



Shoptorque

Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal

Founded February 1981

January 2024

Chairman's Chatter

Chairman's Report to the Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal - 2023.
Welcome to the 42nd AGM of the Classic Motorcycle Club of Natal.

To our Members on the Sick list, we wish them a speedy recovery.
We also remember our Members who have passed away.
Alan Gainsford, Arthur Warren, Theo Alberda, Clive Rossiter and Mike Treverthan.

On a Financial Note.

It is with your Membership and continued support of our Fundraising, Raffles and Sales from the "Refreshments" - Piston BROKE, that we will not be increasing Subs for 2024.

An active Club with Breakfast Runs this Year to Impala Ridge, the pre D-J ride, the Century Run, the Grand Exotic Restaurant, the Cotswold Cafe', the Dog House Craft Cafe', Steam Train chase. We supported Cars in the Park, Waterfall Methodist Church, Forest Hills Sports Club and our own Gymkhana/Family Day at the Club. We visited, Robin McDonald and Mac McKenzie's "Man Caves".

Our Members entered the D-J, Natal Classic, Magnum and Fairest Cape Rallies.

The Show Bike of the Month continues to showcase the range of Motorcycles that this Club has. It is always nice to look at and talk the Members about their Bikes.

The Raffle is a Fundraiser for our Club. However it is also upto you the Members to come forward with items for the table.

To the Committee, a BIG THANK YOU for your hard work and commitment to the Club, without which we would not be able to function.

In closing, I would like to wish all Members a relaxed time with Family over the Festive Season.

Looking forward to seeing you once again next Year.

Derek Pirie
Chairman On Two and sometimes on Three Wheels



Alan Young receiving his trophy from Chairman Derek

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Classic Motorcycles leaving UK shores

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New Members:

No New Members

Those Sick, Those We Remember:

Our sincere condolences to Rod Thomas and family on the loss of his wife Virginia.

Bike of the Month Competition Categories

January:	Best of British including best AJS / Matchless
February:	Golden Oldies (Dec 1936) & Golden Years (1937- 1945) Trophy
March:	Day of the Rising Sun
April:	BMW – Dave Turnbull Trophy
May:	Tiddlers & Scooters
June:	Showbike Trophy
July:	Concourse Competition
August:	Post-Classic (2001 – 2010)
September:	European – including Spain, Holland, France, Belgium, Germany (excl BMW), Italy, Czechoslovakia and Russia
October:	Racing Bike & Classic Off Road
November:	Modern and any make / classic from the USA / Canada
December:	AGM – No Competition

Bike of the Month Competition Guidelines:

Members are reminded that to qualify for the competitions they must be fully paid up members; the bike entered in the competition must be owned by them; it must comply with the category entered and it must be a runner. If the bike is a non-runner it will be accepted for display, but will not be considered as a competitor.

Many thanks and regards,
Alan.

Our sincere thanks to Paul Ward of Startline for his very generous sponsorship of prize money.

The Opinions expressed in Shop Torque are not necessarily those of the Chairman, Committee or the Editor

