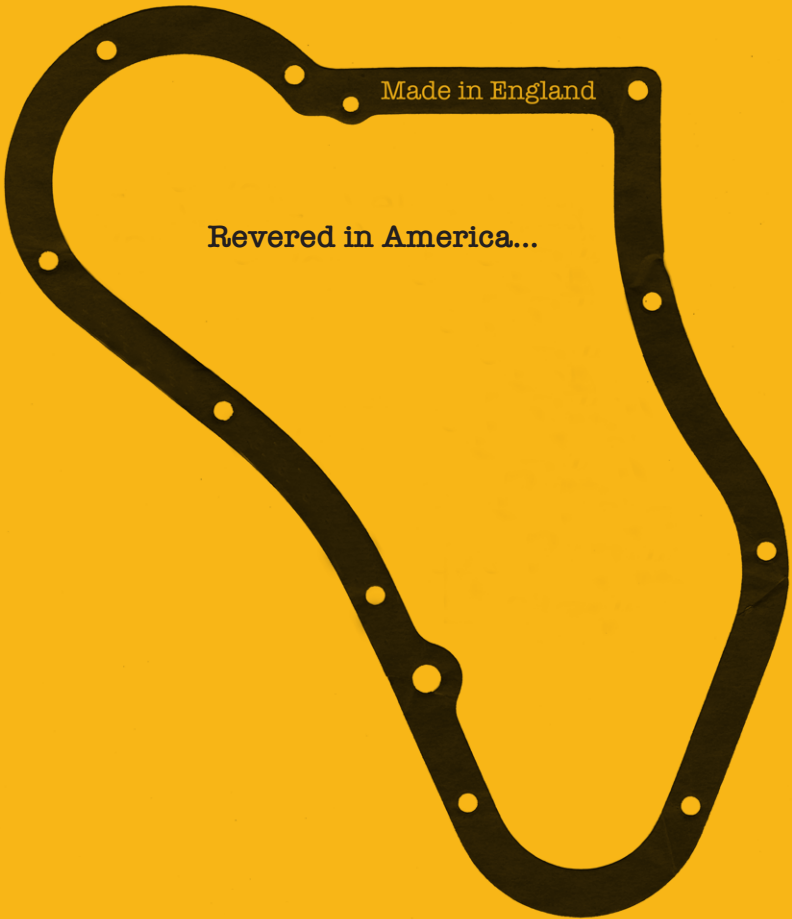


Fishtail West



Jan-April 2024 #258



Chairman's Chat

Be it resolved...this year I shall put two more Velocettes in circulation, to brighten the eyes, ears, and heart of old bike enthusiasts. In a burst of energy last Spring, I assembled the 1949 KTT engine #1029, but attempting to stuff it into the otherwise complete rolling chassis was not a success. The engine plates that formerly held a replica engine - since sold to an East Coast racer - did not have the same correct pattern. Not a big problem, as a drill press was handy, but more distressing was the 1/4" misalignment on the primary drive. The replica motor used a Venom engine shock absorber (ESA), but KTT 1029 retains its original ESA, which is a taper fit, not slotted onto the mainshaft as per the M series. The difficulties were noted on social media, and dear Sam Lovegrove in the UK happened to be making a set of MkVIII engine plates, and suggested a second set would be easy. If you don't watch 'Shed and Buried' on British TV, you might not know Sam, but he's an incredibly talented English hippie who makes turnip wine and can/is taking a totally burned-up Brough Superior 4-cylinder from the terrible Top Mountain Museum fire, and bringing it back to life. Call it fate:

I'd first encountered that very Brough-Austin 4 at Good Olde Days, the Oakland collection of Ben Kalka, the ex-Mossad criminal mastermind who eluded a DEA trap in the late 1980s, buying tons of the components required for the manufacture of amphetamines...from the military. He got caught eventually, and in his pressing need to fund lawyers, sold off his collection, which is why VMT260 'La Courgette' sits in my garage. The BS4 went to Switzerland, then Germany, where I was allowed a test



Paul D'Orleans circa 2012

ride for The Vintagent, which was utterly delightful. Ten years later, it burned to a crisp, but Sam is the man, and it will live again.

Regarding US matters: our Summer Rally will be a peach, although President Kim has found juggling the AHRMA schedule with 4th of July vacationers to be challenging in the choice of our dates. That's sorted now; be prepared for a return to our Big Loop format. Almost all our rallies were laid out thus in years past, and it's only been the past 15 years or so that the cloverleaf format has been favored, as frankly it's easier for the riders. But, we see more on a Big Loop: our rallies have been an education on the landscapes and places of the Western USA because of them. For me, that's 32,000 miles of back roads, and counting.

If you're read this far, a reward: plans for our VOCNA East Coast Rally are moving forward, with lots of input from club members and vintage riders on the other coast. By the next issue of FTW all plans will be complete, and we're looking at the weekend of September 21st .

Please reach out to me directly if you're interested in joining us in Vermont that weekend.

Paul d'Orleans
president@velocette.org

The elected officers of the Velocette Owners' Club of North America and Canada is a registered non profit organization.

- Chairman: Mr. Paul d'Orléans
chairman@velocette.org
- President: Kim Young
kim@614engineering.com
- Editor: JP Default
info@velocette.org
- Treasurer: Blaise Descollonges
info@descoatelier.com
- Secretary: Sarah Kolterman
membership@velocette.org
- Rally Purser: Sarah Kolterman
- Web Master: JP Default

Front cover: That gasket by JP Default
 Back cover: Fishtail by JP Default

Corrections to issue #257:

Inside cover: Mid 50's MAC racer' on the inside cover is in fact Burt Monroe's MSS which was the world's fastest Velo innits day! Page 8: KTT belongs to Neville not Jack. Page 9: Jack and Neville Mickelson are from New Zealand, not Australia.

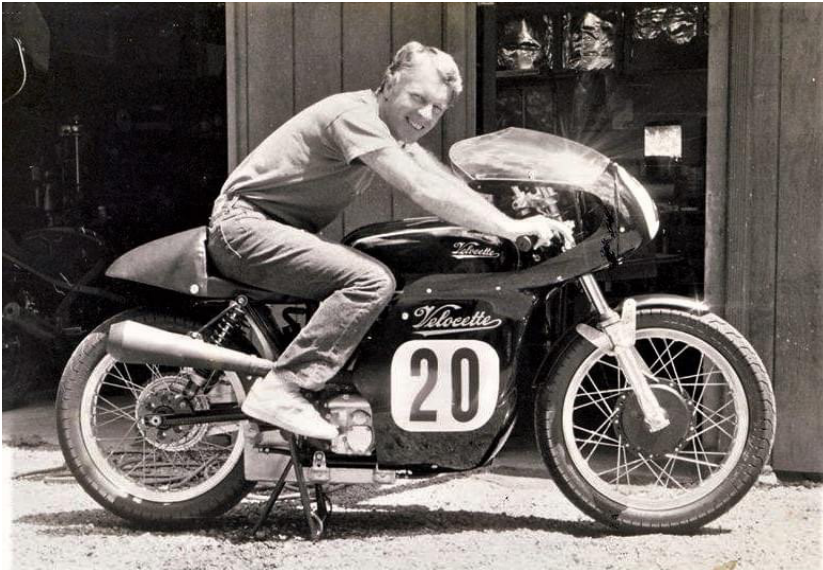
Submissions for the next issue: 30th April 2024.

