

50 YEARS AGO

THE 1914 SENIOR T.T. RACE

by George Stevens

JUNE, 1964

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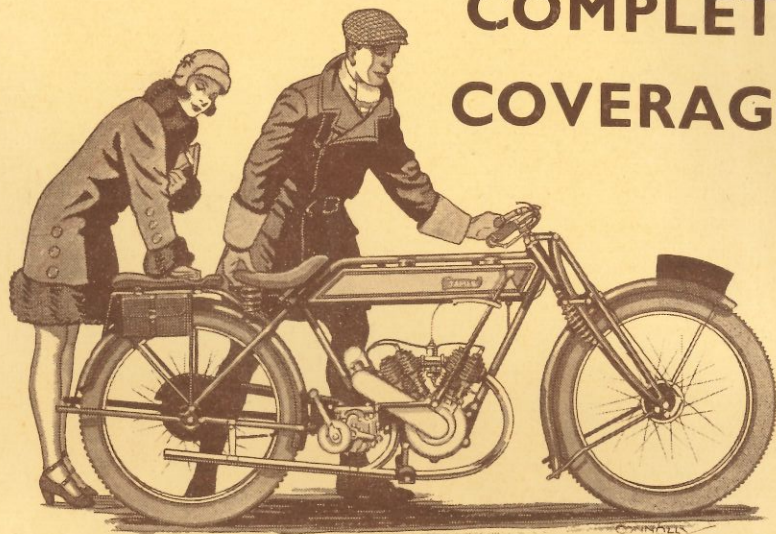


How one man saw things 50 years ago! Sulby Bridge was the scene of a near-disaster during practice in 1914, when a rider crashed in the path of fast-approaching rivals. Fortunately, he fell to the right of the bridge and the on-coming riders were able to take avoiding action.

(Reproduced from a sketch made by *Motor Cycling* artist, John Bryan).

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50 Years Ago

The 1914 Senior T.T. Race

With Notes on the Ridges and Scotts.

Speed—particularly that of vehicles propelled by “those infernal combustion engines”—was a topic receiving much attention in the early months of 1914. As far as motor cyclists and the motor cycle press were concerned, two sorts of speed were in the news: the maximum permissible by law on public roads, and the maximum obtainable (by any acceptable means) on race tracks.

The rapidly growing motoring public was finding itself in bad favour with the Police, who took advantage of the 1903 Motor Car Act and set up speed traps in unlikely places. The legal maximum speed in 1914 was still 20 m.p.h.—and of course numerous riders “copped it” and were viciously fined. As an example of “British Justice, 1914,” *Motor Cycling* quoted two cases held on the same day: for savagely beating a dog, one defendant was fined 7/6d.; for driving at 23 m.p.h., another was fined £3. For being drunk in charge of a vehicle, the maximum fine was £2; for speeding—£10.

Police persecution led to a flood of indignant letters in the correspondence columns of the two motor cycling journals of the day, and the more flagrant examples of “Black Justice” led to the publication of a “Black List” of towns noted for speed-traps and anti-motoring Magistrates.

The other sort of speed was also widely discussed in the “Letters to the Editor” pages, for motor cycle racing, although a relatively new sport, was flourishing; and the youthful Auto-Cycle Union was already world famous for its organisation of the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy events.

The T.T. was itself a subject provoking much discussion. Were racing machines getting too fast? Why were motor cycles so badly treated on the sea voyage to the Isle of Man? What could be done to make the races safer?—these were a few of the questions being asked. Another T.T. “evergreen” was “Who will win the Senior T.T.?”; and this was as difficult to predict 50 years ago as it is to-day. Rudge, Scott, Indian and Matchless machines were favourites. An Indian had just set up the “fastest in England” record at Brooklands, covering a flying kilo at 93.5 m.p.h. Scotts had won the Senior Race for two years running, and wild rumours circulated about the revolutionary new machines in preparation. Rudge had increased the speed and stamina of the famous “Multi,” and their team riders—Pullin, Greene and Rowlandson—successfully completed the 2,400 kilometre Giro d’Italia, over roads that made the 1914 Manx highways seem smooth. A Matchless ridden by either of the Collier brothers was always a potential winner. The 1914 T.T. promised to be a very close race indeed.

A fatal accident in the 1913 Senior event had evidently had some effect on those responsible for drawing up the 1914 race regulations, and for the first time the wearing of a racing helmet of approved type was made compulsory; at least six practice laps were to be covered by each competitor—and one of them had to be fast enough to “qualify.” The Junior race was to be held on Tuesday, 19th May, over 5 laps; and the Senior on Thursday, 21st May, over 6 laps. The Mountain course—used since 1911—remained unaltered, similar in all but road surface to the course used ever since.