Editorial

Greetings Everyone

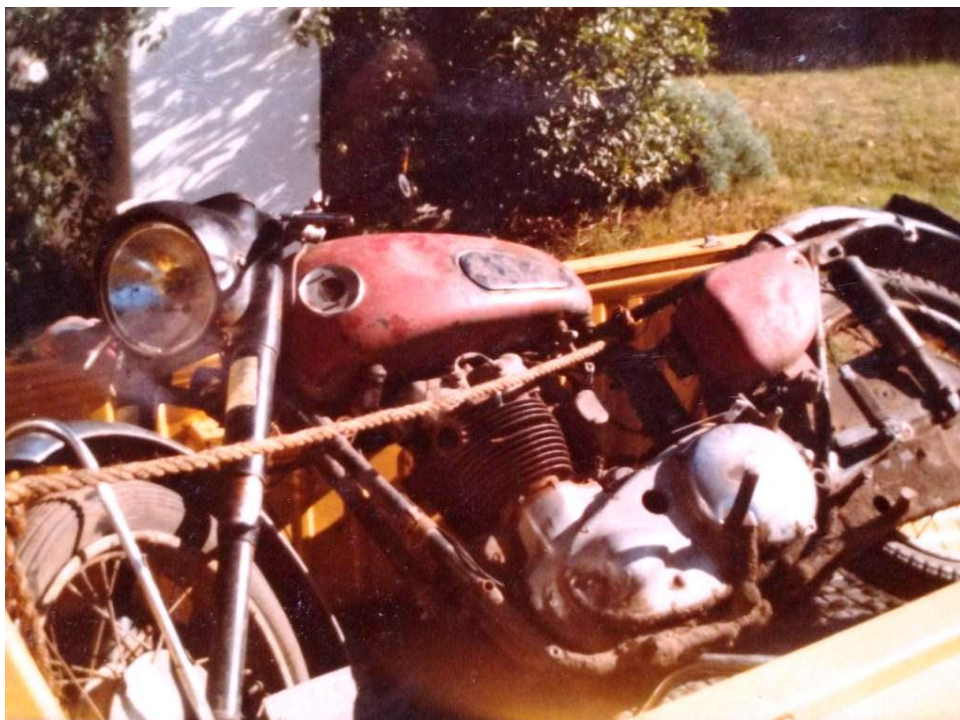
I have offered to take over the Editors job. My thanks go to Jason Anderson for keeping the club updated over the last few years. Being a club's Editor is no easy task and to put a newsletter together takes many hours of work. So you as members of the club are the eyes and ears, I am just the scribe. Therefore I would be interested in any articles you may have. We also need stories on your restoration progress and interesting motorcycles you may own.

If I may introduce myself:

I was born in Durban but my early years I lived in Darnall as my dad was the sugar mill foreman. We then moved to Hillcrest and I matriculated from Hillcrest High School. In my matric year we had a visit from a Defence Force sergeant who gave us an offer we could not refuse.... two years in the military or 6 years in jail. I was probably one of the lucky ones. I got drafted into the South African Air Force. After a selection process and undertaking a pilot's medical (which took one week) I was selected to undergo training in Radar. I then spent the remainder of my service and subsequent camps at the Northern Air Defence Sector Devon (Situating near Springs JHB.... not UK). Did we see any UFO's on the radar? Indeed we did. We also tracked the Russian pilot who came in from Mozambique in 1981 in his Mig aircraft.

On leaving the Air Force I joined Toyota. After undergoing a series of tests they told me I would be joining the Industrial Engineering Dept and they would send me to Natal Tech to do a Diploma in Industrial Engineering. While working at Toyota I met Chairman Derek. He at that time was running the Commercial side of the CKD in the Assembly Hall. When I finished my Diploma I moved to PMB and worked for Aberdare Cables then Renold Crofts then back to Toyota Jacobs. I then went to Australia for a while. Did not enjoy Australia. Boring, flat hot and everything hops. I then moved to the UK and worked for Atlas Hydraulics. Their manufacturing division was located in Scotland and their Heads office was in Bradford. After freezing for 7 years and with pounds in my pocket I returned to South Africa. I bought some industrial land in Brackenhill Hillcrest and built Ridgefield Business Park. I got my Architects number and drew up my own plans. In addition I run Bel Tec Stationery Suppliers and rely on a rental income. I am married to Dawn, have two children; my daughter Amy is a Medical Doctor and my son Ross is an Attorney. The vehicles I own are a 1934 Mercedes (rebodied to the W22 spec). A 1936 Rover 16 (rebodied). A 1973 Ford Escort MK1. A 1968 BSA 650 Thunderbolt and a 1989 Nissan Exa. To me the BSA A65 range, particularly the late 60's models, were some of the best looking bikes BSA ever produced.

So my connection with the club is as follows and I could be wrong on the dates here. However in July 1982 I had just finished my national service. While driving to Phoenix to look at a mini I passed a scrap yard and decided to stop and have a look. I saw a motorcycle wheel sticking out from under a car bonnet. On removing the bonnet I found an old motorcycle, it was a twin cylinder and at first I thought it was a BSA A10. There were no markings on it. I struck a deal with the owner and bought the mostly complete bike for R30. Scrap Value.



