

# Trail Gazette

March 2016

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## February 27, 2016 Meeting Minutes

President Bruce Reichelt called the meeting to order at 12:58 pm at the Kelly's Olympian, downtown Portland.

### Officers in Attendance:

Officers attending were Bruce, Treasurer Tom Ruttan, Vice President Chuck Hodson and your faithful secretary, Tom Krise. *[editor's note: other officers are also faithful]*

### Attendees:

Also in attendance was our intrepid Newsletter team, Tom and Jen Nielsen, and Jackie Colwell, Ron Saunders, and Gene Walker.

### Reports:

Last meeting minutes was given by Tom K., following correspondence from Brewers Union 180 in Oakridge, Oregon. Tom R. gave the Treasurer's report, which consisted of expenses and income for 2015, our chapter's tax reports, and renewal of our corporate status. Our treasury can be enhanced by judicious spending and seeking income by selling ads in our newsletter.

### Old Business:

- It was also reported that the One Motorcycle Show is interested in working with us in the future events. **Tom K. motioned and Jackie 2nd The Club will reimburse Tom N. for personal funds spent on the One Motorcycle Show. Motion Passed.**
- Also, Bruce mentioned that we should look into providing a stipend for newsletter editors, as it was indicated in past practice.
- Next was Road Run Committee. Tom N. indicated development of a poster we can send to other club's newsletters.

- Nothing to report from the Bylaw Committee.
- Under Old Business, discussion centered on changes of meeting format. Tom N. spoke of separation from the social and business functions of the club, with most club business done by a the officers. Other members are welcome to attend these Officer Business meetings. **Tom N. Motioned and Jen 2<sup>nd</sup> we change the format to: Officer/Business meeting at 11 am, followed by a social gathering at noon, and then a ride or other activity. Motion Passed.**

## NEXT OTC MEETING: March 26, 2016

11 AM Officers Business Meeting  
*(all members welcome)*

**High Noon – Social Meeting/Potluck  
Welding Presentation by Bruce Reichelt**

The Old Texaco Gas Station, Antique  
Powerland, 3995 Brooklake Road NE,  
Brooks, Oregon.

### New Business:

- With consideration of what May's calendar looks like, **Jen motioned and Gene 2<sup>nd</sup>, we hold our chapter meeting at Tom and Stephanie's house on May 14. Motion Passed.** This year it will be a picnic-style potluck. Tom will provide pulled pork.
  - The May 14 meeting will be at Tom Krise and Stephanie Schmidt's house at 1615 Court St NE, Salem.
  - We will have the Officer's Business Meeting at 10:30, followed by a picnic at noon and a ride afterwards.
  - Tom can be reached at 503-881-1699.



- Tom Ruttan mentioned he has updated the membership roster.
- Next meeting: March 26, 2015, noon, at the Old Gas Station at Brooks. Officer's Business Meeting is at 11am, potluck social around noon, followed by a presentation on welding by Bruce Reichelt.
- **Jen called for adjournment and nobody objected.** It was 2:15pm.
- Respectfully submitted by Tom Krise, Secretary

#### **To the Oregon Trail Club:**

Don Woodard passed away February 20<sup>th</sup>. He was 81. He was a charter member of OTC. He often spoke of how much fun all the rides were. In fact, he said he never went on a ride that he didn't have a great time. The club gave him the opportunity to meet and enjoy some of the best and most happy people in his life. He loved working on his old motorcycles, going to swap meets, and tipping a few with the boys. Thank you all for making his life a very happy one.

Gail Woodard

## **Honeymoon Triumph**

*By Tom Ruttan*

### **In The Beginning**

This is the story of one Triumph that represented the beginning of this line of modern era (that is, modern through circa 1970's) that was the most popular British motorcycle of its time.