By the end of April, with entry lists swelling, the A.C.U. had failed to find any helmet on the market which, in the opinion of competition and medical experts, was entirely suitable as racing headwear. This awkward situation was quickly eased by the A.C.U. itself: they ordered a supply of specially designed helmets and made them available at 18s. 6d. each. Quite a rushed contract for one of the firms whose standard product was rejected! Thus was the "A.C.U. approved" crash-hat initiated . . . and many were the lives saved, over the years.

Practising was held for a fortnight, prior to the races, and the first week's weather was atrocious. Constantly wet roads made high speeds dangerous, and when drier weather appeared during the second week, numerous riders struggled—amidst clouds of dust—to complete their qualifying laps. The 1913 T.T. winner, "Tim" Wood—now in his seventies—recalls turning out on the new racing Scott: "I had tried to complete a timed lap from Ramsey hairpin, but trouble occurred on every attempt, and I finished up riding borrowed or standard machinery. During the second week, dust used to get into the Scott's oscillating valve and clog it. Once again I spent the week borrowing other riders' machines! On the very last practice morning, the valve innards burst at Kirkmichael. My brother, Clarry, was following close behind on a Standard 1913 job—so we did a rapid change of number plates and off I set again! When I reached the Scott depot, knowing that I wouldn't qualify if I returned to the start on a different-looking 'bike,' I jumped off, once again removed the number plates—and stuck them on Frank Applebee's race machine. I remember that he was very reluctant to let me have it—probably because I had already 'blown up' several valves. I managed to qualify by all this juggling with number plates, but without having made any decent times during the whole practice period. In the race itself, things were rather different because I was first man away and there was no cloud of dust ahead of me, thrown up by other riders, to be inhaled through the carburettor."

Crashes, mechanical failures and other retirements eliminated some ten riders, and when the roads were closed for Senior Race day, there were 103 starters, on the following machines: 2 A.B.C., 3 Abingdon, 3 Alldays, 3 Ariel, 8 B.S.A., 2 Calthorpe, 1 Chase, 3 Douglas, 1 Dunkley, 1 Ellswick-Precision, 2 F.N., 8 Indian, 1 Ivy-Precision, 4 James, 4 Matchless, 3 Motosacoche, 1 Nestor, 1 New Hudson, 3 Norton, 3 N.S.U., 4 N.U.T., 3 Premier, 1 Puch, 2 Quadrant, 1 Regal, 1 Regal-Precision, 3 Rover, 2 Royal Ruby, 1 Rudge, 6 Rudge Multi, 4 Scott, 2 Singer, 3 Sunbeam, 7 Triumph and 6 Zenith.

The weather was dull at first, with mist on the hills and quite a strong wind. It cleared progressively throughout the day, however, and the sun shone continuously during the race. Tim Wood, number 51, was first away at 9.30 a.m., other riders following at twenty-second intervals. Only eighteen men had got away when frantic blowing of police whistles and much waving of arms caused the Clerk of the Course to stop any further riders starting. There was five minutes' delay because V. Knight (Chase) had fallen at the foot of Bray Hill, and an apprehensive policeman had sent the cry along the line. At nineteen minutes to ten the twenty-second intervals were resumed and there was no further hold-up. The last man (Hugh Mason, N.U.T.) had only been gone forty-four seconds when Tim Wood reappeared, having covered his first, standing-start lap in 42 min. 16 secs. (53.3 m.p.h.)—an absolute record for the course on his first lap! Charlie Collier (number 118, Matchless) had been much fancied as one of the leaders, but he retired with stripped gears at Gooseneck, without even completing one lap. J. Adamson (Rudge Multi) had been hot on Collier's tail, and he came through the start in second place at 44 min. 16 secs., followed by Harry Collier on another Matchless, just 6 seconds astern. Other riders came through at

about 10 second intervals, Cyril Pullin (Rudge) having moved up into 9th position. As his number was 159—third but last away—he had ridden the entire lap through the flying dust and grit of 100 riders, in a most creditable time of 45 min. 49 secs.

