

Ross Masonic Club



Supporting Local Freemasons

The Craftsmen

Week Commencing 20th July 2020

Issue Number Sixteen

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of the Ross Masonic Club Weekly Round-Up.
Special Motorcycle Enthusiast Edition

Welcome to a very special edition of **The Craftsmen**. This week we focus on the personal stories of members who have a passion for motorcycles. Even if you are not a motorcycle fan, I am sure you will find the articles interesting. Also a slightly different format this week, let me know what you think. A special thank you to all those that contributed.



Keep safe Brethren and keep in contact.



Keeping in Contact and Staying Sharp

Facebook



We have set up a Facebook Group for Ross Masonic Club. We currently have 28 members across the Lodges and Chapter. Any members of Lodges or Chapter that meet at Ross Masonic Hall are welcome to join in.

More opportunities to Zoom together

If you have not previously joined in, we now have a meeting that starts earlier on a Friday at 7:30pm as well as the 8:45pm meeting for the 9 o'clock toast.

You can come and go during these times as you please.

It's simple to setup and Billy can help with support if you need it.



proposing the #TimetoToast this evening on behalf of @hfdslightblues Looking forward to our next meeting”.

This week VW Bro Graham King proposed the 9 o'clock Toast that the PGM Tweeted

“Thanks to the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and Past Grand Superintendent VW Bro Graham King for

Would I know the answer? Did I know the answer?

Last time I asked Why do we ‘Square’ the Lodge?

In the early days of the Craft, Lodges were not as dignified and decorous as they are today. We have progressed a very long way from the days when an enterprising tavern-keeper could put up a sign bearing the words: ‘Freemasons made here for half- a -crown’, and when many Freemasons were initiated for the price of a round of drinks. Lodges met at specific taverns, from which they derived their names. In those days, the tavern floors were sprinkled with sand to soak up spillages. Before the Lodge meeting commenced, the Tyler would draw rough sketches of various Masonic symbols, such as the sun, moon, blazing star, etc. in the sand. In other Lodges, with bare floorboards, these symbols were drawn on the floor with charcoal or chalk. This procedure was known as ‘Drawing the Lodge’, and the Tyler was paid a fee for this service. Old Lodge accounts show that this varied between half-a-crown and four shillings. At the end of the Lodge meeting, the youngest Entered Apprentice was handed a mop and pail of water and instructed to wash away the drawings.

For next time, let me pose the question. Why do we wear gloves?

You can always check your thoughts by visiting ‘Solomon’ of course! <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

By Dennis Roberts - Group Leader

Information and Guidance Group

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The idea was to teach him, as he obliterated the designs on the floor, to exclude from his conversations outside the Lodge everything he had heard or witnessed in the Lodge. It was therefore, a symbol of the Masonic virtue of silence.

Drawing the Lodge continued for some time, before the next development, which was to paint or draw the symbols onto a roll of canvas which could easily be laid on the floor of the Lodge and rolled up again and stored after the meeting. From these rolls of canvas to the Tracing Boards we use today was but a short step. Thus what we call Tracing Boards today did not develop from the Lodge Boards mentioned in our Ritual, but rather from the drawings in sanded 17th century tavern floors.

Why then do we continue to ‘Square’? Simply because our ancestors were very precise in their movements so as not to disturb the sand on the floor and spoil the design, and the practice became part of ‘tradition’, enforced as ever, by strict DC’s!!

Coffee Break and T@3

This week Aeron Lewis provides us with a curiosity to name and the answer to last week's question.



Aeron's Curiosities - Last Week's Answer

This object was made 'turned' in this case and carved as a token of love and was placed down between the breasts of the lady they loved, it is dated 1898, initials on it are CH and PAV.

It is a stay busk. Before 1830 corsets were called stays. They were an essential part of a woman's undergarments, forcing the body to the fashion shape of the season. When tightened the stays could damage a woman's body by distorting and repositioning her internal organs.