The views, opinions, and technical tips expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the club, editor or of any of the other VOCNA officers.

On occasion, this newsletter may feature content from diverse sources: from online, older motorcycle publications, archives, member submissions etc... These might include photographs, articles, technical drawings, cartoons, logos, memes etc. We try to acknowledge their source, wherever possible. We thank them for their use.

The Velocette Owners' Club of North America and Canada is a registered non profit organization.

Godspeed Bob Strode



Robert Strode 10.16.1938 - 3.2.2024

It is with great sadness that we salute a Velocette legend, Bob Strode, who died of cancer on March 2nd 2024. He will be remembered by most for taking over Lou Branch parts business, as well as his amazing racing builds, which inspired many. Our thoughts are with his family and friends during this difficult time.

“Bob was an expert fabricator and builder of bikes and cars. He was also generous and patient in sharing his workshop and expertise with me as a young Velo enthusiast, “back in the day”. The road racer on which he is pictured was a prime example of his ingenuity and craftsmanship. Bob built the frame duplicating Velo geometry using stiffer tubing and construction techniques. One clever innovation: the inner primary case he designed and cast incorporates the front engine mount, and clamps the swingarm trunnion tube at the rear, adding stiffness to the whole assembly. The bike came into my possession for a number of years, and I campaigned

it on the West Coast. I finally sold it and it reappeared in England some years later, in somewhat sorry shape. The new owner resurrected it, improved it and raced it on the IOM. I called the bike the “Strode Special”, so Bob’s name and memory live on through that creation. He was a kind and generous soul, and will be missed. Godspeed, Bob.” - John Ray

“Bob is the one who in 1987, sold me his Velocette parts and service business. The business was the ex-Lou Branch Velocette Motorcycle Sales shop from California, who was the US importer for Velocette in 1950, and before that was Jack Frodsham Velocette in the late 1930s. Bob was a great friend and will be missed. I phoned & talked with him just a few days ago. We talked about the great times we had together. A friendship that started through a common interest in Velocette motorcycles.” - Ed Gilkison

Editors Letter

The newsletter is a permanent fixture, both in print, and on-line. We are dedicated to serving the membership of this club across the board.

An Apology

So we were off to a good start, the first issue was widely well received. Thank you for all the positive encouragement, and some good constructive feedback, which we have taken on board. That said, this year started slow with a number of issues, my bad, as well as finding the right production/ printer partner. We were ghosted by 2 printers who apparently claimed our business, but never delivered. We now have a team in place, and there will be no further delays to this much coveted Newsletter! I thank you all for your patience.

The part that we are not in control of, is the content. Editing a newsletter is hard work at best of times, but with scarce submissions, it makes it more difficult to publish anything. So it's up to you. I'm keen to make this a success, but it's your newsletter, your stories, your photos to share with the membership. I've spoken to many of you who have promised articles, but I'm still waiting. You know who you are... I know there is a lot going on out there in Veloland, and all stories, big and small are welcome. Garage stories, wrenching, race meets, swap meets, events, tech tips and questions, historical references, club legacy and of course, rides!



JP Defaut flying the Velo flag, BC '24 photo © Kim Lohstroh Young

The newsletter is a permanent fixture, both in print, and on-line. We are dedicated to serving the membership of this club across the board. That said, while the majority of members wish to continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter, some members are happy to read it online. In the interest of keeping everyone happy, and costs down, if I could ask you to drop me a line and express your preference: printed or digital copy, I would be most grateful. Production costs have increased in the recent months, and the club needs to save funds where possible, every little helps. But rest assured, we are not eliminating the printed copy!

As a photographer and storyteller (not a techie), what drew me in to this club in the first place was the community. The motorcycles are inspiring of course, but the people are on another level. I'm keen to spread the word of this unique motorcycle experience, that never fails to push us into the challenge, whether its on a ride, wrenching or dealing with the club issues and making sure everyone is heard. This club is about people, and their motorcycles. So lets hear it.

JP Defaut Editor FTW & velocette.org
info@velocette.org

Deadline for next issue:
14th May 2024

The Ex-Pres is still talking

What kind of normal person would do this? They must be WACKO.

Our 40th rally ride is almost a distant memory as we are gearing up for the 41st rally ride. As I said in my previous submission, the reason this ride has been continuing for so long is because this club is blessed with a proliferation of people that are out of the norm. People that buy an almost obscure old English motorcycle and then want to ride them. Not just ride them but ride them over a thousand miles on back roads, not smooth straight paved highways, but rough and ready back roads, not all of which are paved. These bikes are at a minimum almost 60 years old and most are much older. Not to mention that these crazy people that will ride in all types of weather from extreme heat and numbing cold to soaking wet to reach Velo Nirvana, finishing the rally on your steed. Real Velo Nirvana is celebrating this achievement with your compatriots. What kind of normal person would do this? They must be WACKO. Would your average Adventure Tourer rider with carefully colour matched Klim riding gear mounted on their highly polished steed cruising down the main highways to the next Hyatt hotel do this? No.

To ride a Velo you need to have a certain amount of 'dirt bag' in your genes. Grease and oil stains are badges of honour. You also need to



Cory Padula with his Thruxton Slayer, BC 2023 ©JP Default

know how to operate a screwdriver and a wrench. This puts Velo riders in a special class. And in that class are really unique individuals, characters, the people that take Wacko to the next level. Let me stop at this point and say my definition of Wacko is in the positive sense, someone that defies the norm and ventures to areas that most people would not feel comfortable. We are modern day true adventurers. We are not your All-Inclusive Resort types, we are the backpackers heading into the wilderness and unknown. And within this group there are those that excel at going to the next level. These are real characters.

The Velo club is full of these next level characters. Here are just a few of the names that I can quickly name. Carey McSquid, Tim Thielmann, George and Satchi Shoblo, Paul Zell, and Iron Mike McNeil. These people instantly bring to my mind some very crazy memories. The stories that I recall of being with these characters are amazing, crazy and even far-fetched. These people and many, many others not mentioned as the list is long, and their crazy antics helped shape and drive the club into what it is today.

Over the next few issues I am going to relate some of the stories and events based on my interactions with these people. I invite you to add to this list of characters or tell your stories. I hope

we can create a True Wackos page on our website and hopefully every one of you will get a mention.

I want to start the series off with a story about Tim Thielmann. Tim was a good friend of mine and real Velo enthusiast. Sadly he died many years ago of a cancerous brain tumour. He had an MSS and an LE. We did quite a bit of riding together. One such memorable ride was heading down to a rally in Cambria, California. This was a rather memorable trip.

We had gassed up in a small town on the California coast. Tim fired up his Velo and was off down the road, meanwhile unbeknownst to him I still had to finish pumping gas and getting my bike ready to go so a couple of minutes went by before I was able to ride. Meanwhile a group of 3 sport bikes rode by. They were heading down our route. I fired up the Thruxton and was soon behind the sport bikes just as we hit the twisties. They were rather slow in the corners by my standards so at the first opportunity I passed them in the first few corners and soon I had the

Thruxton cracked wide open in an effort to catch up with Tim. Tim in the meantime was wondering where I was and had pulled over. Unfortunately at the moment I was coming around the corner he decided to hang a U turn and go back to look for me. I came around going hell bent. Oh Shit were my exact words as he veered in front of me. There was nowhere to go. I went wide and he also. All I remember is seeing his saddlebag rack inches in front of me and then BOOM. He went flying over the handlebars and I went down with a splat. If that wasn't bad enough, the sport bike guys then showed up. They dismounted and instead of offering to help, they walked up to Tim who was sprawled down the road wondering what the hell happened. They proceeded to give him shit for going too fast. He was still a bit dazed but managed to get up and tell them to F off. We then got back on our feet saying very little as the deed had been done. We proceeded to straighten and mend our bikes as best we could and continued on our trip.