During lap two, Tim Wood continued to increase his lead—although some reporters wrote of his "near misses" at some of the bends. Adamson lost his place by reason of a puncture, and Harry Collier moved up into second position. Into third place came Cyril Pullin, riding extremely well, his Rudge Multi sounding very healthy. H. V. Colver (Matchless) lay fourth; Roy Lovegrove (Scott) had moved up to eighth; T. E. Greene on another Rudge was sharing tenth place with P. J. Derkum (Indian) and H. R. Davies was eleventh on a Sunbeam . . . the same position he had held on lap one. During the third lap, A. H. Alexander, in seventh place on his Indian, had his front tyre blow off whilst speeding down the mountain, but was fortunately unhurt. Tim Wood's flying Scott came to a temporary halt at Willaston, while the rider changed a plug—a delay which allowed Harry Collier to take the lead by seconds. Pullin remained third, about 1½ minutes behind Collier. The first 12 positions, at the end of lap three, were as follows:—

			<i>h.</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>s.</i>
1.	H. A. Collier (Matchless)	.....	.....	2	14 19
2.	H. O. Wood (Scott)	.....	.....	2	14 45
3.	C. G. Pullin (Rudge)	.....	.....	2	16 10
4.	H. V. Colver (Matchless)	.....	.....	2	17 10
5.	C. B. Franklin (Indian)	.....	.....	2	17 54
6.	G. J. Shemans (Triumph)	.....	.....	2	19 32
7.	O. C. Godfrey (Indian)	.....	.....	2	19 44
8.	T. E. Greene (Rudge)	.....	.....	2	19 58
9.	Q. Smith (Triumph)	.....	.....	2	20 28
10.	R. Bownass (N.U.T.)	.....	.....	2	20 34
11.	R. W. Lovegrove (Scott)	.....	.....	2	20 36
12.	H. R. Davies (Sunbeam)	.....	.....	2	20 43

Frank Applebee was 17th on another Scott; and Sunbeams filled 21st and 25th places. The reduction in the number of riders was becoming increasingly obvious as more and more dropped out during lap four. Broken valve springs, punctures, stretched exhaust valves and snapped footrests were the main causes.

Times for the fourth lap showed that Tim Wood had regained the lead, and put 88 seconds between himself and Collier, who doggedly hung on to the second place, with Pullin still about two minutes behind. The Rudge pit attendants began to make frantic signals ("unconvincing antics," recalls Pullin) in order to convey the closeness of the race. ("I had no idea of my position, but it occurred to me that it might be promising, so I proceeded to coax the last rev from the motor by making fullest use of the gear; and I put a little more energy into the foot-slogging at the Gooseneck. I sighted Collier prior to entering the Ramsey straight, and turned the wick up to smoking point" . . . Cyril Pullin recalling his impressions for the Rudge Enthusiasts' Club, last year).

The tough struggle between Tim Wood and Harry Collier gripped the attention of the large and colourfully-dressed crowds of spectators, for it seemed certain that one of them must win the race . . . but anything could happen in the last 37 miles. Misfortunes struck both of them: Tim Wood's special four-spark magneto stopped generating at Union Mills, rendered useless by oil and road filth. Collier jumped into the lead . . . but not for long. His frame snapped at 70 m.p.h. on Sulby straight and he was thrown—fortunately escaping with a few bruises.

It was now anybody's race. Pullin was in the lead and going like a bomb; Colver's Matchless was still running, but with only one gear left; Lovegrove had started to pick up places on his Scott, and O. C. Godfrey was lapping consistently with his Indian. H. R. Davies moved up to fifth position on the leading Sunbeam, with Q. Smith (Triumph) only about half a minute ahead of him.

T. E. Greene (Rudge) had particularly hard luck at Quarter Bridge, after refuelling at the Grandstand. Petrol splashed over on to the hot cylinder, and man and machine vanished in a sheet of flame! Greene threw himself to the ground and rolled over; nearby spectators "extinguished" him with gravel—and the Rudge burnt out completely. Roy Lovegrove suffered a broken chain and plug trouble at Willaston, and dropped from sixth to eighteenth place.

Cyril Pullin, whose Rudge had run beautifully throughout the race, but for some slight "coughing" on the third lap, romped home an easy winner. ("How I hated the Gooseneck with its tiring footslogging! What a thirst—what a crowd—couldn't hear them—only the echo of the old Rudge which gave me a lovely ride. I thanked all the helpers, and then went off to tea. . . . after a visit to the doctor, who removed thirty-six sizeable pieces of Manx road from my eyes.") Over seven minutes separated Pullin and the next rider to finish. Howard Davies, the Sunbeam rider, put in his fastest lap at the finish of a splendidly-riden race, and registered *exactly* the same total time as O. C. Godfrey (Indian). For the first, and indeed the *only* time in the history of the T.T., there had been a tie for second place! The riders themselves had no idea where they had finished—all they wanted was a drink and a hot bath.

52 riders finished in this, the most successful Senior T.T. held up to the time. Doubts and premonitions some of them may have had, but few could have known that they had just ridden in the last T.T. to be held for six long years.

