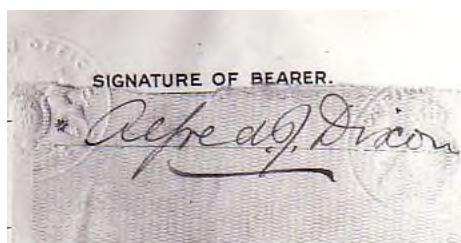


Alfred James Dixon

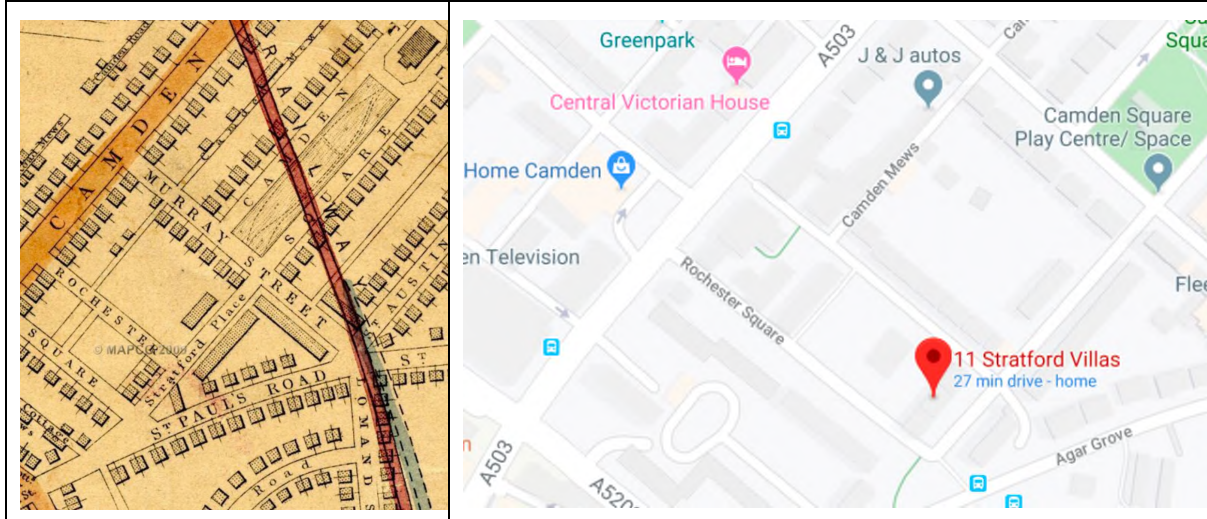
The story that follows is mainly drawn from personal reminiscences of his children and from one of his very good friends who I was able to talk to back in the early 1970s when I started this research – “Mac” (MacFarlane of Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey. Alfred James – Jimmy to his friends, or AJ in the press of his time, managed to live his short life to the full but died early, before his full potential could be uncovered. He lived fast and he lived hard. But above all, he had fun, until cancer took over his life.



Part 1

An Introduction to Jimmy Dixon

Alfred James Dixon was born at 11 Stratford Place, St Pancras. Today it is known as Stratford Villas.



His parents were **Alfred Archer Dixon** and **Fanny Law**. Alfred Archer Dixon had started his working life as a porter for the Great Western Railway, but by the time of his death, he owned 11 houses, two cottages and was the licensee for two public houses. Fanny was his third wife – the first (Susan) having left him and shortly after died and the second died in childbirth. Fanny was the daughter of **Richard Law**, an Irish immigrant who joined the Royal Navy, served on board HMS Rodney at the battle of Sebastopol in the Crimean War and then settled in Layer Breton, near Colchester, working as a carpenter and then, for 30 years, managed the Hare and Hounds public house.

He attended Ongar Grammar School as a boarder but there are no records to tell us what kind of student he was. Like any child he

must have been aware of the rapidly changing environment around him, as the nineteenth century drew to a close. It was about this time that many of the important inventions were emerging – automobiles, flying machines, motorised bicycles, radio, etc. It must have been a very exciting time to be growing up.



I started researching Jimmy, in the early 1970s and one of my first ports of call was the White House pub in Enfield. Jimmy spent most of his childhood there, as his dad was the licensee. I explained who I was and the publican said that he had been sorting out the attic/loft and found a couple of photos and a certificate. They had been there for 70 years!! They are included in Part 2 – the sepia ones.



His father wanted him to be an engineer and so, like his father, he joined the railways and went to trade school. As the century turned, Jimmy was fourteen years old. Britain was at war with the Boers in South Africa in the second Boer War; in Paris the second Olympic Games are staged; the Central line open in London; first zeppelin successfully launched; in the

US, the first car show opens and the first Michelin Guide is published.

Mac described him as “6 feet tall and 14 stone. As a child he was very blonde, but later it developed into soft reddy-brown hair. He had a red beard. He was a popular man with everyone, yet stern. He was a blunt man, calling a spade a spade but never bitched about anything,” Mac said. “He had plenty of girl-friends, most notably an Irish/American girl called Ann, and another called Dorothy who lived next door to the White House, at the “Old Forge”. Her father was a farrier.”

Family stories say that Jimmy had a zest for life and was always tinkering with machinery. He was closely associated with the [Singer Motorcycle Company](#) – whether he was employed by them is unknown. Mac told me that he loved speed, fast cars and aeroplanes, and even went so far as to have a go at building his own aircraft which he kept on Tottenham marshes. He was keen on travelling and saw much of the Continent, venturing as far as Russia.”

He certainly mixed with some of the pioneers of the motor industry. He was a passionate motorcycle pioneer, cyclecar racing driver, an inventor, a family man. He was gregarious, could play the piano and had an excellent singing voice and was said to be the life of any party.

War broke out in August 1914 and this put paid to Jimmy’s motorcycle career. He joined the army. He served in France in the Royal Engineers 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment in September 1915 but was discharged 4 May 1916. I believe that he was injured and this may have led to his early death in 1935. I have been unable to find his Army record. Unfortunately about 60% of the soldiers’ Service Records were irretrievably damaged or lost completely as a result of enemy bombing in 1940 during the Second World War. The exact number of serving British soldiers is not known because of the loss of the records. His regimental number was 117224. He was awarded the Victory, British and Star medals.

Three British campaign medals: The 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



Pip, Squeak and Wilfred are the affectionate names given to the three WW1 campaign medals — The 1914 Star or 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal respectively. These medals were primarily awarded to the Old Contemptibles (B.E.F.). and by convention all three medals are worn together and in the same order from left to right when viewed from the front. The set of three medals or at least the British War Medal and the Victory Medal are the most likely medals to be found among family heirlooms.

When the WW1 medals were issued in the 1920's it coincided with a popular comic strip published by the Daily Mirror newspaper. It was written by Bertram J. Lamb (Uncle Dick), and drawn by the

cartoonist Austin Bowen Payne (A.B. Payne). Pip was the dog, Squeak the penguin and Wilfred the young rabbit. It is believed that A. B. Payne's batman during the war had been nicknamed "Pip-squeak" and this is where the idea for the names of the dog and penguin came from. For some reason the three names of the characters became associated with the three campaign medals being issued at that time to many thousands of returning servicemen, and they stuck.

Mac said that he has been a dispatch rider at the front, skidding through the mud and the dust between headquarters and the trenches. He had tried to join the Royal Flying Corps, but he was too heavy. One of the funnier stories that Mac told me was that at one time, some soldiers got together to organise a motorcycle race. Apparently Jimmy was in the lead and some Italian soldiers didn't like this so they threw a dog at him. He crashed and didn't win the race. Mac didn't know if the dog was alive or dead.

Jimmy's skills as a mechanical engineer, were needed back in England and he was demobbed and sent to work in a munitions factory in Coventry as an engineer. One evening he and a group of friends went to the Hippodrome theatre. As mentioned, he was adventurous and Nanna told me that on this night he was in drag (dressed up as a woman). My grandmother, **Gertrude Annie Elkington**, b 30 April 1894, was working in the box office – she was the manageress. They hit it off and Jimmy went back and started courting her. Gertrude was known as "Jack" to her friends. Jack



was born in 1894. His father worked in a bicycle factory. The family were very poor. Note that the famous Elkington silver baron family of Birmingham, were Jack's 4th cousins. Jack and Jimmy were married in 1916 in Coventry. Jack was 26 years old, 5 feet 5 inches with blue eyes and medium complexion. The passport tells us that she has a broad nose, small mouth, round chin and light brown hair.

