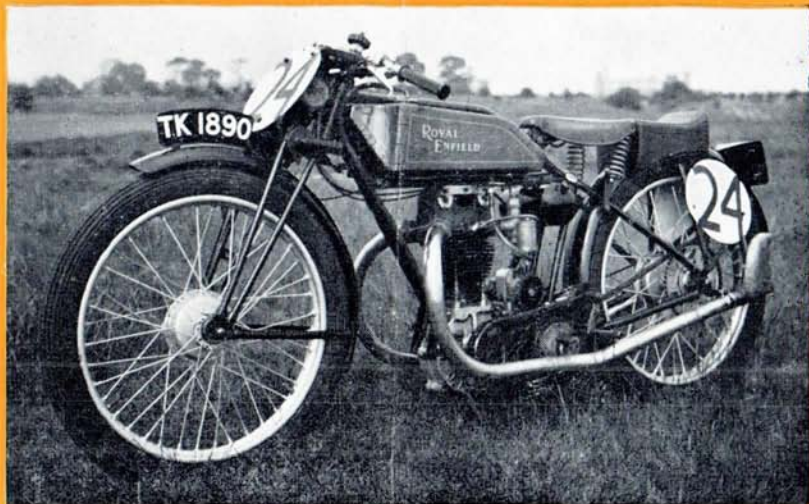




Bemsee

THE JOURNAL OF THE
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

Vol. 11. No. 1. JAN., 1958 ONE SHILLING



Gem of a bike! Royal Enfield 1927/9 T.T. specimen,
ridden by Charles Barrow.

(Photo: Harold Davies)

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Bemsee

Vol. 11. No. 1. JAN., 1958

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P. F. WRIGHT

BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

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A FRIEND IN NEED

HERE we are going into 1958 and so the first thing, editorially, is to wish a Happy and Peaceful New Year to all the members and may it be one of which Bemsee will be very proud.

At this time of each year, we trot out one very large request to our many members and friends and say, "Please do make a point of sending in an item of news, a photograph, a letter, a criticism, an article, a suggestion, a comment; in fact, anything that will help to make our monthly journal the more brighter and interesting." If each of our 1,200 or more members were to send along just *one* item then the editorial files would bulge even more than they do and the Editor would be a very happy man.

Your contributions need not be typed, but just written legibly, preferably with a one-line space between each line of text and presented on one side of each sheet of paper. Make your comment and remarks come to the point and do remember that we must all be nice to one another, otherwise we would not be in Bemsee!

The Editor would like to take this opportunity of thanking all his many contributors of the past and to say that without their efforts, there just would not be any magazine. To our photographer friends who send in such wonderful pictures of the boys in action at the Meetings, a big "Thank you!" Also like thanks to the Area Reps for their News each month. Don't forget to send it in on time, as stated below. Finally, thank you, Guy, for all your help from the Secretarial chair and from our Staff at head office.

Yes, the Editor feels that he does have many friends indeed!

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GIRLING



POCKET GENIUS

By

BILL SALMOND

EVEN the man in the street nowadays finds it necessary to understand a surprising number of scientific principles in order to live a normal life without the cost of calling in an expert or specialist. Just one humble example: being the repair of a blown fuse.

The tempo of life itself has become very largely geared up through mechanical methods of travel, communication and the various facilities that our forebears never experienced. It has become necessary to cut out time-wasting effort as much as possible to keep pace with modern economy except in the field of sport, hobbies or entertainment, where there is a different object.

One requirement that is practically unavoidable is the need to calculate one or more answers from available data, most especially for those of us who are in constant contact with some form of mechanical science or engineering, yet the number of us who try and work out an answer with a pencil and laborious effort in some form of mathematics is astonishingly and quite unnecessarily high.

Back in 1620, a certain Professor Gunter decided to mark a logarithmic scale on a convenient holder, and with the aid of a pair of dividers, was able to cut out a great number of worries, 'equals' and 'therefores' in this calculating business. His work on these lines was probably more of amusement in many ways, but formed the basis six years later of a device made by a gentleman called Wingate, that used several such scales in a more convenient form—this blessing for busy modern man is still called a slide-rule. The final touch was added in 1851 by a third gentleman called Mannheim, who added the cursor.

From such beginnings there have grown vast improvements both in the accuracy of these instruments and the diversity of the scale arrangements, not to mention the sheer beauty of precision evident in the manufacture and form that are now available.

In the case of the British firms making slide-rules today, there are several who have rightly earned a world-wide reputation; British workmanship being quietly delighted by the challenge of the difficulty of manufacture, and the positive way in which the product itself speaks of their supreme skill and craftsmanship.