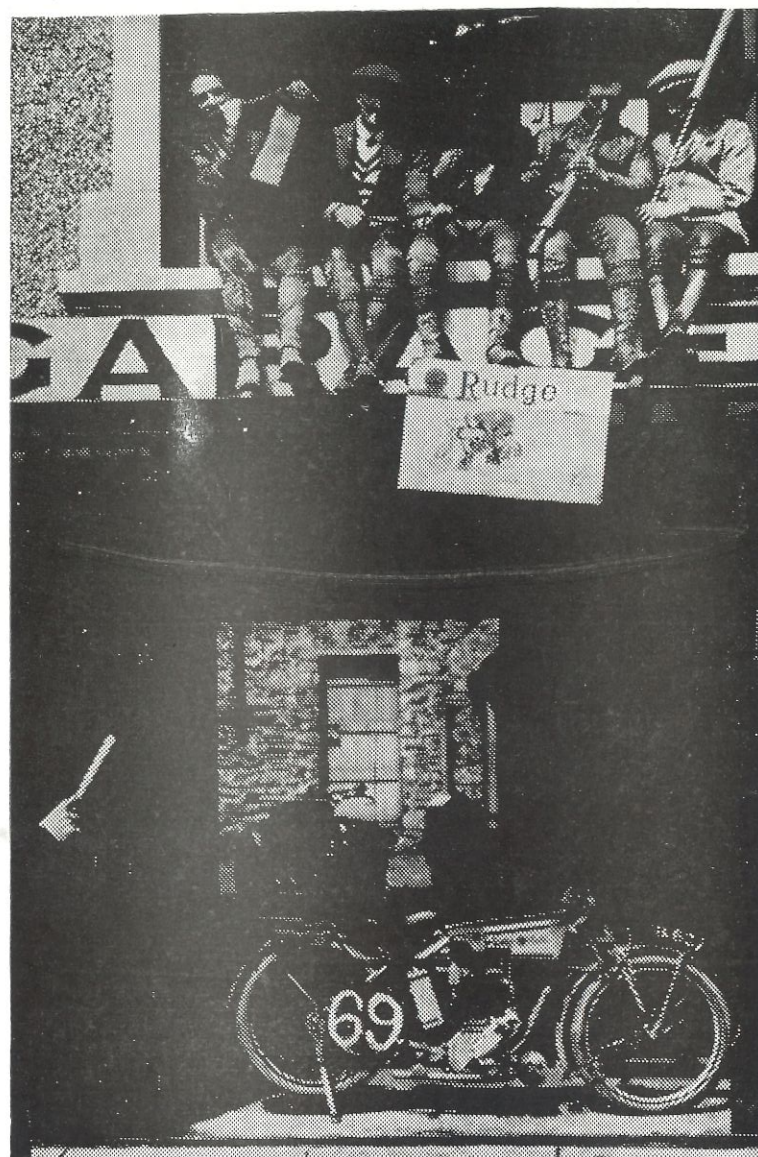
HOW THEY FINISHED.

	<i>h.</i>	<i>m.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>Average Speed m.p.h.</i>
1. C. G. Pullin (Rudge)	4	32	48	49.9
2. H. R. Davies (Sunbeam)	4	39	12	48.39
2. O. C. Godfrey (Indian)	4	39	12	48.39
4. H. V. Colver (Matchless)	4	39	23	48.36
5. G. Boyton (Triumph)	4	47	10	47.02
6. J. L. E. Emerson (A.B.C.)	4	50	12	46.53
7. H. Mason (N.U.T.)	4	50	35	46.42
8. C. B. Franklin (Indian)	4	52	46	46.12
9. Q. Smith (Triumph)	4	54	6	45.91
10. J. F. Sirrett (Motosacoche)	4	56	1	45.60
11. V. Busby (Sunbeam)	4	56	3	45.59
12. D. Young (B.S.A.)	4	56	53	45.47

followed by 40 other riders, the last of whom finished in 6 hrs. 22 mins. 28 secs.

The fastest and record lap was Tim Wood's first, in 42 min. 16 secs. (53.3 m.p.h.)

Opposite page— Victory celebrations by what was probably the very first jazz band! *Left to right, above the Rudge (which does not bear the actual race number)* are Pullin, Phil Mathews, T. E. Greene, Adamson and an unknown friend. This tuneful trio was 'conducted' by the team manager, Rowlandson.