Stay busks were inserted into the front of stays to flatten the wearer's stomach. They restricted movement making it impossible to bend forward.

A similar example can be found here on the BBC website.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/4Cm3wPcnSS2GAZB3Z5EOtQ>



Aeron's Curiosities - This Week's Question

This week we publish a further picture of a 'curiously wrought' item that Aeron sent in. Can anyone hazard a guess at what it is and what it is used for?

Answer in next weeks issue.



Craft Provincial Gardening Competition

Don't Forget To Enter!

If you are in the Craft in Herefordshire you will have received details of the Provincial Gardening Competition.

Send your entries by email to pco@herefordshiremasons.org.uk

You can send up to two photos, no larger than 2MB each.

Give each of them a title, and give a short description of what you have done in the garden during lockdown to get the results shown in the photos.

Don't forget to add your name, and which Lodge you're in. Closing date 12th August.

Good luck!



Scott McHattie's Scottish Adventures

Scottish North Coast 500 (NC500): May 2019. A few places to visit.

Having been a die-hard Harley Davidson rider since buying my first worn out example at the age of 21 years and restoring it, I hadn't really deviated much from the brand in that I'd owned dozens of other Marques over the years but had always at least one Harley. I currently own three.

I have a group of friends who also ride Harleys and towards the end of 2018 we decided to plan our annual trip and do the Scottish North Coast 500, 500 miles around the coast of Scotland, this was to take place in May 2019. There are a number of routes to take and we ended up doing a total of 1700 miles from home and back.



Rather fortuitously I'd just acquired a BMW Adventure 1200 with luggage and despite protestations from my travelling companions I thought it the perfect ride for such a trip, it proved to be the case.



So three days before we were due to meet in Perth I set off with my girlfriend who would catch a flight home before the start of the trip from Edinburgh.

Setting off from Ross on Wye we stopped in to see some friends in Windermere before continuing on the Gretna Green for a Scottish breakfast and on to Stirling where we visited the 15th Century Rosslyn Chapel founded by William Sinclair, First Grandmaster of the Grand Lodge of Scotland.



The chapel, built 150 years after the dissolution of the Knights Templar, has many Templar symbols, such as the "Two riders on a single horse" that appear on the Knights Templar Seal. William Sinclair 3rd Earl of Orkney, Baron of Roslyn and 1st Earl of Caithness, hereditary Grand Master of the Scottish stonemasons, built Rosslyn Chapel. A later William Sinclair of Roslyn became the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and, subsequently, several other members of the Sinclair family have held this position.

<https://www.rosslynchapel.com>



Scott McHattie's Scottish Adventures

Scottish North Coast 500 (NC500): May 2019. A few places to visit.

For the night we stayed at the former Stirling County High School which is now a hotel and where my father went to school. The entrance is stunning with the signs of the zodiac carved into each side and a short walk down from Stirling Castle where you can see the river Forth separating the highlands from the Lowlands and the Abbey Craig where William Wallace defeated the English in 1297 at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. A Victorian monument stands on the spot where he supposedly commanded his army.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Stirling_Bridge

There are so many things to see on this trip and having



been familiar with Scotland from an early age I am still finding more to see and things I've missed.

One of the highlights for me was to ride out with one of my companions to Boleskine House nestled on the banks of Loch Ness and the former home of one Aleister Crowley, English eccentric / occultist and member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn who were founded in 1888 and list amongst their membership some rather notable luminaries.



Boleskine House was owned at one time by Jimmy Paige of Led Zeppelin fame and a collector of all things Crowley and is plagued by misfortune and strange events. It mysteriously caught fire in 2015 and was purchased by the Boleskine House Foundation. It is linked to the churchyard opposite by an underground tunnel in the cellar.