For my needs, which are admittedly not of the more complex character of the Geologist, Architect or Constructional Engineer, to mention but a few, I have found that the "B.R.L." and "Unique" models show a surprisingly high degree of accuracy coupled with straightforward handling requirements. I mention these rules in alphabetical order: they are made by Blundell Rules Ltd., Lynch Lane, Weymouth, Dorset (BRL), and Unique Slide Rule Co. (of Brighton) Ltd., Telscombe Cliffs, Sussex.

Taking the "Unique" rules first, thanks to their method of printing the scales on paper, glueing to wood, and finally covering with clear plastic, they have achieved an economy in manufacture that is unrivalled. Amongst the twenty-eight rules in their catalogue, one can find five-inch pocket rules costing less than seven shillings—a quite remarkable price. They have also produced a twenty-inch rule, as far as fineness of scales goes, on a ten-inch stock, this means draughting office accuracy, yet fitting the briefcase. This has been achieved by 'folding' the scales, or printing half the scale underneath its own first half, resulting in twenty-inch accuracy in a ten-inch rule. They also have a ten-inch set of scales on a pocket five-inch rule. Perhaps their finest achievement is their 10in. Dualistic Rule De Luxe which not only incorporates the 10in./20in. scales, but also their high-speed scales, so arranged that much time is saved in calculating. Additional scales are also carried for long-range log-log working as well as inch and centimetre normal rules. Truly a remarkable slide-rule, when you consider that a short course booklet on slide-rule use, as well as a further booklet on this particular rule is supplied with the rule in a stout case, all for 23/-.

The beginner frequently chooses an "Unique" rule purely from an economy motive and never has need to use any other brand. He is well advised, however, to study the various types available before deciding which rule to buy, bearing in mind that it is generally better to select the rule that only carries the scales he is going to require, not only because it will be cheaper, but also less liable to confusion in use. At a later stage, he can then acquire a more complex rule that is tailor-made for his possibly specialist

needs—one of the advantages of the modern rules.

The "B.R.L." range of slide-rules are one of the most perfect man-made products that you could find in the world. They are made of rigid P.V.C., a solid white plastic, that is virtually unaffected by humidity, is dimensionally stable and of such a fine texture that the engraving of the scales can be carried out to incredibly accurate degrees of fineness. The pure white base seems to emphasise the clarity of the engraving, and the depth of each engraved mark on the rules ensures virtually permanent durability. Incorporated in the design of the more expensive "B.R.L." rules is a patent tensioning device that, once set to your personal preference, makes the instrument really pleasing to use in the way that any sensitive and highly-tuned device is to appreciative hands.

"B.R.L." also supply a slide-rule instruction booklet with each rule, which enables the owner to use the instrument right away if he knows the decimal system. They manufacture over twenty different types of rule, from the superb little five-inch pocket rule in its leather case and of several types up to the truly magnificent twenty-inch technicians' rule. The most popular size rule is invariably the ten-inch model, and these are supplied in bookcloth-covered cardboard cases giving ample protection and a more-than-normal quality appearance.

I was intrigued to find, when comparing the accuracy of results using four-figure log tables, "Unique" 10" rule, 10"-20" rule, "B.R.L." 10" rule and "B.R.L." 5" rule that, despite the latter of necessity carrying fewer scale divisions in the overall length, the degree of accuracy was only bettered by the 20" scale. On investigation I found that this was due to the extreme fineness of the cursor line used for the 5" model, which gave accuracy to a further decimal point than one normally expects. Just about the only criticism of the 10" rules of both makes is that the cursor line is not fine enough to interpolate between the divisions as easily as one would wish—an easily cured matter.

For users whose eyes are less efficient, and for those who want the utmost degree of accuracy both in setting the scales and reading the results, the Blundell Rules people have designed two types of magnifying device that can be fitted to the cursor. They can even supply rule cases, if ordered with the

rule, that permit the magnifier to be left in place when returned to the case.

It is not easy to cover the advantages of owning a slide-rule, on a sweepingly broad basis. They are, however, broadly speaking, that the user is enabled to make a variety of calculations more easily, more quickly and usually to a degree of accuracy that is more than enough to cover that given in the first place by the data at his disposal. To my mind, can be added the advantage of seeing each step of every calculation before your eyes, and in a way that it is so easily verified at any stage by the simple procedure of reversing the 'moves' back to the basic figures set. The sort of practical application that can be appreciated is, for instance, that on one setting of the rule, it can be instantly seen which rider in a T.T. or M.P.G. race is within Silver or Bronze Replica time, as soon as the leader's time is known and that of the other rider in question.

Putting things in an even more elementary way, few people find much difficulty in adding or subtracting; brows begin to furrow when fractions, multiplications, divisions, percentages, powers, and roots, etc., etc., crop up. The slide-rule simplifies things, in that multiplication is achieved by adding, and division is achieved by subtracting, on the more usual scales. Frightful-looking equations involving vector analysis and computations involving inverse differential scaling of trigonometrical ratios, to mention but two reasons why aspirin are selling so well, can be quite easily worked out if you have to, by choosing the type of slide-rule that carries suitable scales. To the user of more normal rules, these specialist versions look rather like a still photograph of the nightmare of a mad mathematical scientist—hence the advice to select the type of rule that carries scales you will really use, unless you want to impress someone.

