

LET'S GO SCOOTER RACING...

1969. I'd just joined a scooter club with my racy Li150 series 2 and this was going to be my first ever racing event...

I guess, back in 1969, having the boss of Supertune as our scooter club leader, we had a pedigree which meant we HAD to go racing. As a newly joined member of LC London, sitting listening to Malcolm Clarkson and Ron Moss talking about the last meeting at Brands Hatch and the forthcoming, new-style race meeting at Mallory Park in March - we were all ears, mustard keen and eagerly pining for our first race meeting.

When the great day arrived, it was an early start, meeting up at the clubhouse at the Waddon Hotel on a crispy-cold spring morning. The few club members who were actually racing had to make scrutineering at the circuit for eight o'clock, so they'd set off a lot earlier or the night before. The rest of us were going in support and looking forward a good days racing as spectators and spares carriers.

In those early racing days, we often drove the racing scooters up to the circuit, raced them and then drove them back. We didn't have support vans, trailers or masses of spares. It was a miracle that we didn't break the engines more often than we did.

Somebody must have planned out the route to the circuit and we set off in line; leader with the maps, slower bikes and then the faster machines at the back. Black Belstaff jackets were compulsory - as were the green Lambretta Club London banners on the fronts of all the machines. And en route, although the leaders and slower bikes were keeping to a steady 50 mph, the back riders were pushing 70 mph to keep up. This was great.

Somewhere in the middle of the countryside, just as we had begun to master the problems of staying together at fluctuating speeds, an unmarked car overtook our line of bikes and then proceeded to wave us all into a convenient lay-by. The Law. We parked up all the bikes in standard Lambretta Club Great Britain format (handlebars to left) and awaited the Bad News. Two smartly dressed middle-aged men (to us - probably both a ripe old age of 29) got out of their car and walked over to us all.

"So what's all this then?" one started " a special sect or something? You're obviously not a motorcycle club". The other one was keen to tell us why we had been pulled over; "you have all been breaking the speed limit on an 'A' class road" and furthermore "constituting a hazard to other motorists" (what other motorists? - it was about 7.00 in the morning and they obviously had nothing better to do). "We'll need see your driving licences - if you have any"

The main body of us started fumbling in our pockets for papers, wallets, whatever. Panic, we were nabbed.

Then, one bright spark broke ranks and said in a voice which didn't crack, didn't falter and was crystal clear - "Can I see your authority?". Was he mad? Slowly, the rest of us realised that the two guys in front of us, with an unmarked car, in plain clothes, might actually not be policemen and, indeed, he had a point; we had a right to see their credentials.



"No problem, sir" - I think he used the term in a derisory way and reached for his top pocket. Flicking out his police identity card he unfortunately lost control of it - it slipped from his grasp and double-flipped into an ideally-placed puddle awaiting at his feet.

The rest of us, having decided that breaking into uncontrolled laughter was not a option at this point, resumed our frantic search for driving licences. Heads bowed, quietly gagging. The soggy identity card was retrieved, inspected by the bright-eyed enquirer and approved. "Yeah - OK - so you're policemen..."

So **THEN** we got the riot act - driving too fast, too close, slow down, leave space, etc, etc. and, while we waited grimly for the punch-line - they let us off. With a bit more confidence, we started chatting to them and explained what a scooter club was; what we were doing and that we weren't mods fresh up from Brighton. The fact that we didn't have fur-lined parkas may have swung it in our favour. We started back on our way; continued at regulation speed for ten minutes until we were sure that they weren't following us and then reverted to Plan "A" - plus another 5 mph to make up for lost time.

We met up with the rest of the club at the circuit who had set off earlier on the race bikes and Race Day went without a hitch. Ron Moss won the 200cc class on a Supertune bike which looked brand new, with solo racing seat and a special engine they had just finished putting together the night before.

The journey home that evening was, more or less, the same as going up, but without the policemen.

At one point we spotted Malcolm Clarkson and Ron Moss, who had set off early, in a lay-by obviously stopped for a smoke.

How the two of them drove all that way up and back with Ron as passenger on the racing seat and Malcolm on the air intake, I'll never know. If MC had marital problems later in life; this may have been the day it started.

The snake of green bannered Lambrettas all pulled in to confirm that things were well with them and we quickly realised that they weren't smoking - but **the bike was**. Malcolm quietly commented in his dry northern accent "...getting a bit hot two up and it seized. So we've put some oil in the petrol now. It'll be OK in a minute or two". Ron was quick to point out to his boss "I hope so, 'cos the customer's coming to pick this up tomorrow morning..."

So (apparently) we not only drove our own bikes up to race events raced them and then drove them back, but we also did the same with customers new machines as well.

What a day. Oh - and the racing? I can't remember a thing about it.

Spyke



Here's one I made earlier... The LC London's club banner was redesigned by Spyke in 1970 following the reformation of the club. The previous version was the standard 130mm depth, used the Lambretta Club logostyle and was sub-titled "The Jet Set". The new version slimmed down to 90mm dropped the byeline and had a more distinctive, modern look to it. Well, it was 1970...

Scooter racing - the beginning

- December 1965** - First High Speed Trial for Lambrettas organised by LCGB at Brands Hatch
- December 1966** - Second HST for Lambrettas organised by LCGB at Brands Hatch
- December 1967** - Third HST for Lambrettas organised by LCGB at Brands Hatch
- May 1968** - First all-makes HST at Lydden Hill organised by LASCA (London Area Scooter Clubs Association)
- 1968** - LCGB moves Lambrettas-only event to Cadwell Park
- 1969** - LASCA runs first ever all-makes Scooter Track Championship with four events throughout the year
- 1970** - LASCA runs full season of nine track events and BSTC