

Burton Newsletter #3 – January 2021

Here is our third newsletter. Thanks to those few that have sent me something to include and please send me anything that you think might be of interest. Unfortunately we are still living in a world blighted by the Covid 19 pandemic that is restricting all our normal activities. Stay safe and stay well. Eddy [Email me.](#)

Don't forget Tuesday January 12th, **Club Meeting by Zoom** 8.00 pm

[Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 937 187 9353 Passcode: BURTON

*Have faith in the Pfizer vaccine. Don't forget they make Viagra.
If they can raise the dead, they can save the living.*

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I have been having conversations by Zoom with Brian Slack and got him reminiscing about various things. I've made notes as I went along and tried to put them into something that you, the readers may find interesting. Any mistakes may be due to Brian's memory or more likely to my note taking. Eddy

The Burton Section – Early Days

Brian first met Glyn Hall in 1966 while Brian was sitting in the dentist's chair and Glyn was the dentist. Brian had a BSA badge on his jacket and Glyn asked if he was into bikes and so a friendship was formed. A group in of mainly businesspeople with a variety of interests used to meet on Monday nights in the Unicorn at Newton Solney. Brian and Glyn were interested in bikes and through further conversations with likeminded people in the area it was decided to form a group at the Beacon Hotel in Burton. In 1970 a member of the group, Les Wright made a list of all present. It was decided to apply for group membership of the VMCC. From then on, we had monthly meetings and in 1971 got full section status. Brian ran the first section event which was a breakfast run in 1971 starting from outside his house in Belvedere Road where eleven bikes started from. Brian still has pictures of this.

The section met at various places over the years including the *Beacon Hotel* on Tutbury Road, the *Spread Eagle*, the *New Inn* and the fishing club on Borough Road, Burton. With the help of Norman Shipley owner of Ashfield Garage on Scalpcliff Road we organised a show of motorcycles for a couple of years where Brian brought a couple of race bikes, Dave Hickman, Peter's father, an 80^{cc} Suzuki and various vintage bikes owned

by members. Bob Hazlehurst, Joe Fern, Vic Smith, Les Wright who acted as secretary and Peter Halliday to mention a few.

Due to pressure of work and bike racing Brian, although still involved, had to take a back seat for a while so John Goodall and later Ann Davy with the help of others moved the section forward.

Brian who knew quite a few of the lads who worked at Marston's and they suggested that they should try to have their meetings at Marstons Club on Shobnall Road. Then as now club meetings are held there and this was an excellent venue for the section's premier event, the Burton Parade after running it for two years from Bass' Brewery Museum. Brian, who was in a management position in an engineering business, F J Duckworth and responsible for buying 3000 tons of steel a year. He was able to use a bit of "leverage" with metal suppliers to get them to sponsor the trophies for the Parade. He also managed to get Dent's, Dumelow's, Maurice Evans and various others to put up some money for trophies and on more than one occasion he got his welding suppliers to provide a set of Webb Corbett's finest whisky and brandy glasses as a raffle prize.

Brian will be the first to admit that he is not great at writing but he is certainly good at talking and will do another interview and also Glyn Hall will be involved They should have lots of stories to tell for future instalments. I mentioned earlier that Brian worked in the engineering industry, mostly to do with steel fabrications, something I know a bit about as that is what I did as an apprentice more than 50 years ago. I'll leave you with a photograph of Brian at the tender age of 15 at his first engineering job.



Ted Wooley Brian Slack Alf Butler

Clayton Equipment Sropton Road Hatton 1953

—
I got bored over Christmas and started changing the wrappers over on the sweets in the tin of Celebrations. Wife wasn't happy, she really got her Snickers in a Twix.
—

Three Wheelers and Me

Actually, that should read three-wheelers and us as Shelley has driven them as much as me, but it does not quite rhyme.

If you have never driven a three-wheeler, then this is meant as an encouragement, and to debunk the urban myths that surround them, it is also a bit of a cautionary tale as they are a little weird and some of them are quite dreadful.