One of the major advantages of the slide-rule is that the user can practice or check his method of working by using simple numbers like 2 and 3 until he is quite familiar with the routine. The more experienced user, if he has not had to use the rule for some time, will often check his setting routines in this way as well, so no beginner need worry that he must keep in constant practice. It is noticeable, however, that the owner of a good rule acquires the habit of using it in many ways, partly as a sheer time

saver, and partly for the pleasure that is found in using a good slide-rule.

The only really valid argument against the slide-rule is, in fact, that in really high-precision calculations, where data figures are known to four or five decimal places, the slide-rule is not accurate to enough decimal places in normal handling. The answer to this apparent truth is that any number can be sub-divided into two or more smaller numbers. If the calculations are worked out via this greater quantity of smaller numbers, with, possibly, a straightforward need for mental addition to arrive at the overall answer, the slide-rule can still serve where it is most needed. An example to illustrate this point being:—

$$16875 \quad 14260 + 2615 \quad 14260 \quad 2615 \\ = \frac{\quad}{14.26} = \frac{\quad}{14.26} + \frac{\quad}{14.26} = \frac{\quad}{14.26}$$

1000 + 183.5. The first factor in the third statement easily being decided mentally to amount to 1000; the second factor remaining within the accurate scope of the slide-rule. Other and larger numbers can be sub-divided into manageable proportions that can be further reduced mentally until the slide-rule is employed for the tricky fractional portions.

Standard calculations such as working out a lap speed from the known time taken and the distance of the full lap, is as straightforward as telling the time from a clock face—you only have to read it off after the setting is made.

For those who want to learn more about the method of operations in complete detail, the excellent book by Burns Snodgrass in the "Teach Yourself Books" 6/- series entitled "The Slide Rule" is well worth study. It has an easy-to-understand style and does not blind the beginner with higher mathematics. The technical sections in various public libraries will most likely carry this and other books on the subject.

In conclusion, the beginner is advised to start with the Standard or Student's rule unless he is likely to require a more advanced type in his work at an early opportunity, when colleagues will be able to advise him. Even the more complex Technicians' or Electrical rules, etc., carry the normal straight scales for normal calculations. Reasonable care should be taken of a slide-rule, as with any other precision instrument, but

(Continued on page 13)

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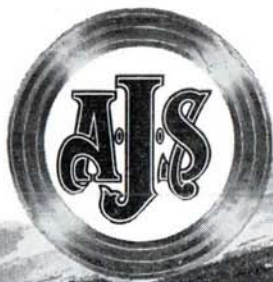
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THEORY AND PRACTICE

By

ERWIN TRAGATSCH

I NEVER learn much from successes, but always a lot from failures! At least I try to learn and to avoid in the future, mistakes which I had made in the past, but I also learn from other people's unsuccessful experiences and when I am not in favour of hot two-strokes, then this is entirely based on facts. This means of course, not that I agree fully with a device called a vaive, which is a poor hot piece of iron that depends upon something to knock it down and a spring to pull it up. This is surely not a good thing from an engineering point of view, but . . . what's better?

Sleeve valves? We had them in the Barr & Stroud engines thirty years ago and later in successful aeroplane engines, and of course in cars too (Minerva, Knight, Imperia). They are quite O.K. for use in normal vehicles, but they didn't prove suitable for higher speeds, and they need very careful production, which is more expensive than the manufacture of engines with poppet valves. The Bristol engine in the aeroplane was an excellent sleeve valve design but nobody could produce such an engine at an acceptable price for a motor-cycle. Theoretically a sleeve valve engine should be able to outclass a poppet valve engine as it is running smoother, quieter and in fact, it seems to be simpler; but only when we try to produce them do we find the real snags, which exclude it from use and further development in motor-cycles and cars.

Why are sleeve valve engines not suitable for higher speeds? They have an inferior power-output compared with poppet valve engines because of the need for restricting the reciprocating motion of the sleeves to a small amount and therefore limiting the port openings. Some of the chief difficulties met with in the manufacture of this class of engine occur in the making of the sleeves, which must be designed to avoid fracture or distortion under working conditions. The question of adequate lubrication of the sleeves, and, on the other hand, the prevention of gumming and high oil-consumption are other important points.