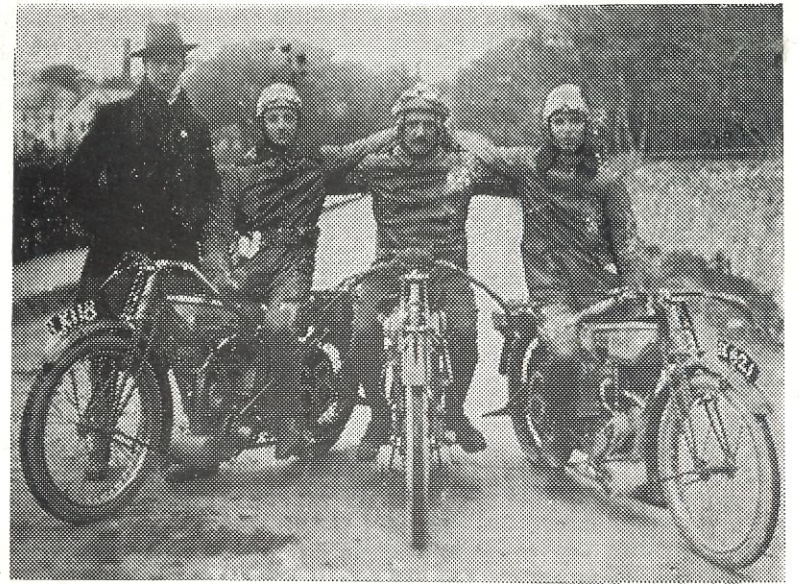
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Above—The Rudge Team. Riders from left to right—Pullin, Adamson and Greenc. In hat and overcoat is the team manager, Rowlandson.

Left—A recent portrait of C. G. Pullin, F.R.Ae.S., M.I.Mech.E., F.M.H.A., M.H.A. (U.S.A.), winner of the 1914 Senior on a Rudge Multi—and Vice-President of the Rudge Enthusiasts Club, 1964.



"I was among the last to start, and I thought this might be a good thing—but I had not reckoned with the dust. My goggles were smashed by flying stones halfway through the race, playing havoc with my eyes, which collected thirty-six pieces of Manx road." His one-piece leathers, specially made by Dunhill's, must have been the first; and after foot-slogging round the Gooseneck, they were probably the hottest! While some of the finishing riders had to be carried off the track, in utter exhaustion, Cyril Pullin was fit and fresh. ("This is nothing to the Italian race," he said—a reference to the Giro d'Italia, after which he had to be lifted from the saddle).

The winning Rudge Multi had been specially tuned at Pullin's "ill-equipped workshop, which included a somewhat ragged youth who spent his working hours polishing cylinder bores with graphite and chamois leather." Like the other

Multis, this big single (85 x 88mm.—499 c.c.) had a Ruthardt magneto, Senspray carburettor and John Bull belt for the twenty-speed gear. It differed from standard in having a higher compression ration (4 to 1), a 5% nickel steel inlet valve and a special tungsten alloy exhaust valve with a shrouded neck. Cams were ground to give an inlet opening at 5° B.T.C., closing at 37° after B.D.C. The exhaust opened at 47° before B.D.C. and closed 20° after. Flywheels were polished and loaded in the rim to balance .45% of the reciprocating mass. A lightened connecting rod carried needle roller big end bearings, but a plain little end bush. The cast iron piston was carefully lightened, and two $\frac{1}{8}$ in. piston rings fitted. Piston clearance was made almost double that recommended by contemporary engineers . . . and this proved advantageous. 3,000 r.p.m. and 80 m.p.h. (on the level) could be obtained. (These interesting details are from a workshop notebook kept by Cyril Pullin, and brought to light recently). The standard kit of "Rudge racing spares" included a complete magneto contact breaker, high tension brush, etc., tyre levers, puncture outfit—and a butt-ended inner tube, to be worn round the waist. Three carburettor jets were also supplied—but Pullin fitted an "adjustable" jet, which proved extremely valuable when the engine misfired slightly in the third lap. "I liked the machine very much" said C. G. P., "It was a joy to ride and steered perfectly—in fact the weight distribution was so good that in practice I rode a lap 'hands-off' except for the Gooseneck. Happy memories, Alas no more, but the name remains—'Rudge-Multi'."