At some stage, before she knew Jimmy, she had become a devout Catholic, upsetting her own family – her father nearly disowned her.

Photograph above shows Gertrude "Jack" at age 21

Just nine months after their marriage, on 10 June 1917, their first child was born -**Nora Winifred Dixon** in Coventry. The family lived at Dronfield Road, quite close to the Singer factory. Their second

child, **Alfred Patrick John Dixon** was born 25 May 1919 and was named after Paddy Flynn and known as Paddy to his family.

In the early 1920s, Jimmy and Jack moved back to Enfield, where he now had the license to run the White House pub. Gertrude worked in the bar and did the books. Mac was a regular visitor and reported to me that they were he and Jimmy were keen amateur radio buffs – called HAM radio. Jimmy's call sign was G6PD and he was transmitting before it became necessary to hold a licence. He was a member of the North Middlesex Wireless Club. Jimmy attended the 3rd Annual Conference of Affiliated Wireless Societies and had a letter published in the [1922 Wireless World](#) magazine where he made a number of resolutions.

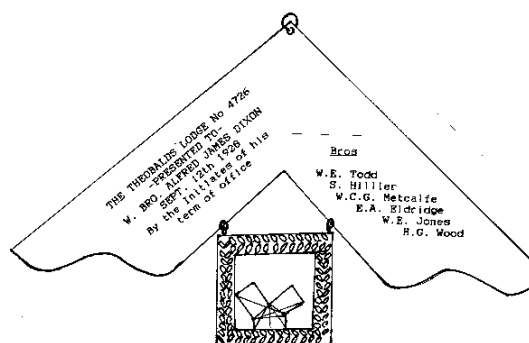
Mac also said that every available space in the pub was crammed with parts for his cars and motorcycle and radio- every cupboard, in the cellar, on the stairs and the roof.

Jimmy sold two of the 10 houses that his father had left him and turned his attention from motorcycle racing to car racing. – see Part 3. But he was also an inventor. Mac said that he invented all sorts of things, including a home-made refrigerator, a clock out of a shell case, and he experimented with making ice cream out of a vinegar barrel. When cats made too much noise on



the roof of his house, he set up an electric charge to give them a buzz. Later he used the same techniques on the local lads who would urinate against the side of his corrugated iron shed – the story goes that it did the trick!

It was in Enfield that he joined the Freemasons. He very quickly rose through the ranks and became Worshipful Grand Master at Theobalds Lodge



I visited the site in the 1970s and found the black and white flooring in a park. I doubt it's there now.

Jimmy stood for parliament in behalf of the Conservative party in the 1923 general election, but was beaten by William Henderson, Labour Party.

He also took flying lessons and was close friends with Paddy Flynn. Mac said that his circle of friends included [Paddy Flynn](#), [Alan Cobham](#), "Eddy" Richard Seagrave, Dick Seamen and the Prince of Wales. Paddy was one of the first pilots of Imperial Airways, which later became BOAC then BAC.

Paddy, his son (my dad) remembers watching Jimmy walk on the wings of an Avro 504K at Clacton-on-sea in a plane piloted by Paddy Flynn. This may or may not have been part of the Circus.

The picture below shows Jimmy with Paddy and I believe Alan Cobham. The photo could have been taken in 1933 when Cobham organised a great air display in Clacton – or I could be earlier.



it was Cobham who started the National Aviation Day displays – a combination of [barnstorming](#) and joyriding. This consisted of a team of up to fourteen aircraft, ranging from single-seaters to modern airliners, and many skilled pilots. It toured the country, calling at hundreds of sites, some of them regular airfields and some just fields cleared for the occasion. Generally known as "Cobham's [Flying](#)

[Circus](#)", it was hugely popular, giving thousands of people their first experience of flying, and bringing "air-mindedness" to the population. See more [here](#).

Some amazing videos of Cobham's Flying circus can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voaoP53AZAs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivM3I5FVyoQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLm8Iy363ak>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsWPYA0HPq4>

The family moved from Enfield to Clacton-on-Sea, Essex in 1928. I don't know why they moved. Phyl told her son Tony, that they moved to Clacton for financial reasons as her dad, Jimmy, was a playboy and spent money like water. Jimmy and Jack bought Mazzolini's Café and Jack ran the café, which was very busy in the summer, leaving Jimmy time to pursue his hobbies in the winter. The photo below shows Mr Mazzolini outside his shop in Station Road, Clacton. They continued the name of Mazzolinis. It was a restaurant, confectioner and ice cream parlour.

I do believe that they also owned and ran the Criterion restaurant. That is family chitchat, but I have no proof. Funnily enough, after leaving teacher training college in Clacton in 1973, both myself and my future wife worked in the Criterion restaurant.





The family didn't live in Clacton, but in Frinton-on-Sea, a town that allowed no pubs in it! They had a lovely house called Sans Souci. The picture left shows the children: L-R Paddy; Phyllis and Nora.

Jimmy of course had a number of cars at this time. My dad, Paddy, and his sister told me that he had a Riley and a Sunbeam and he could do the trip between Farringdon and Clacton in 80 minutes. Why Farringdon? I have no idea as Farringdon is a historic market town in the Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire, 18 miles south-west of Oxford. I should have asked why Farringdon? Nora told me that on one journey, the gear ever suddenly snapped off and cool as a cucumber he slapped a box spanner over the stump and continued driving.



In Clacton he had his own motor cruiser and he anchored this at Walton-on-the-Naze. It was called Puffin. Once a year he would take his family out for a cruise. At Harwich one day, returning from the marine store, he slipped on the slimy steps and fell headlong into the water. When he emerged he still wore the blue beret at a jaunty angle. Cigarette still between his

lips and with a broad smile he told the kids "Don't you dare tell your mother." However, most of the time he usually dumped the kids on the Walton pier for the day, where they would have to amuse themselves with twopenny in their pockets.

He also took the family out for picnics in his car. Here we can see a very early form of CD player....



Jack is in the passenger seat, Nora on the back seat, Phyl next to the wheel and Jimmy at the back. I wonder if he had a tripod, or whether my dad took the picture?

He loved music and usually took his music machines with him, much like we do today. He would have loved the technology that we have developed.



He was elected president of the Clacton on Sea Chamber of Commerce in 1931. They held their Annual meeting and reported that membership stood at 140-a record! There were 3 nominations for presidency and Mr.A J Dixon was elected." There is a cartoon of Clacton celebrities that my cousin Tony Burns unearthed – I'm hoping to get a better copy. It shows Jimmy – smoking as usual.

The photo below shows the family out on a day trip on a river. I expect it was the River Stour, as I remember Dad taking us there and saying that his dad used to take him. Nora had left home by this stage and so, L-R Phyl, Jack; Jimmy and Paddy



Jimmy, as we have seen was well-liked and he was highly regarded in the Clacton business community. He was a keen fisherman, and went fishing off the pier as often as he could.

Tragedy struck when Jimmy fell ill with cancer. It was cancer of the stomach. He had spent his youth in pubs – a very unhealthy environment, and all of his life around cars and motorcycles. Add to that he was a heavy smoker and drinker. He



underwent an operation in London to remove it, but he suffered a relapse and had to give up work... and fun. Towards the end of his life, Nora gave up her work and moved home (they lived in a house called Winster in Elm Tree Avenue, Frinton) to look after him. Nora had trained as a nurse. Finally this big man wasted away to virtually nothing, living on a diet of morphine and brandy. He had lived hard, but he also died hard. And he was only 47 years old when he died. Imagine what he could have achieved if he had lived a full life. He died on the 21 March 1935.

The photo below is the last picture that we have of Jimmy, standing next to old Fred. Frederick Walker, pianoforte dealer had two shops - at No 33 Old Road and Wagstaff's Corner at No 37 Norman Jacobs of the Clacton & District Local History Society dates it at about 1932.