As we headed down the coast, we needed to tend to our sore battered



Tim Thielmann with his MSS Cambria 2000



Tim ThielMann with his LE Cambria 2000



Tim ThielMann Cambria 2000

bodies. We were in desperate need of some hop based medication and food. We soon found an appropriate facility that could provide the necessary nutrition. Sometime later we exited the place of healing and discovered not only was it was dark but just for giggles a thick fog was rolling in. Add to that we were half swacked and had to find a place to camp. A roadside ditch was looking pretty tempting before we even started our search. As we began to fire up the bikes we discovered that neither of the bike's headlights worked and only one had a functioning taillight, just what we needed. We managed to strap a flashlight on the lead bike's handlebar and the bike with the working taillight followed. We were now tasked with heading down the road in the thick fog looking for a camp ground. We could barely see the road with our one lame flashlight. Then, all of a sudden we see a light illuminating what looked like what could be a camping area. We see a parking area and building that appeared to be a washroom. Yeehaa. We pull in, set up our tents and immediately crashed for the second time that day. Next morning we woke up to find that we were in the middle of a rest area. There was a big sign just behind us that said NO CAMPING. We quickly packed up and headed off just as a police car arrived. We completed the trip to Cambria and back home but there more adventures than just this one highlight.

A few years later on one of the first rallies, a 1200 mile event in Washington state, Tim shows up a Velo. Well sort of a Velo....a Velocette LE. The perfect bike to pick to traverse the mountain ranges on a 5 day route you are thinking. NOT. Well Tim did it. On one of the days I remember Tim leaving at his usual 5am time mounted on his LE. This was the big day with a long relentless climb up the mountain range ahead. He plodded along and was finally climbing the last of the big passes. As he was nearing the top of what seemed like a never

ending climb a Venom mounted Sam Jowett passed him. Sam who was not known for speed, snickered as he went thumping past as this was one of the few opportunities he had to pass someone. But mere minutes later as Sam was descending at a nice gait an LE with Tim aboard went whizzing past at breakneck speed leaving Sam far behind. Tim ended up at the day's destination just moments before Sam did. Of course Sam received a thorough ribbing that he was beaten by an LE.

To this day I do not know of anyone that has ridden one day of a rally on a LE, never mind completing a full 1200 mile rally on one. Koodos to Tim. He gets my vote for being a full blown Velo Wacko. He is Just one of many characters that set the direction of this club and cemented the legacy of the Million Mile rally. I think Tim's name should be on the list of Velo Characters as a Wacko supreme.

So that's just one of my nominees. I look forward to hearing about yours and the stories that accompany them. Please submit nominees and your stories and let's all see who the pioneers were that helped make this club so unique.

Cheers,

Ex-Prez Wacko, No Class

**HAVE YOU
RIDDEN
YOUR BIKE
TODAY**

Father and Son

Some of my earliest memories

are British Motorcycles. Going into the garage and seeing my dad's two BSAs. He had a 1956 Gold Star and his 1964 BSA Spitfire/Hornet. By the time I came along both were dormant, disassembled, but remained treasured by my dad. These two motorcycles held a special place in his heart throughout my childhood. He referenced the Spitfire/Hornet as a bike he had tremendous connection with. My father's closest friends all had British motorcycles and they felt the same connection too. I grew up around these machines, and it took me until my late twenties to finally see what they all saw in them.

My first encounter with a Velocette was also my first encounter with the Velocette Owners Club. The exact year is lost to me, but I am thinking it was in the mid to late 90s. I was on our annual family camping trip near Markleeville, CA. My dad lit up like a Christmas tree when we pulled up in Markleeville, as there were a couple dozen Velocettes parked in front of the Cutthroat Saloon (since renamed). He could not believe the sight and he was so excited to walk up and down the block or so of motorcycles, all while eagerly telling me about Velocettes and various British Motorcycles. At the end of the row of Velocettes was a man who had taken the entire top end off of his motorcycle on the side of the road in town. My dad was eager to chat with him and I was in awe that this guy had brazenly pulled his engine apart with minimal tools on the side of the road in a tiny mountain town.

Over the last 10 or so years I have had a few chance sightings of various groups of Velocettes around Northern California. For whatever reason my social media suggestions for a period of time were Velocette-centric. However, the allure of organized



Eric Maas

rides, and distances covered appealed to me, earlier this year I joined and appreciated the newsletter when I get it.

I am no stranger to older motorcycles. I have owned several 60s and 70s Japanese motorcycles. Most of those have all come and gone throughout my life. I love being on two wheels, but I do not have the same connection to them that I do with British Motorcycles, there is just a charm that I felt the first time I rode one that I have been unable to escape since.

I purchased my first British Motorcycle, a 1970 Triumph Bonneville from a long time family friend in 2011. My father assembled the bike for Sandy Kosman from miscellaneous parts lying around his shop in the early 70s. After piecing it back together it was then sold out of the Kosman shop to my dad's friend who loved the bike so much he eventually put the bike on display in his living room. When I acquired it, it had migrated from the living room to a damp and flooded basement of a San

Francisco apartment building. When I got the call to buy the bike it was suggested that I pick up a pair of rubber concrete boots on my way over... First stop was a car wash where the boots found the dumpster and the bike got a serious pressure washer wash and a serious scrub.

The 2020 COVID lockdowns moved my dad back into the garage after years away. His first project was his childhood best friend's Rickman Triumph. This was another bike built at the Kosman shop in the late 60's. My father inherited it in the early 90s after tragically losing this friend. My dad has documented his rebuilding putting the Rickman back on the road on his blog (maasmoto.com).

My goal is to build a bike every year or so with my dad while he still can. He turned 80 this year and is disabled with a rare neuromuscular disorder, but he likes to keep busy. Stop and go traffic is tough for him so we find opportunities to get him out on quieter back roads.

With his Rickman back on the road, my father and I have finally started on his 1964 BSA Spitfire Hornet, and we are very excited about this project. It is his chance to put his first motorcycle back on the road the way he always wanted to.

I don't own a Velocette, and maybe the right project will come up at some point, I am in no rush. I, like many of you, have a few projects lined up in my overcrowded garage. I personally am looking forward to seeing you out on a club ride and hopefully some of you would not mind stopping by my dad's blog (maasmoto.com) and leaving him a comment of encouragement to keep going.

Cheers,

Eric Maas

Special thanks to Eric Maas for sharing this with us.



