

OTHER TRIALS RUN BY THE SIDCUP MOTOR CYCLE CLUB from 1929 to 1939

The Sidcup Motor Cycle Club was formed in January 1928. Almost immediately trials were arranged to test the riding skills of the early members and the reliability of their machines.

The first Club Monthly Bulletin was printed in July 1929, so details of trials in the first 15 or so months of the Club are non-existent. The weekly Clubnight at the Station Hotel was the place to discuss previous trials and to arrange future ones.

Note: First names were never shown in results. First names are added here when known.

Pillion Trial – 9th June 1929

This trial was most successful, there being 26 starters of which 18 finished. It was noticed that Nos. 2, 3 and 4 did not look quite so RUBY at the finish. No. 2's retirement caused much merriment at the finish. The following members are to be congratulated on their success:-

1. V. Beretta (Cotton) lost 1 mark
2. D. Lynch (Rudge) lost 4 marks
3. T. Walden (Douglas) lost 7 marks
4. R. Harwood (Rex Acme) lost 8 marks

A time check had to be the decider for the 4th place. R. Browning being the unfortunate, also he was the only entrant whose performance was clean throughout the trial – buy another watch, Mr Browning.

Night Trial - 23rd June 1929

It is pleasing to note that all entrants in this event were successful in gaining Awards. They were as follows:-

A.E. Smith	Silver Medal	A.E.J. Springate	Bronze Medal
W. Friend	Silver Medal	C. Nash	Bronze Medal
W. Breed	Silver Medal	G.H. Shepherd	Bronze Medal
T. Walden	Silver Medal	L.H. Smith	Bronze Medal
		J. Lennard	Bronze Medal
		Freddie Hurrell	Consolation Club Coat Badge Award

Palmer Cup Trial – 19th October 1930

An entry of 28 was received for this event, 23 of the riders finishing the course. W. Friend (Scott) was unlucky enough to be 'nabbed' for noise just after the start, and J. Stubley (B.S.A. com) had a little contretemps at St. Mary Cray, luckily with no personal injuries. V. Beretta also bore bloodstains round the course, riding with his left leg perched in a peculiar position owing to missing a footrest.

Over 50 riders, officials and friends sat down to tea afterwards at H.Q., and then tongues wagged merrily far into the evening.

RESULTS

Palmer Challenge Cup and Miniature – Reg Browning

Silver Medals – F. Macdonald, D. Wheatley, T. Walden, J. Collins, E. Pott

Bronze Medals – D. Lynch, Eric R. Phillips, W.L. Gray, Miss D. Breese, A.T. Smallwood, V. Beretta.7

Performance Trial – 1st February 1931

A satisfactory entry of 22, a really good course, well marked, well run, is the general opinion expressed. Another feather in the hat of "N.C.S." [N.C.S. was Norman Smith who knew every lane and track in North Kent, and who plotted trials courses for many years].

Performance Cup	Max Pring
Runner Up	Joe Francis
Silver Medal	F.W. Arrow
Bronze Medal	E.R. Robbins
Free Entry to next trial	Eric. R. Phillips

Conducted Trial – 3rd January 1932

A small entry, but we might have called it the “Sidcup Experts” Trial. Plenty of observers and a really enjoyable day. Mild sunny weather prevailed making sections nice and soft.

21st Century note: marking seems to have been by collecting points the further up a climb achieved.

Final Scores

Solo		Sidecar	
Max Pring	75	F. Eldridge	66
D. Wheatley	75		
J. Collins	72		
W.E. Scott	71	Awards go to Messrs. Pring,	
K.N. Smith	70	Wheatley, Collins and Eldridge.	
E. Robbins	54		
G.F. Butcher	51		
C.E. Selby	36		
H. Mangold	33		

O'Donnell Trial – 20th March 1932

The O'Donnell Trial went down in the annals of the Club as one of the most enjoyable events yet organised. Starting from Larkfield at noon, competitors passed through Aylesford to Fleur de Lis Hill, the Tunbury Avenue and Tunbury Wood, the latter being very tricky.