Over the past forty years we have owned six different ones. However, one of them looked so disappointing once I had rebuilt most of it that I got rid of it before ever driving it.

First up was a Reliant Supervan 111. This was a contradiction in terms as there was absolutely nothing super about it. Bought on the rebound from a gas guzzling BMC J4 van which we had used to move us up from London to Malvern, we were seduced by its meagre fuel consumption. I think in retrospect it was the worst vehicle we ever owned. It may have done fifty miles to the gallon of petrol, but it also did fifty miles to two gallons of water. If we set off for the two-hundred-mile trip to the south coast to see family, we had to carry about five gallons of water to get us there. It used to hoot like an old-fashioned kettle as it went up Birdlip Hill, but I must admit it never seized up.

In general, its performance was adequate and contrary to the old wife's tales it steered ok and the front wheel never fell off and it never got close to tipping over. It was used pretty mercilessly and even towed a trailer. It was noisy, smelly and very poorly built. I once smashed the driver's door window while slamming it shut in a bit of a temper. Once I had cleaned all the broken glass off the seats, I drove to Worcester to the dealer to try and get a replacement. I thought they would have to order one, but when I got there, they had them in stock as I was told it happened often if you wound the window up too far then it caught on the roof and smashed. "Yes, they often do that sir" was the reply. Would I have another? Definitely not. But it was my first introduction to a three-track vehicle, with all the disadvantages on rough ground and advantages of light responsive steering.



Reliant Supervan 111

Next up was a 1931 Ariel Fleet three-wheeler delivery truck. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

These were designed to be cheap and useful for the small business owner and came at the height of the economic depression, and probably did little to help its recovery.

Dunlop solid disc wheeled, two of which were at the front, chain drive to a massive sprocket on the back wheel, which was housed in an enormously heavy cast iron swinging arm attached to an iron channel section chassis. Powered by a 550cc Ariel side valve engine detuned to about 4.5 to 1 CR. I got hold of a road test. 0 to 20 in forty seconds. I decided I was never going to use it so got rid before spending any more time and money. I notice that a guy has just joined the AOMCC and he has two of them, so someone loves them.

Next was a 1934 BSA front wheel drive three-wheeler. This came as a kit from a guy in Essex; it was a four-cylinder version with BSA's own side valve engine of about 1100cc. The mechanical parts were massively over engineered and hence heavy, which made it hard to manufacture down to the tax weight limit for three wheelers in the 1930s. This tax concession was one of the big selling points for three wheelers then. BSA solved the weight problem by subcontracting the body manufacture to Carbodies, a firm that still exists, who made it using a light ash frame covered with 1mm thick plywood all covered with 24-gauge aluminium sheet. When I built the body finding 1mm thick exterior ply was quite a challenge, until I discovered that it was used in the manufacture of caravans.

The BSA was the second mass manufactured vehicle to have FWD, the first being Alvis, although you could be forgiven for not regarding Alvis as a mass manufacturer, the third of course was Citroen.

BSA started to make these little cars in 1929 powered by a Hotchkiss V twin engine, which rumour has was left over from an aero engine project. They made a huge number of these three wheelers and outsold companies like Morgan. The V twins had a reputation for being rather unreliable but the four-cylinder ones were pretty bulletproof. They went on making them until about 1936 and by then were also making a rather sporty looking four-wheeler.

All in all a very civilised little vehicle which we kept for about 12 years and carted the kids around in rallies and to school, although they did insist on us parking out of site to let them out when school was reached.

Performance wise it was quite quiet and gentle but adequate, the steering was light but the lock was poor due to the limitations of FWD and the only front brake was a single differential brake which tended to get oil on it from the diff. Apart from a slightly odd situation that could arise on steep hills with very steep cambers on the corners, where the front wheel might lift, it was an excellent car of its type, much better value than a Morgan for VMCC stuff and has a really good owners club for spare etc. One strange quirk was that the brake and the accelerator pedals were transposed: according to the drivers' handbook "for the convenience of the driver". Braking in a hurry not to be recommended.