We were fortunate enough to be able to walk up to the house and explore prior to restoration taking place and I am looking forward to going back to see it finished.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boleskine_House

The highlight of the trip for me was setting out for Fort William in a light drizzle, my heated grips keeping my hands warm as I rode up and through the Cairngorms National Park. I'd set off earlier than the rest of the pack in order to see the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge, which I recall from my childhood. As I rode through the mountains I looked up to see a stag atop a rocky outcrop and looking down on me in all its majestic beauty. Another was seeing Mary Queen of Scots' bed chamber at Holyrood House in Edinburgh. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spean_Bridge

I hope that this brief submission has made you think about visiting Scotland, preferably on your motorcycle but any form of transport would do and maybe you'll travel the length of this beautiful country to stand and have your picture taken at John O Groats as we all did.



Michael's Motorcycle Memories

Michael Holland recounts his lifelong love of motorcycles and the forming of Columbanus Lodge No 9941, a special interest Lodge for fellow motorcyclists.

I have been riding motorcycles since I was 16 and owned a variety of bikes over that period. Since retiring to Hereford, I have owned an Indian Chief, Suzuki GSX650F, Kawasaki ZZR 1400, BMW K1600 GTL and a BMW R100S.



I currently still have the two BMWs and the Indian Chief. My wife was not keen to ride with me on the Kawasaki or the Suzuki due to the riding position, but is comfortable to ride with me on the BMW GTL and also on the Indian Chief. The photo of the two of us was taken on a trip we took up to Yorkshire a year or so ago. The other photos show all the aforementioned bikes.

I am currently IPM and was a Founder Member (JW) of Columbanus Lodge No. 9941 which is a special interest Lodge for those with a passion for motorcycling. We were consecrated in Somerset by the PGM on 20th May 2017 and meet 5 times a year in January, May, June, July and September. Between May and September, we usually meet up at a suitable location and have a ride to wherever we plan to hold the meeting as we are peripatetic. However, in January and May (Installation) we usually meet at Keynsham Masonic Hall which is the venue shown on or Warrant. The other three meetings are by dispensation and will change each year.

Although Columbanus was formed as a Somerset Lodge it draws members from the neighbouring provinces including Gloucestershire and Herefordshire and beyond.

St Columbanus is the patron saint of motorcyclists; hence the name.

Prior to consecration, the inaugural founders' meeting was held at Keynsham Masonic Hall, following which 15 bikers



took the scenic route over to the A&E Department at the Royal United Hospitals in Bath. The Founders donated a supply of 'Teddies for Loving Care' which masons have been supplying to hospitals for a number of years.

This was followed by a two hour ride around the Mendips and back to Keynsham Masonic Hall in time for tea.



Community Service On Two Wheels

Scott Teasdale tells us about his voluntary services making deliveries for local pharmacies during the recent lockdown period.

Ross Community Development Trust was set up in early 2020 to bring together local charities to help and support the area and residents in times of need.

Bro. Scott Teasdale from Vitruvian lodge became involved through his membership of the Ross Rotary Club and was able to put his skills as an IAM advanced motorcyclist to good use throughout the lockdown period. On his trusted BMW GS 1200 he clocked up many miles as part of a voluntary team who supported the local pharmacy network delivering medicines and hospital supplies to those who were shielding or could not get out.

A team of drivers took deliveries to Ross and outlying locations, with Scott covering the more rural locations and like a good freemason, covered all the points of the compass from Llangarron in the West, Linton in the East, Harewood End in the North and Bishopswood in the South, sometimes spending 5 hours in the saddle and often needing extra panniers fitted to cope with up to 35 deliveries in a day – large and small including some temperature and time sensitive.



The service is now beginning to wind down, however they have already delivered over 2,000 items since commencing in March.

Having moved to the area a couple of years ago Scott's local knowledge of the pot holed roads, mountain tracks and country lanes has improved tremendously, with and sometimes without the help of a Satnav!

Finding some addresses in our beautiful countryside was interesting and challenging at times. Sometimes a postcode covers a few square miles, the houses don't have clear name signs and there are no house numbers to make things easy. However the warm welcome and grateful thanks received made it very rewarding and a special bonus when delivering to one of our brethren.

