

# *The Silver Spoke*

The Newsletter of the Grampian Classic Motorcycle Club

**May/June 2017 Cairn O' Mount**

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## Editorial

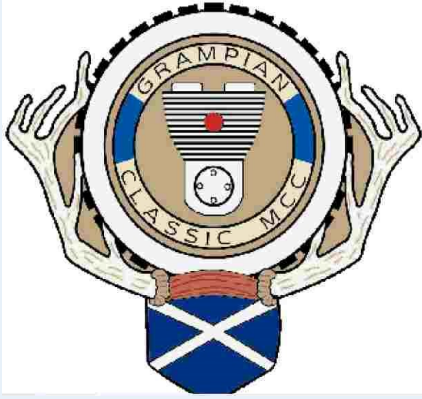
I hope you all agree that the Cairn O' Mount run was again a great success; we couldn't have got many more bikes in the Feughside car park! The weather held and as far as I know (!) there were no accidents or breakdowns? There was a fine selection of bikes rightly given awards in the various categories and I've tried to include as many of them as I can in the assorted rogues gallery on the following pages. If there's one thing that does occur to me is the large number of bikes that turn up without registering. I've no problem at all with this but it strikes me that we could consider a collection for Club funds? Anyone there on a bike is benefitting from the hard work the organisers and the Club have put in and I'm sure most would stick their hand in their pocket and donate a couple of quid? Nothing mandatory just someone shaking a bucket.

Here are the winners, congratulations to All, and also a big Thanks to all of the organisers who give freely of their time to make it happen. I'm afraid I don't have photos of every bike or award but I hope you enjoy them nonetheless.

Finally, a big thank you to Dean Darlington for his write up of the day, attached separately.

## Judging Results

Vintage	Panther	Dean Darlington
Post vintage	Velocette	Alan Griggs
Post war	Sunbeam S7	Andrew Laing
Classic	BSA rocket 3	Sandy Thomson
Modern Classic	MZ ETZ	Brian Orman
Oldest rider / bike	Mick Elstone / Royal Enfield	
Youngest rider vs bike	Dean Darlington	
Distance	Alan Gorrell	Vincent Comet
Best Triumph	Tiger 110	Alister Clark



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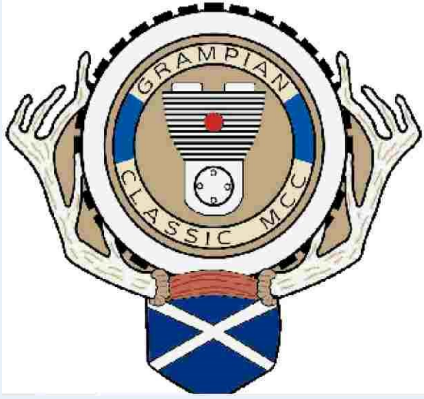
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Dean Darlington on his Panther. Best bike/best vintage/youngest rider oldest bike





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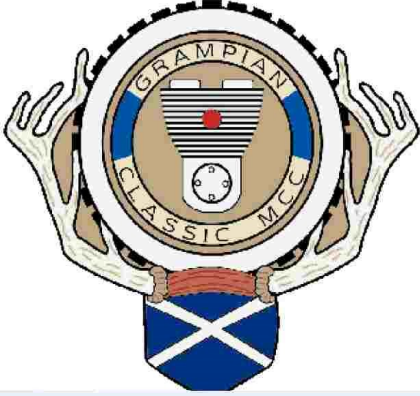
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Post vintage—Alan Griggs. Apologies, no photo of the Velo from this year but hope this is the bike in 2016?