Madame President The VOCNA Idaho Vandals Rally 2024



Kim Lohstroh Young and her 1930 KSS. Photo by Paul D'Orleans

The rally is finally coming together. It has been a long haul finding and confirming hotels and camping locations as many places are booked over a year in advance. It will be based in McCall, Idaho, July 21st - 27th. We will be doing a loop with stops at Wallowa Lake, OR, Lolo Hot Springs, MT, Salmon, ID, and Stanley, ID. I chose Idaho for the amazing roads that pass through its dramatic landscape and stunning scenery. The inspiration for the rally is nature. We will encounter vast forests, mountains carved by glaciers, multiple rivers, hot springs, glacial lakes, the deepest freshwater gorge in the world, part of the Lewis and Clark Trail, as well as wildlife including elk, bears, moose, and bighorn sheep. McCall, ID is a small resort town that sits on the shore of Payette Lake, nestled in the center of the Payette National Forest. It was settled in 1889 and currently has a population of 3800. The route will feature dropping into and rising out of Hell's Canyon crossing the state line from Idaho to Oregon, winding along the Clearwater and Lochsa rivers, Highway 12 is known for its 99 miles (160 km) of curves, traveling over Lolo pass from Idaho into Montana, riding through the rugged peaks of the Bitterroot and Sawtooth Mountains, and the opportunity to experience many natural hot springs. All hotel reservations must be made

over the phone and are listed under The Velocette Club, please mention this when booking your room. All camping has been reserved and paid for, fees will be included on the registration form. If you have an RV please contact me to make arrangements.

Rally start is McCall, IDAHO

Sunday July 21, 26 & 27
Hotel: Nordic Inn 400 N 3rd St 208 634-7671 reservations by June 16
Alternative: The Third Street Inn
Camping: Black Bear RV Park 190 Krahn Lane Wallowa Lake, OR

Monday, July 22nd
Hotel: Wallowa Lake Lodge 60060 Wallowa Lake Hwy 541 432-9821 reservations by April 1
Alternatives: Wallowa Lake Resort (vacation rentals/cabins), Eagle Cap Chalets (chalets/cabins/condos)
Camping: Wallowa Lake State Park Lolo Hot Springs, MT

Tuesday, July 23rd
Hotel: Lodge at Lolo Hot Springs 38600 US 12 406 273-2201 reservations by June 23rd,
Alternative: Lolo Hot Springs (cabins)
Camping: Lolo Hot Springs 38500 US-12 Salmon, ID

Wednesday, July 24th Hotel: not confirmed until 2/8/24
Camping: Andreas on the River 603 Riverfront Drive Stanley, ID

Thursday, July 25th
Hotel & Camping: Contact Kim for reservations 415-308-0172 or kim@614engineering.com by June 1
Mountain Village Resort 220 Eva Falls Avenue 208 774-3661 Alternatives: Redfish Riverside Inn, Stanley High Country Inn.

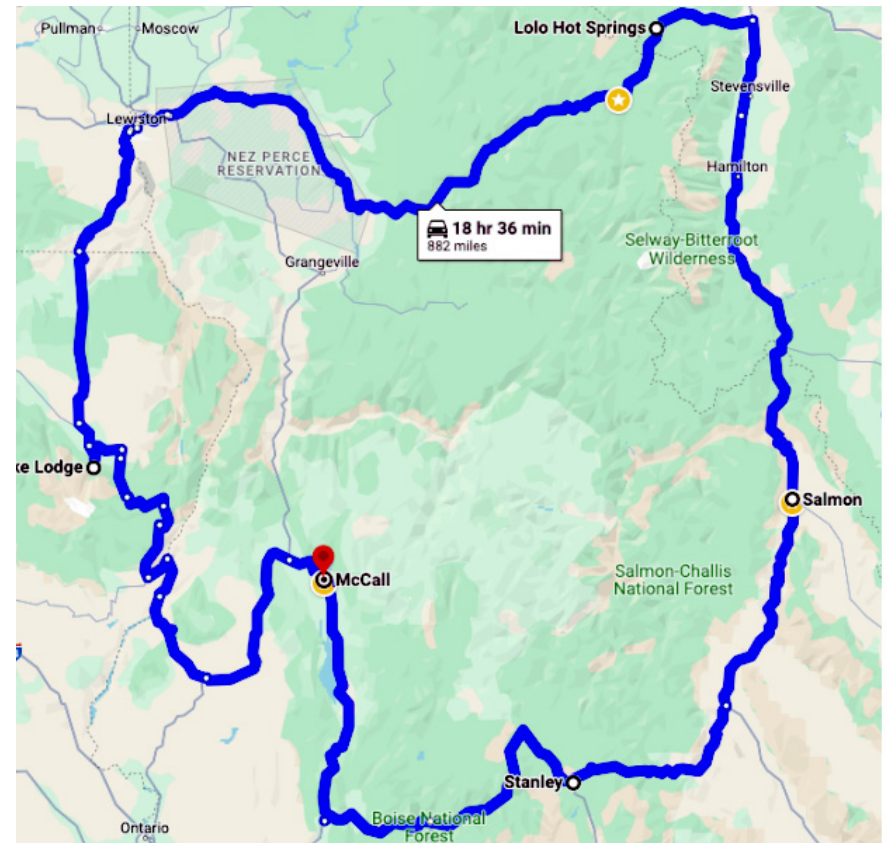
Monday, we will drop into and rise out of Hell's Canyon (carved by the Snake River and at 7,993 feet deep), crossing the state line from Idaho to Oregon, ending our day at Wallowa Lake.

Tuesday, we wind along the Clearwater and Lochsa rivers on Highway 12 (known for its 99 miles/160 km of curves) and a couple of hot springs naturally rising from the mountains. We finish our day after traveling over Lolo pass from Idaho into Montana, at Lolo Hot Springs.

Wednesday, we will be riding through and alongside the rugged peaks of the Bitterroot Mountains (part of the Rocky Mountains), and stop in Salmon, a rustic mountain town, for the night.

Thursday, we follow the Salmon River to Stanley, Idaho. Planted at the foot of the Sawtooth Mountains on the banks of the Salmon River, Stanley, Idaho defines natural beauty. There are multiple hot springs in and near this small town, population 119. Friday we will ride through the Sawtooth Mountains on our return to McCall. On Saturday, there is an awards dinner.

velocette.org for online registration



MOVing across the USA

by Larry Luce

“See the USA in a Chevrolet”, that was the advice General Motors fed us sixty some years ago. I tried it a few times. Travel in the back of a ‘55 Chevy wagon, in company with my siblings and parents, was never a really satisfying experience. It was all about where we were going; the trip there was something to be endured. I more enjoy traveling by vintage motorcycle. The capabilities of the machine slow the pace of travel and allow you to experience the environment you are traveling through on a much more intimate basis. Also, the bike, being something out of the ordinary, attracts attention and promotes encounters with interested strangers you meet. That’s all good in my opinion. Being now retired from the work a day life I have become interested in seeing more of the USA than what I have as yet experienced. Organized cross country events for vintage motorcycles fulfill both these interest and offer the benefit of logistical support and companionship along the way. The only real downside to this concept is you have to follow an imposed agenda and there is significant expense involved.

The Motorcycle Cannonball Endurance Event offers just such an experience. You cross the USA on your vintage motorcycle with route and accommodations pre-arranged. The rider is responsible for the maintenance of their machine but chase vehicles are provided to assure you will not find yourself broke down in the middle of nowhere. The downside is, if you cannot fix the machine, the event moves on without you.

I have been intrigued by the Cannonball concept for many years. The problem was I did not have a bike

that met the event age requirements. This year I decided to purchase an acceptable bike and live the experience.

As originally presented the machine age parameters for this years Cannonball required a bike to be no newer than 1933 production. I had always thought if I did this event I would want to do it on a push rod engined Velocette. It just so happens the first push rod Velocettes were produced in 1933. Unfortunately, most of them were 250cc that year.