Remember that Jack had converted to Catholicism? The only one in our extended family to do so. Well she had an arrangement that she would bring the daughters up as Catholic but Jimmy insisted that the son, Paddy, be brought up as protestant. I'm not sure that Jimmy was all that religious, but he certainly steered clear of the Roman Catholic religion. However, in his dying days, when racked with pain. The Catholic church was a constant companion. Jack brought in a personal friend of hers to give jimmy some comfort, but also to ensure that he would go to heaven. Can't remember the name of the priest (Heenan?) but he was a Jesuit and he had many long conversations with Jimmy. He wore him down and eventually Jimmy threw his freemasons ring into the fire. The Catholic church is and was vehemently opposed to Freemasonry. I like to believe that Jimmy threw his ring in as a gesture to please Jack.... and as insurance in case there was an afterlife.

Jimmy's final home at Kirby Cross cemetery. Jack is there as well. My dad, Paddy, wished to have his ashes interred here and there is a new gravestone. By the time he died, the family was not so well off. The estate was valued at £4994-11-3d. That is still far better than a lot of Paddy was pulled out from Colchester High School. He had ambitions to be a professional cricketer as he was an excellent athlete, but he was sent as a boy entrant to RAF and trained to be an aircraft engineer. Nora was a nurse working away from home and Phyl stayed with Jack until the outbreak of

World War 2. After the war, Jack decided that life in England held no future for her and she took a job as a nanny in Canada and stayed there for three or four years.



In the estate duty documents we learn that jimmy owned 6 freehold houses in Bell Road, Enfield – 5,6,7,8,10 and 11. In the picture, no 11 is the last one on the right. All six houses were valued at £1890. The other assets (personal property) stood at £195. He also owned the two cottages that his father had passed to him – Sea View villas in Layer Breton, Esse.



Part 2A

Jimmy's motorcycle career

After finishing his apprenticeship, and as soon as he could, Jimmy obtained wheels – Mac told me that he bought a second hand motorcycle and learned to ride it. He then started riding in competitions. Last time I was in England I spent a few happy hours trawling through motorcycling magazines in a library in Coventry, but I didn't have enough time to search all of Jimmy's life.

In 1914, when his father died, he gave up work to concentrate on his racing career.

Mac told me that Jimmy not only rode motorcycles, but had an active part in developing some technology that was incorporated into new models. He has a close working relationship with [Singer Motorcycles](#). And he travelled all over Europe in his pursuit of speed and glory.

Family tradition told us that Jimmy was part of the Singer company, and was employed by them for racing motorcycles and cars. This has been verified in Motor Sport's article "[Mud in the Midlands](#)". It states that ***"Trade drivers were taking an interest, such as, if I am not mistaken, Gunner Poppe (A7), Mead (Rhode), Brittain with the "Snowden Ranger BSA and Al Dixon (Singer 10)".***

From reading Motor Cycle magazine and from searching the internet, I have identified the following events and dates that Jimmy was reported in. There were probably many more, but I live in the Outback of Australia, and so I have no access to official records.

His father, Alfred Archer Dixon, didn't approve of his son's motor racing career, but nevertheless, he supported him with an allowance. Alfred Archer died in 1914 and his estate was valued at £3710-12-3 (about £500,000.00 today). However I don't believe that reflects the cost of the houses that he owned. 10 of these at about £300,000 each would give a figure of five and a half million. Not bad for a railway porter! What it meant of course, is that Jimmy now had no money worries. The following are some of the events that I have been able to place Jimmy in.

1911 MCC Herts County A & AEC: HCAC Open Hill Climb



There are snippets written about him in the press. 1912 was a busy year as there is an advert from Singer listing all his successes. It states that “as evidence of the exceptional speed and service of the “Singer” Motor Bicycle, the following success which have been registered during the past year, will be of special interest. It then lists the success of G.E. Stanley, Harry Long, G.H. Petty and A.J. Dixon. These include:

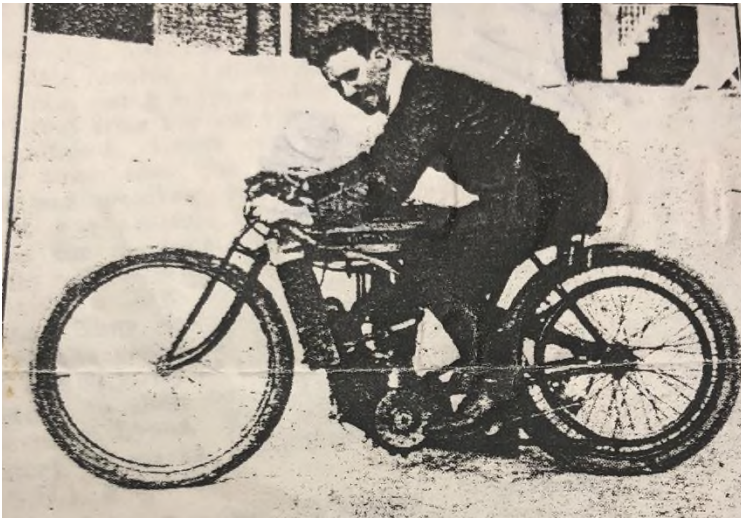
- **London- Edinburgh – London:** Special return journey: **Gold Medal highest award**
- **London – Exeter – London Reliability Trial**
- **Paris – Leige Road Race** 400 kilometres – 1st class certificate: **Gold Medal highest award**
- **Scottish Six Days Trial** - 1st class certificate: **Gold Medal highest award**
- **MCC Hill Climbing & Reliability Trials** – awarded for best performance, only one to climb Porlock; **Silver cup highest award**
- **ACU Six Days Trial**- 1st class certificate: **Gold Medal highest award**. [Motorcycle Timeline](#) reports the whole race and states that AJ Dixon (Singer) made a clean and fast ascent, though his stand was trailing. “Soresby (LMC) treated the spectators to a marvellous exhibition of trick riding, his machine skidding from one side to the other. The two privately owned Scotts (**Baker** and **Longfield**) skidded, although their engines never faltered. The latter charged an almost perpendicular bank and fell under his machine. **Holloway** (Premier) and **Dixon** (Singer) got into a rut between the bends and stopped, but restarted and completed the climb. Trouble was prevalent to the bitter end. **WD South** broke a valve, and was lucky to finish to time...George **Brough** encountered a van broadside on in the roadway and unfortunately hit the wheel and cut his leg. With true British pluck he had it hastily bandaged, and, assisted into the saddle by **Berwick** and **Dixon**, he made a non-stop run to the finish and had to be lifted off the saddle again, but he had accomplished his object—full marks throughout!”
- **22 Sep 1912 Spa Meeting (Belgium) Kilometre Trials** – first - highest award
- **23 Sep 1912 Malchamps Hill Climb** 15 kilometres - first - highest award
- **24 Sep 1912 Bethane Barracq-Michael** 13 kilometre race: on time: First highest award; on Formula: First highest award and fastest time of the day; Classemont General – for the meeting - first - highest award
- **Gaillon Hill Climb (France)** on time 500cc class - First highest award; Classemont General – for the meeting - first - highest award

- **French Kilometre Record 26 Oct 1912**

I don't have the full article but the following story demonstrates that Jimmy was certainly experimenting. So he was ahead of his time with water cooled engines!!!

1912: Motor Cycling magazine page 150

".... One of the features of the water-cooled system is that it allows a higher compression to be used than does an air cooled model. In some cases, the extra power developed by the water-cooled engine has resulted in breakage of vital parts.



The 80-mile-an-hour 500cc Singer, referred to below. It is at present being tuned up at Brooklands by **Mr A. J. Dixon**, who is shown mounted on it. It is suggested that at present the engine is overcooked and hence has as yet failed to develop the power expected of so remarkable a machine.

.... It has been suggested to me that the 80 mile an hour Singer water-cooled engine has not yet performed up to expectations on the track is because it is overcooled. Indeed I am told that one of the radiators

has been put out of action during the latest tests and that the speed at once increased."