### **The Chase**

The year was 1987 and I had been looking for a pre-war Triumph twin for some time. My motivation was that that these models represented some of the rarest Triumphs in the hobby and the most collectable and desirable bikes a serious Triumph collector could want, for reasons that will become clear in this article. I attended the annual vintage motorcycle swap meet and bike show in Tsawwassen, British Columbia, that year and saw a postcard advertising a 1940 Triumph Speed Twin for sale by one of the swap meet vendors. That person turned out to be Ray Tolman, a school teacher from Osoyoos, B.C. who was selling some of his bike collection. Ray did not have the bike at the swap meet, so after some additional discussion and examination of pictures of the bike, I was interested enough to agree to visit Ray a couple of weeks later to see the bike first hand.

The bike turned out to be a 10-year old restoration in good shape with nearly all the correct, hard to find

parts in place. Ray was the 3<sup>rd</sup> owner, having bought it from Peter Clegg of Vancouver B.C., who had done the restoration. I was very pleased with the Speed Twin and the price was reasonable, so we made a deal. I trailered the pre-war beauty back to Oregon with a stop at the US Border to do the dance with the Border Patrol to secure the proper import papers and make a contribution to the US Treasury with some import tariffs.

Before I cover the rest of the history of this machine, a little background of the origins of the Speed Twin is in order.



### **The History of the Breed**

The Triumph Speed Twin, introduced in 1938, is one of the most important motorcycles ever produced. The Speed Twin, almost on its own, took Triumph from bankruptcy to being one of the most important motorcycle manufacturers in the world. When Edward Turner joined Triumph in 1935 as, in his own words: "Works Manager," "Sales Manager," "General Manager," and "Chief Buyer" the company was seriously short of cash. However, it did have a range of well designed, and modestly successful, single-cylinder machines which Turner promptly re-branded with the snappy titles of "Tiger 70," "Tiger 80," and "Tiger 90" - the number indicating the bike's supposed top speed.

Turner had always been a fan of parallel twins. In fact, his Ariel "Square 4," from his previous stint with Ariel, was actually a pair of conjoined parallel twins. It was no surprise then, that when he arrived at Triumph, the factory absolutely was going to have a twin. This was a fortunate set of circumstances because Triumph did in fact own an extremely clever, well designed and attractive twin, which Turner could have immediately utilized. Egos being what they are for high achievers, Turner wanted to make his own mark rather than using Triumph's existing twin that was a product of the fertile brain of



Val Page, who was unquestionably the finest British motorcycle designer of all time - and Turner actively loathed Page.

Throughout his working life, Turner was blessed with an uncanny knack of knowing exactly what made motorcyclists buy bikes. This is easy to write, but incredibly hard to achieve. First, Turner knew that mass sales would not come from a product that was too great a step from the known. Innovators are wonderful - but they never make any money. So, Turner's Speed Twin engine looked very much like the Triumph's existing twin port single - and many of its competitors too. The new engine was actually narrower than the single it replaced and was lighter too. However, it was vastly smoother and made more torque lower down the rev range than its single-cylinder competitors. It was also easier to start than the Singles and much less demanding to ride.

With clean external lines and fully enclosed, oil-tight valve gear, the Speed Twin was ultra-modern for 1937 - and in every respect a sophisticated motor. Yet, by having simple push-rod operated valve gear, the new engine used well known, and solidly proven, engineering, so development time was minimal. Turner also made the Twin cheap and easy to manufacture, so that from day one, the Speed Twin generated profit for Triumph. A key part of the new bike's commercial success was that Turner cunningly employed virtually the whole of the Tiger 90 chassis. The new engine simply slotted into the old single's chassis using nothing more complex than different engine plates.

Finally came the sprinkling of magic dust which Turner, at least at this stage of his career, carried round in his pocket. First, he refused to have the steering head angle at the optimum rake for precise handling. To do so would have cramped the lines of the new bike and Turner wanted it to look lithe, muscular and feline. Finally, he decided on what was to become the world's most famous color for a motorcycle: Triumph Amaranth Red - set off with hand painted gold lining.

The result was a bike so instantly popular that only the most favored customers were allowed to buy a Speed Twin from their Triumph dealer. Turner's brand new baby was that popular! It became the basis for all the famous Triumph twins that followed, including the Thunderbird, Bonneville, and Tigers.