I don’t mean to imply the MOV (250 model designation) is in any way an inferior machine. They served as the basis for all further developments in this illustrious line and many MOVs were raced and developed into exceptionally successful specials. I’ve done many miles on a MAC Velocette (the 350cc version) and know these to be very capable tourers if you are in no hurry. A 250 by comparison seemed a little small when faced with freeway travel and challenging terrain. However, the guidelines for the event stated the bike should be capable of maintaining a 40mph average speed. It seemed reasonable to assume even a 250 could do that.

So the search was on for a 1933 Velocette. I own a MK2 KSS (1938) but have no experience with MK1s (a 1933 KSS would be a MK1). I have no spares for an early KSS but I have a lot of MAC parts and much is common to the MOV. The problem is MOVs do not exist in the USA. There were tax advantages to a 250 over a 350 in the UK so MOVs sold well there. As luck would have it, I came across an ad for a reasonable looking and priced ‘33 MOV on offer in the UK at a time when



Larry "The Legend" Luce on his MOV on the Cannonball 2023

The Velocette club summer rally has often served as a “shake down” venue for me when I need to test a newly re-commissioned bike.

the pound and dollar were at near parity. I swallowed hard and initiated the purchase.

What could go wrong? Everything. Stories of computer fraud are rife and a few small pictures on a

computer screen are a bad basis on which to initiate a multi thousand pound purchase but so it goes. I had to commit fast. I sent a bank transfer to complete the purchase. I then sent another multi thousand pound bank transfer to a shipping company I had no experience with to get the bike

shipped to me. Then months of silent waiting began. To my great relief, I did finally receive the bike. When I got it unpacked I was surprised, the MOV actually looked pretty good.

The MOV ran as received but not very well. Shifting seemed to be a particular problem. The bike seemed very original and low time in terms of use but it obviously had problems. My first challenge, prior to disassembly, was to obtain a title and license for this bike. With a folder full of English documents in hand I headed to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

I'm honest by nature, and maybe a little naive, so I went to the DMV prepared to tell the truth. I soon learned that was a big mistake. I've registered a lot of old motorcycles with no paperwork but never one I imported. What a nightmare this turned into. They didn't like the motorcycle frame number. They didn't like the customs documents I was provided. They didn't even like the report the Highway

Patrol inspector wrote after viewing the bike. It took nearly a year and more trips to the DMV than I can recall to clear this up but I did finally get a license plate. It arrived one week before I left to start the Cannonball event. A little advice to fellow vintage motor bike enthusiast in California; Do not tell DMV you imported the bike. Tell them you found it in a barn and there is no paperwork. I can't imagine how they would ever find out the truth and you will save yourself a world of trouble and expense.

While DMV was jerking me around I initiated a complete rebuild of the MOV. I was very lucky in my purchase; this was to all appearances a low use 90 year old motorcycle. The main problems found were a badly grooved clutch throw out bearing and no taper on the crankshaft main shafts where the main bearings seat. I made up a roller bearing for the clutch. If this was a MAC I could have used another crank but I had no other MOV parts so the main shafts were metal sprayed and ground to restore the taper. That cost a lot of money.

My good friend Mike Jongblood re-assembled the bottom end. The original piston was reused (+30 bore after 90 years) and the head was serviced but used as is. The timing cover was up dated to provide pressure oil feed to the cam. A replacement cam and followers were installed as these were badly worn. I replaced all the timing gears, we replaced the fiber cam gear with a steel one and we replaced the oil pump drive gear with a double start gear. Drains were added to the valve cups on the head. The transmission



Larry Luce cruising in style on the Cannonball 2023. (Note the Craven bags, cool!)

was basically OK. I enlarged the crankshaft sprocket one tooth. It then came time to test the stamina of this device.

The Velocette club summer rally has often served as a “shake down” venue for me when I need to test a newly re-commissioned bike. This years rally on Vancouver Island in Canada was ideal to test the MOV. The bike performed well and proved its mettle. I learned it could be pushed to run at 55mph or more but was probably happier at 45 to 50mph speeds. That makes sense as in its day this bike was intended to be a ride to work vehicle not a sportster or a touring machine. I learned long ago you have to ride the bike you have not try to make the bike perform like what you may wish you had. I could live with what the MOV had to offer and I was reasonably assured it would serve me well.

Most people who participate in the Cannonball have some level of personal support traveling along. This varies from large trucks with built in machine shops and large staffs to the wife following along in a vehicle which will serve to carry supplies, spares and tools. I had no such support. My wife was busy

Most Cannonball participants are just in for the experience but the event is actually a competition.

with guest visiting and I would not prevail upon a friend to serve in this capacity. On past excursions I have never had a support vehicle along. I like to be self contained and carry with me what I think I might need. My initial intention was to ride the bike to the start of the event. It's probably fortunate a hurricane turned up on the weekend I had intended to leave and quashed those plans. I ended up renting a truck and hauling the MOV to Virginia Beach.

Most Cannonball participants are just in for the experience but the event is actually a competition. Bikes are grouped into classes based on year of manufacture and engine capacity. The handicapping system favors the oldest and smallest machines. Beyond that, to win, the rider has to complete the course each day within the time constraints established and without needing to be hauled by the chase truck. No mechanical assistance is allowed while on the course but fellow participants and passers by have been known to lend a hand or provide advice when needed. There is a small minority of participants who are very serious about winning and go to extreme measures to enhance their chances (they use bikes which have no place on modern roads, they often have mobile machine shops, no expense is spared for preparation and maintenance of the bike, a seemingly unlimited range of spares is provided) I had no allusions of hope to win anything and was only hoping to finish.

There was an interesting variety of machines entered this year. A bike of Hungarian manufacture was the most unusual. English, German, French and Italian bikes rounded out the foreign made contingent. Harley Davidsons predominated but there were many



Indians and a few other more obscure US manufacturers represented. I had the only Velocette and I believe there was only one other rider running without support. The smallest bikes entered were two BMW 200cc singles of early '30s vintage. Neither of those BMWs finished the whole course but one rider made a truly valiant effort and was still running at the end. Riders and support crews came over from England, Ireland, Germany, Australia, France, Hungary and Italy. My investment to compete in this event was significant (maybe \$15,000 with purchase of the bike), I can't imagine what it must have cost the foreign participants.

Once the ride began it became apparent I would usually be on my own. The MOV was faster than the tiny BMWs and the side valve singles, but I could not keep up with the larger ohv singles and big twins on hills. The four cylinder bikes just left me in the dust even if they were attached to a sidecar. That would not be a problem other than the fact that for the first half of the ride my odometer was not working. These circumstances led to my only loss of points. In general the course was well laid out and could be followed with close attention to instructions and visual markings

but not always. On one occasion, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, we were directed to turn onto a named road. I looked for a road sign but found none. I ended up way past the turn off point on a one way closed loop crowded with tourist stopping constantly to look at just everything. Not good. I eventually found myself in company with a large group of equally lost riders (including event staff members). A Forrest Service guy had given me a map which seemed to show where the road I wanted should be and I decided to check that out. Wrong. I encountered one of the tiny BMW riders and we stumbled on together. Now we were way off course and had no sure idea where we were in relation to the intended route. To add to our dilemma there was no cell phone reception. The BMW would go no faster than about 35mph. It was getting dark and he did not have a functioning headlight so I decided not to abandon him to his fate. Eventually we figured out how to get where we needed to be but it was very dark and the BMW guy only had sun glasses. I had had enough and pulled into a parking lot and told the BMW guy to call the chase truck. I was given a 60 point penalty.