BSA Three-wheeler

In 1997 or was it 1998 I was feeling bereft as I had parted with the BSA to make room for a Dellow trials car. I then discovered that I had very little talent for car trialling so after about three years sold it and went looking for something else on three wheels. I think it was in Classic Bike that I saw an advert for a kit of parts for a 1918 Morgan Grand Prix, and it was the right money and only down the road in Swadlincote. I had no experience of Morgans but knew a man who had. So I asked Pat Davy what he thought of Morgans like the one advertised. He gave a typical PD reply, "It'll be like going over Niagara Falls in a barrel." was the response. So I bought it anyway.

It was a really good kit of parts having had a lot of money spent on the chassis, wheels, engine etc. What was missing was a body. The car was a fairly early two speeder, Morgans come as two speeders or three speeders depending on age. One of the principles of Morgan design is a concept called "value engineering". This means that wherever possible any part fulfils more than one job. This keeps down weight, reduces complexity, and saves money; it also means they wear out quickly. So a rebuilt one ends up with many new parts including in this case a newly made chassis.

Examples of value engineering are for example the long chassis tubes that double as exhaust pipes, (hence the chassis rebuilding required), and steering pins with three jobs, king pin, suspension pin and mudguard holder. Mine is powered by a side valve water-cooled JAP v twin motor and the two speed operates through a simple sliding dog arrangement changing from one rear wheel sprocket to another one. No front brakes, two contracting band brakes on the rear, one foot operated which is ok and the other operated by your arm which practically requires the driver to dislocate their shoulder to use it. Starting is by a starting handle inserted into the side of the car and operated on the bevel box spindle. Tyres are beaded edge which have to be inflated to about 40psi giving a pretty firm ride. Although I have driven it through Bristol in the rush hour it is quite a handful with a lot for the driver to do but when I have lent it to people they seemed to pick it up pretty quickly. Good fun vintage motoring. The most alarming things to happen are blow outs and tyres coming off. This is particularly dangerous on the rear of a trike as you then get rear wheel steering which is to be avoided. A chap called Mick Sharpe made me the body recommended by Glyn Hall and very good he is too. We still have and use this trike.



1918 Morgan Grand Prix

After my bad accident I needed to commute to Stoke on Trent and could not use a bike so bought a Kit car-based trike called a JZR. These were designed and sold by John Ziemba and mine was powered by an 850 Moto Guzzi engine. An excellent thing which we used as a normal car for a couple of years, even taking it on holiday to Norway, which did turn out to be a bit wet. Quick, with very precise steering, the only thing I did not like was that it had Citroen 2CV wheels and tyres; these are very soft and tend to distort on the side walls going along. Unfortunately, they are the only tyres available for these wheels. We had one unnerving experience coming back from a jumble at Uttoxeter racecourse to Beamhill along Toot Hill Lane. This lane has a big strip of grass and stones in the middle and the rear wheel got rutted with the resulting rear wheel steer that took us up a very steep bank and within an ace of overturning. Lesson - trikes do not like rear wheel steering but do sometimes do it.



Pat and dad in the JZR

About 20 years ago I bought a 1933 sports Morgan three speeder. This is a very good car with a decent history; it has a water-cooled OHV JAP V twin engine and a three speed and reverse gearbox. Very useable with enormous amounts of torque. The ride can be quite harsh and bumpy and the overall impression is that of an angry beast trying to get out of a sack. This is the original Niagara Falls barrel but once you get the hang of it great fun although it does tend to shake itself to pieces on a fairly regular basis. Shelley drives it as much as I do and it is a pretty regular sight on Burton section events.