### **The First Chase**

Ray was the 3<sup>rd</sup> owner of this bike, which makes me the 4<sup>th</sup> owner, and that is pretty cool since it is now 71 years old! But the story of this bike before Ray's ownership makes this bike even more special. Peter Clegg, who sold the Speed Twin to Ray, had his eye on this machine many years before he took possession and did the restoration.

Sometime in the early 70's, Peter started to notice this old, rusty Triumph leaning against a fencepost in a yard in Vancouver along a route he drove pretty regularly. Being an old bike nut and eternal optimist as many of us vintage bike crazies are, he stopped one day to inquire about the bike with the hopes that he could find the owner and strike a quick deal to take this lovely rust bucket home. This is how he met Arthur Colquhoun, the owner of the house and the bike in question. Of course Arthur had no intention of selling the bike and, in fact, said that he intended to restore the machine "someday." (How many times have we all heard that?) Peter was quite disappointed but persisted in dropping by once and awhile to test the waters, get to know Arthur, and learn the story of this Triumph.

### **The Honeymoon Triumph**

Arthur bought the Speed Twin from Deeley's Motorcycle Shop in Vancouver brand new in 1940. Many of you are aware of Deeley's because it is still in business. Deeley's is now a large Harley-Davidson dealer with a very impressive vintage motorcycle museum attached to the dealership, along with an extensive collection of vintage motorcycles. Back in 1940, they were also the Western Canadian distributor for Triumph, as well as a dealer.





Arthur special-ordered this bike with the road touring options that included valenced fenders, a 19" front wheel (instead of the standard 20"), and a passenger pillion seat on the rear fender. Peter learned later that this is a very rare option package that made the bike even more unique and valuable. Why did Arthur order the road touring option? Well, he just got married, and he and his new bride intended to ride down to Oregon for their honeymoon. Think how brave and hardy (fool hardy?) his new bride was to agree to ride ~1200 miles on a small pillion seat on the back of a rigid frame Triumph. They don't make gals like that anymore!

Arthur and his bride indeed rode the Triumph to Oregon and back and as near as Peter or anyone else could tell it was a successful journey because Arthur was married to the same woman all those many years later when Peter was actively courting Arthur for ownership of his Honeymoon Triumph.

When Arthur and his sturdy bride returned home from the trip, he leaned the bike against a fencepost and there it sat for the next 38 years while Arthur went off to World War II, and returned to a job and family that kept him away from his trusty Triumph for all those years. This is how Peter found it in the 70's; complete and original, but very rusty.

### **The Deal**

Peter got to know Arthur and his wife pretty well over the next few years, so when Arthur died in 1978, his wife called to offer Peter the bike. In some ways, it was an easy restoration because it was very complete and original with relatively low miles on it, but it was quite challenging because it had sat out in the British Columbia weather all those years. Peter was able to salvage all the rusty parts and bring the bike back to life, both cosmetically and functionally. As a testament to his restoration skills, the bike has performed reliably and still turns heads in the 29 years I have owned it.

### **The Final Word**

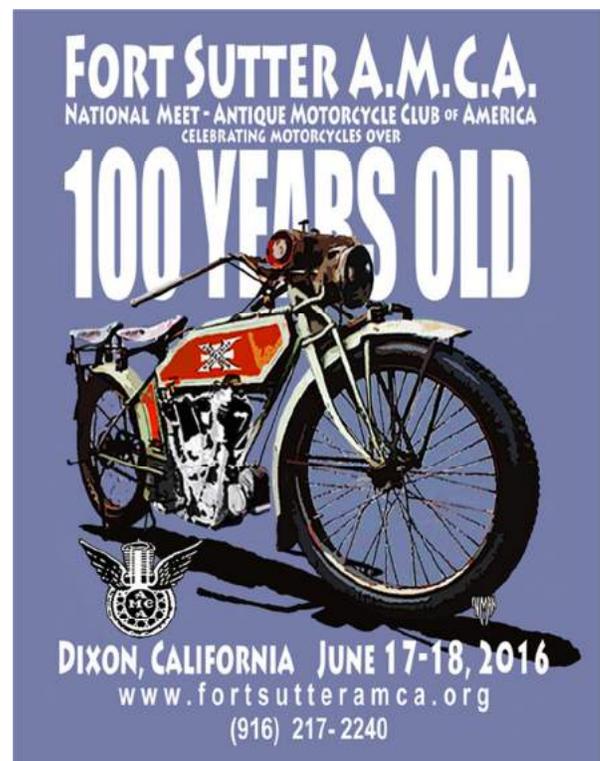
Since I bought the bike from Ray in 1987, it has been the crown jewel of my collection. I have had fun taking it to various shows where it picked up honors such as the *Best British Bike* award at the 1988 VME Isle of Vashon meet, *People's Choice* award at the 1989 OVM spring meet in Corvallis, and recently runner up for *Best of Show* at the 2008 *All British Field Meet* in Portland. I feel privileged to own this pre-war Triumph, enjoy looking at its classic lines, and riding in many of the vintage motorcycle