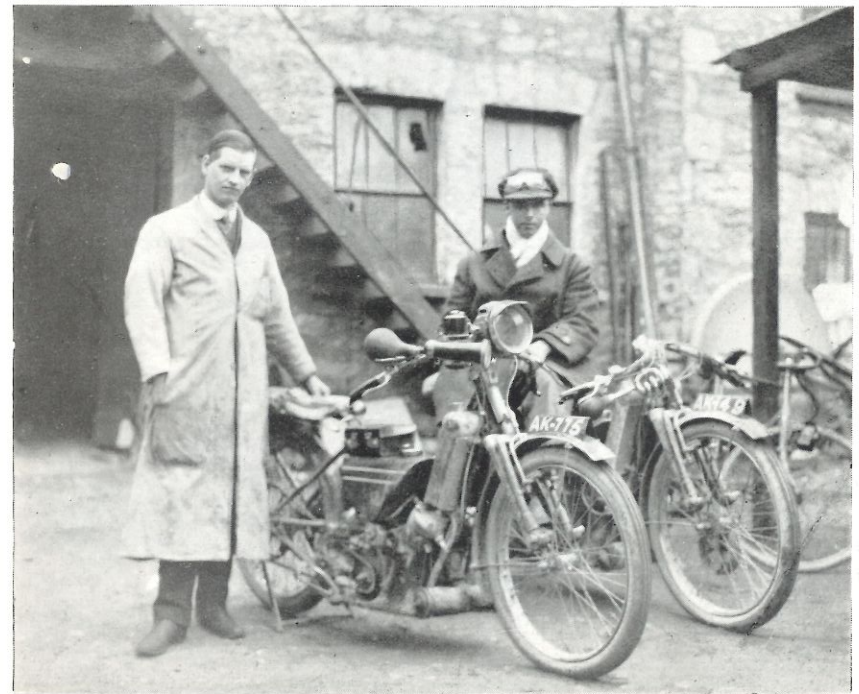
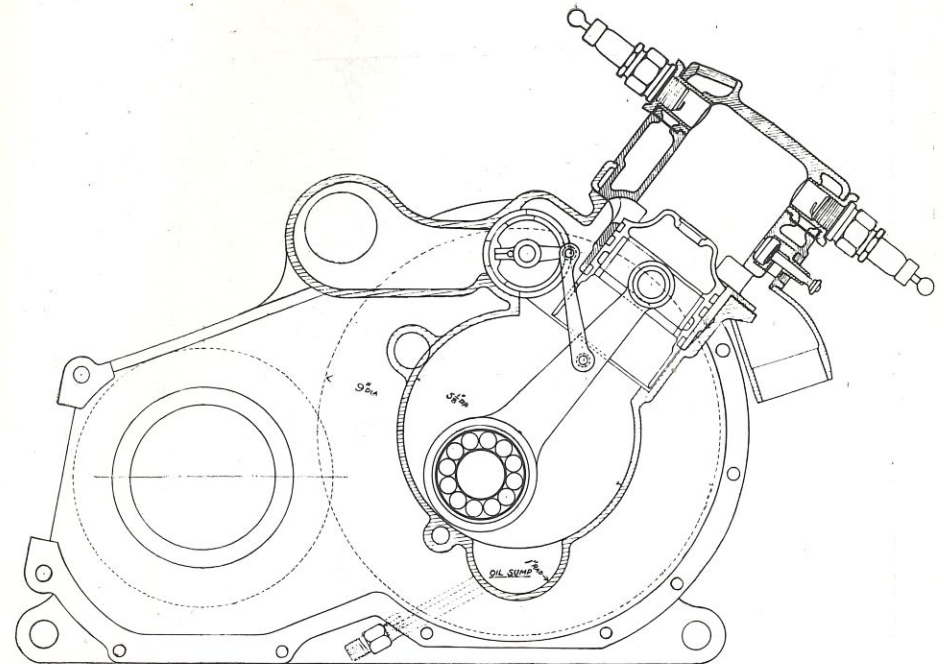
"The nicest 'bike I ever rode," was Tim Wood's comment on the 1914 T.T. Scott. "Tim"—a nickname derived from "Timber" Wood—is now in his seventies, living in retirement at Chislehurst. 50 years ago he broke his own 1913 lap record three times but retired with an oil-drenched magneto when in a leading position. His 1913 record was not equalled by any other rider in the 1914 race.