Larry Luce shaking down his MOV on the 2023 Velo Rally, Vancouver Island © Paul D'Orleans

The only other time I came close to being on the chase truck was in Nevada. The route took us on a long screech of the 15 freeway. There was a strong head wind and it was fairly warm. I rode on the shoulder and tried to maintain speeds of 50 to 55mph. That was hard on the bike. When we eventually got off the freeway we were immediately caught in a construction zone with escorted passage. I had to stop the engine to await our turn. When I tried to restart the bike there was no compression. Kick as I might there was no response. A coarse

monitor called the chase truck and gave them my location. I called Mike Jongblood and discussed the situation. We decided it was probably carbon on a valve seat or stem that was preventing the exhaust valve from closing. I kept kicking and eventually the bike restarted (it's a miracle). And away I went. Now I'm moving along and happened to look down and saw a large flow of oil squirting onto my right boot. What the heck! I stopped and reluctantly turned the motor off. The blanking screw in the

crankshaft oil quill feed had been lost (I've never heard of that happening). Fortunately I had a screw of the same thread in my spares and enough small washers to effect a repair and I had oil to replenish what was lost. Thank my lucky stars the bike restarted and I could finish the day.

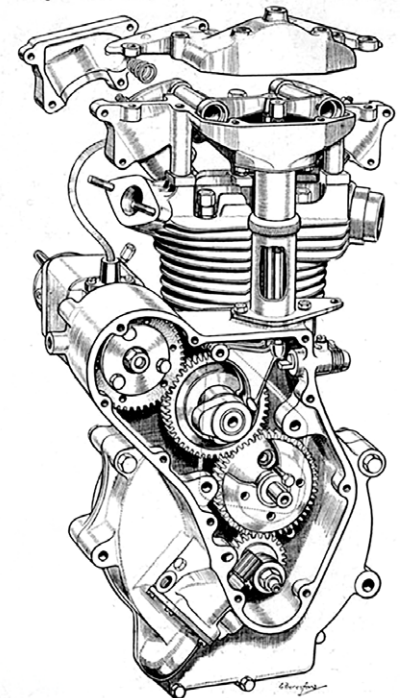
You can never really relax and just enjoy the scenery on a staged ride like this. You need to be constantly vigilant of where you are and what you are looking for next. In addition, you have to be acutely aware of what is happening with your bike. All that concentration can get trying. Still, watching the landscape and climate transition from place to place as we crossed the country was a fascinating experience. An effort was made to route us through the most scenic terrain available. You would have to be incredibly jaded and cynical not to be awed by the stupendous variety of sights this country has to offer. We were often hosted for meals by small towns, motorcycle museums and Harley dealers along the route. People were enthusiastic in welcoming us and were eager to offer any support they could if needed. The Hungarian contingent encountered problems when threads stripped on an essential piece of their motor. Our host for lunch in a small Kansas town found a local machinist with cnc capabilities who programed his machine and produced the necessary part for no charge. This all happened on a Sunday morning. The Hungarian group was astounded and so was I.

You often hear of, and I have occasionally encountered, hostility between riders of US made bikes

and those who own foreign origin machines. I encountered none of that type of attitude on this event. All people evolved were anxious to offer any help they could regardless of who you were and what you rode. There may just be hope for mankind yet.

And so it went. Seventeen days of some of the most intense motor cycle immersion possible. Over 3800 miles travelled. We went through some rain and some heat but mostly it was very nice. The MOV did its job and, as best as could be determined, is the only bike of 250cc or smaller capacity to have ever finished a Cannonball with no points lost due to mechanical issues. I finished third in my class and about half way down in the overall ranking of finishers. I enjoyed the experience but was happy when it ended.

Larry Luce



Eastern News

The Velo is now tucked up for the winter, time to try and source a solid state replacement for the Autolite dynamo voltage regulator. Regrettably the Bosch VR is no longer made.

I realised that I have now owned the Velo for 49 years, how time flies. I still have the original UK logbook (registration document) which recorded up to seven changes in ownership as well as payments for tax discs. It is interesting to see the previous owners and the length of time they had the bike.

First owner was Kings Motors (Oxford) at their Bromborough branch in the Wirral, Cheshire. Hence the registration 870 PTU, TU being a Cheshire registration. Incidentally Kings was owned by Mike Hailwoods' father. Kings registered the bike on 18 March 1961 so the bike was possibly made early 61 or late 1960.

It sat on their floor until 17 November 1961 when William (no last names in case they are still around) took the bike to St. Helens. William was clearly happy as he kept it for almost nine years, however on 23 June 1970 the ownership changed to Peter in Wigan.

Peter was not so keen as less than a year later Ian registered the machine on 3 June 1971. In no time at all John then took possession on 6 September 1971. Peter sold it to his dad Ernest on 3 May 1973. Ernest kept the bike for just over a year until 8 July 1974 when yours truly became the owner.

Along the way the people mentioned made quite a few changes to the bike. Originally a Mk1 Clubman it kept the BTH mag and TT carb, lost the rearset footrests but regrettably kept the too short rear brake rod, gained a Thruxton breather and unfortunately had alloy WM1 rims fitted.

Forty nine years later I have visited various countries on the Velo. England Scotland and Wales (obviously) but also France, Holland, Belgium, West Germany and...Canada.

Along the way I replaced the WM2 rims, changed to 12V electrics, learned all sorts of things and had a really good time.

Roll on the next 49 years.....?

ride safely,

Andrew



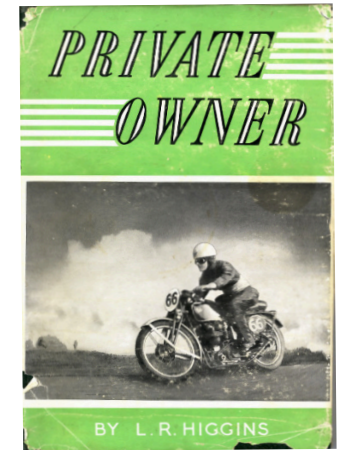
© JP Defaut

Book Review

Some years ago, while doing some research before buying a rare MkVII KTT from Australia, I was reminded that Les Higgins rode one in the 1938 Isle of Man TT, and wrote a book about his racing exploits, 'Private Owner' (1948, Foulis). Higgins was never in the top ranks of riders, but was a typical 'clubman', an arch enthusiast who spent all his money and free weekends racing where he could: at Brooklands, the TT, the Ulster, Donington Park, etc. Higgins was one of those riders who filled the starting grids behind the stars, among the ranks of 'also rans'. He was thus the target customer for production racing motorcycles, as offered by Velocette with the KTT, Norton with their Model 30 Manx, AJS with their R7 and later 7R, Excelsior with their Manxman, etc.

The cover of Private Owner shows Higgins racing his MkVII KTT. He was also captured in the 'Keig Collection Volume 1' at the 1938 Isle of Man TT, with the caption "Between 1938 and 1951, fair haired Londoner Les Higgins had seven goes at the TT and finished once, 29th in the 1939 Junior on the machine pictured. His infinitely more memorable achievement was the original 'Shell History of the TT' which he painstakingly compiled in 1953." Higgins also wrote 'Britain's Racing Motor Cycles' (1953, Foulis - he was clearly busy writing two books in 1952), which is a well-written historical survey, full of anecdotes and details, although the photographs are sparse - the editorial opposite of today's motorcycle books.