Ross Community Development Trust

We're currently helping people across the town affected by Coronavirus. We offer a home shopping service for those who are isolated and will make daily phone calls to check on the welfare of those living alone, but need funding to run this service. Please help us to help Ross!

If you are in isolation and need practical help phone our Helpline and leave us a message. We will call you back as soon as we can.

Message line number: 01763 802046 Or email: help@rosscdt.org.uk

We will get back to you as soon as we can. You can request help with grocery delivery, daily phone welfare checks, and pet care. If you are able to, please consider donating or volunteering to support our work.

Ken's TT Success

This week we focus on the Road Racing abilities of Ken Tilley



For those of you in Vitruvian Chapter, you will know E Comp Ken Tilley the Second Provincial Grand Principal (designate) PGStB. He is a fantastic supporter of our Chapter but not many of you will know of his high speed, high adrenaline, high octane past, racing motor cycles at the highest level around Europe and at the Isle of Man TT Races.

Ken takes up the story.

From a very early age my parents used to take me to watch the TT races in the Isle of Man. My father was a great enthusiast and huge supporter throughout my career. The speed and control of the riders fascinated me. I used to watch the top riders receive their silver replica trophies and money and I thought, perhaps one day that could be me.....

It was only a matter of time before I had to have a go myself. My first bike was a 197cc Dot which I bought for £8 at the age of seventeen. I used to take it scrambling and over the next couple of years I progressed to a 500cc BSA Gold Star and was very successful.



At the age of twenty two I transitioned to road racing and bought a Greeves Silverstone on which I won the award for 'Best Newcomer into Racing'.



I followed that up by riding an Italian Aermacchi in the Isle of Man Grand Prix and continued for the next four years on an AJS7R and 500cc Manx Norton machines.

I served my apprenticeship in club racing having success in two club championships and finishing runner-up in the British Clubman's Championship.

By then I felt it was time to step up into the international arena.



In the 1970s the TT races were a World Championship round and the Senior TT was a 'Blue Ribbon' race. I competed in the British Grand Prix which was the fourth round of the 1970 Grand Prix motorcycle racing season. The overall season consisted of twelve Grand Prix races in six classes: 500cc, 350cc, 250cc, 125cc, 50cc and Sidecars 500cc. It had begun on 3 May, with the West German Grand Prix and ended with Spanish Grand Prix on 27 September.

The 1970 race stays in my mind particularly as I recall it was a very hot day and the riders were warned that tar was melting on some parts of the 37-mile course. Despite the heat, I had a very enjoyable ride and managed to win a silver replica, the 'J S Moore Trophy' coming a very respectable 13th overall in the 500cc class and not least a reasonable amount of money!



As this was part of the 1970 Grand Prix motorcycle racing season, I finished 65th overall in the 22nd F.I.M. Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix season!



Ken's TT Success

Continued



The Mountain Course on the Isle of Man

The clockwise course has a lap of 37.73 miles (60.72 km), from the start line at the TT Grandstand on Glencrutchery Road (A2 Ramsey to Douglas) in the island's main town of Douglas. After negotiating urban streets, the racing circuit turns right to leave Douglas at Quarter Bridge, then proceeds along the A1 Douglas to Peel road through the villages of Braddan, Union Mills, Glen Vine, Crosby, and Greeba. The course then turns right at Ballacraigne on to the A3 Castletown to Ramsey road, firstly through countryside glens followed by agricultural land interspersed by the villages of Kirk Michael, Ballaugh and Sulby, finally intersecting with the A18 Snaefell mountain road after negotiating urban streets in the town of Ramsey. The A18 then takes the course back to Douglas through the highest point, situated after the Bungalow at Hailwood's Height near the 31st Milestone and the UK Ordnance Survey spot height of 422 metres (1,385 ft) above sea level. The descent starts through countryside before entering the residential outskirts of Douglas back to the finish line.