club events in the Portland area. Because this is an older restoration, it has a few scrapes and dings from years of use, so would not do well in concours judging events. Maybe that is why I enjoy this bike so much; I don't have to worry about taking it out and using it for what it was designed for: riding it on the road and having fun.

\*Ref.: Frank Welling, "Memorable MS: 1938 Triumph Speedtwin", Motorcycle USA.com, May 26, 2010.



*1950s Trucks for Johnson Motors (JOMO, West coast Distributors for Triumph). These were customized Chevy trucks with modified pick up beds, extensive signage on the sides, and painted the factory Blue & White colors of Triumph. There were three identical trucks that were loaded with Triumphs to be raced at Catalina Island.*





## 1940 Era Norton and BSA Motorcycles *The SS Thistlegorm*

The SS Thistlegorm was a British armed freighter launched in April 1940 during World War II. After three successful voyages to collect war related resources from the US, Argentina, and the West Indies, she set sail on her fourth voyage from Glasgow on 2 June 1941, destined for Alexandria, Egypt. The vessel's cargo included trucks, armored cars, Norton 16H and BSA motorcycles, guns, ammunition, radio equipment, aircraft parts, railway wagons, and two steam locomotives, the latter carried on deck. The cargo was to resupply allied forces in Egypt, which would become part of the famed British Eighth Army in September 1941.



Due to German and Italian naval and air force activity in the Mediterranean, the Thistlegorm sailed as part of a convoy via Cape Town, South Africa, where she refueled, before heading north up the East coast of Africa and into the Red Sea. Due to a collision in the Suez Canal, the convoy could not transit through the canal to reach



the port of Alexandria and instead moored at "Safe Anchorage F" in September 1941 where she remained at anchor.

Because of the large build-up of Allied troops in Egypt during September 1941, German intelligence suspected that there was a troop carrier in the area bringing in additional troops. Two German bombers were dispatched from Crete to find and destroy the troop carrier. This search failed, but one of the bombers discovered the vessels moored in Safe Anchorage F. Targeting the largest ship, they dropped two bombs on the *Thistlegorm*, both of which struck near the stern of the ship at 0130 hours on October 6th, 1941. The bomb and the explosion of some of the ammunition stored in hold led to the sinking of the *Thistlegorm* with the loss of four sailors and five members of the Royal Navy gun crew. The survivors were picked up by HMS *Carlisle*. Most of the cargo remained within the ship, with the exception of the steam locomotives from the deck, which were blown off to either side of the wreck.