His account of racing in the 1930s is a track-side glimpse of an insider who was just as in awe of his heroes as the presumed reader, and he recounts the endless dramas of his various races in great detail. Lap times, which riders rode which bikes, how the bikes performed, and occasional



quotes from the champions, make 'Private Owner' a charming period piece, on par with G.S. Davidson's numerous books on racing in the immediate post-war era. Higgins was quite young when he first encountered motorcycle racing as a schoolboy (1924), along the promenade during the Herne Bay speed trials. Five years later he purchased a new 1929 Velocette KSS, learning how to ride on the road and prepare for racing. Like many aspiring but not wealthy racers, he found 'last year's model' racers affordable, like a Velocette KTT MkIV and later MkV, paid for with his meager weekly wages of 57 shillings. He ultimately bought a new MkVII KTT in 1938, although this meant he had to enter the IOM TT to gain delivery of the bike, but was intimidated, to say the least, with what was the world's most important road race at the time.

Clearly Higgins was a Velocette man through and through, and given the options available, he made a great choice. Plenty of Velocette riders won their Gold Stars at Brooklands on Velocettes, for 100+mph laps during a race. It took three years before a 350cc machine did the 'ton' - not coincidentally the same year the KTT was introduced. - Paul D'Orleans

Events

4th May 2024
The Quail; Carmel Valley

VOCNA returns to The Quail, courtesy of our Chairman Paul D'Orleans and the Motorcycle Arts Foundation.

18th May 2024
Spring opener; Napa CA

Dear Usual Suspects,

You are most cordially invited to attend the 37th Annual Spring Opener.

Schedule of Events:

9:30 AM-ish: Gather at our Red Barn and get ready to ride. Please arrive with your fuel tanks TOPPED UP!



The Quail Beauty Parade © JP Defaut

10:00 AM: Depart for the 100 mile loop to Lake Berryessa. No breakfast stop, but stops at the Pope Valley Market and Turtle Rock Cafe.

1:00 PM: Return to the Red Barn for brews & spanner show.

2:30 PM: Brews, grub & frivolity at the Hop Creek Pub.

Be There or Be Square!

RSVP.

Cheers,

JR



John Ray "Fettling away" at Rancho Veloce, Napa CA © JP Defaut

On the market

'What's it worth?' is the worst question, because really who cares? Motorcycles are much better ridden than watched. And they're terrible investments. But, we do buy and sell them, and we do need to keep our estate valuation up to date, for when we inevitably kick the bucket. Then again, when my buddy Geoff Follin sat down with his wife to explain his carefully assembled valuation file for his motorcycle collection, she shut the folder and said flatly, 'When you die, they're all going in the dumpster.' She was serious, and we've been laughing about it for 25 years. Regardless, this column will follow public auctions at which Velocettes are sold. Full disclosure: one of my paying jobs is consulting for auction houses, primarily Mecum, as Bonhams no longer trades bikes in the USA. The Bonhams Stafford sale is the largest vintage motorcycle auction in the UK and Europe, and is thus a twice-yearly bellweather for prices across the pond. The Stafford fairground is a huge series of warehouses with club and business displays, outdoor areas for an autojumble, and a parking area for thousands of motorcycles, that - like Goodwood - is almost as interesting as what's inside. The center of the action is the Bonhams auction, and everyone files through the warehouse to see the variety of machines for sale. These always include a huge automobilia selection, with books, racing gear, trophies, basket cases, and piles of parts in dozens of separate lots. If you have an old bike, there will be a lot (ha!) to tempt you. It's also a great place to see who's in the motorcycle industry in the UK, as most everyone shows up; the dealers, the parts sellers, the restorers, the magazine staff, the collectors, the clubs. The clubs, in fact, compete for prizes for the best stand, so club stands tend to be fun. Not so much the food concessions, but as the Clash once sang, 'this is England'.



Quite a few Velocettes passed through Stafford last October. On the whole, prices in the UK are down, down, down, making this a buyer's market. That includes Velos, as you'll see. With the pound low (\$1.22 on auction day), prices were very reasonable for US buyers...they're even better on the continent, where the euro has been hovering near parity with the dollar.

A 1967 Thruxton with an estimate of £15-17k did not sell: it was an unfinished restoration - inspection required. With Dodkin alloy triple clamps, Dunlop alloy rims, a GP carb, and an appropriate blue/silver paint job, it looked good to me, but was overpriced for the UK market. Food for thought. Top price for a Velo was a correctly restored 1954 MSS (\$6850). A grass-track style 1936 MAC fetched \$4k, but a '61 Viceroy scooter did better at \$5700 - it was a real beauty restored in red. A 1940 MOV with a good not perfect resto took \$4300, and the rest were LEs ranging from \$400 - \$3800. Adjust your mental calculations on the value of your motorcycles accordingly.

Didn't find the Velo you were looking for? Well, next issue I'll share what sold in Las Vegas at Mecum's January sale. And if you've got a bike to sell, send a note to Editor!

info@velocette.org

Supercharged KTT

While doing some research on Velocettes raced at the Brooklands speed bowl, I came across two photographs of H.C. Lamacraft's supercharged KTT from 1938. His racer is a 1935 MkV KTT, to which a Centric-type blower has been added. The MkV KTT is recognizable by its MkIV-type engine with a bronze cylinder head, installed in the new-for-1935 KSS roadster full-cradle frame. Lamacraft won a Gold Star for a 100+mph lap at Brooklands in 1934 in the 350cc class, aboard a Velocette MkIV KTT, which is not the machine seen here. There's no record of Lamacraft winning a Gold Star at Brooklands in 1938 or '39, so it's safe to presume this machine was not successful.

Supercharging a single-cylinder motorcycle isn't easy, as the fuel mixture is drawn into the motor in pulses, every four stroke - boom, boom, boom. But forced induction

with a supercharger provides a constant push of fuel/air mix at the motor, and in between 'breaths' with a single-cylinder, that mixture builds up then gets shoved into the motor all once. What's required is a plenum chamber of equal capacity to the engine - in this case 350cc - placed between the supercharger and the motor, to even out the flow of air. Looking at Lamacraft's machine, there is no plenum chamber at all, which is poor practice for supercharging. In fact he's got it backwards, with a very long induction tract feeding the blower, probably of the right capacity given its tortuous path, but almost no interval between the blower and the induction tract.