A much better proposition (and this time I agree to a certain extent with friend A. E. Rose's article "Rotary Club" in the November issue of

"Bemsee") are rotary valves. It's quite a long time since I first came across them on fast-running engines . . . racing two-strokes! I do know that many two-stroke experts like Ing. Marcellino at Puchs, Ing. Weber at D.K.W.'s, and other designers like Zoller, Cvach, Schroeter, Ruppe, Violet, Schlupeyman, etc., worked on them many years ago. In England, Booth, Sidwell and Smyth patented one far back in 1927 and probably the best known in that period was the supercharged two-stroke engine with rotary exhaust valves, designed by Cuddon-Fletcher.

It's interesting to note that, not counting superchargers, the first time I came across hot racing two-strokes was on racing cars. In America, Miller and Duesenberg had already then a lot of experience with two-stroke racing cars, but I gained mine at home in Czechoslovakia, where the "Z" factory at Brno started producing real racing cars with 2, 4, 6 and eventually 8 cylinder two-stroke engines, which had rotary valves. This is the arms factory where the "Bren" guns had been invented, but which had nothing to do with the "C.Z." motor-cycle factory. In fact, the design of these unconventional racing engines was not a by a designer in the car factory, but by a Professor at the Technical High School at Brno.

What I remember about these engines is that the valves were never really gas-tight, but I haven't an idea how much the losses were. There were also lubrication problems and matters also became complicated when the engines warmed up and the vaives "asked" for more room! The reliability of these engines was never of a high degree and more than once they became slower from lap to lap compared with the pre-war E.R.A. models 'A' and 'B', driven by the late Dick Seaman, "Bira" and by Charles Martin, against whom they competed, the 1,500 c.c. "Z" eight-cylinder two-stroke cars with rotary valves, proved very slow.

Since then, we have gained much knowledge about this matter; we had improved materials as well as a lot of "know-how" and theoretically there shouldn't be a poppet valve-engined motor-cycle or car in existence . . . except in the Vintage Clubs! I will not

concentrate now on two-strokes exclusively, but have a look at the four-strokes as well, and in the Isle of Man lives a gentleman named Les Martin who in practice for the 1935 Lightweight and Senior T.T. races, roared round the Island on a 250 c.c. Cotton and 500 c.c. Rudge, which in fact, were "smoking" machines with Cross rotary valves! Unfortunately a practice crash (not his last one!) on the "Cotton-Cross", prevented him from showing the capabilities of this interesting design and since then no rotary valve-engine has competed in a race in the Isle of Man.

The principal feature of a rotary valve is of course that it enables very high compression ratios to be used even with commercial (low octane) grades of fuel, and at the same time greatly increases engine speeds owing to the better filling at high revs. Cross already had before the war, 17.5 b.h.p. at 6,000 r.p.m. and a compression ratio of 11 to 1, from a 247 c.c. engine, while Aspin, who used a rotary combustion chamber, which at the same time acted as a valve, had 33 b.h.p. at 11,000 r.p.m. from his 249 c.c. engine. It was said that both engines were very economical and reliable and despite all these advantages, our good old poppet valve engine is still very much alive and with us! Both Cross and Aspin have spent much knowledge, much work and much money on rotary valve engines and also gained technical successes, but there is still much development work needed and, above all, a man who can find a way to produce such an engine at an acceptable price and always at the very important quality standards, in quantities.

Now, back to two-strokes with rotary valves, and this reminds me of an interesting development by the Austrian Puch factory in around 1929, when they appeared in practice for the Austrian T.T. with a rotary valve two-stroke design, to be ridden by Elvetio Toricelli, the Swiss rider who now lives in Canada. I remember they had a lot of trouble with it and eventually the design was withdrawn and never appeared in an event! The main reason was bad material, unsuitable material and partly, cooling and lubrication troubles. The engine became too hot, lost power and eventually "something" broke. That was long ago when we had not enough experience and, as I said before, especially at the old D.K.W. works at Zschopau they produced quite a good lot of experimental two-strokes with rotary valves.

The most up-to-date design was by Dir. Reitz of the German Triumph factory and it is really a great pity that this once-famous firm ceased motor-cycle production a few months ago.

A. E. Rose will probably be interested to hear that also in England certain two-stroke experts (I don't say they were Englishmen!), played with rotary valves during certain periods and there were times when this matter was also considered by other firms including Velocette, Levis, Dunell, Humber and even Villiers. Both Velocette and Levis eventually used different kinds of pumps for forcing the induction, Dunells became famous with the "piston with two different bores", while Humber, as well as Peugeot in France, used a flat sleeve between crankcase and cylinder.