Map Credit By Dan Karran - OpenStreetMap, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4794998>

Race	Position	Time	Speed	Machine
1972 Senior TT	20	2.31.14.20	89.82	Norton
1972 Junior TT	R			Norton
1971 Senior TT	R			Norton
1971 Junior TT	30	2.42.22.00	69.72	Norton
1970 Senior TT	13	2.29.08.80	91.09	Norton
1970 Junior TT	R			AJS



Ken on his Manx Norton in the 1970 Isle of Man Senior TT race

Grand Prix Success

I also competed in the 1971 and 1972 Grand Prix in the 500cc class. My average time was down in 1971 as I broke down in the pouring rain and had to push the motorcycle 6 miles to the finish, still coming in 30th overall with an average speed of 69.72 MPH. (*Editor - How fast must he have pushed!*)

Another year I was in 8th or 9th place mid race in the rain with the mist coming down over the mountains. A piston ceased as I was taking a left hand corner just after Sulby. This threw me off and I ended up with a broken shoulder. But I had to get out of the way quickly as there were 80 or so riders about to descend on me as the rest of the field appeared!

After the TT races I rode internationally at meetings in Germany, Austria and France. In the early days I was self financing but as I got more successful, the sponsors came along. In later years, I was contacted by Castrol Oil and Bill Stuart Racing. We used to travel around in an old 1500cwt van which we had kitted out to take the bikes and with a pop up roof to sleep in.

Motorcycling has been a lifelong passion of mine having worked in the motor trade most of my life and I am still a member of the Cotswold Section of the Vintage Motorcycle Club. But my passion and heart remains in competing and racing motorcycles.



Ken on his 1933 Norton Model ES2

Goff Goes 'Off Road' Again

To paraphrase the Craft ritual "We left off at that part of . . ." my 'off road' motorcycling history which mentioned taking part in pre'65 Trials and achieving a few successes over that period.



The Bultaco Sherpa - first time out after its refurb.

Godfrey (Goff) Hannam writes:

It was in the spring of the year 2000 when I, in company with my older Brother, went for a ride out on our (road going) motorcycles to explore where the venue of the renowned 'Red Marley Hill Climb' was to be held after a period of almost 30 years since it was last organised. It was on the way back home that we spotted directional signs to a Pre '65 Trial and decided to go and have a look.

(NB Motorcycle Hill climbing started at Red Marley in the early twenties. The track consisted of a straight 440 yard climb with a 1 in 10 gradient steepening to 1 in 5 approaching the famous jump near the top (known as the pimple) where the machines, travelling at speed got completely airborne! Apart from the war years this event was staged until 1971. The competitors raced up the hill two at a time, in heats, and thence semi-finals and a final to produce the winner).

So that was it, watching that event that day took me back to the 1970's events I started riding in as a young man. I was hooked! Within a month or two I had purchased a 1961 Triumph Tiger Cub (200cc) Trials machine and started competing again.

I initially entered the pre '65 events being run by Motorcycle clubs mainly in Gloucestershire: - by the Cheltenham Home Guard MCC; the Golden Valley MCC, Golden Valley Classic MCC and the Vintage Motorcycle Club (Cotswold Section).

As my results began to improve over the first couple of years but then plateaued, I concluded that I needed a more powerful machine. The limitations of a 200 cc machine were such that when the ground conditions and terrain being traversed demanded the use of a higher gear the 'Cub' was not really powerful enough to utilise them and very quickly 'ran out of steam'!

I was on the look out for a 250cc or 350cc (unit construction) BSA, but the 500cc HT Ariel (mentioned in my first article) came up for sale in Cheltenham and after viewing and trying it out, I just had to buy it! Once I got used to the riding characteristics of the Ariel, compared to those of the Cub, my results began to steadily improve once again. Around this period, I began entering 'National' competitions being held under the auspices of the Motorcycle sport's Governing Body - The Auto-Cycle Union (ACU).