In the early fifties, Jacques-Yves Cousteau discovered the *Thistlegorm*. He raised several items from the wreck, including a motorcycle, the captain's safe, and the ship's bell. The February 1956 edition of *National Geographic* clearly shows the ship's bell in place and Cousteau's divers in the ship's Lantern Room. Cousteau documented diving on the wreck in part of his book *The Living Sea*. The depth of the wreck at around 100 feet at its deepest makes it ideal for diving without the need for specialized equipment and training; also, the massive explosion that sank her had blown much of her midships superstructure away and makes the wreck very accessible to sport divers today. Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS\\_Thistlegorm#cite\\_note-divernet2006-5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Thistlegorm#cite_note-divernet2006-5)



See a 1942 training film prepared for the British Army during World War II on maintenance of the Norton 16H on You-Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ7FMGXIM9E>



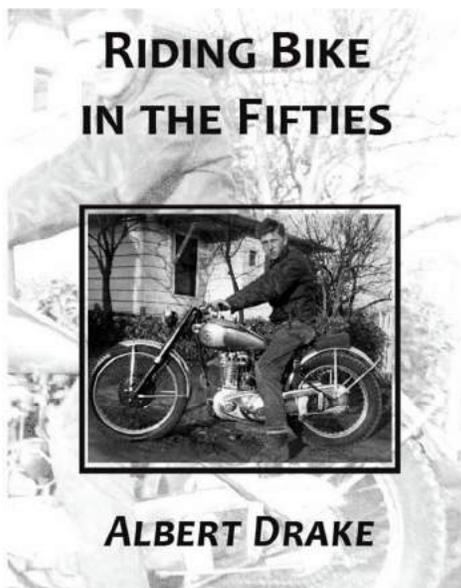
## Riding Bike in the Fifties A Book by Albert Drake

(Of Potential interest to OTC members)

When there were far fewer people around, far fewer laws and regulations, when the legal speed limit was 75 mph, when gas was cheap, when driving was a pleasure, if you owned a hot machine you could point the grill down an empty road and go!

"Sometimes, on certain mornings in early fall, when there is a light fog and the air holds a hint of moisture, I can recall so clearly the sound of a single's exhaust. The mist put a layer of moisture on the chrome, and I'd wipe dew off the seat with a rag, tickle the carb and mount the bike. Using the compression release, I'd kick the piston through until it was on compression stroke and kick it without the compression release, maybe once, maybe more, until it fired. The exhaust was crisp, sharp, with a bark as I cracked the throttle."

Thus begins "Riding Bike in the Fifties," hot-rod historian Albert Drake's most recent book. It's a journey into memory, back to a time that has to be called the Golden Age of Motorcycles. British bikes--BSA, Triumph, AJS, Matchless, Norton, Velocette--had invaded roads and race tracks previously dominated by Harley-Davidson and Indian. In the open land surrounding cities, bikers were blazing trails, making Hare and Hound courses. If there was a rule it was "run what ya brung", never mind about insurance, licenses, headlights, mufflers, crash helmets. There never was a time when so many were so free on two wheels.



"Riding Bike in the Fifties" is jammed with first-hand accounts of riding and racing motorcycles in the 1950s and vintage black and white photographs and illustrations. Topics range from "What We Wore," "Where We Rode," to "The Morning Speed Run," and "Three-Wheeling."

131 pages, 10 x 7 x 0.3 inches, perfect-bound (September, 2012)  
Stone Press; ISBN: 0-936892-27-7; Signed copy...**\$19.95**

Mail inquiries or orders to: Flat Out Press #WEB, PO Box 66874, Portland, OR 97290  
<http://flatoutpress.blogspot.com/2012/09/riding-bike-in-fifties.html>

### Jokes of the Month From "Car Talk"

*Paradox:* Two physicians.

*Parasites:* What you see from the top of the Eiffel Tower.

*Pharmacist:* A helper on the farm.

*Polarize:* What penguins see with.

*Primate:* Removing your spouse from in-front of the TV.

*Relief:* What trees do in the spring.

*Rubberneck:* What you do to relax your wife.

*Selfish:* What the owner of a seafood store does.

*Sudafed:* Brought litigation against a government official.

*Subdued:* Like a guy, like works on one of those, like, submarines, man!