As found my 'BSA A10 650cc' I bought from a scrap yard for R30

I took the bike home and started stripping it down. The timing side bush being bronze was worn out. So I took it to Alpha McDelta Pinetown to have a new bush made. As I was carrying the parts in I met a man coming out and it turned out to be none other than Mike Lang (nice guy Mike). On seeing the parts he stopped for a chat and told me they were starting a classic motorcycle club and would I like to join. I never even knew a club was being formed but said definitely I would join. By luck he had an application form in his car and I had enough money to pay the first years joining fee. Hence by that lucky meeting I somehow became member number 12. At that time we were meeting at the Mayville Hotel, and then later on the club house was built on the Bluff. About the 'BSA' I bought from the scrapyard. I took the gearbox to Cliffie McArthur he had SH Francis bicycles, (me being so young at the time I had to address Cliffie as Mr McArthur, none of the first name terms, he was old school.... show some respect young man). He identified the gearbox as a Burman Gearbox and what I had in fact bought was a 1958 Ariel Huntmaster 650cc.

John Booth Editor
Keeping the wheels turning.

Club Trophies

The Following Trophies were awarded at the AGM. Unfortunately many of the winners could not attend.

Oldest participant in any Club Event :
Dudley Schafer.

Youngest participant in any Club Event :
Matthew Vacy-Lyle.

Bum Pad Rider:
Beth Talbot.

Buckled Wheel :
Steve Schnittker & Beth Talbot.

Bike of the Year :
1922 Indian, Robin McDonald.

Highest placed Member in the D-J :
Trevor Davids in 11th place, riding a 1930 BSA 500cc Sloper.

Enthusiasts of the Year :
Our Youngest Member, Storm Young, who participated the Gymkhana on his self-propelled Trike.

Chairman's Award.

This Award is at the discretion of the Chairman. This year it is awarded to a Member who is the Hub in the Wheel of the Club. Always helping where he can and is there to offer advice, Alan Young.



Danielle presenting the Youngest Rider Trophy.
Grant Vacy-Lyle accepting the trophy for Mathew Vacy-Lyle



Chairman Derek presenting the Chairmans Award to Alan Young

Monthly Competition

Bike of the month must be a runner if entered into the competition (concourse is a judged section and must be a runner). If the bike is a non-runner it will be accepted for display only and will not be considered as a competitor. For others, a member is welcome to put on their projects, barn finds as in the appropriate category for members to see.

Best of British

1st 1960 Ariel Arrow 250cc Ron Bell



2nd 1977 Seeley Honda CB750F Thomas Schubert



3rd 1953 Ariel Aquare Four MK2 Terry Chesterton



(I would like to run a Who's Who in the club under the title: "This is your story". We have some interesting people in our club and I feel these stories need to be told. Personal stories can give us an insight of what life was like decades ago and we need these accounts written down before they are lost in time. You may not think you have much to share but everyone has a story worth telling. I would like this to be a feature in the club newsletter. Ed)

I have given the very first 'This is your story' to Alan Young. A biker and a gentleman, an inspiration to us all, and one of the very first members of the club. Such an honour to read his story.

Alan Young....This is your story

I was born in Durban in 1933. I have spent most of my life in Durban although work gave me the opportunity to travel most of RSA as well as Rhodesia and SWA [Namibia].

Educated Windsor Park Primary, Class 1 to Standard 6 then Glenwood High where I had a particular aptitude for technical drawing and was offered a job with J.K. Eaton before completing JC. I had to complete my compulsory military training from 1952 to 1956, a total waste of time comprising parades, training camps and spit and polish; certainly never prepared me for combat of any sort!