1913 Sutton Coldfield & Mid Warwickshire Automobile Club Open Reliability Trial non stop + AJ Dixon (15th February)



1913 Auto Cycle Union Spring One Day Motor Cycle Reliability Test

At the White House, the publican handed me a faded certificate, The certificate was for a Spring One Day Motor Cycle Reliability Trial held on Saturday 1st March 1913. It was not in good condition and even less so when I donated it to the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham in 2019. The transcription reads:

The Auto Cycle Union



First Class certificate

This is to certify that the Singer Motor Bicycle entered by **Mr A Dixon** driven by Mr AJ Dixon
complied with all the regulations of the

Spring One Day Motor Cycle Reliability Trial

Held on

Saturday March 1st 1913

From Dorking by a circuitous and intricate route, including the ascent of fourteen steep hills, via Headingley, Leith Hill, Shere, Effingham, Albury, Guildford, Hindhead, Liphook, Ewhurst and Holmbury St Mary to Dorking, a distance of 123 miles.

The journey was accomplished at the minimum speed of 18 miles per hour. And no adjustment of any kind was made except replenishments with petrol to Hindhead. The whole of the course was completed without a single involuntary stop. The regulations as to equipment were complied with in every particular and the condition of the machine at the conclusion of the Trial was satisfactory.

Condition of roads and weather: Good – Fine

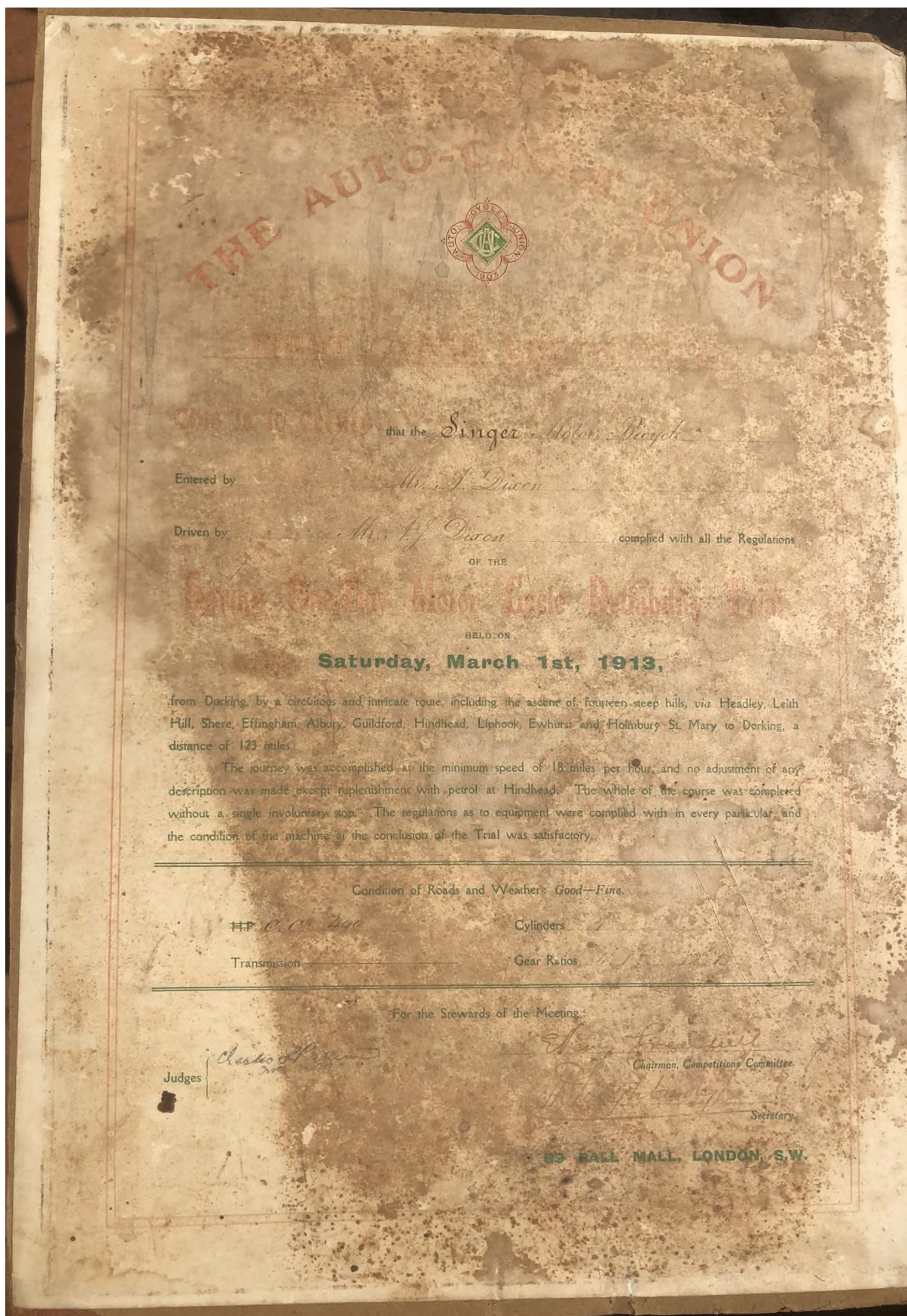
HP CC 400 Cylinders 1

Transmission - Gear ratios 5:1 12"1

For the Stewards of the Meeting:

Judges: *Dr Charles Patterson & Rev Henry Greenhill & Secretary of the ACU: H.P. Beasley*

89 Pall Mall, London SW



The Spring Trial was written up in motor Cycle magazine 4 March 1913. It describes that there were more than 150 machines entered and the article gives a great description and some very clear photographs over 6 pages. Mention is made of Jimmy ... "the worst part of the trial was now over. A steep little pitch in Haslemere called Sandrock Hill, caused a few of the passenger machines some little inconvenience.

1913 Milan – Torina – Bologna - Torina

Even in Italy we find that Jimmy is racing his beloved Singer motorcycle. This was published in [La Stampa Portivo](#) published in Verona in April 1913.

I 1000 CHILOMETRI IN MOTOCICLETTA

E' questa una nuova organizzazione sportiva della *Gazzetta dello Sport* e dell'*Unione Sportiva Milanese*, che si svolgerà nei giorni 26-27 aprile in due tappe e cioè: la prima sul percorso Milano-Torino-Tortona-Pavia-Bologna, e la seconda sul percorso Bologna-Ferrara-Rovigo-Vicenza-Verona-Brescia-Sondrio-Milano.

Ecco il nome delle Case concorrenti:

1. Rudge Whitw. (Vailati E.) — 2. Rudge Whitw. (Meschia P.) — 3. Rudge Whitw. (Fossati F.) — 4. Rudge Whitw. (C. S. Scott) — 5. Rudge Whitw. (G. A. Neumann) — 6. Rudge Whitw. (S. A. Rowlandson).

7. Abingdon (Cerizza L.) — 8. Abingdon (Pippo) — 9. Abingdon (Cervino).

10. Senior (Fonti G.) — 11. Senior (Maffei M.) — 12. Senior (Passeri E.).

13. Frera (Merlo C.) — 14. Frera (Spadoni) — 15. Frera (Acerboni M.).

16. Borgo I (Longo P.) — 17. Borgo II (Alberto P.) — 18. Borgo III (Borgo C.).

19. Moto Rêve (Mascheroni C.) — 20. Moto Rêve (Cremaschi M.) — 21. Moto Rêve (Verducci Mario).

22. Triumph I (Ravelli G.) — 23. Triumph II (Bona G.) — 24. Triumph III (Zan A.) — 25. Triumph IV (Pusterla C.) — 26. Triumph V (Marinoni F.) — 27. Triumph VI (Marcoli A.).

28. New Hudson (Rechis P.) — 29. New Hudson (Conti E.) — 30. New Hudson (Gambini D.).

31. Ariel (Bassi V.) — 32. Ariel (Bellorini E.) — 33. Ariel (Maffei Carlo).

34. Singer (Colcker) — 35. Singer (A. J. Dixon) — 36. Singer (Jourasoff).

37. Borgo IV (Borgo Michele) — 38. Borgo V (Forti Arturo) — 39. Borgo VI (Meldi Giuseppe).

40. Douglas (N. N.) — 41. Douglas (N. N.) — 42. Douglas (N. N.).

43. N. S. U. I (Ghirlanda) — 44. N. S. U. II (Cassert C.) — 45. N. S. U. III (Carughi C.) — 46. N. S. U. IV (Baj Badino F.) — 47. N. S. U. V (Latuada A.) — 48. N. S. U. VI (« Jorio »).