Bottom and top Left Suzuki RL250 at the Wye Valley AC Trial
Top right 1956 Ariel HT 500 in its final guise before being sold
Middle Triumph Tiger Cub after refurb

They ran a Championship series called the "Sammy Miller British Bike Championship" with events commencing in February and finishing up in November each year. These events were run by several Clubs - throughout the country from Devon, Hampshire, South and Mid-Wales, the Midlands and up into Cumbria and Yorkshire.

Goff Goes 'Off Road' Again

Continued.....



The series had various capacity class Championships and points were awarded according to your finishing position. The Champion in each class being the individual with the most points overall. As a rule of thumb, to achieve a better chance of success, the more rounds you took part in the better your point scoring chances were. I entered the more local events for a year or two, but for the 2012 season I was

determined to enter all 8 rounds being organised that year.

As I was riding very regularly around that time, somewhere or other most weekends, I was pretty much at the top of my game, as I was in my opinion, a good Clubman rider rather than any sort of well known "Star".



Bear of Rodborough (Cotswold Cups) Trophy

Thus it transpired during the 2012 of this series I managed to win one round (in my class) outright beating a former Works rider and Western Centre "Star" in the process who, due to the amalgamation of 3 classes into 1 for that year, was riding a 250cc BSA!

In the other rounds that year I regularly placed high up. Thus because of the points scoring system (points awarded from 1st to 15th place in each class) and the fact that I competed and finished in all rounds, I was delighted to have managed to win the Championship for my class (Pre Unit). I was even more delighted to be awarded the overall award for the "Best British Performance" and subsequently attended the ACU Awards Ceremony & Dinner and Dance, (for all disciplines of motorcycle sport) held in a Northampton hotel in early 2013 where my two awards were presented to me by Sammy Miller, MBE, himself - who won more than 1,300 motorcycle trials during his career and was British trials champion 11 times.



ACU Awards Ceremony 2012

I also entered the Scottish 2 Day pre'65 Trial, held in Kinlochleven near Fort William in 2004 and 2006. I managed to finish both times and was awarded a Finishers award both times and I really cherish them! In 2004 I lost 117 marks on observation and finished 119th out of 180 entrants (there were 28 non finishers that year). In 2006 I lost 95 marks on observation and finished in 105th place again out of 180 entrants (21 did not finish). This event is so popular that apart from established "Stars" and past winners the remainder of the permitted number of entrants are chosen by ballot i.e. "names out of the hat". This event has been running since 1984 and is always oversubscribed such is its popularity. There is always a sprinkling of International entrants every year, but most of the entrants are from GB. It is the precursor to the Internationally renowned Scottish Six Day Trial which has been held during the first week of May since 1909 except for during the two World Wars and in 2001 due to Foot and Mouth Disease and 2020 for the Covid Pandemic. This event is also oversubscribed (550+) and the Ballot system is used to determine the 275 successful entrants.



A selection of Trophies including the Bear of Rodborough (Cotswold Cups) Trophy

I continued to compete on the Ariel for a couple more years after my 2012 success. That is until my increasing age, decreasing stamina and fitness (I was diagnosed with Asthma in 1990) dictated that now (into my 60's) I really should retire from this competitive and physically demanding sport. Thus, I am back to how it all started when I was 15 years old – Observing at local Trials events and continuing to put something back into the sport I thoroughly enjoyed being involved and competing in!

As with my Masonry, my involvement in Motorcycle Observed Trials and in Motorcycling generally, has enabled me to make long lasting and firm friendships with 'like-minded' people – enthusiasts all!

Crash Bang Wallop - What A Picture!

Andrew Moore talks about Speedway Photography in the early noughties when photography was just turning from film to digital.



A perfect marriage of interests.

My wife has had a lifelong interest in speedway having been taken to stadiums in the North of England as a child by her parents. I have had a lifelong passion for photography having been introduced to the hobby by my father as a child.