Shelley and Kath Partington in the 1933 Sports Morgan

Three wheelers - an experience worth having with the occasional moment when they bite back. *Pat Robotham*

A guy went off the road and finished up stuck between Mr Smith's house and the house of the Ball family.

Luckily he was dragged out of the wreckage by the Smiths.

Many of us will remember the sixties fondly as a time when Britain moved into a new era popularly known as the "Swinging Sixties". The country seemed to come alive and young people were at the vanguard as "Pop Culture" swept the country and the world. It was an exciting time for me as I left school, got my first job and my first motorcycle. The world of fashion changed with people like Mary Quant, a clothes designer who invented hot pants and miniskirts with high hemlines that also raised more than a few eyebrows at the time! She was also known for her use of pop art in fashion. Pop music had many famous names, perhaps The Beatles were the most famous at the time. The art world embraced "Pop Culture" and maybe the American Andy Warhol was a good example. He was a successful magazine and ad illustrator who became a leading artist of the 1960s Pop art movement. He is also famous for the celebrated quote: "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." Is that quote true? Our section chairman, Mick Dughan has sent the short piece below that suggest that in his case it may well be true. *Eddy*

Mick writes, I hope you had a good Christmas and New Year and are coping with the ongoing Covid 19 restrictions. We are coping OK, but it is more difficult at this time of the year with little to do outside and the cold weather. We try to get a regular walk whilst keeping safe. I am sending the story below; it may be of interest for the newsletter.

Once I was famous

Some years ago, we went on a coach holiday to Thailand and on arrival at Phuket we were offered an optional orientation tour. Since only six people took up the option it was arranged to go in a small minibus instead of the large coach. As we travelled round, we came to a T junction. We waited as a black Range Rover followed by a black Mercedes Benz went past, and then our driver pulled out behind them, only to see another black Range Rover behind us.

He realised that we had joined the convoy of Prince Albert of Monaco who was on an official visit. Not daring to stop he carried on for some distance with crowds waving to us. I'm not sure if they thought I was the Prince or not so I waved back anyway.

We eventually managed to turn left out of the convoy and as far as I know our driver got away with it.

Keep safe,

Regards *Mick*.

—

Audrey Hall

Just a few words to let you all know that Glyn Hall's wife Audrey passed away on 12th of December 2020 after a number of illnesses of late. Audrey supported the section right from the start and over the years was a member of the signing in team for the Burton Parade. When Glyn took over from me organising the trophies, she did all the paperwork and writing to the sponsors. Audrey also attended many events both motorcycling and steam rallies with the children as the photo shows. I am sure that all who knew her will miss her. Our thoughts and condolences go to Glyn and the family. *Brian Slack*



Audry Hall On Franscis Barnett

Stanford hall 1977

Audrey on a Francis Barnett at Stanford Hall - 1977



Audrey and Glyn Hall at the VMCC Barbeque 2018

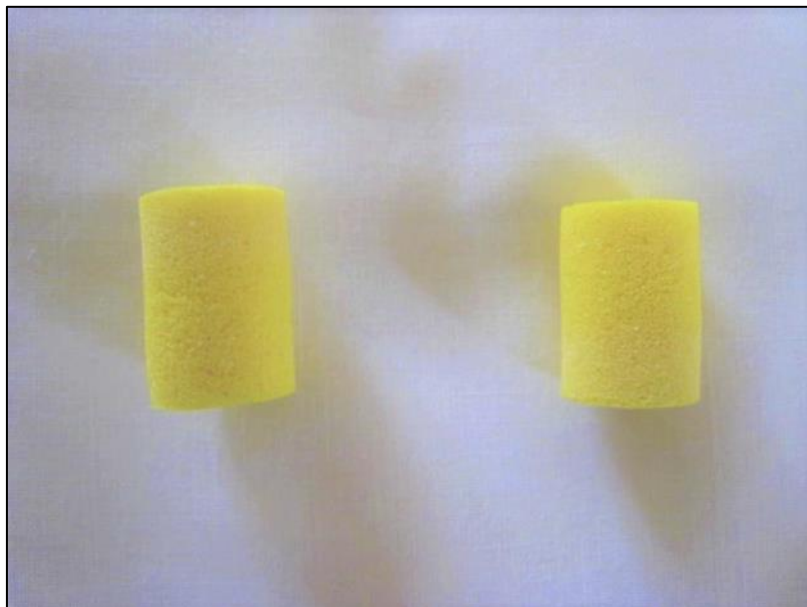
**Ear Plugs - Silence is Golden a "Gurgle Test" or a "Scientific Study"
You Decide.**

