

“BARRY”

BARRY An Appreciation by Cliff Lewis

I suppose we all felt that a parting was near. Nevertheless, writing these words has come as an unexpected and difficult task. What a world of motor-cycle racing memories Barry's name will always bring!

There may be those who make such remarks as “a rough diamond”. To all of them the only reply is “a diamond of the first water beneath the surface, and a true gentleman”. It was his wish that we should not mourn his passing and, in that spirit, this endeavour is to mark the man, as I believe would have been his wish.

Edwin Charles Ellis Baragwanath would never say much of his early life. We first met on Brockley Rise, soon after the first war, where motorcyclists were wont to gather at week-ends for social meetings. His big twin Matchless and Bat J.A.P. twins were generally admired as his prowess was already well known.

He had great experience as a ships engineer, not to mention railway locomotives and aeroplane engines. He was without question a first rate fitter and tuner. He had long association with the Prestwichs, and J.A.P. engines. As long as I can remember, he had lived with his two sisters in Kentish Town. An outstanding memory there is of his hobby of making wine. The resulting concoctions seemed pretty horrible to one who was no connoisseur, but I understand that they had great merit—and potency!

He rode at hundreds of sprints and hill-climbs, and at Brooklands for as long back as memory will take me. His later years were all at the track, where he rode Brough Superiors from soon after the S.S. 100 was announced in 1924. Although he did make appearances with solos, it was with sidecars that he was outstanding. The S.S. 100 was magnificent but, of course, it was a 100 m.p.h. solo design. Barry was determined it should be a 100 m.p.h. sidecar machine and finally fitted “a blower”. Thus modified, he won one of the first sidecar Gold Stars (for lap of Brooklands in excess of 100 m.p.h., during a race). A little memory here of his simple but realistic tuning is that he found with a 55 degree twin, the blower would build up a bigger delivery for one cylinder than the other. He surmounted the difficulty by grinding the top off one inlet cam on a hand-wheel, until the desired balance was obtained. He then had a cam properly made to the contour found suitable.

There were thrills to be had riding at Brooklands, but I think my greatest thrill was to be in the “Motor Cycle” box at the Fork, and to have old Barry, with the imperturbable Arthur Arber as his passenger, pass right beneath one's chin at something round the 110 m.p.h. mark. It was in such a split second as is hard to imagine. His course would be dead true, but the whole outfit appeared to weave and bend in a way that seemed to invite disintegration. His shed at Brooklands was next to mine, and we were always in and out of each other's. How many times would Barry borrow a tool or test his plugs on my tester? And how many times would I go to him, never fruitlessly, for advice or comfort. Or he would call upon his opposite neighbours, the Cambridge University boys—Spug Muir, Jock Forbes and Crasher White, to encourage them. His image, in his winged collar, is always so vivid.

One amusing story is told of the old days—we often rode our machines home from the track with the scantiest of road equipment necessary to conform to the legal requirements. One day Barry was attempting a restart at Esher when the local bobby reprimanded him on the account of excessive noise. Barry smartly replied: “Noise be! Just you wait till I can get it firing on both cylinders.”

We reformed Bemsee in 1947. Getting it going was a difficult and very big task. In all the years up to 1961 Barry's help was forthcoming on each and every occasion. That state of affairs continued right to the end; even to the 1000 Kilometres at Silverstone in May. He never missed a Committee Meeting, at the first of which after the War he was unanimously voted Chairman of the Club. Whenever the Committee decided that some extra duty was necessary from the Secretary for a forthcoming event, Barry would always come out to the office wherever it was to help in the most practical manner. On race days he would give me all the advice and help so badly needed by mere amateurs at the game, as well as scrutineering every machine thoroughly.

I don't think he ever had much money, bless his heart, because after Committee meetings he would often have to leave at once to work on night-shift at the West London factory where he worked at the time. There he was engaged on research work on gas turbines. For the project, and the boffins directing it, he had scant respect. His classic remark was of the supreme achievement when the power output

[continued on page 175]

had been so far boosted that two moths, unwittingly flying past the exhaust outlet were killed! Nevertheless, at all the meetings and visits and race meetings which we attended together, I cannot recall him asking for one penny of personal expenses.

Run of the mill reporters have doubtless rhapsodised more volubly on other racing motorcyclists of, possibly, more colour and journalistic value. I do not believe that one of the racing men so praised would dissent when I name Barry as "King of the Sport".

New Members: The following new Members have been elected recently. We welcome them to the Club and wish them a long and happy stay.

P. A. Botfield	G. B. Brader
D. F. Brindley	W. H. Day
D. E. Dowse	W. H. Day
C. T. Fisher	C. McP. Fenton
W. A. G. Hoare	R. Foster
J. A. Jennings	M. Ingarfield
J. Kimberley	G. S. Kennell
D. Mattia	R. J. Legg
S. M. Millard	W. E. Meeson
C. E. Palmer	R. L. North
I. Rendek	M. K. Palmer
E. J. Stallard	G. Smith
D. R. Walker	F. E. To
E. H. B. Whittles	J. R. White
P. S. Young	P. Wilson

form for tickets. As with our race meetings, it is first come, first served, so to avoid disappointment, please apply for your tickets as early as possible.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All last year's trophy winners are asked to return these as soon as possible for servicing and engraving ready for the Annual Dinner in November. Please be sure to pack them well and to register them—some are worth a lot of money. The address to send them to is:—

A. C. Wallace,
Gresham House,
24 Holborn Viaduct,
London, E.C.1.

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

ANNUAL DINNER, 1962

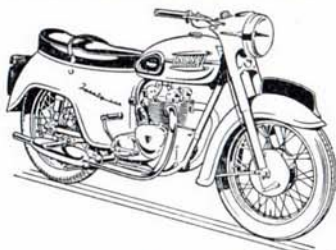
The Club's Annual Dinner, Dance and Presentation of Prizes will take place on Thursday, 16th November. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an application

Are you displaying a poster for
SNETTERTON?

If not, why not?

Contact the Office for supplies NOW!

ARTHUR WHEELER



SURREY'S LEADING
RIDER AGENT
FOR YOUR
NEW OR USED

MOTORCYCLE - SCOOTER - SIDECAR - 3-WHEELER

Main Agent for all the leading makes

TOURING • TRIALS • RACING

**SATISFACTION and an unrivalled
AFTER SALES SERVICE assured**

Part Exchanges and Hire Purchase welcomed

ARTHUR WHEELER LTD.
45, 47 & 51 WATERLOO ROAD **EPSOM** PHONE 4505/6