Blind Lane near Yalding was the ‘tit-bit’ of the day, apart from the deep splash near the finish, where hundreds of spectators were present.

Provisional Results:-

O'Donnell Cup and replica	A.J. Dussek	Norton sidecar	West Kent Club
Walden Memorial Cup	Cedric J. Bond	Ariel	Sidcup Club
Novice Cup	D.E.P. Johnstone	Velocette	Gravesend Club
Team Prize	West Kent M.C.	H.W. Downton	Ariel
		T.W. Watkins	B.S.A. sidecar
		A.J. Dussek	Norton sidecar
Silver Cups	Max Pring	Grindley Peerless	
	B.E. Tyler	Matchless sidecar	
	P. Stead	Matchless sidecar	
	T.W. Watkins	B.S.A. sidecar	
Silver Medals	P. Guest, H,W, Downton, T. Wakem, R.G. Tomson		
Bronze Medals	C.V.M. Booth, K. Pugh, C.H. Pearsall, W. Jury, J.R. Allen, C. Waterson		

Conducted Trial – 10th September 1933

Very fair support was given to this fixture, there being about 25 people on the move, of whom 11 were competitors.

The 3 sections used were well spaced, and made quite an enjoyable run, although hop-pickers and their offspring were frequently a nuisance. It was certainly a very “matey” affair, and was blessed with fine weather.

	Cotman's Ash	Forge Lane	Boxley Sharpshoot	Total	
E.G. Williams	12	12	12	36	Cup
E. Evans	12	10	12	34	Cup
K.W. Smith	12	5	12	29	
W.E. Scott	12	12	1	26	
C.T. Eldridge	12	12	2	26	
Max Pring	12	12	1	25	
J. Carr	5	4	12	21	
P.W.A. Smith	9	5	5	19	
W.B. Thomas	10	3	2	15	
A. Soar	5	2	3	10	
F. Arnold	3	5	2	10	

21st Century note: If you are wondering what on earth was a 'Conducted Trial', the Club Bulletin of September 1934 included Regulations for a Conducted Trial to be held on 9th September. Now read on.....

Method of running event. *Competitors, officials and observers will ride together from section to section. Competitors may bring pillion passengers who must dismount while each section is being covered. Riders will be paired off at the discretion of the organisers so that the chances of each pair will be as even as possible. Observed sections will be easy to medium in character and will be subdivided. A foot will rank as a failure. A competitor will lose 1 mark for each failure in each subsection, so that encouragement is given to riders who can recover and complete the section clean. Each competitor will be credited with 100 marks at the start and the "Twosome" with the nearest marks to 200 at the finish will be adjudged the winners.*

The observed sections will not be chosen until the previous day so as to ensure that no ridiculous conditions prevail. In the event of a tie, a special test at Brands Hatch will be used, similar to that used in recent Walden Trial, i.e. a timed grass section, up and downhill. Nearest average to 12 m.p.h. wins.

Walden Memorial Trial – 11th March 1934

Despite the extremely wet conditions prevailing, this event was carried through successfully, and afterwards a jolly evening was held at Knockholt. The Brands Hatch sections proved very interesting and Buckland Bank was only cleaned by one sidecar.

Members of the party which left to mark the course during the night will remember it for many a day as the most miserable, cold and sodden ride they have ever had. many thanks to them all, especially "Drac" Evans.

RESULTS:-

Walden Cup	Max Pring
Cray Cup	A.J. Denters
Novice Award	J. Edwards
Team Award	Wickham Club
Silver Medals	A.P. Fyfe, F.W. Waterson, S.J. Butler, J. Manley
Bronze Medals	P.D. Saunders, S. Mead, J. Skelton, H.E. Vines, W.E. Waters.