We got married and combined our interests so while 'she' watched speedway, 'I' took pictures. This quickly developed to running the websites for a few of the local riders at Newport. (Luckily 'she' is the intelligent and technical one). Over time I was granted pit access as a guest of the riders and to stand in the central green to take pictures pretty much in the middle of the action. Sometimes far too much in the 'middle of the action' as a riderless bike came cartwheeling towards me.

Lesson No 1 - learn to use a camera with your left eye so you can use the peripheral vision in your right eye to watch out for 'loose' bikes.

Speedway bikes have no brakes, just one gear, a clutch and 500cc engines which run on methanol fuel and can accelerate to 60 mph faster than a Formula 1 car!

They race around oval circuits of around 300 metres in length in an anti-clockwise direction. To get around the tight corners at high speed the riders actually have to accelerate to bring the rear wheel out and initiate a "skid"!

Speedway meetings can be run as individual events although what you will usually see week in and week out, at most tracks around the country, are 2 teams racing against each other.

The 2 teams have 7 riders each and they race over 15 heats with 2 riders from each team in every heat. If a rider wins a race he will earn his team 3 points, if he comes second he will earn them 2 points, 3rd and they will only earn 1 point and if he comes last the they won't get anything!



Craig Watson and Frank Smart always rode well as a pair.

Riders are paid their money by the number of points they get in each race. If two team mates finish in adjacent scoring positions, they get "paid" for an extra point. This is to encourage team racing but mainly to stop the second rider trying to get past his team mate so that he gets paid more money.

So if team mates finish 1st and 2nd then the second placed rider earns 2 points for his team but is paid for 3 points. If team mates finish 2nd and 3rd then the second placed ride earns 1 point for his team but is paid for 2 points. If team mates finish in 1st and 3rd then the rider finishing in third earns 1 point for his team and is paid for 1 point. Riders are not paid anything if they come 4th. So riders will rider as a pair if they are out in front to prevent the opposition coming between them. This requires a great deal of spacial awareness and communication between team mates while riding a 500cc bike with no brakes around corners.



0-60 faster than a Formula One car

Crash Bang Wallop - What A Picture!

Continued

Lesson No 2 - Speedway happens mainly in the summer and on some occasions the sun is out and it is dry. It's a dusty sport so not the place to go changing lenses unless you want to spend hours removing dust particles from your camera's sensor or the final images.



Dust - every photographers nightmare

I started my photography using a film camera and scanned in the negatives once processed with a dedicated negative scanner. This quickly progressed to a digital camera, in fact a Nikon D1x. One of the first 'Professional' digital cameras with a 5mp sensor. Currently my camera has a sensor nearly 10 times that!



Jason Crump checks out the opposition at Swindon Speedway

Daylight shots were fine, but floodlit events had a bewildering array of different light sources, which meant processing the images could be tricky to say the least. Brown shale soon turned to purple under floodlights and the grain of using a high ISO setting was unavoidable. In fact it has been interesting processing some of the images from 2003/4 for this article in the modern version of Adobe Lightroom to see how much things have improved in terms of post processing capability.



The Craftsmen Newsletter



Lesson No 3 - Don't switch off! Panning the camera following the riders as they sped around the track to try and capture that 'decisive moment'. Slowing the shutter speed to get that magical background blur to show the rider's speed while getting them pin sharp were all an interesting mix of skills, while still keeping an eye out for riderless bikes.



Craig Watson gets a little too much traction at Swindon

Most of the riders of that era were a friendly bunch and we got to know a few of them quite well. I even drove to Essex to shoot a set of calendar images for one rider. That's a story for another day!



Neils Kristian Iversen And Tony Atkin congratulate each other

In many ways I miss those days and the excitement of getting that 'decisive moment'. Oh, and the fish and chip supper at Rye House Speedway alongside the River Lea of Adele fame (although she didn't mention the midges in the car park by the river!).



Neils Kristian Iversen Takes a tumble at Rye House