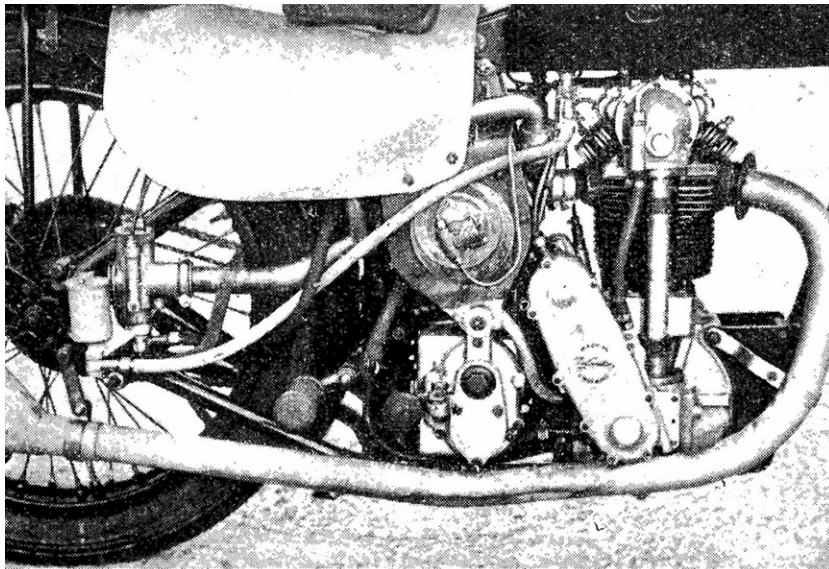
Lamacraft was not the first to supercharge a Velocette, as the factory got their first. Notably, Veloce Board member and de facto development engineer Harold Willis added a blower to a KTT in 1932,

which he famously dubbed 'Whiffing Clara' for the wheezing sound it made as the pressurized mixture leaked out after the engine was stopped. Whiffing Clara was not a success, in fact it was a notorious pig to ride, as it suffered from serious 'turbo lag', in both acceleration and (more dangerously) in deceleration. Still, the engine developed 32hp on the dyno, and while Willis opted to ride an 'ordinary' KTT at the Isle of Man that year (Board members that raced their products being a Veloce tradition), Clara was ridden in the Senior TT by South African J.G. Lind, who retired due to carburetion issues, after he'd recorded 112mph down Sulby Straight. That was a good bit faster than the rest of the factory Velocette racers, and one wonders why they didn't persevere, or at least try for a few World Records.

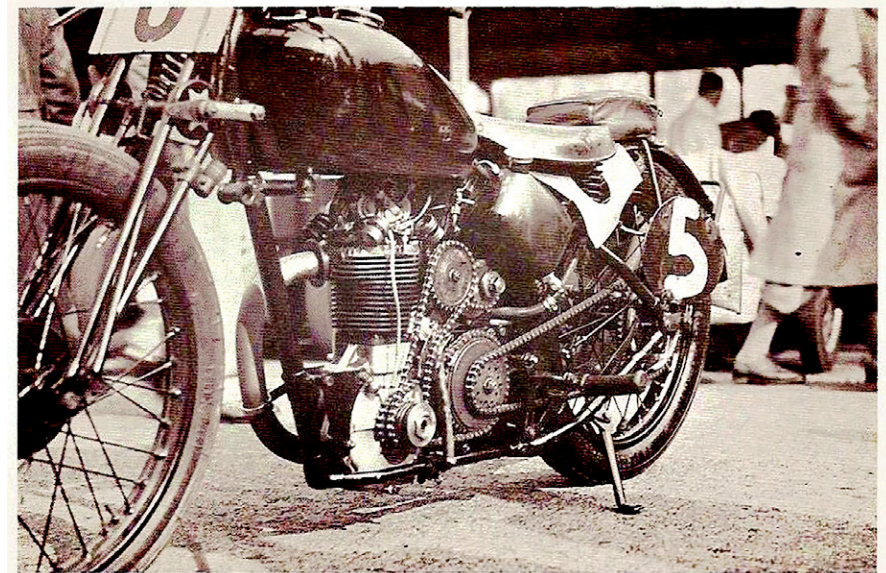
Supercharging motorcycles was all the rage in the 1930s, but it was much easier to supercharge multi-cylinder engines, as they draw intake more evenly from a pressurized chamber. In 1938 Lamacraft would

have seen reports of supercharged multi-cylinder Continental racers from Moto Guzzi, BMW, Gilera, NSU, etc. He might even have seen them in the metal at the Isle of Man TT in 1937 and taken inspiration. There was only one single-cylinder racer before WW2 that successfully integrated a supercharger, and that was the 1937 Moto Guzzi 250cc OHC 2-valve single that took the Italian Championship and even won a few GPs over the (also supercharged) DKW two-strokes dominating the 250cc class. Supercharging a two-stroke is beyond the scope of this article! Suffice it to say the 250cc Moto Guzzi produced 45hp on methanol, and took many World Speed Records, being capable of well over 120mph prewar. In fact, Moto Guzzi used this machine for record breaking through 1952, when it reached 132mph...with a sidecar.

Paul D'Orleans



A successor to Les Archer's "Whiffing Clara"? Here is H. C. Lamacraft's blown Velocette equipped for use at Brooklands. Observe the "rear-mounted" carburetor.



H.C. Lamacraft's supercharged 348 cc Velocette in the Paddock at Brooklands on 12th March 1938 (Motor Cycle)

Parts & Labor



Classifieds

You said no more Velos!



I said no, more Velos.



FOR SALE

1951 Rigid MAC Project
Contact BOB (707) 280-3187 Bay Area CA



FOR SALE

If you're feeling flush, this should help you out of the winter blues:

1948 KTT MK8

A snip at €39k (that's approx \$40k USD + shipping /taxes

Contact Gerhard Pradler info@velocette.org



FOR SALE

19482 MAC Project
Contact Frederic Schmid info@velocette.org



ART WANTED

Vintage Velocette posters, images, photos, books, postcards or any velocette related art.
Contact JP Default: info@velocette.org



The last word



Run Lean: avoid unnecessary expenses.
Richard Branson

A stylized, high-contrast illustration of a man wearing a leather jacket, a helmet, and goggles. He is pointing directly at the viewer with a serious expression. The background is a solid yellow color.

I WANT YOUR Velo stories

info@velocette.org

Since this is the Velocette owners' Club, we'd love to hear and share your Velo experiences, on or off the road. Even buried in the garage for decades! Whether you own a Thruxton, Venom, Viper, MAC, LE or Valiant even, we'd love to hear about your Velo. Tell us about how it came into your life, the resurrection process, the race preparation, the full restoration, as well as the upgrades. Should you have a hot rod, a gentleman racer or even a custom special, we'd love to share that with the membership. If you've yet to own one, there are plenty out there, that's a story too. Don't be shy...!

Motorcycle Hoarder

BINGO

A	TANK TO A BIKE YOU NO LONGER HAVE	RANDOM BOX OF STOCK PARTS	CHILD SIZED BIKES (BUT NO KIDS)	COLLECTION OF UNUSED STICKERS	CONSTANTLY SCROLLING MARKETPLACE
B	LESS BIKES RUNNING THAN NOT	EXHAUST FOR BIKES YOU DONT OWN	SOMETIMES FIND HARDWARE IN POCKETS	GARAGE SPACE > LIVING SPACE	ENTIRE CLOSET OF GEAR
C	WRENCH MORE THAN YOU RIDE	MOTOS AND/OR PARTS INSIDE THE HOUSE		USED CHAINS YOU NEVER THREW AWAY	BIKES RAN WHEN PARKED
D	HARD TO WALK THROUGH GARAGE	SINGLE FORK TUBE	PROJECT COST 50x MORE TO FIX THAN BUY	USE HELMETS AS WALL ART	COULD OPEN YOUR OWN PARTS STORE
E	IDENTIFY AS "COLLECTOR" OR "ENTHUSIAST"	SWAP MEETS ARE YOUR CHURCH	"I'M GOING TO SELL IT WHEN I'M DONE" & OTHER LIES	MOTORCYCLES WILL COME UP IN EVERY CONVO	MULTIPLE UNFINISHED PROJECTS