49. Grignani (Grignani V.) — 50. Grignani (Grignani E.) — 51. Grignani (N. N.).

52. Humber (Feliciani P.) — 53. Humber (Facchetti A.) — 54. Humber (Garanzini O.).

55. Zenith (Galli R.) — 56. Zenith (Valeri P.) — 57. Zenith (Sassi M.).

La Giurta dei 1000 chilometri si compone dei signori conte Orazio Oldofredi, Maggioni cav. Enrico e Merosi ing. Giuseppe.

Per la verifica delle cilindrata delle macchine sono stati scelti i signori Volterra Guido e Santoni Antonio.

La punzonatura delle macchine sarà fatta dal signor Polloni Alessandro.

1914 London to Edinburgh Run May 29th to June 1st

Graces Guide gives all the entrants, the machines that they rode and the position they achieved in the race. It was won by Jimmy's friend - Lionel Martin – and so many of his other friends from the Motor Cycle Club dinner were there as well. There was a field of 199 motorcycles and 27 cyclecars.

Jimmy was riding a 10 HP Singer and came 127th!

1913 Bristol Motorcycle & Motor Club: Open Hill Climb June 23rd



1913 The Leige – Paris – Leige Trial August



This trial was held 15 – 17 August 1913. Riders had a speed trial and a hill climb at Spa. Every competitor who did not lose a minute at any of the 12 controls received a gold medal and a silver cup for the best team performance and each member of the team a special award. The following British riders finished: **A.J. Dixon (3½ Singer)**. These are some of the photographs that I inherited. The top one is also reproduced in the Motor Cycle magazine story of 28 August 1913.



The article tells us that competitors were started at one minute intervals for the 525 mile journey and that there were 65 starters. Jimmy set an average speed of 25mph – but he was slowed considerably on the bad sections of road. It should be remembered that even the best roads were pretty bad by today's standards. Most roads were dirt, with cobblestones in the towns. Of the forty-two that started, thirty-five finished. Jimmy was one of the winners of the first class awards.



No idea where they are, but Jimmy has a beanie and is looking at the man behind him. Notice his spare tyre over the handlebars.

1914 Edinburgh & District Motor Club Ltd – Scottish Trials

Won by A J Dixon 1914



<https://motorcycletimeline.com/1910-2/>

Following this it was time to wrap up the year, and Jimmy put on his finery and headed to London for the **Annual Dinner of the Motor Cycling Club**. The Club was formed in 1901, so when Jimmy attended, it was just 10 years old. One of our heirlooms is the menu, with signatures of some of luminaries of the time

PROGRAMME

SONGS—(a) "Fairings" ... *from Songs of the Fair*
 (b) "The Ballad Monger" ... *Songs of Old London*
 "Down Vauxhall Way" ... *Songs of Old London*
 MISS LILLIAN TOOLEY

SONGS—"All mine own" ... *Coates*
 "Macushla" ... *Macmurrrough*
 MR. FREDERIC LAKE

DUET—"Somewhere a Voice is calling" ... *Tale*
 MISS LILLIAN TOOLEY & MR. FREDERIC LAKE

HUMOROUS SONGS—"Oh! Mr. Editor!!" ... *Williams*
 "Queries" ... *Ford*
 MISS HAIDEE HAMILTON

HUMOROUS RECITATIONS—"The Fable of 'Lutie'" ... *Ad*
 "The Suburban Gardener" ... *Wood*
 MR. WALTER CHURCHES

HUMOROUS SONGS—"Friends" ... *Sterry*
 "Aspirations" ... *Sterry*
 MR. ROLAND MERRY

BURLESQUE SKETCHES—"Jack Horner" ... *MS*
 "The Vaudeville Merchant" ... *MS*
 MR. BEN OSBORN

MR. HARRY COLLIER, Accompanist



The Motor Cycling Club

ANNUAL DINNER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13th, 1913

CHARLES JARROTT, Esq.,

IN THE CHAIR

TRACADERO RESTAURANT
 LONDON, W.

MENU

Hors d'Œuvre à la Russe

Potages
 Consomme aux Perles
 Crème Faubonne

Poisson
 Suprême de Barbeau Havraise

Relève
 Contrefilet piqué Niçoise

Entrée
 Timbale Milanaise

Roû
 Pâtes d'Ecosse à la Broche
 Pommes l'ailles
 Salade de Saison

Glacé
 Bombe Trocadéro

Bonne Bouche
 Croûte Royale

Dessert

TOAST LIST

The Motor Cycling Club
 Proposed by MAJOR LINDSAY LLOYD
 Responded to by THE CHAIRMAN

The President
 Proposed by ROBT. H. HEAD, Esq.



Charles Jarrott OBE (26 March 1877 – 4 January 1944) was an English racing car driver and businessman.

Jarrott raced from 1900 to 1904, winning the 1902 [Circuit des Ardennes](#) race and competing in the 1903 and 1904 [Gordon Bennett Cup](#) races. He was the chair of the Motor Cycling Club's Annual Dinner at the Trocadero on Saturday 12 December 1913. He co-founded a car import firm in 1902 and was a founder member of [the Automobile Association](#) (the AA), serving as chairman in 1922. Photo from [here](#)

(Motorsport database). [Great story](#).

[The Jarrott Cup 1914](#) Staines to Penzance 174 riders



Lionel Martin 15 March 1878 – 21 October 1945 was an English engineer, who with **Robert Bamford** founded a company in January 1913 that became [Aston Martin](#). Great article about Martin and Bamford with pictures in **Exceptional Cars Aston Martin Ulster** *The remarkable history of CMC 614* By Stephen Archer. He won the Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a Singer. Photo from Exceptional Cars: Aston Martin Ulster by Stephen Archer.



Robert Bamford (16 June 1883 – 1942) was an English engineer, who with **Lionel Martin** founded a company in January 1913 that became [Aston Martin](#). Bamford and Martin became firm friends through their love of long-distance competitive cycling. He was inducted into the [Automotive Hall of Fame](#) in 2013.

H. G. Bell took part in the **Motor Cycling Club's 24 hours' run from London to Exeter** and back.



"Almost a collision! HG Bell (4 cyl FN) just snatches his machine away as LA Baddeley (7hp Indian and sidecar) starts off.. Also took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 7 F.N.

L. A. Baddely – also in the photo above. It was grisly work turning out in the wee sma' hours for the dreaded ninety miles to Exeter. Wilton was practically under water, but there was a narrow path available between the floods. Soon after this, in a blinding storm, about twenty riders lost their way, and went chasing round and round some baronial park. This seemed to have innumerable lodge gates and roads like a maze, as they always brought us back to a steep, narrow, and skidsome hill with a kind of triumphal arch half way up it. The idea that the modern 3½hp single will climb any hill received a rude shock hereabouts, and many of us envied the rider of the two-speed. Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 3.5 HP Baddeley

Billie Pratt took part of the Herts team in the **annual [reliability trial](#)** organised by the MCC for *The Motor Cycle* Fifty-guinea Challenge Cup, over a 100-mile course centred on Daventry, attracted a record entry of 18 teams, each comprising five solos and a combo.

weren't helped by the penalty imposed on their combo pilot, Billy Pratt. When he copped a sidecar wheel puncture his passenger scrambled onto the carrier and rode there for 55 miles before an MCC observer told him passengers had to remain in their sidecars and disqualified him. Fierce.

At Promenade Sands June 1933 Kirkaldy, Scotland 5 laps in an unsupercharged 1250cc MG Magna

Harold "Oily" Karslake, founder of the [Dreadnought](#) joined the Motor Cycling Club in 1909, he became a regular and highly successful participant in their long-distance trials - winning the "24 Hours" (466 miles) trial outright in 1909. In 1910, he participated in the **London-Edinburgh** (and back.) The non-stop team trials and the petrol consumption trial. In 1911, he won the gold medal for the **Winter Ride** and the silver medal in the "**Land's End Trial**" - in total, some 60,000 -70,000 miles in eight years. Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 5-6 Ariel sidecar

John Chater-Lea, son of William Chater-Lea who founded Chater-Lea, still in operation [today](#).