### SUBMISSIONS TO NEWSLETTER:

Please submit article contributions, classified advertisements, photos, trip reports, and suggestions by the second Thursday of each month. Prefer Word or Adobe PDF for text and .jpg or PDF for graphics to  
[nielsents@comcast.net](mailto:nielsents@comcast.net)

Thanks, Tom and Jen



## Classified



### **For Sale: 1980 BSA Thunderbolt 650**

Appears stock except for handle bars . Runs fine, starts first kick, less than 6,000 miles. I have had the bike for a long time. Asking \$2,900, Bill Dodson 541-592-6073 [sitnbull48@gmail.com](mailto:sitnbull48@gmail.com)



### **Vintage Motorcycle Enthusiast**

Portland Chapter on the second Tuesday of Every Month at 7:00 PM noon at the Rambler, 4205 N Mississippi Ave, Portland OR <http://www.vmemc.org/>

### **Oregon Vintage Motorcyclists**

OVM meets on the Second Saturday of Every Month at noon at Columbia River Brewing, 1728 NE 40th, Portland OR 97212 <http://www.oregonvintage.org/>

## Upcoming Events

Date	Event
March 26	<b>OTC Meeting</b> 11 AM Officers Business Meeting (all members welcome); <b>High Noon-Social Meeting/Potluck</b> The Old Texaco Gas Station, Antique Powerland, 3995 Brooklake Road NE, Brooks, Oregon
March 31-Apr 2	<b>PIR NW Car Collectors Swap Meet,</b> Portland International Raceway <a href="http://portlandraceway.com/?/events/major_events">http://portlandraceway.com/?/events/major_events</a>
April 1-3	<b>Portland Swap Meet, Expo Center</b> Mostly car and truck, but some motorcycles, tools, memorabilia, etc. 3,500 vendors <a href="http://www.portlandswapmeet.com/">http://www.portlandswapmeet.com/</a>
April 2-3	<b>Clubman's All British Motorcycle Show and Swap Meet</b> Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, San Jose, CA <a href="http://www.bsacnc.org/clubmans.htm">http://www.bsacnc.org/clubmans.htm</a>
April 23	<b>OVM Piccolo Ride</b> Portland, Oregon 250 cc and smaller, scooters also <a href="http://www.oregonvintage.org/calendar.php">http://www.oregonvintage.org/calendar.php</a>
April 23	<b>Washington Vintage Motorcyclists Swap Meet &amp; Bike Show</b> Skagit County Fairgrounds, Mt. Vernon, Washington <a href="http://www.washingtonvintagemotorcyclists.org">www.washingtonvintagemotorcyclists.org</a>
April 30-May 1	<b>Steel Stampede, Crooked River Ranch,</b> Vintage Trials and Motocross-AHMRA Terrebonne, OR <a href="http://www.steelstampede.org">www.steelstampede.org</a>
May 1	<b>Classic &amp; Vintage Swap Meet &amp; Show &amp; Shine</b> Cloverdale County Fairgrounds Agridex Building, Sonoma, California <a href="http://www.classicbikeswapmeet.com/">http://www.classicbikeswapmeet.com/</a>
May 21	<b>OVM Swap Meet</b> Corvallis, Oregon <a href="http://www.oregonvintage.org/calendar.php">http://www.oregonvintage.org/calendar.php</a>
June 3-5	<b>Reno Street Vibrations</b> Reno, Nevada <a href="http://roadshowsreno.com/sv_spring.php">roadshowsreno.com/sv_spring.php</a>
June 10-12	<b>Redwood Run</b> Piercy, California <a href="http://www.redwoodrun.org/">http://www.redwoodrun.org/</a>
June 17-19	<b>Chief Joseph Rally</b> Grant County Fairgrounds, John Day, Oregon <a href="http://www.bmwro.org/content.aspx?page_id=87&amp;club_id=301799&amp;item_id=476064">http://www.bmwro.org/content.aspx?page_id=87&amp;club_id=301799&amp;item_id=476064</a>
June 17-18	<b>Fort Sutter National Motorcycle show and Swap Meet</b> Dixon Fairgrounds, Dixon, California <a href="http://www.amcafortsutter.org/events.html">http://www.amcafortsutter.org/events.html</a>
July 21-23	<b>AMCA OTC Mountain Hop Rally</b> Holiday Farm RV Park <a href="http://antiquemotorcycleoregon.com">antiquemotorcycleoregon.com</a>



Oregon Trail Chapter, AMCA