As stated I was offered work as an apprentice draughtsman with J. K. Eaton, manufacturers of truck bodies but had to spend first two years in the workshop to familiarise myself with the manufacturing process. An alternative offer was presented to join Mather and Platt, Manchester based with a SA branch, who specialised in automatic sprinkler systems for fire protection. Remained with them for 25 years eventually becoming contracts manager for the Durban Branch. Subsequently teamed up with Angello Lodetti and established a company to design, manufacture and install sprinkler systems. Retired in 2007.

I feel sure that every motorcyclist started their two wheel interest on a bicycle. In my case, being from a family that operated on a tight budget, the best they could afford was a Phillips 26 inch with backpedal brake. But I was king of the road and one of the first mods was to attach a stiff piece of cardboard to the rear forks to simulate the putt-putt of a motorcycle as the spokes clipped the cardboard. Distance meant nothing when you are young and fit and long distance rides were commonplace.

On Dec 16th 1947 (Dingaan's Day) my brother took me to the Burman Drive Hillclimb, the first to be held following WW II. We arrived just as Cliffie McArthur was setting off on his Excelsior. The noise from that megaphone and the aroma of Castrol R was exhilarating and I was hooked on motorcycle racing. All day bikes, sidecars and cars were blasting up the hill in an attempt to break the record. And what a test of skill it was. Virtually no straights, just one corner after the next over a distance of one mile.

So, having witnessed that, friends and I had to emulate the racers on our bicycles so we would meet up after school and race down the hill then pedal back to the top and repeat the action. The chances we took were scary as we used the full width of the road and were fortunate not to have a head-on with a vehicle coming up the hill. Fortunately, traffic on the hill was very light.

One of our group, Mike Moore was a schoolmate and close friend and he was as crazy about racing bikes as me. His dad, "Pop" Moore owned the sugar farm adjacent the sugar mill in mTubatuba where we spent the school holidays. On the farm was a 500 Triumph side valve circa 1938 which we stripped down to the bare essentials and rode all over the farm pretending we were top dog racers. Pop Moore had a fully equipped workshop on the farm and was a skilled mechanic and repairman.

One day the bike ground to a halt and on inspection it was found that the crown of the piston had detached at the top ring groove. This was when Pop displayed his skills. He welded the crown back onto the piston and machined the ring groove to original. After reassembly the bike fired up first push and we were back on the roads.



Triumph 500 sv at the Moore family sugar farm Mtubatuba

Mike went on to become a successful racer, first on a BSA Goldstar and Later on AJS 7R and G50 Matchless eventually becoming SA 500cc champion. By then I had given up my efforts at racing and served as pit crew for Mike whenever he raced locally.

My efforts at racing began on 16th Dec 1953 at Burman Drive. My bike was an Ambassador with 197cc Villiers motor, all I could afford. Of course the bike was stripped of all non-essentials and tuning comprised skimming the head, substituting flywheel bob weights for full circle flywheels to increase crankcase compression, blending and polishing inlet and exhaust ports and fitting a megaphone exhaust for maximum noise but very little performance. At that time we did not have the exhaust expansion box know how which later gave such a vast improvement to two stroke performance.

Anyway, woke early on the 16th to be greeted by a steady downpour which did not let up for the whole day. Arrived at the pit area as nervous as hell but was calmed by another competitor Roy Millbank. Such a helpful man and a well established competitor country wide. He had two bikes at the climb, a GP Triumph and a 250 supercharged two stroke DKW, the noisiest bike ever raced. Being a novice and the smallest bike I was sent off first. The procedure was a start line with a timing line about 30m further forward. At the drop of the flag I grabbed a handful and dropped the clutch only to do a wheelie before getting under control. In those days no fancy wet road tyres, you used what was available in block and ribbed tread. Foot down on the corners because of the wet road and go as hard as you dare without throwing it down the road. When you crossed the finish line it was a short ride to Trematon Drive and once on the downhill, switch off and coast back to the start. You were allowed three timed runs, at the end of the second run I was lying third. Yipee, just do another run about the same time and I should bag third place. Never count your chickens! At the first corner on my third run I braked a bit too sharply and down I went. I was up immediately and off again but a bent footrest made it difficult to change gears. So I dropped well down the placings and finished the day like a drowned rat!