Talking about sleeves reminds me of the German "Schliha" machine; a two-stroke single of 250 c.c., 350 c.c. and 500 c.c. capacities, produced in the late twenties. It wasn't a racing machine, but in some circles this design was regarded as sound, reliable and economical. When in 1928 the Jawa works thought of entering the motor-cycle trade, they thought of building this or the German Wanderer 500 c.c. o.h.v. single, under licence. So one day a 500 c.c. Schliha arrived in Prague and was tested by some experts . . . but not one was impressed! The engine, a sleeve-valved two-stroke, was complicated, inefficient, unreliable, very uneconomical and, in short, a real failure. The first Jawa was a 500 c.c. o.h.v. Wanderer "Single" of unit design with a pressed-steel frame, built under licence! The first Jawa two-stroke appeared in 1932 with a Villiers 175 c.c. engine.

Cuddon-Fletcher used a supercharger for his two-stroke engine of 1,100 c.c. (four cylinders) and a rotary exhaust valve. In this engine the mixture entered through a series of ports cut around the base of each cylinder. The rotary valve was used to release the exhaust gases, and was built up from three steel tubes, one within the other, which fitted into a cylindrical housing above the cylinders. The tubes were slotted so that a springy action was obtained which formed a gas-seal. A water-jacketed sleeve within this valve was provided with ports which corresponded with those in the cylinder head. When similar ports in the split tube coincided with these, the exhaust gases escaped into the water-cooled manifold. There were good ideas in this design, but that was theory!

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BILL JARMAN'S COLUMN

ALL you wish yourselves for 1958 and good racing in fine weather for the coming season. We are forty-nine years old this year, so 1958 may be regarded as the training year before our Jubilee. In other words, start preparing for the B.M.C.R.C. events of 1959 in 1958. No time to spare!

Make a New Year resolution. Come to the A.G.M. Never overlook the fact that you are a shareholder, as well as a member of a grand outfit with a first-class record of achievements.

My correspondence over 250 c.c. twins and 500 c.c. fours, etc., continues. One kind soul gave me some figures regarding registrations of new machines during the first nine months of 1957. The under 250 class clocked 153,947 machines whilst the over 250 category only accounted for a mere 22,968. I expect that most of the smaller ones were single-cylinder jobs. Anyway, I'm still unrepentant over the 125/250/500 sequence for production or racing. Similar remarks apply to the 250 single and 500 twin.

Another bright lad wrote to me last month saying, "The next best thing to being a successful racing motor-cyclist is to be an unsuccessful racing motor-cyclist." Agreed, but it is an expensive hobby if one merely does it for fun. It can be freely admitted that one gets mixed up with the salt of the earth in the process but one also requires the meat and vegetables to go with the condiments. (*I thought you were a vegetarian!!—Ed.*)

Members in the London area are due for a special treat at their monthly social. Reg Geeson has promised to bring along an engine and tell of his trials and tribulations. As this unit is the only one of its kind in the country, the evening of January 14th, 1958, should be something to remember. I'm told by "Tot" that Ken Brett has done something similar for the Cheshire area.

Did you read Bill Salmond's ghostly racing story of the I.O.M. in last month's issue? It certainly made some of us think as well as chuckle. Maybe some of you fellows could contribute a fairy story for your own magazine. Have a go sometime just to help the handful of enthusiasts who make it possible,

especially Editor Peter Wright who is often short of copy.

I have just been firmly and politely advised by a trade member that I need not worry so much about British 250's. I am also told that there will be a lot of surprises ready for the 1958 Earls Court Show. This is encouraging, but why have we had to wait so long? Let's hope there are one or two production racers in this quarter-litre class, together with some 125's. These two capacities are of paramount importance today and it will be great to see our members putting up a good show on bikes made at home.

Congratulations to "Bob Mac" who recently went to Italy and cracked a lot of records with the 350 "Gilly Four". The best in the bunch was a hundred and forty-one in the hour. Now who wants to argue about the 350 which is just about as good as the 500 (or more). Yes, my masters, I can see the 250 becoming the Senior class before we are much older and the 350 looks like becoming the sidecar size.

Get out your nice new diary and put our 1958 racing dates in pencil. April 19th, July 5th, August 4th and September 13th. There may also be a couple of dates for sprints or hill-climbs, but these are not yet fixed. Watch out for the date of the Sunbeam Sprint. This kind of motor-cycle sport is coming back to favour. Furthermore, it doesn't cost the earth!

Several of us have been fortunate enough to see the latest Shell film of the 1957 Jubilee T.T. Yes, it's a good one and we hope to have it in London on February 18th. For further details, see the notes under Area News—Metropolitan Area. These films may come under the heading of publicity but what a nice way of doing it.

Before concluding, may I thank the many members who have written to me during 1957. Some of them sent snapshots and those which are very good will go to the Editor. A few of the letters were obviously penned by men with "axes to grind", whilst others wrote for the sheer joy of it. To one and all, many sincere thanks. Please continue the letters and cards. They will be answered even if they are critical of the ideas which come along to help with these paragraphs.

AREA NEWS

METROPOLITAN AREA

W. G. Jarman,

153, Reigate Avenue,
Sutton, Surrey.

