd
Paintwork and metalwork	Wild West Custom Paint
Powder Coating	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice Finishes
Seat re-covering and refurbishment	Exeter Disability Collective

## Club Facebook Use

A quieter month, maybe people are out on their bikes a bit more. 94 members, up 1. 214 posts, comments and reactions, down 22%. Top 3 contributors are (admins & mods not included) 1 Steve Trevena 2 Simon Spoerer 3 Malcolm Winslade. Let's see pictures when you go out on your bikes, always nice to see them. Please, if you hear of anyone asking to join the Facebook group, remind them they MUST answer the 3 questions. We turn down several requests every month because they haven't.

*Steve Harcus (Facebook Administrator)*

## Club Regalia

Peter White holds small stocks of club regalia which are available on club nights:



Hi Vis Waistcoat £3



Lapel Badge £4



Sticker 50p



Machine Badge £15



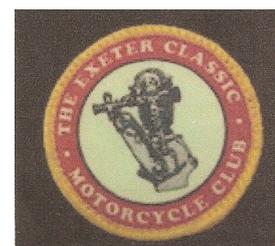
Baseball Cap £5



New Polo Shirt £20



Black Fleece £15



Sew On Badge £2



Windscreen Sticker 50p

## Available to borrow

**Small bike lift.** Type that lifts frame rails or crankcase. £5 per loan. Contact Chris Ellis.

**Single bike trailer.** For a donation to club funds. Contact Ray Martin.



## CLUB RUNS AND OTHER EVENTS

### 2019 Meets and Runs

**Wednesday** meets and possible runs – every Wednesday meeting at 9-10am at Toby Carvery, Exeter Arms, Middlemoor, Exeter EX2 7HL.

**Sunday** meets and possible runs – every Sunday 9-10am at Toby Carvery, Exeter Arms, Middlemoor, Exeter EX2 7HL.

### 2019 Dates for Club Events

- Devon County Show: Thu 16-Sat 18 May
- Alphington Church Fête: Sat 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2-5pm
- Darts Farm: Sun 16<sup>th</sup> June, 11am-3:30pm (arrive from 9:30am)
- Exeter Guildhall Shopping Centre ECMC Motorcycles: Sat 6<sup>th</sup> July, 10am-4pm
- Historic Vehicle Gathering at Powderham Castle: Sat 13-Sun 14 July
- ECMC Annual Dartmoor Run: Sun 28 July
- Exmouth Classic Vehicle Gathering, Imperial Rec: Sun 18 August from 10:00am
- Dawlish Bike & Trike Show: Sun 1st September
- Bedford Square: Sat 7<sup>th</sup> December

### Club Meetings – at The Twisted Oak, Ide

7<sup>th</sup> May (**Tuesday**), 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1<sup>st</sup> July (usually first Monday of the month).

### Committee Meetings

20<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

If there are any issues club members would like to raise with the Committee please contact any Committee member (see back page for Who's Who in the Club).

### Other Events (for information)

12<sup>th</sup> May 2019 *Spirit of the Sixties* charity run. Westland Classic Motorcycle Club. Starts at Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton, details - <https://www.wcmcc.org.uk/charity-runs>



## Some of our sponsors and supporters:

(Have your membership card with you and you may receive a discount)

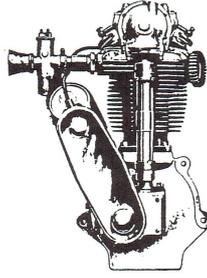
**Treen Motors, Charlotte Street, Crediton EX17 3BG** (on the corner, facing you as you ride through Crediton from Exeter). Tel. 01363 772283. Motorcycle servicing and MOTs. Used motorcycles, accessories. Support vehicle for the Dartmoor Run.

**The Worx, King Edward Street, Exeter, Devon EX4 4NY.** Servicing, repairs, MOTs, wheel building etc. For modern and classic bikes. Discount on bike MOTs for ECMC members. They now do car MOTs, servicing and repairs too. Tel. Chris on 01392 272722

**Exeter Engineering, Higher Park, Pennymoor, Tiverton EX16 8LL.** Tel. 01392 344944. [www.exeterengineering.co.uk](http://www.exeterengineering.co.uk). Restoration and renovation of classic vehicles, from individual components to full projects and everything in between.

# EXETER CLASSIC MOTOR CYCLE CLUB

EST.



1988

## INFORMATION

## WHO'S WHO IN THE CLUB

Chairman: Mervyn Green – 07799 100505  
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