Conducted Trial – 9th September 1934 [21st Century note:- the article and results were printed in the first Club magazine, the "Swastika". Previous Club Bulletins were 2 or 3 sheets of paper stapled together]

This event attracted a turn out of 30 of which 14 were entrants. The first section, Headlands Hill, caused a bit of bother as did Buckland Hairpin.

Cotmans Ash, White Horse, Hogmore Hairpin and the Brands Hatch Chalkpit section completed the course and a special test was held near the Brands Hatch Pavilion.

To even competitors' chances, the experts had been graded with novices as far as possible, and the results were:-

Ashtrays with medals	J.A. Low	Ariel
	W. Carter	Rudge
Bronze Medals	W. Hanke	B.S.A.
	C.E. Eldridge	Excelsior
2 Best Individual Novices	L.B. Smith	New Hudson
(Silver Medals)	W. Hawke	B.S.A.

An enjoyable tea was obtained afterwards at the Brands Hatch Pavilion.

Closed Trial, 25th April 1935 [this looks like a 'Conducted Trial' as above.]

This was certainly the best Closed Event we have had since 1929. Although only 15 members competed, there were a large number of helpers and observers, and the procession caused a stir of interest in the villages. Perhaps they thought Hitler had sent a "D.R. Squad" [Dispatch Rider] over here!. Farningham Woods had to be used to find a winner and it was in ripe condition.

D. Moggridge on a 2-speed Scott and H. Turner on a 494 Douglas sidecar were the heroes of the event, the latter getting applause for his canny tactics on Cotmans Ash. Max Pring and J.G. Wheeler did well for Standard Tyres, but their Handicap percentage was small. The solo winners were: 1. L.J. Hornagold, 248 Raleigh; 2. J. Pearson, 348 Norton; 3. L.B. Smith, 246 New Hudson. Sidecar Class – F.E. Hawken, 498 Matchless.

Closed Trial, 1st September 1935

This event attracted 17 entries or which two were non-starters, and one retired in order to keep an appointment. The party of 30 all told thoroughly enjoyed the run which included Skeet Hill Slip. Cotmans Ash, Bitchetwood, Oldbury, Forge Lane and Mereworth Woods. Tea was taken afterwards at Brands Hatch where results were worked out as under:-

SOLOS:-	1 st – H.C. Hawke	490 Norton	Tankard
	2 nd – W. Hawke	499 B.S.A.	Ash Tray
	3 rd – Len Stielow	490 Norton	Bronze Medal
SIDECAR	1 st – H.A. Turner	557 Ariel sidevalve	Tankard

Closed Trial, 29th March 1936

Spoilt by foul weather affecting a good entry. "Piggeries" proved fair, yet reasonably difficult section out Fleur de Lis, became impossible for standard tyres after a heavy shower had fallen.

Owing to local opposition at "Broad Street", a nice little section had to be cut out and Coldbridge Wood was then visited.

Results:	Terry .A. Groves	250 B.S.A.	Tankard
	Vernon Habgood	348 Norton	Bronze Medal

Touring Trial, 26th April 1936 [21st Century note:- No details of this event as the April 1936 'Swastika' is missing from the Club archive. The Club had a group based in Hastings known as the Southern Section.]

The organisation of this event was good, but the entry on the small side due, no doubt, to the number of checkers and helpers required. J.W. Cannon had to retire through sudden illness due to the diving work that he is occasionally called upon to undertake. The results were:-

Southern Section Tankard	Vernon Habgood	996 A.J.S.
Perpetual Calendar	Eric Crouch	500 Triumph
Club Ashtray	H. Garrett	343 Triumph
Team Ashtrays	H. Garrett and S.R. Seelly	M.G.

After a happy little tea party at the "George", friend Clitheroe produced another Film Show which was very much appreciated.