Took part in the MCC's 1910 London-Edinburgh trial, riding a Chater-Lea motorcycle. In WW1 was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in 1915. Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 8 Chater-Lea.

C W. Meredith rode a 3L Bradbury in the Herts County (with Jimmy) in 1912. He drove a 3 wheeled cycle car in the **14th Edinburgh Trial** May 1921. Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 6 Bradbury sidecar

The internet revealed that his medals came up for sale and I am reproducing everything here. Early and rare collection of gold and silver Motor Cycling medals C W Meredith along with his military and other medals. This gives me an idea of some of the medals that our family no longer has.

9ct gold Motor Cycling Club Medals: Total weight 116 grams

- London Exeter London 26th & 27th December 1911.
- London Lands End London April 6th to 8th 1912.
- London Edinburgh London May 24th 25th & 27th 1912.
- London Exeter London Dec 27th & 28th 1912.

- London Exeter London Dec 26th & 27th 1913 Sidecar.
- London Lands End London 22nd 24th March 1913.
- London Edinburgh London 9th 10th 12th May 1913.
- London Edinburgh May 29th 30th 1914.
- Edinburgh & District Motor Cycle Club Ltd Scottish Six Days Motor Cycle Reliability Trial July 1912.

Silver medals:

- Standard Trail August 1st and 3rd 1914
- London Lands End London April 11th & 13th 1914
- Herts County Automobile and Aero Club 3rd Quarterly Trial 5/10/12 2nd Class B.
- Purley and District Motor Cycle Club: Collins Cup Trial 1914 1912 September
- night-trial winner of Scott Cup Flexibility Hill Climb 1913 Class 2 1912
- Inter club trial 18th May September
- night trial 1913 Flexibility Hill Climb 1914 Class 3 1912
- Club team trial Flexibility Hill Climb 1913
- Passenger Class Herts County Automobile & Aero Club 1st Quarterly trial 20/01/12.
- Herts County Automobile & Aero Club 4th Quarterly trial Dec 1912
- The North West London Motor Cycle Club London Gloucester London 31st Jan 1914

Military and other medals: 1914-1918 medal The Great War for civilisation medal Two Defence medals Rotary International medal Silver 50 Francs coin in white metal mount Red Cross Long and Efficient service medal for Mrs Marjorie Meredith with three red cross badges and another red cross medal

F C Reynolds

R.M.Brice. Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 7 Indian.

Bradford?

H A Cooper: **MCC Land's End Trial 25th-26th March 1921 – 314 miles** driving a Morris Sport *200 motorists and motorcyclists left Cranford Bridge, Hounslow for an overnight run to Land's End for the **Motor Cycling Club's Jarrott Cup**. The first competitor started at 10 pm, with the rest being started at 1 minute intervals, motorcyclists first, side-cars next, followed by the cars. The route went up Porlock Hill, which caused many failures, as did the hairpin bends on Lynton Hill. Showers caused the roads from Launceston to be very bad. The first person to start was T.S.Sharratt, and he was the first to reach Land's End at 3:55 pm the following day.*

Gold medal cars 14th Edinburgh Trial **13th-14th May 1921 – London-Edinburgh**
JCC High Speed Reliability Trial May 1925 - Brooklands

C. G Ridgeway Extract from **Speedway: Auto Racing's Ghost Tracks by S. Collins & Gavin Ireland**. Took part in the 1914 London to Edinburgh riding a 375HP Scott sidecar

Edwin Seagrave – son of Henry the famous racing driver? No further information

F.A. Applebee: Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 3.75Scott sidecar

G. Bax: Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 375HP Scott sidecar

G. T. Gray: Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 3.5 Rudge Multi.

Jack Haslam: Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 2.75Douglas

R. Charlesworth: Took part in the **1914 London to Edinburgh** riding a 5 Zenith sidecar

W. Cooper: Gold medal in the **MCC London-Exeter and back 1913** driving a Humberette 10 HP cyclecar

Part 2B

Jimmy's motorcycle career

1914 Paris-Nice Trial March

Jimmy took part in the Paris -Nice – Monte Carlo Trial in 1914. He was awarded a gold medal which is held in a bank by one of my cousins. One of the photographs that was given to me by my grandmother is of Jimmy, together with the other British riders, embarking on the ship that took them and their machines



across the channel.

Jimmy has the black spot in front of him.

Motor Cycle magazine wrote about the Trial in some detail. It stated that “striking success achieved by British machines. The story goes on to say that Jimmy lost no points on the first day (188 miles from Paris Montgeron to Dijon). The second day was 185 miles – Dijon to Lyons, “a most

depressing morning with drizzling rain which got worse all day. One of the competitors, Vernon Busby, considered that this ride was the most arduous he had ever undertaken with visibility at zero. It was altogether A miserable run, and the English competitors felt it severely, as they had to travel 120 miles in a downpour before lunch, starting at 5am with only a light French meal to fortify themselves for such an ordeal.”

This photograph below was found in the attic of the White House public house in 1971. Jimmy is on the left – I am not sure who the other rider is or what the motorcycle is.



photo below was found in the attic of the White House pub in 1971





The illustration left shows F. Smith (Clyno sidecar) and A.J. Dixon (Singer) stopped for a chat.

Jimmy lost no points in day 2.

The third day consisted of 185 miles, from Lyons to Aix-en-Provence. The competitors had to get taxis to the garage where their machines were stored, and some of the riders got lost navigating out of the town. Weather was good, but some of the English riders complained about the quality of the French food. **Jimmy and Hugh Gibson both lost marks in a secret check at Livron for being 3 minutes early.** The fourth day was another 185 miles from Aix-en-Provence to Monte-Carlo. "The

English riders got lost again – it being a 5am start in the dark and there were no street lights. Some of them found themselves in a street in which the drains were up and lifted their machines over the barriers to save time in getting out of town. At Cannes, the "British riders were exceedingly glad to obtain food similar to that found at home."

As they neared Monte-Carlo they ran into heavy traffic because the Tour de France was taking place.

At the conclusion of the race there was a Flexibility Trial – a run from Nice, up the mountain to the Golf Club at Monte Carlo. Parker (Norton); **Dixon (Singer)**; Sangster (Ariel) and Newsome (Triumph) all performed admirably.

"After the celebrations, coming down into Nice, the official car caught fire, but with the assistance of **A. J. Dixon, the Singer rider**, the flames were extinguished. Thus ended an exceedingly severe trial."

The list of awards tell us **that A.J. Dixon** won a gold medal for the 500cc motorcycles and came 4th in the Flexibility Trial. This is a terrible copy of a photo that is in the report. Next time I am in England, I will see if I can get a better copy.



Some of the English riders refresh themselves with chocolate near Sevres
Amongst the group will be seen Hugh Gibson, Frank Smith, A. J. Dixon
and W. F. Newsome.

Family tradition said that Jimmy won a cup but with the outbreak of World War 1 he wasn't sure how easy it would be to get it back to Britain, so he buried it and retrieved it after the war ended. I'm not sure I believe this story, but that's what my grandmother told me.

The following pictures were inherited. I have no idea which of the numerous races they could be from – but I suspect they are from France.



Jimmy is riding across a bridge





Jimmy is the man without a hat.

1924 Midland Cycling and Athletic Club held their annual 24 hour Trial

The race was from Birmingham via Beacon Hill to Shrewsbury and Holyhead and return was a particularly stiff one, including, besides the hill named, such climbs as Cefn Du, Bwlch-y-Groes, Bwlch-y-Ddar, Peniarth and Braniarth. Both Cefn Du and Bwlch-y-Ddar were responsible for the coming to grief of several competitors, the latter being too much of a stumbling block for even that expert Trials man, Mr. H. F. S.

Morgan. Jimmy rode his trusty Singer 3½ HP.