I'm not sure how many of you wear ear plugs but, my car is relatively quiet, so that's what I'm trying to achieve when I'm out riding on two wheels. So where did it all start? This is where I have to admit that I'm a Brummie born & bred. During the 1950's on occasional Sundays our parents would take us to the then, Royal Borough of Sutton Coldfield to visit the park. At the town gate entrance there was a permanent fun fair and we kids were always attracted to the merry go round rides. Never mind the one with the horses, my twin brother and I liked the one with the cars, motorbikes, tractors, and a double decker bus. Correct! A double decker bus one each side of the ride to balance the load. Remember these rides were for children up to a certain height. I think my twin brother and I were attracted to the upper front deck since you had to climb the stairs at the rear. He was on one bus and me on the other. So, by now I guess you are thinking where do ear plugs come in? From previous trips to the fun fair, I remembered how noisy the rides were and decided before we went to make some ear plugs (now we're getting there). With my older brother's tools, I cut about 3/8" off some garden cane, (remember we were working in Imperial then) knocked a carpet tack partly into one end and glued some cotton wool on the other - perfect! The custom-made pair were put into a match box, so I was a happy little chappy. At the fun fair, we alighted our respective upper deck front seats, I paid the merry go round man his fee, put my ear plugs in and enjoyed the ride. Did they work? At the time I think they did but it was a long time ago. The final part of this tale was that when we twins returned to our parents only one of us had paid for the ride. Now that's what I call a bargain and one advantage of being an identical twin! Noise wasn't really a problem for my upbringing until powered two wheelers came along. I remember from the early to 60's to the 70's ear plugs were not part of my riding kit and not even considered by any of my other riding buddies either. This was because most of our riding was to and from work and seeing friends in urban areas with only getting out at on long runs at the weekends. I think motorcycle racers may have stuffed cotton wool in their ears since track bikes had racing exhausts. The only time I became aware of high noise levels was when one of my

friends decided he wanted to go racing and he bought a 350 Aermacchi. Unfortunately, he was racing against 350 Yamahas and during the pre-race warm up in the paddock noise levels were ear splitting. I insisted on wearing ear defenders. Only a few mechanics wore them, and we all got funny looks! Time went by and cars replaced bikes as my primary form of transport, and it wasn't until the early 1980's when I was in my 30's that I could afford both. During the period without two wheels, hearing protection at work became mandatory and ear plugs were freely available. It wasn't until I went on two wheels again that I realised how noisy motor cycling really was but with ear plugs inserted it made riding so much more pleasurable. For several years, I had the choice of the Bilsom cotton wool style, or the EAR yellow foam plugs. At the time I couldn't determine which were better but of the two the EAR foam plugs were more comfortable. So at least that was one part of scientific investigation sorted.



Bilsom Cotton Wool Filled Ear Plugs



EAR yellow foam plugs

Then came the time to retire - whoopee - more riding time. Going off the subject again, I have 3 forms of two-wheeler transport, a Honda XBR 500, a Suzuki 200cc Burgman scooter, (why I bought it is a different story), and a BSA Bantam - no laughing please! So now was the time to evaluate ear plugs. Most of my rides are on the scooter since it is very comfortable and there is plenty of storage under the seat to stow riding gear when I/we reach our destination. Runs are usually between 250 and 350 miles a day. If you haven't read my

previous missives or forgotten, I wear a Vcan helmet fitted with a radio. Hmm, conflict of interests methinks but quietness is the priority.

