

A SHORT HISTORY OF PORTSMOUTH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

As Remembered by John Bussell.

The idea for the "Portsmouth Motor Cycle Racing Club" was born when half a dozen Portsmouth enthusiasts were in the Isle of Man at the first TT race after the war, in 1947. Amongst those were John Fisher, a local motor cycle agent, a TT competitor and a scrambles rider, who became the first club President. There have only been two since John Fisher's retirement, namely John Wilson and John Bussell.

The first events organised were with the Gosport MCC, under the banner of the "Southdowns Combine" and were scrambles at Hipley Copse, Southwick, just north of Portsmouth .

The first open to centre scramble to be run solely by the club was at Old Idsworth Farm, owned by the Bussell family, in April 1952 with the first solo & sidecar in the following August. The entries contained some famous names of the time: Graham Beamish, Phil Nex, Les Archer, Eric Cheney, MXDN team members and local riders Wilson Bros. Ray Marsh, Ken Hall & John Clayton. During the late '50s Phil Nex achieved something no one has done since winning both solo and sidecar Centre Championships at Old Idsworth on the same day.

Progress was made in the '60s with Stuart Maunder taking the helm as Clerk of the Course with John Bussell as Secretary of the Meeting of all the scrambles and motocross, through Local, National & International with events being run at Grandfather's Bottom on Butser Hill; Oxenbourne Farm, East Meon ; and Ladies Mile, Chalton. The pinnacle when in 1974 and '75 with the help of John Mould, The Wilsons and the Smith Family as leaders, as well as many other club members, the 250cc British MX GP was organised with riders coming from all over the world.

The club has a famous trophy – "The Kaj Bornebusch" used from 1971 for scrambles; it was given by Kaj, a Swedish rider living in England and riding at Old Idsworth, at the time having enjoyed the welcome given to him by the Club. He was both a solo and sidecar competitor and was well-known for a special, extra wide rear tyre on his machines.

During this exciting time the many keen members organised Grass Track events with top class entries of Lew Coffin, Dave Palmer and other well-known competitors were held at Froxfield (north of Petersfield) in 1965-66-67.

Trials were led by John Mould (one of the longest serving Club Secretaries) for the Mould Trophy that had good quality entries, as well.

Since the heady days of Scrambles & MotoCross the club has been very active running Enduros (they require less man power!) The lead has again taken by the Maunder family, following Stuart, his son, Colin and currently by grandson, Graham.

None of the organisers or officials over all the years could have been so efficient without the full support of their wives and girl friends whose help is always invaluable.

Over the years, many great times have been had at club social events; the latest was the 60th Celebration, held Saturday 19th January 2008.