Post war - Andrew Laing





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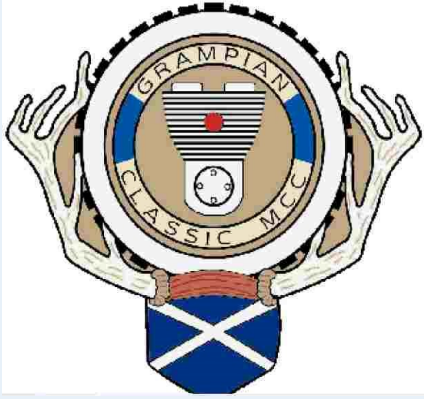
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Classic—Sandy Thomson. Sorry for the poor photograph. If anyone has a better one please email for the next newsletter



Modern Classic – Brian Orman. No award photo I'm afraid but this is Brian's bike





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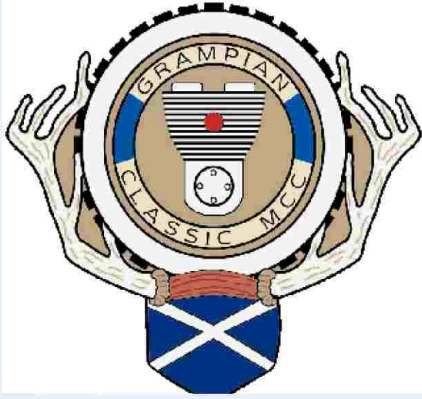
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Oldest rider and bike—Mick Elstone



Longest Distance - Alan Gorrell. No good photo of Andrew's bike—please send one for the next newsletter if you have one





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Best Triumph—Alister Clark. Sorry, no bike photo, please send one for the next Newsletter



## Long Way Up (and down)

Many times have I attended the gathering to celebrate all that is old, smelly and noisy but that's enough of the riders, what you want to read about is the stunning array of vintage, classic and custom bikes. Every year, the Grampian Classic Motorcycle Club host the Cairn O' Mount Motorcycle run.

The Cairn O'Mount road was one of the most challenging hills to early motorists and it is featured in the 1927 "Rudge Book of the Road". It runs from Banchory to Fettercairn in the North East of Scotland and is still great fun on a modern motorcycle, but can be a challenge for older machines.

This year, I had the opportunity to participate on my 1925 P&M. With many weeks of careful preparation behind me, the only thing (I thought) I wasn't in control of was the weather. Now, it may come as a surprise to any "Southerners" reading this, but the climate up here is fairly unpredictable and it's not unusual to get all seasons in the one day. Weather check three day prior is forecasting rain, marvellous!

Sunday morning arrives with a slight mist over the hills but the sun is threatening to make an appearance. All loaded up, we set off for base camp with my pit crew (my long suffering wife and Oska, the hunting 'for dead motorcycles' dog). The P&M was unloaded and provided with the usual refreshments, oil, grease and fuel. We had Bacon butties and a cup of Tetley's tea waiting for us at the run start.

After conducting the pre-start sequence, a couple of prods on the kick-start broke the serene silence at the Potarch Bridge carpark and the P&M reverberated off the surrounding woodland. What a wonderful sound (I thought). With slight apprehension, I got toggged up in part period kit and headed for the start point at the Feughside Inn about 5 miles away using the old military road (just off the B933). This short hop allowed for any last minute tweaks and more importantly, to build confidence for the challenge ahead.

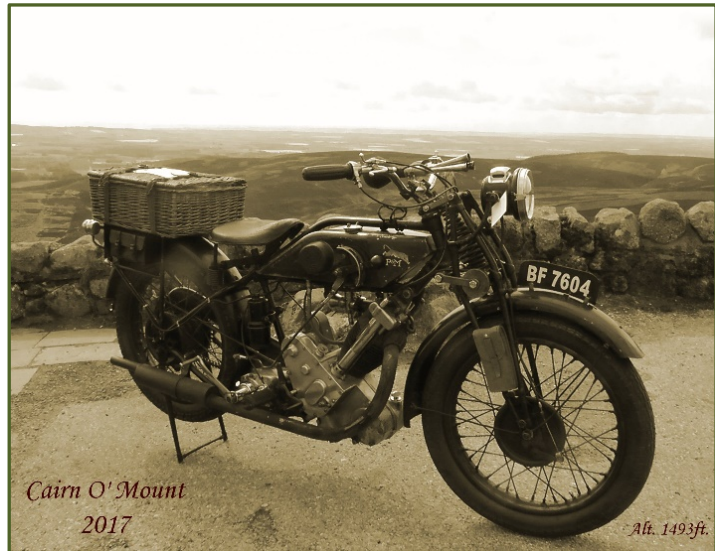
We arrived at the run start without incident, thankfully, the P&M was running superbly. The short ride was stunning and the sun was out to stay. Bikes had already started to gather ready for the 11am start. It was noted that my arrival wasn't a surprise as the "Thump" of the 500 OHV had preceded me, oh dear :-). A fine collection of around one hundred motorcycles were on parade and awaiting the judges to do their thing. We did our thing whilst enjoying the Tea and Butties.