Thereafter, I continued racing at Novelty Hill, Scott Road Hillclimb and Hesketh without any great success. I joined the CMCN when they were using the Mayville hotel as their base of operations while the clubhouse was under construction in Tara Road and that was when I became involved in the committee, eventually being elected vice chairman under chairmanship of the memorable Jim Cramer.

Sometime around 1984 there was discussion on the formation of classic racing in the club and I organized an event at iDubi circuit. Can't recall all who attended but Clifffie was there with a Manxman, Doug Cruikshank with a Manx Norton, also a Goldstar, about five bikes in all. From then the numbers grew and we were racing at the Toyota test track, Masons mill, Umhlanga and Hillcrest street racing plus visits to Swartkops and other circuits in Gauteng.





By now my financial situation had improved being able to afford CB750's and 900's and other classic bikes. For racing I acquired a Honda CB450 twin on which I had a fair amount of success and some very enjoyable racing over the years. Eventually the Honda became too much of a handful and I downgraded to a Ducati 250 desmo and further down to a Honda CB175.

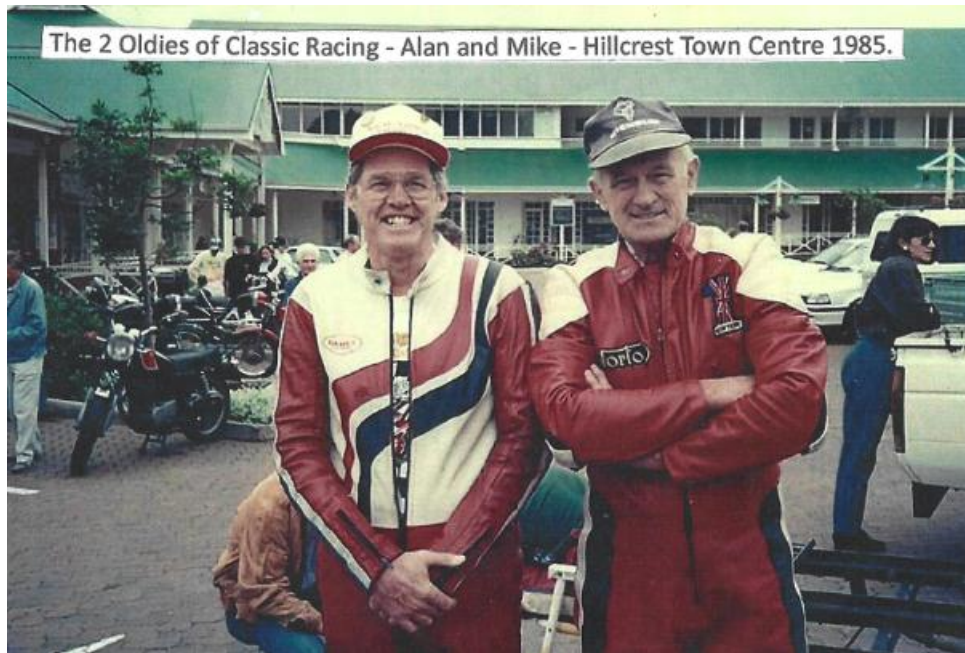
Next step down will probably be a wheelchair! Only wish classic racing could be revived but with no circuits within 120 kilometers it is unlikely to happen. We live in hope!



Honda CB 450



*Honda CB 175, Masons Mill. Lying on the track stone cold.
Geoff Isacks stopped to see if I was ok.
Recovered without injury.*



Oh for what it's worth I forgot to mention in March 1947 during the Royal Families visit to Durban, all the schools in Durban were bussed to Greyville racecourse and assembled on the track opposite the main grandstand in which sat and stood the Royal Family. The schools sang patriotic songs and performed marches etc. The other event, a few days later, was a selection of a boy and girl from each school who were then bussed to the harbour and taken on board the HMS Vanguard to be entertained by crew members with games and tours of the ship. I was the lucky boy from our school.