Closed Conducted Handicap Trial – 25th October 1936 [21st Century note:- Report of this trial was in the first "The Compass", the new name replacing "The Swastika". The Swastika design was used by Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party in Germany, and some Sidcup members had their bikes displaying the Club badge kicked over when parked.]

This was a red-letter day in the annual of the Club. A terrific crowd set off from Wrotham Hill. The sections gradually stiffened, and "Rookery Nook", a new section took heavy toll.

The procession during the day must have contained 40 to 50 machines and the day was a record for numbers and freedom from trouble and altogether a jolly, sporting day out.

Results:-	Arthur Cunningham	499 B.S.A.	Tankard
	Harry Relf	348 Cotton	Silver Medal
	Terry Groves	250 B.S.A.	Bronze Medal
	Vernon Habgood	348 Norton	Bronze Medal
	Dicky Dykes	500 Triumph	Sidecar Award
	Eric Elms	250 New Imperial	Standard Tyres Award. Bronze Medal



Dicky Dykes ½ pint tankard

Closed Trial – 17th January 1937

This event had a “super” course of approximately 3 miles, including ‘rabbit’ holes, bumpy mud patches, a greasy 1 in 2 drop, muddy climbs, numerous hairpins and steep grassy banks, and competitors had 6 laps to do including a practice lap. All those who finished testify to the fact that it was more of a “trial” for both man and machine than the ordinary event.

RESULTS			Total with	
			<u>Bonus</u>	<u>Bonus</u>
1 st	Terry Groves	249 B.S.A.	692 marks	10
2 nd	Vernon Habgood	346 Levis	656 “	15
3 rd	Arthur Cunningham	499 B.S.A.	650 “	30
4 th	Perce Holding	500 Enfield	644 “	25
5 th	Bert Pretty	348 Velocette	642 “	100
6 th	W.G. Simmons	348 Velocette	634 “	50
7 th	Harry D. Relf	348 Cotton	613 “	20
8 th	Reg Whatman	499 Enfield	590 “	25
9 th	H. Seymour	348 Velocette	555 “	35
10 th	W. Bennett	346 A.J.S.	516 “	50

Standard Tyre Class			<u>Bonus (2 laps only)</u>	
1 st	Frank W. Smith	498 Levis	173 “	64
2 nd	Harry C. Hawke	498 Levis	144 “	32
3 rd	W. Hawke	496 B.S.A.	70 “	30

21st Century Note:- I have no idea how the scoring or Bonus worked! Any ideas?

Closed Conducted Trial, 11th July 1937

Start – Rose and Crown, Burwash, Sussex. Finish – Queens Head, Sedlescombe.

An interesting day was spent and the sections at Franchise and Froghole were quite bad enough, if used further up than we did for an Open to Centre Trial, despite it being midsummer. One shudders to think what Froghole must be like in the depth of winter.

Results:-	Class A.	Vernon Habgood	Tankard
	Class B.	R.D. Reid	Tankard
		F.W. Smith	Silver Medal
		T.R. Berry	Bronze Medal
	Class C.	A.V. Emberson	Tankard
		C.T. Oakes	Silver Medal
A.W. Booth		Bronze Medal	

Closed Trial, 19th September 1937

Old Jupiter Plurius decided to join us for this “do”, but in spite of his outbursts we managed to make a jolly good day out of a none too promising one.

Forty-nine people turned out and 42 sat down to tea at the N.Z. Tea Rooms, Hurstmonceux, which proved an admirable venue.

Results:-	Class 1.	Solo Experts	1 st .	R.D. Reid	350 A.J.S.
	Class 2.	Solo General	1 st	Perce Holding	499 Enfield
2 nd			Reg Whatman	343 Triumph	
Class 3.	Solo Novice	1 st	T.S. Broughton	497 Ariel	
		2 nd	E.S. Shepherd	497 Ariel	
Class 4	Sidecars	1 st	E.R. Downton	497 Ariel	
Best Standard Tyre Performance				W. Hawkes	496 B.S.A.