Illustration in Atkinson page 76

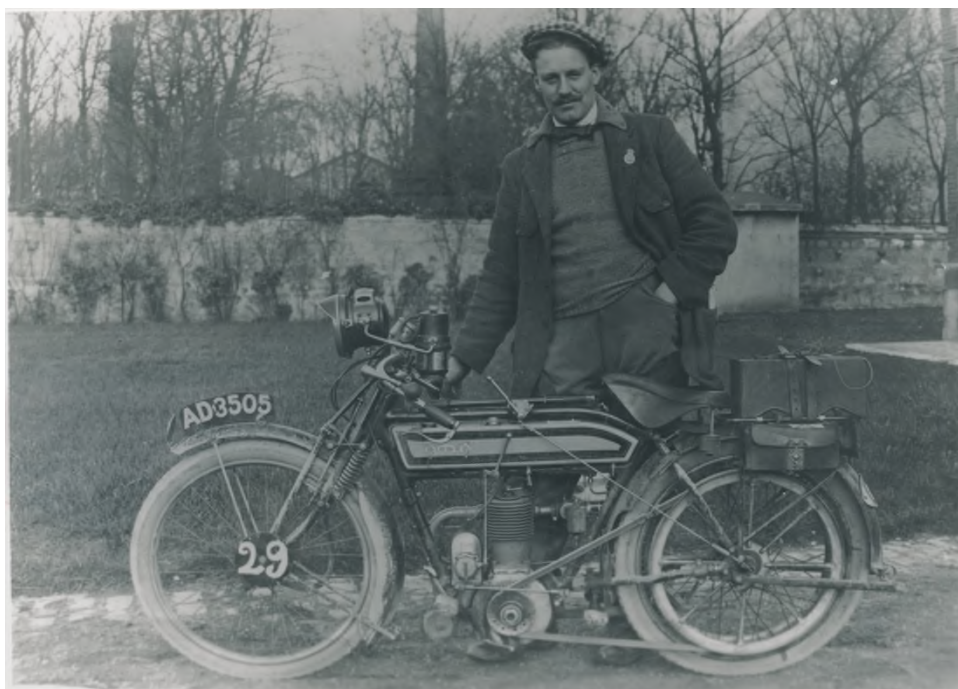




A later photograph from the collection is dated 1911 or 1917?. I have no information about what Jimmy is doing with a Peugeot



Jimmy was very close friends with WF Bicknell who was also a Singer rider and driver.



Jimmy – photo taken
circa 1930

An internet search revealed a digitised version of the Motor Cycle Magazine and we find that Jimmy (AJ Dixon) is mentioned as riding a Rudge. I couldn't work out the date for this article. Quote: *"The first of the series of four 100 miles open reliability and sporting trials for motor cycles of all kinds, organised by the Herts. County A.t., will be held on Saturday next, the 20th inst., starting from the Chequers Hotel, Oxbridge, at 9.20 a.m. prompt. On account of the late tui try, (the start has been put back half an hour to ensure competitors finishing in daylight. The route is via Denham Avenue, Rickmansworth, Watford, St. Albans, Harpenden, Luton, Shiropenhoc, Dunstable, Ivinghoe, Tring (lunch Rose and Crown Hotel), Aston Clinton, Wendover, Princes Risborough, Missenden, Amersham, Rickmansworth, Uxbridge. There will be two timed hill-climbs, as well as an observed ascent of Holywell Hill, St. Albans, at 10 m.p.h.*

- **Herts County A.C January 4 1912:** We know that Jimmy rode in these trial on a Rudge. The trial was a quarterly trial under new management fifty-nine starting out of an entry of seventy-one.

Part 3

Jimmy Dixon and cyclecars

I don't know when Jimmy first got into car racing, but I presume that he could drive before the First World War. It wasn't until after he father died that he could afford to indulge his hobby, as owning car before 1920 was the prerogative of the wealthy. However I read in a 1913 copy of the Cyclecar that Jimmy won a silver medal in the 1913 **London-Exeter-London Trials**.

I know that his mates from the Motor Cycle Club were involved in car racing. In the 1913 Auto-Cycle Union First Cyclecar Trial, Chater-Lea drove his own 8HP Chater-Lea shaft drive vehicle and Lionel Martin drove a 10 HP Singer (source Graces Guide).

No study of cars of this [period] is complete without reading Atkinson's excellent book **The Singer Story**. This outstanding work has given me a new insight into cars of this period, and particularly what Jimmy would have worked with. Atkinson has made a couple of errors in calling Jimmy "Arthur" but notwithstanding that, this is an outstanding book.

Own a car he did and the first one that I know about is a Singer 10.

1913 London Exeter Run (December)

Article in Motor Cycling: Like thousands of other touring side-carists, I had never entered a great reliability trial until a few days ago, the idea struck me that it would be rather fun to carry the flag of the Motor Cycling Gypsy Club through the London to Exeter run." He tells a story of appalling weather conditions and the struggle to overcome them. At the bottom of the article we find: "A. J. Dixon, the well-known Singer driver said that the outward journey in the night was the most unpleasant he had ever been in." Jimmy received a silver medal for this event driving a 10HP Singer

At the 1912 Cycle and Motor Cycle Show, Singer unveiled its new baby car to the world. Atkinson states that "This new car was of very lightweight construction, weighing just 6cwt and was capable of both 40 mpg and 40mph. The was probably the first vehicle successfully designed and constructed along the lines of a conventional car, but which was in essence a "cyclecar". A cyclecar,, according to the Auto Cycle Union had an engine of less than 1100cc in a car which weighed less than 7 cwt." Atkinson stats that the Singer 10 was the first really practical light car.

Jimmy won a silver medal

In 1920 the Singer motor company took over the Coventry Premier marque, after which a four wheel



version of the Runabout was introduced. Car production continued after the Singer take-over for couple more years only, the badge finally being used on a pared-back version of the Singer Ten. The Premier Works was situated in Read Street, Coventry. The original factory buildings no longer survive, but the site in more recent times was the location of a factory used by Lucas Aerospace.

Photo shows a standard Coventry Premier.

Jimmy loved Singers. He raced a Singer motorcycles and it was natural that he would go on to race Singer cars.

1921 London to Land's End Trial

Jimmy took part in this trial in his Singer 10HP. Atkinson wrongly names him Arthur Dixon, but was in fact AJ Dixon. This was the only Singer in the race. But Atkinson gives a fascinating account of the race. "On arriving at Lynton, they had precisely two minutes to complete the climb. The surface conditions of which were atrocious. The combination of an appalling surface and the severe gradient proved too much for the Singer. Jimmy only managed 15 mph, so only got a silver medal.

1921 Midlands Light Car Club 1 day Reliability Trial

This race was held 23rd April 1912 Atkinson reports that it started at the Austin factory at Longbridge in Birmingham and proceeded south through Worcestershire to the Malvern Hills. Jimmy and his friend and mechanic R. Croucher entered in a Coventry Premier three—wheeler. Jimmy received a silver medal because he faltered on the old Wyche cutting when he failed to climb the 1 in 2.9 hill.

1921 200 mile race at Brooklands

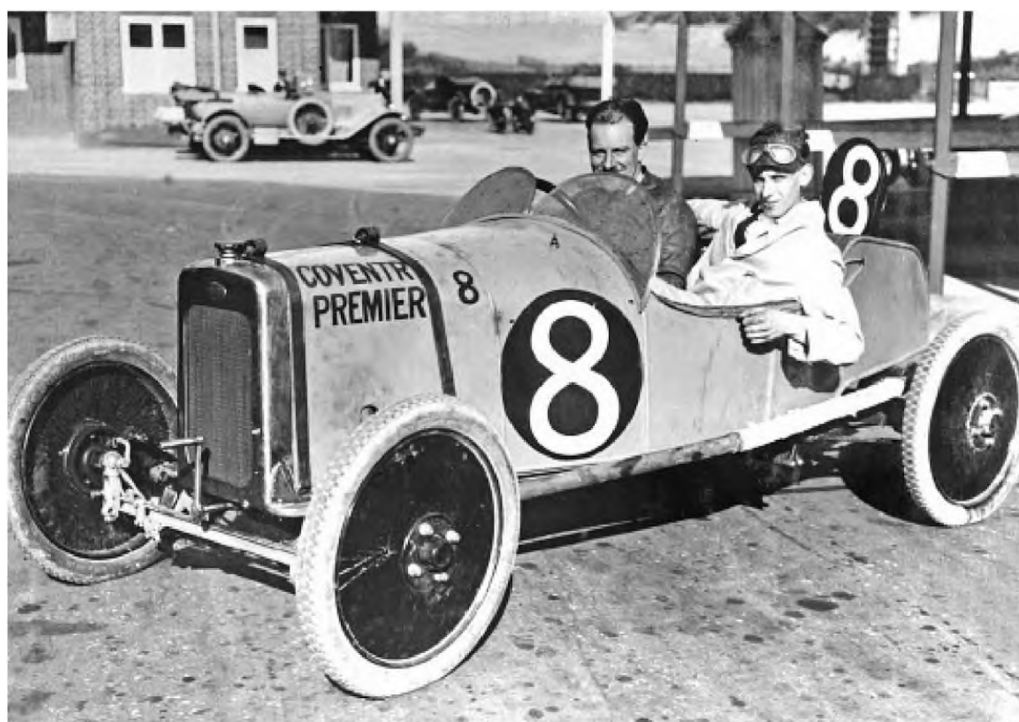
This race was the first of its kind and was organised by the **Junior Car Club** and was held in October . The **JCC** had originally been called the **Cyclecar Club** and had been formed in 1912. Today it called the **British Automobile Racing Club**. The Junior Car Club organised the first long-distance race to be held in Britain, which was ultimately won by Henry Seagrave.