HERE are the dates for your 1958 diary: January 14th: R. E. Geeson and his engines; February 18th: Racing Films Show; March 11th: Diabolical Debate.

All at the "Prince of Wales Tavern," Drury Lane, W.C., 7 for 7.30 p.m. One member, one guest.

M.P. Motor Club Socials, Chigwell, Essex, are held on the third Saturday in each month. M.P. Motor Club Socials, Hayes, Kent, are on January 25th, February 22nd and March 29th. Wear your badge or carry your card on all the above occasions. As far as possible, we run our socials "au pair" with the Bow Garage Club and the M.P.M.C., who have done so much to help the club at Silverstone and the Crystal Palace.

NOTTS AND LEICESTER

W. B. Martin,

"Ivy Cottage," 55, Kneeton Road,
East Bridgford, Notts.

OUR December Meeting turned out to be quite a lively gathering, and although lacking in numbers, we were not it seemed lacking in repartee.

The promised Film Show has at last been arranged, January 13th, 1958, around 7.30 p.m. at our usual place, the "Dolphin Inn," North Church Street, Nottingham (near Victoria Station). Our Secretary, Guy Tremlett, has provisionally arranged to visit us and we do hope to see him at the show.

At this meeting we would extend a particular welcome to our Derby and Leicester members, when it may be possible to discuss further meetings at the convenience of all. At the Film Show your ladies and/or friends will be most welcome.

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing our members the very best of luck in the New Year.

OUR COVER PICTURE

TO bring in the New Year, we have devoted the cover picture this month to a fine specimen of a vintage T.T. machine, a 1927/29 period Royal Enfield; the present owner being Derek Rumble of Liverpool who kindly sent us the photo.

This bike has two differing capacity engines that can be fitted, either a 250 c.c. or a 350 c.c. Jap, and in its 350 c.c. guise it won the 1953 Vintage Race at Silverstone. In its neyday, its rider was Charles Barrow, a pre-war member of the Club and he rode it at many meetings all over the country. His T.T. placings show him well up the lists, seventh in the 1927 Lightweight and Junior, second in the 1928 Lightweight and fourteenth in that year's Junior, but with an 'R' against him for the 1929 Lightweight.

If any of our readers have similar photos which they would like to send in to the Editor, then we should be most pleased to see them and get them into the magazine when and where possible. Please always try and give the photo-credit name in each case.

NEWS FROM THE R.A.C.

WE have been notified by the Manager, Associate Section, of the R.A.C., that as from January 1st, 1958, the joining fee for Motor-cyclists enrolling as Associate Members of the R.A.C., will be 10/-, and that this will cover, as hitherto, the issue of a motor-cycle badge and telephone box key.

The agreement of association is, therefore, amended as to item 4(e) by the substitution of 10/- for 5/- in the case of the owner or user of a motor-cycle or three-wheeled vehicle.

Existing Motor-cycle members, having already paid the appropriate joining fee of 5/-, will not be required to pay a 5/- balance of joining fee upon transferring to the Car Section.

Notification has also been received, that the Life Associate Membership subscriptions will be raised from £25 to £42, on January 1st, 1958.

Existing Associate Members will be allowed a reduction of the new amount, of £1 1s. 0d., for every consecutive year of membership over five years, subject to a minimum subscription of £10 10s. 0d.

DOUBLE KNOCKER SAYS . . .

HERE I am once more. The absence of these jottings from the pages of "Bemsee" in recent months has been unavoidable due to pressure of work. In fact, it's so long since I last put pen to paper that I have lost count of the number of members who have married, become proud fathers, etc. Quite a lot has happened in the racing world too; things which are going to affect next year's racing more than a little.

I hope that many members read and digested Geoff Duke's article in a recent issue of "Motor Cycling." I have not read a more reasoned and sensible article in many years. It seems to me that one or two governing bodies would do well to study it. I was very interested to read his comments on "production machine" racing and very glad, too, that he mentioned a point very often forgotten, that spectators are as important a part of the racing scene as anyone else. As a matter of fact, I do not altogether agree with his condemnation of standard machine racing. I quite agree that some of the machines are not safe, but I do think that such racing might help to improve those 'bikes which are deficient. I would have thought that a couple of races in the average race programme, devoted to this type of racing, would not detract from the day's sport. There are now, in any case, a number of machines quite suitable for races of this nature. They have the added advantage of giving

more people a chance to do a little racing at a considerably reduced cost. It has just been suggested to me that such races would reduce, slightly possibly, the number of characters who turn certain suburban highways into race tracks on Sunday afternoons!