My military service was done with the RDLI (Royal Durban Light Infantry). Although they never gave me any combat training, I did learn how to use and maintain a number of weapons. The Lee-Enfield .303 rifle, the Bren Gun, the Sten Gun, the Vickers machine gun, the Grenade launcher and how to toss a grenade. All these were used with live ammo including tracers at night. On the Lee, Bren, Sten and Vickers we had to learn how to strip, clean and re-assemble. To me, this aspect of the military was interesting and informative and I became very efficient with the Lee and Bren. With the exception of the grenade I believe all these weapons are obsolete now and have made way for the weapons we see today.

All male members of our family served with the regiment; father, uncles and brothers. One uncle, my father's brother, Captain Roderick Young had the honour of being presented with the regimental colours by King George VI during his visit to SA in 1947. RDLI was irreverently referred to as the Royal Durban Lavatory Inspectors.

Alan Young

(I hope Alan's story has brought back some memories and interest for members. Maybe another visit to the Burman Hill track is needed. I seem to remember my Dad telling me he attempted it once in the late 40's on a Levis 250cc. I don't think he did too well. He was 6ft3inches tall so he said if he leaned forward on the tank his head was in front of the headlight. If he sat upright he felt like a T square standing on it end trying to go around a corner. So a tall guy on a small bike did not work too well. Ed)

The criteria to use when writing your story:

Where were you born and raised?

Where were you educated? What were you trained in? Your career path?

When did you join the club and what vehicles do you own?

Any other interesting facts.

And Photos please.

(Please note I am a two finger typist (one on each hand), so please if any articles are sent to me can they be in a word document or email so I can copy and paste. This can be done as you remember things to include. I am hoping we are going to get 'This is my story' from Toosie Hudson, Deena Naidoo, John Baker, Reg Venter, Alain Beltram (French Motorcycles), Dave Muller and many others. Who were the biker gangs in Durban going back in time? We would all like to know about these bikers and what they got up to. The ladies are not exempt from this exercise Marcia Hinks was evidently a hell raiser on a motorcycle in England so we waiting on her story as well. Ed)

Just when we thought we were the only country losing motorcycles and cars to overseas markets...

Classic motorcycles are leaving the UK at an unprecedented pace

by Nick Smith

5 January 2023 3 min read

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A coveted 1974 Ducati 750SS “Green Frame” attained £172,500 including auction fees. If it had come to the US, that would have been \$192,000 on the day of the sale, a strong number but not outrageous. Had it been pre-turmoil—at say, the Bonhams’ Spring sale, that same American would have had to pay more than \$217,000. Photo by Courtesy Bonhams

I hate CNBC. I hate CNN, Yahoo Finance, and MarketWatch. Well, it’s not that I actually hate them. More like I hate the fact that they are readily available to other people, and those people watch them and have equally brilliant ideas to my own. Political turmoil, out-of-control inflation, geopolitical influences, and a formerly-disproved fiscal policy amounted to a recent exchange rate drop in the United

Kingdom, the likes of which hadn't been seen outside of a global conflict. So, me thinks, if I send some cash over to the UK and hold it there until the Bonhams Stafford motorcycle auction, I should be able to buy some bikes on the cheap. I would have a 15 percent advantage just based on the exchange rate. Fantastic. So, I arranged finances and notified my international transporters of choice, Shippio in England and Schumacher over here, that the entire auction would be loaded up and shipped over to me at pennies on the dollar.

Only trouble is that apparently, others had the same idea.

As a dealer of all things on two or four (and sometimes even three) wheels, and having spent the first half of my life in England and Europe, I am most drawn to machines of that area of manufacture. So, when an auction house offers a plethora of motorcycles, I'm there, dressed in my buying boots, even if it is in the middle of the night California time. But, regardless of all that coffee and a trigger finger on the bid button, I only managed to snag a handful of what I believe are good bikes at reasonable prices.