Pillion Trial, 15th May 1938

This event attracted 90 entries, the exact number anticipated, and was run under very severe conditions for the 25 odd Standard Tyre entrants. Actually 11 entrants retired, most of these at Vert Wood which was very gluey.

<u>Pillion Cup for Best Performance of the Day</u>	F.E. Quick	Lost 20 marks		
350 Cup	R.D. Reid	Lost 21 marks		
500 Cup	J. Lilley	Lost 25 marks		
Novice Award – Silver Cup	J. Manister	Lost 27 marks		
<u>Standard Tyre Awards</u>				
Special Pint Tankard	G.D.R. Parry	Lost 67 marks		
Half Pint Tankard	T.J. Balcombe	Lost 74 marks		
<u>Best Performance with Lady Passenger</u>				
Special Pint Tankard	W. Jones	Lost 25 marks		
<u>Best Team</u>	B.J. Bigwood and R.J. Allen	Total lost 55 marks		
<u>Next Best 10% of Finishers</u>				
R.J. Allen	P.G.N. Booth	A.R. Coast	C.C. Collins	
B.J. Bigwood	A.L. Bartlett	M. Banks		
<u>Next Best 15% of Finishers</u>				
A. Dawkins	G. Baker	V.G. Hayes	E. Marshall	P.H. Wilson
H.J. Martin	J.E. Gibson	J. Burchell	S.W. Page	George Wheeler

Closed Handicap Trial, 12th February 1939

Start at Brands Hatch. This was astoundingly popular and fully eighty members as well as their friends must have been out. There were 24 entries and of those, Tom Arter was a non-starter. The weather was kind and the course good, although the "Hollow" was a bit stiff for a Novice, but really quite short and harmless. Max [Pring] hurried round and got away home to his wife who was rather ill. It was hot work for most of the lads, but most of them completed the 5 laps.

		<u>Machine</u>	<u>Perf.</u>	<u>H'cap</u>	<u>P'f x H'cp</u>	<u>Award</u>
1	Vernon Habgood	350 Levis	29	80	2320	Tankard
2	Eric Usher	350 Triumph	45	78	3510	Ash Tray
3	Max Pring	350 Triumph	42	84	3528	Silver Medal
4	'Wag' Bennett	350 Matchless	66	61	4026	Bronze Medal
5	Bert Pretty		101	40	4040	
6	C. Street		155	30	4650	
7	D. Souter		150	32	4800	
8	Geoff Walkley		60	81	4850	
9	Perce Holding		63	78	4914	
10	Arthur Cunningham		66	79	5214	
11	C. Harding		141	37	5217	
12	W. Hawke		97	58	5626	
13	Dick Bowern		132	45	5940	
14	L.A. Davis		97	66	6402	
15	Glyn Parry		119	55	6545	
16	Pat Healey		226	30	6780	
17	Harry Hawke		125	55	6875	
18	Jack Lindridge		104	67	6968	
	G.W. Davis		Retired after 4 laps			
	J. Mitchell		Retired after 3 laps			
	Len Stielow		Retired after 2 laps			
	M. Fitzgerald		Retired after 1 lap			
	J. Le Brocq		Retired after 1 lap			

Marking was 5 for a stop; 3 for footing.

21st Century Final Notes:- The monthly Club Bulletin duplicated on 2 or 3 sheets of Foolscap paper evolved into a printed magazine from October 1934 and was named "The Swastika", after the ancient symbol of good fortune. In 1936, this was changed (for an obvious reason) to "The Compass", and it has continued thus for 90 years plus.

Events were planned for 1940, including a Grass Track Meeting at Brands Hatch on Whit Monday, 13th May. Over 100 entries were received, but a Government Proclamation declared the day would not be a Bank Holiday.

The June 'Compass' stated, *"Proclamation or not, the Police had taken action to stop the meeting in view of the renewed possibility of air raids."*