I must offer my congratulations in these jottings to Bob McIntyre on his incredible performance on the 350 Gilera at Monza, at the beginning of December. The amazing thing about this record is that it was only four years ago when we were all marvelling at the late Ray Amm's 500 "Hour" record on the Norton at Monthery. Now this wonderful effort has been surpassed by a 350, on a none-too-easy track and on road tyres. It will be very interesting to see Bob on his Potts 350 next year.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all members a very successful and happy New Year. To those who race I hope you have your best season ever (no expensive noises and that sort of unpleasantness) and to those who help us at the meetings, I hope you all enjoy them more than ever. Flag marshals, incidentally, will be glad to hear they have one new flag to wave from now on, a colourful affair of red and yellow stripes for oil warning. If you want to save postage or happen to be in the neighbourhood, the staff are always pleased to see you.

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THE EDITOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

PLEASE permit me to correct an error in the Sunbeam Sprint results, December "Bemsee".

Howard German's best time in the 650 c.c. class on my rejuvenated Douglas was 13.87 seconds and not 13.96 seconds as reported.

In the 1,000 c.c. class he improved this to 13.75 seconds. Interesting to note that that darkest of all horses, H. A. Voice, returned his best time, 13.79 seconds, in this class, too.

London, S.E.7.

Joseph Bayley.

A-C.U. NOTES

AT a recent meeting of the A-C.U. Competitions Committee, the following decision was reached regarding the 1958 Clubman's T.T. event. "Having reconsidered the proposed 1958 Programme of Races in the Isle of Man and taking into consideration the I.o.M. Tourist Board's objections to the Clubman's Races, and the Manufacturers' apparent lack of interest in the proposed Sports Machine Race, we advise that the extra race not be proceeded with in 1958." The A-C.U.'s hand-out goes on to say that the possibility of holding the races on a mainland circuit might be con-

sidered. (*Bemsee amongst others has been approached with a view to organising this race.—Ed.*)

The qualifying periods for points for International licences are unaltered for 1958. That is to say, full points in all events as per the Schedule after January 1st, 1953. 50% of points gained after January 1st, 1950, and December 31st, 1952.

The A-C.U.'s International Road Race Meeting will be held at Thruxton on August Monday, August 4th, 1958.

MUTUAL AID

Wanted: Leathers; height 6ft.; chest 40in.—R. J. Herring, No. 2 Council House, Westbury, Brackley, Northants.

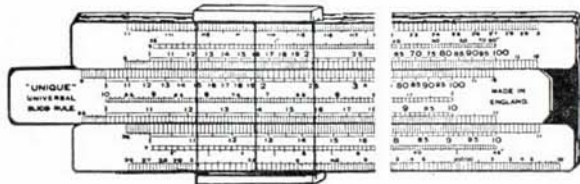
Wanted: Leathers (one-piece type); height 5ft. 9in.; chest 36/37in.—E. S. Gregory, 57 Tallis Street, Cwmparc, Rhondda, Glam.

Sale: 1953 G45 Matchless engine, recently rebuilt to 1957 specification. Complete with magneto, etc. £95.—F. W. J. Launchbury, 5 Parkhill Road, Wimbledon, S.W.19.

POCKET GENIUS (continued from page 5)

should it be necessary to use the rule with, say, oily or dirty hands, the plastic type are obviously better than the celluloid-on-wood type. The more experienced user will prefer the "Unique" Dualistic or 10"20" Precision Rules in the less expensive bracket, or may jump the intermediate stages and equip himself with

one of the fine "B.R.L." Rules, which will hold their own with the Continental "Nestler" rules or America's "Dietzen" rules or "Keuffel & Esser" instruments. There are other British rules on the market, but these examples carry my highest marks.



The "Unique" Universal Slide Rule

NEWS FROM THE R.A.C.

LIGHTING-UP TIMES FOR 1958

LIGHTING-UP times for 1958 are given in a handy pocket-sized Lighting-up Timetable and Mileage Indicator just published by the Royal Automobile Club.

Under the Road Traffic Act of 1957 lighting-up time throughout the year will again be between half-an-hour after sunset and half-an-hour before sunrise.

Many drivers only switch on their lights when visibility becomes too bad for them to see without artificial means. While this may seem a logical yardstick, any driver so doing may easily be committing a breach of the law, for vehicle lights are not only intended to see with but also to be seen. But a copy of this folder, one of the most useful aids a motorist or motor-cyclist can have, prevents this worry.

It shows lighting-up times for each day of the year for London, Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Glasgow and Belfast.

A quick reference mileage indicator gives distances between forty-one important towns all over Great Britain—places as diverse as London and Aberystwyth, Dover and Fishguard, Inverness and Plymouth.

The folder is available to R.A.C. members, free of charge, from any R.A.C. Office. Demand is always heavy for this popular annual publication and motorists are advised to make early application for a copy.

* * *

NAPOLEON STARTED IT ALL

RECENTLY the R.A.C. suggested the intriguing reason for the British custom of driving on the left hand side of the road. This led to enquiries from many sources about the reason why nearly every other country uses the "wrong" side. Here is what was discovered.