According to sources, the sale was, and I quote, mental: 96 percent sell-through with over half of the 300 odd bikes heading overseas, and about a quarter of the sale heading Stateside. A shocking number for a country that has historically *imported* collector bikes from around the world by the container load. Many of these bikes were bought by dealers, but a noticeable number went to individual collectors, including a Honda Z50 that was air freighted to an impatient enthusiast. The bikes that stayed in the UK likely were those that didn't have much appeal outside the country (such as those from a museum that divested itself of British speedway racing motorcycles).

This auction wasn't a fluke. Hagerty analysis of shipping data for classic cars shows a fifteen percent uptick in imports from the UK to the States. For bikes, those in the know in international transport tell me exports from the United States are down—way down—and imports are up. The scale used to tilt about 80 percent export, but now it is more like 50/50 in/out.

So, what does this say about the motorcycle market? That it's global, and as a result, quite resilient. Despite (or maybe because of) a barrage of news about interest rate hikes, inflation data, and downturns in stock and real estate, buyers believed that these motorcycles are unlikely to be cheaper over the next few months or years.

All to say, many more bikes are coming into the United States. Should you join the fray? If so, how's it work?

First, I can't recommend buying from anyone but a reputable dealer or established auction company—there are too many horror stories about private party deals that don't really exist. All the firms you would deal with have done this before and can recommend an international transporter to help you. Let them do the paperwork.

Customs can be a relationship business, and for the nominal cost to get the paperwork right, these relationships are worth their weight in motorcycles. A seasoned seller will also take the bike to the port, get it loaded, and reverse the process at this end with nice, tidy import documents. Then it is up to you to work out how to get a title for it in the state in which you reside. Research that at the outset: It can be painful, arduous, and expensive.

What to buy and import? Therein lies the trick. From a dealer perspective, you have to juggle interest rates, socioeconomic factors and tastes. That last nugget is the fiddly bit: what is worth more here than there, wherever "there" is? Simple to research, but asking prices are not reliable information, and tastes and associated prices move. A lot. I'd love to recommend a year, make, model, but with my luck that rose will shed its bloom before I finish writing this. And prices will adjust as a taste shifts with remarkable speed, once word is out. If you're an enthusiast, it's a little more straightforward: buy what you like while it's on sale and enjoy it.

What we can be sure of is that all these external factors are cyclical, and that my handful of machines that are now bobbing their way across the Atlantic will be worth more in the UK as soon as economics and politics right-side. They will then have an exchange rate advantage and can afford to buy them all back. And so the world turns.

Nick Smith is a motorcycle and car appraiser and principle of motorcycle dealer Classic Avenue. He's based in California but a Briton at heart.

SAVVA Indemnity Forms and Cards:

Indemnity Forms and Indemnity Cards

The form is available for download on the SAVVA website under Forms .

Indemnity forms are legal documents. Both sides of the forms must be completed, signed and witnessed, and after the number of the indemnity card issued has been recorded on the form, the original forms should be posted to the SAVVA Secretary, or brought to the SAVVA AGM each year. Clubs are encouraged to keep copies of the forms.

SAVVA Indemnity applies to all events, socials, fun runs, displays, nothing excluded, organised and promoted by a club affiliated to SAVVA.

The onus rests upon the Club to ensure persons listed in Section 5 of the Handbook complete the forms.

Indemnity Cards It is suggested that when a new member joins a club that an indemnity card be issued to him/her and spouse immediately.

Every single person involved with a SAVVA competitive event where a permit has been issued shall have in their possession an Indemnity Card issued by the Club on behalf of SAVVA, that is all drivers, navigators, passengers of participating vehicles, all officials, marshals and their assistants, including drivers and passengers of tender vehicles and in modern vehicles who are part of the event, and persons representing sponsors, the press, SAVVA or the host club who will be present on the event or who may travel in competing vehicles.

Thus, as Club Members wishing to participate in any Club organised event, please ensure that you have a SAVVA indemnity card, which is issued when you join, and that your Bike is SAVVA dated. Rod Thomas can assist in this regard, as he's the Club Dating Officer.

Items for Sale/Wanted:

1930 Majestic - powered by a Cleveland 4cylinder.



Not sure on this one.... but anyway