11am arrived and the bikes set off in age order (more or less). I was one of the first off, it was a wonderful feeling leading with all that amazing history behind me. Not for long thought, those old bike can still go! I was soon on my own and contemplating the merits of rigid rear and girders on the poorly maintained military road.

Well, 15 minutes into the journey and its going very well, nothing had fallen off the bike (or me). The gradients were starting to test the engine and gearbox but to no detriment. The P&M took it all in her stride. I am glad I spent some quality time setting up the clutch to ensure no drag/slip (Thanks to Jan Klopmans). The gear selection could never be described as 'slick' but as time went on, I became more proficient.

Starting to clear the tree line now and the summit beckons. Things are going really well and the surrounding vistas are superb. Am I getting over confident, we'll see? Just a mile to go now and the 'thump, thump' is ever stronger (maybe she's jettied for this altitude!) As I round the bend, I see the summit car park and my pit crew, we made it! Time for a quick photo call and a fluids check.



It's downhill all the way now to our lunch stop at Brechin Castle centre, what can possibly go wrong. Oh, I forgot to mention, we had just waved off the recovery truck with an "it's ok for you to go ahead mate, we'll be fine now".

So, now it's the brakes turn for a good test. It would be possible to achieve quite a momentum on the descent but the switch back bends and irregular road surface has me braking in anticipation two to three bends ahead. Without incident, we slowly level out and take advantage of some smooth road surface. That's us now 'cruising' at 55mph and barely on the throttle, the original 1925 pocket rocket.

Just approaching Fettercairn now and I ease off the throttle. Bike starts to pop and bang on the over-run, that's strange I thought, never done that before. The bike is sounding very poorly now so I stop immediately. I start to suspect a points/timing issue then I notice the Magdrive fibre coupling. Looks like the old girl has decided to start munching through the drive coupling. Hmm. did not anticipate this and no spare on hand. Out with the tool kit to see what can be done. All I have suitable is the magic Duct tape, yup, a fix for all. I squeeze the coupling back into shape and hold the drive dogs in place by wrapping lots of duct tape strips around the outside of the coupling. Guess you're all thinking the same as me, surely that won't work for long. With a very delicate prod of the kick starter, she fires back to life. And, I'm convinced, is running sweeter than ever!



Lunch stop is 12 miles away, will she make it? After discussion with the pit crew, I decide to give it a go. Being 'very' careful with throttle and gears, we eventually roll into the car park at Brechin and meet up again with pit crew and other riders. Can't believe, a) the repair worked in the first place, b) lasted for 12 miles. On the way, I had formulated a repair plan based on my initial success. Now, where can I get some zip ties.....



After a lovely lunch of cake and coffee, I headed back to the P&M for repairs. I now made a very professional repair with more Duct tape reinforced with zip ties! A quick grease, oil and fuel top-up and we're ready for the return journey.

Starting to enjoy the journey again as my confidence in the repair is increasing. Blasting (relatively speaking) down these country roads in glorious weather and amazing scenery is a real privilege. The sound and smell from the P&M is very evocative.

The real test of the P&M is on the return journey as the climb to the summit of the Cairn O' Mount from the coast side is very abrupt. We decide to stop for cake and coffee again just before the climb starts. In hindsight, I guess we should have been looking to "lighten the load"!

Off we set and the bike is flawless, racing (sort of) to the summit and over the top. Except for a couple of steep climbs, the road back to the Feughside Inn is a gentle drop and on the decent road surface, the quality of the ride was amazing (for a 91 year old).

Back at the Inn for more cake and coffee and a chat with other participants. Everybody has had a great time and the bikes have performed admirably. Met some really nice folk and shared some 'tales'

Many thanks to the GCMCC for organising and all the people that contributed to putting on a fantastic day (including my pit crew). Roll on 2018.

Dean Darlington  
14 May 2017