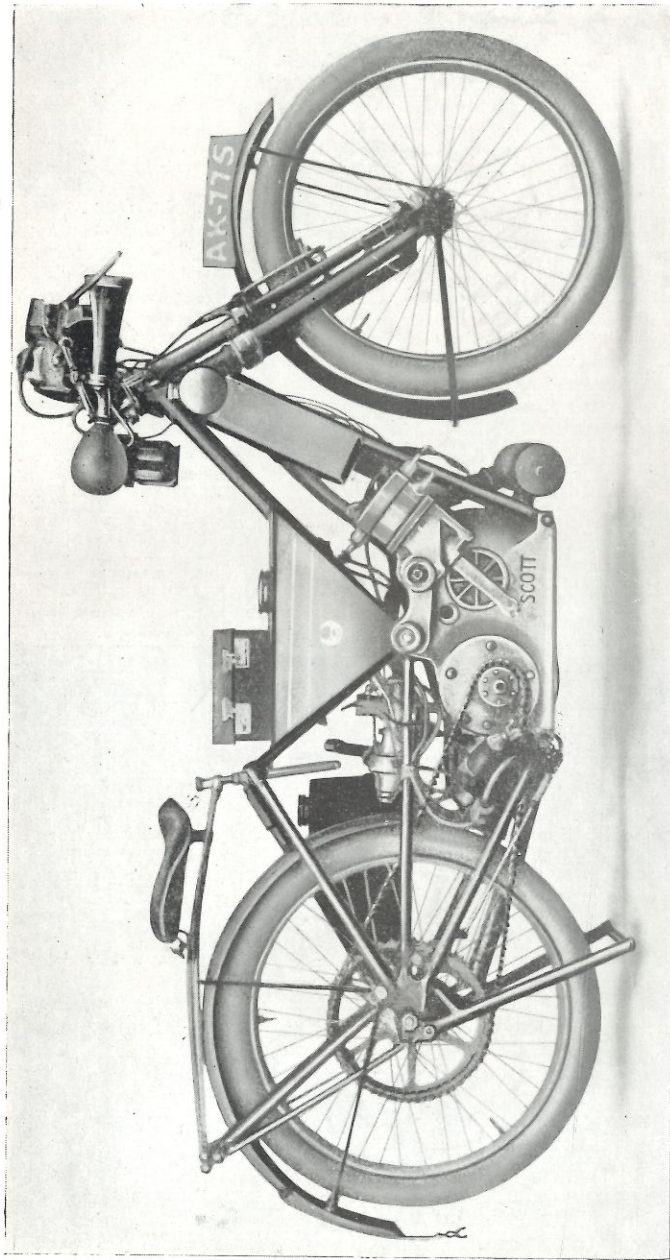
Although Capt. Wood visited the Island for a couple of post-war T.T.s, indifferent health prevents much travelling these days. Nevertheless he follows "the sport" closely and is particularly impressed by the phenomenal improvement in racing and scrambling two-strokes. He is an honorary life member of the Scott Owners' Club and, incidentally, the earliest Senior T.T. winner surviving.



Opposite page—Top: A slightly imperfect reproduction of Alfred Scott's original drawing (side section) of the 1914 T.T. engine. The Corliss-type oscillating valve was actuated by a link from the mid-point of the connecting rod, and controlled induction and transfer phases. The small poppet valve beneath the front sparking plug was a "half compression valve" to facilitate starting.

Bottom: H.O. ("Tim") Wood—on the right—with one of the works fitters and two of the 1914 T.T. Scotts, registered and in full roadgoing trim. (Photo by courtesy of Mrs C. Scott).





A somewhat retouched offside picture of the racing Scott, showing the eccentric "gearbox" mounting and external rear drive sprocket. A Scott carburettor was tucked a way beneath the fuel tank, and the induction manifold formed part of the frame. The saddle was mounted on leaf springs, pivoted at the rear and working in a plunger at the front. A long exhaust pipe (barely visible here) swept back as far as the rear wheel spindle, on the nearside. (Photo by courtesy of *Motor Cycling*).

With the exception of Tim Wood's model, the much-publicised 1914 racing Scotts were disappointing. Since they were such unusual two-strokes, however—and since your author is an incurable Scott enthusiast—a somewhat detailed description may be of interest. In appearance, they were quite unlike previous Scotts, mainly because the famous "oval" petrol tank gave way to a triangular 2-gallon tank resting just above the engine unit. A separate oil-tank held half a gallon of lubricant, and this was pumped to the engine by a foot-operated device. The engine itself was fitted with two separate cylinders ($2\frac{3}{4}$ inch bore x $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch stroke—486 c.c.) deeply spigoted into the crankcase. The familiar central flywheel and overhung cranks in separate chambers remained, but the new distribution valve represented a complete change in induction and transfer control. It was based on the Corliss valve used on large mill steam engines, on which Alfred Scott trained as a young man, and made use of the elliptical locus of a point halfway up the connecting rod. A short link articulated in a suitable pivot-bearing, and its diminished movement at the other end "twisted" a valve cylinder fitted with a short lever. (The drawing will make the operation much clearer than a page of description). This rather cumbersome valve gear gave much improved "breathing"; and it could be fitted with a rotatable port sleeve, so that the carburettor was left at full throttle and the engine controlled by a screw-thread device on the sleeve, varying the timing.

The rest of the machine bristled with equally ingenious innovations: one of the frame lugs formed part of the induction manifold; the saddle was mounted on a couple of half-elliptic leaf springs, each further sprung on vertical helical coils at the front end. (Originally, the movement of the forward plungers was used to operate a small pump, which "pressurized" pannier fuel tanks slung below hub level, in order to force petrol to the carburettor. These tanks were subsequently replaced by the one illustrated).