Until the end of the 18th century, it was common practice throughout Europe to drive on the left-hand side of the road because swords were worn on the left and it was logical to keep one's horse on that side of the track. Then, if attacked, the rider was immediately in the best fighting position, sword at the

ready in his right hand with his unguarded left flank automatically protected.

Up to then, also, in accordance with the battle strategy of Richard the Lionheart, most armies attacked from the left flank, giving further weight to this reason. Napoleon jettisoned this orthodox theory of war and caused confusion among his enemies by launching offensives on the right flank with his cannon. He also found that the enemy was still further confused if the French troops moved on the right-hand side of the road, opposite to the usual direction of traffic.

His theory was invincible up to Waterloo, and wherever the eagles of France advanced to conquer, Napoleon decreed that civilian traffic should travel on the right. The Emperor's power happily did not extend either to Britain or Sweden, both of whom continue their adherence to the traditional left-hand side.

During Hitler's occupation of Austria, that country which up to then also favoured the left, was similarly forced to switch to the right-hand side as the German dictator, irrespective of the traffic regulations at that time in force in Austria made his troops move according to the same principles that the Reichswehr had inherited from Napoleon.

Today, the only countries outside Britain, the Commonwealth and Sweden which retain the left side are Hungary, Japan, Thailand, Iceland and Indonesia.

* * *

FIRE!

ACCORDING to "Fire," the journal of the Fire Services, a survey which it carried out showed that many motorists and lorry drivers do not make way for fire engines. The journal appeals to them to do so. The R.A.C. believes that most members are fully aware of the importance of assisting the drivers of fire engines by giving way promptly on hearing the warning signal. In crowded city streets, however, it is not always possible for a car driver—however willing—to find room to pull his vehicle quickly out of the main traffic stream. Inability to do so may thus sometimes be confused with reluctance. The R.A.C. nevertheless appeals to motorists to do all they can to help this vital public service.

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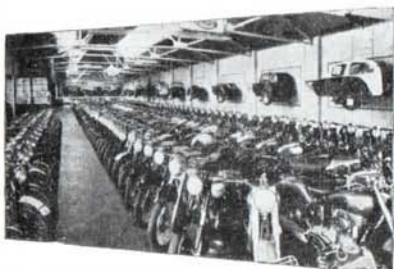
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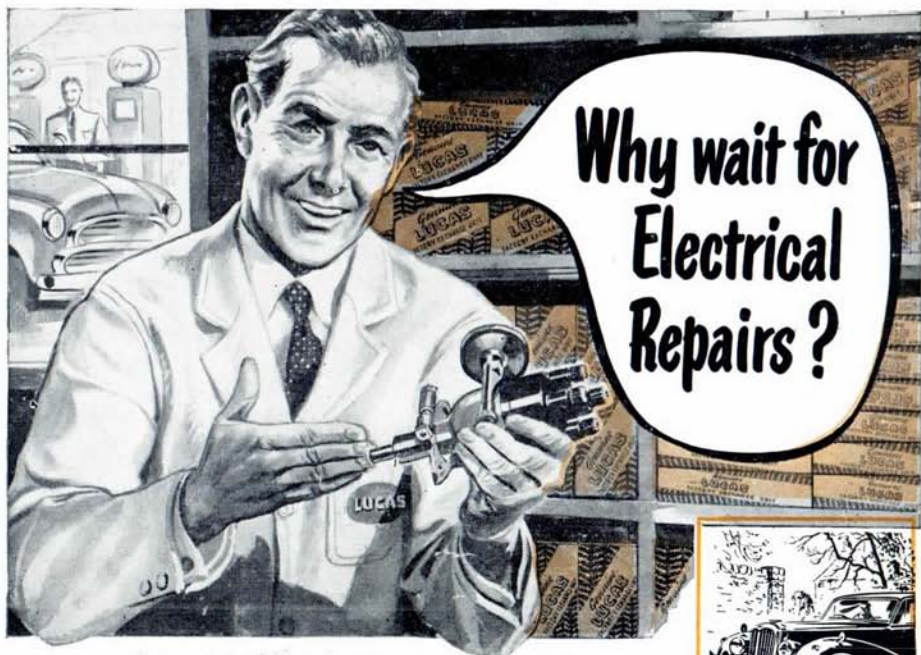
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Pay Your Subscription!

You are reminded that subscriptions are now due, in accordance with Club Rules. I would ask you to use the blue form which was enclosed with last month's magazine, when sending your remittance to the Office. This will not only assist the Staff greatly, but also ensure that your address is correctly recorded on the mailing-list. You are also reminded that no member can attend or vote at the Annual General Meeting unless their subscription has been paid. Thank you for your co-operation.

W. G. TREMLETT,

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