By now the Bilsom cotton wool ear plugs were either scarce or no longer available, so I now had the choice of 3 different styles of ear plugs. Yellow EAR plugs, bullet foam plugs, and silicon fir tree plugs.



High Density orange bullet foam plugs



Yellow Silicon fir tree plugs

Whilst out riding it was difficult to determine which were the best but I did find that again the Yellow EAR plugs were the most comfortable. When I occasionally refuelled wearing my helmet and ear plugs, I noticed there was a significant difference in the noise level of the bubbles gurgling through the holes in the overflow guard in the fuel tank. I think the reason was that the gurgling was at a higher frequency than when riding. Depending on which ear plugs were fitted, I now had a "scientific" yardstick to evaluate them.



Scooter petrol tank showing overflow guard

The "fuelling" tests proved that the yellow EAR plugs were best, a close second were the orange plugs, and the silicon plugs last. During 2019 when out riding with my friends, at one of our breaks during the day, the subject of ear plugs was raised. One of them had some different plugs which were a lump of yellow foam on the end of a blue plastic stick!



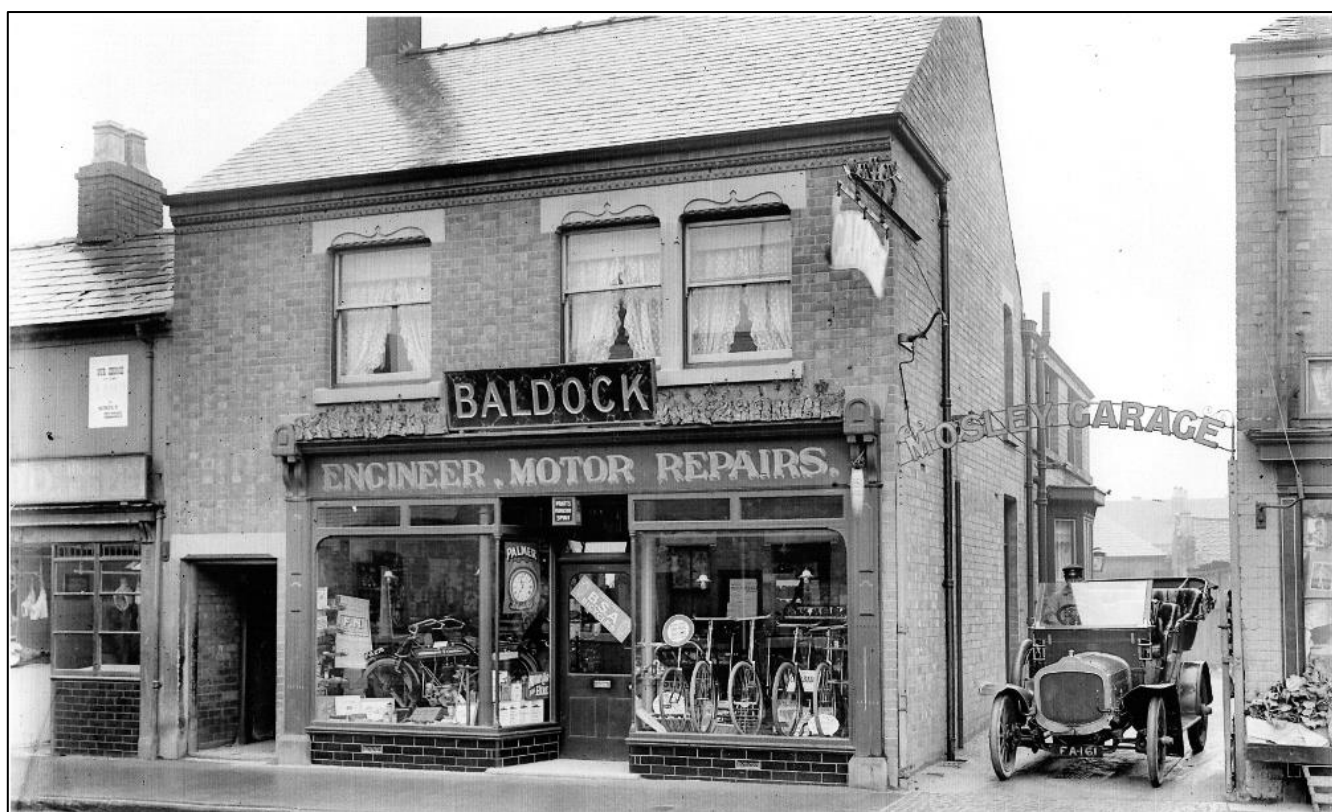
Yellow foam mushroom on a blue stick

I was given a pair to try and I noticed noise levels were much lower but I could hear the radio in my helmet more clearly. Strange! As for the gurgle test - what gurgling - I couldn't hear a thing. So far, they are the best ear plugs I have used but I must insert them at an angle for the best results. As for comfort I don't think they are quite as comfortable as the yellow EAR plugs so I need to do more riding to find out I'm not sure if a custom-made pair would be any quieter but so far, I'm happy with my lump of yellow foam on the end of a blue stick! The question I now have for you all - "A gurgle test or a scientific study?" You decide.

Don Eades

I thought I broke my ankle when I tripped over a box of Kleenex, but the doctor said its only tissue damage.