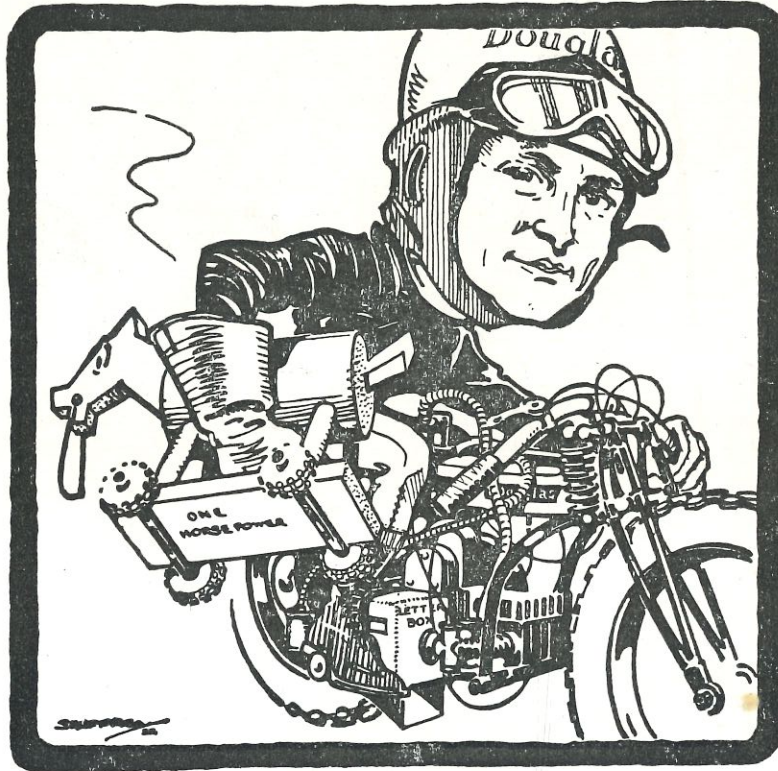
The unit-construction engine casting housed, to the rear, a new form of Scott countershaft. Two or three gears could be provided—two operated by pedal, the third ratio being brought in by means of a trigger control on the handlebar. In the T.T., only two ratios were used—3.3 and 4.7 to 1. Ignition was by a special Bosch magneto which sparked twice per revolution. There were two armature windings, four slip-rings, four pick-up brushes and no "earth." H.T. cable was led to a special handlebar switch, and thence to the plugs—two in each cylinder. This "change-over" switch enabled the rider to make the two plugs in each barrel fire in synchronisation or alternately. It was this complex ignition system which put Tim Wood out of the race—oil and road filth smothered the slip rings and hopelessly shorted them to earth.

Four of these special Scotts were made—one each for Wood, Lovegrove and Applebee, and one reserve. It was Alfred Scott's intention to develop the design as a 1915 sidecar production model, and to this end all adjustments were made from the right-hand side of the machine—contact-breaker, rear drive chain and gearbox (which was mounted in eccentric circular plates, for chain tensioning).

In 1915, unfortunately, too many more important engineering jobs had to be done, and after the War Scott was no longer concerned with motor cycle production. The existing models languished and corroded away, over the years, until there was no complete machine left. That such a fascinating and unorthodox racer should have vanished entirely is a minor tragedy—but all is not lost. Using a few existing components, some miraculously preserved 1914 Works' drawings and a collection of rare photographs, an enthusiastic member of the Scott O.C. is making patterns, castings and so forth for a "one-off" exact replica of the last of Alfred Scott's racing motor cycles.

Acknowledgements.

Interesting facts, figures and photographs have kindly been placed at my disposal by Cyril Pullin, Tim Wood, John Bever, Mrs. C. Scott, The Rudge Enthusiasts' Club Editor, Jack Lennon; *Motor Cycle*, *Motor Cycling* and *The Autocycle*.



Cyril Pullin changed to a different 'steed' after the Kaiser War, with equal success. In 1922 he tuned and rode a 500 c.c. Douglas at 100 m.p.h.—the first time a machine of this capacity achieved the magic 'ton.' In the same year the Hutchinson Tyre Company published a brochure of motorcycling caricatures entitled "Tyresome Tales," from which this drawing is reproduced.

Plate by courtesy of the *Vintage Motor Cycle Club* Editor, Jack Keating.

Do you have a 'soft spot' for Rudge or Scott machines? Both have captured admiration and loyalty over the years, and both have inspired enthusiasts to organize clubs which publish illustrated journals recording the former glories of the two *marques*. Anyone interested is cordially invited to enquire about membership. Secretaries' addresses are:

Rudge Enthusiasts' Club: Jack Lennon, 88 Speer Rd., Thames Ditton, Surrey.

Scott Owners' Club: Mrs. D. Avis, 3 Bosworth Rd., Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.



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