Glyn Hall sent the photograph below. He says the shop is still there on Branston Road in Burton but the 1914 B.S.A. in the window is sold. The detail is great for such an old photograph. If you look closely there is someone wearing a uniform cap driving the car, maybe a chauffeur. Maybe a butcher shop next door with meat hanging in the window.



Calendar 2021

N.B. This is a very provisional calendar based on last year's calendar. Events, contact information, etc will be added or amended as and when we have it and all of this may be subject to change.

Covid 19 restrictions if still current will apply to all events.

Date	Venue and Time	Contact
January 12 th	Club Meeting by Zoom 8.00 pm Zoom Link Meeting ID: 937 187 9353 Passcode: BURTON	
February 9 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
March 9 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
April 13 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
May ? TBA	Aviation Wolds Run	
May 9 th	Burton Parade	
May 11 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
June 8 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
June 22 nd	Chip Shop Run 7.00 pm Marston's	
July 4 th	Easy Does It (Pre1960 and upto 250cc 1971) Marston's 11.00 am	Mick Leach 01283 815487
July ? TBA	Hatton Carnival	
July 13 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
July 27 th	Evening Run + Pie and Peas - 7.00 pm Marston's - Pre- book	Pre- book Brian Slack 01283 544500
August / TBA	BBQ Pat & Shelley – Kingston from 3.00 pm ST14 8QW- Gmap	
August 8 th	Tax Dodger's Run (Tax exempt bikes only)	Mick Leach 01283 815487

August 10 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
August 22 nd	Evening Run – Last of the Summer Wine - 7.00 pm Marston's	
September ? TBA	Draycot Show – Arrive before 11.00 am	
September 14 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
September 19 th	Breakfast Run 7.30 am Marston's	Pre- book Brian Slack 01283 544500
October 3 rd	Autumn Mist Run Start 10.00 Conkers	*Volunteer wanted*
October 12 th	Club Night 8.00 pm Marston's	
October 26 th	Harvest Supper 8.00 pm Marston's	Pre- book Brian Slack 01283 544500
November 7 th	Frost Bite Run 10.00 am Tutbury Car Park	Vic Carrington-Porter 01283 619489
November 9 th	Section AGM 8.00 pm Marston's	
December 14 th	Beer & Skittles 8.00 pm Bridge Inn	Vic Carrington-Porter 01283 619489