Great article about the race [here](#). Extract "This was the first long-distance race held England, for Brooklands, in spite of its fourteen summers, had seen nothing like it. The actual distance was to be 901 miles 189 yards, and there were to be two classes, up to 1,100 cc and 1101-1500 cc, with cups for the winners and a great gold cup presented by T. B. Andre; for the entrant of the car making fastest time of all. The starters were to be drawn up at the Fork in four lines, the first row leaving at mid-day, the remaining rows being flagged off at intervals. Cars allocated to the first row were to sport at least two feet of yellow paint on their bonnets, those in the second row red, those in the third - green, and those unfortunates in the last row white. Mechanics had to be carried and they, alone, could assist the driver at the pits.

Jimmy finished 4th in his class. This was also the first race in which he drove a 4 wheeled car. Before this time he driven the 3 wheeled Singer. Atkinson said that “another Singer works entry was that of the Coventry Premier driven by Arthur (**we know this should read AJ**) Dixon”. So if it was a works entry, that would indicate that Jimmy was part of the Singer company? He goes on to explain that “Dixon’s car, which wore a number 8 for the race was basically standard even down to it’s disk wheels. A Good win was the mechanic for Dixon.

Jimmy managed a speed of over 55 mph!

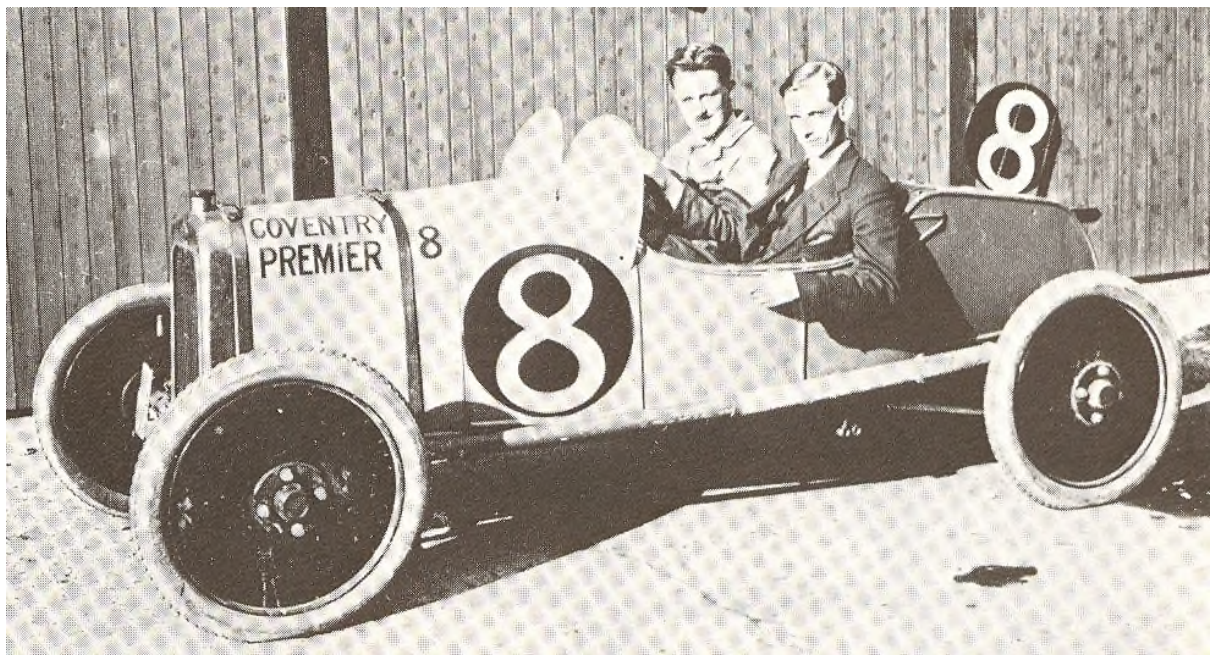
We know that this was a pretty standard road going car. It had a top speed of 58 mph while petrol consumption was over 40 mpg. J Dagley owned one and he recalls the foibles of the car in a 1952 edition of Motor Sport.: I owned a Coventry Premier car in 1925/1926. The two outstanding features were the starting handle and the gear lever. The engine was a 50 degree V twin, water cooled 80mm x 98mm and it revolved *backwards*. The starting handle engaged a pinion meshing with the crankshaft timing piston and geared *up*. One complete turn of the starting handle turned over the engine twice, so that the provision of an exhaust valve lifter was a sheer necessity. The gear lever worked in a central gate and had an enormous travel, Second gear was right under the dash and top was right back, almost touching the edge of the bench type front seat. Without exaggeration, the knob of the gear lever moved through an arc of over two feet. Altogether it was a very reliable, willing and solid little car.”



The photo shows Jimmy and Bicknell ready for the race outside the Brookland’s Clubhouse. The clubhouse is still there, even though most of the track has gone.



Not such a good picture.



And the photograph on the next age is held by my cousin Tony



A much better picture that is held by Getty Images is this one

Coventry-Premier Of AJ Dixon

Coventry-Premier 1055 cc, Event Entry No: 8, Driver: Dixon, A.J., Finished: 4th. In 1100cc class, Place: Brooklands, J.C.C. 200-mile Race, Date: 22.10.21. Artist Bill Brunell.
(Photo by National Motor Museum/Heritage Images/Getty Images)



Brooklands circuit in 1921, and below part of the circuit today (2019).



Austin Harris photograph below shows the competitors lining up. Jimmy on the front row on the right



Jimmy wasn't driving the only Singer entry. One of the directors of Singer, B.J. Parker entered a works 10hp driven by Jimmy's good friend William Bicknell (with Sydney Walden as mechanic). Sadly their magneto failed after 60 laps and they did not finish. Photo below: Bicknell in a Singer 10.



1921 London to Exeter Trial (Boxing night)

"There were three Singer entries in the London to Exeter trial. The Singer 10 of CFM Abbott-Brown and the 8hp Coventry Premiers of AJ Dixon and R. Croucher. The weather was incredibly wet, virtually a gale. In company with Fraser Nash's GN, the two drivers of the Coventry Premiers refused to put their roofs up and ran through the gale unprotected. The Premiers both finished but of the 97 entrants there were only 8 non-finishers, one of whom was Abbott-Brown whose car was in fact the 1913 and outdated for this event." Atkinson p 88

1922 Land's End Trial

Both Jimmy and Croucher entered this event with their Coventry Premiers. *"McNeile in his Singer had problems at Beggar's Roost where he collided with the bank. On restarting, he selected reverse instead of second gear and shot off backwards down the hill. He made another attempt to climb while pressurizing the fuel tank by blowing into a tube. The tube came off and sprayed petrol into his eyes. Despite this he managed to carry on driving and was eventually assisted over the steepest part."* (Atkinson p 88). The Motor described this as the *"hardest trial yet"*, and Jimmy did not manage to finish

1923 Colmore Cup



The Colmore Cup was organised by **Sutton Coldfield and N**

Birmingham AC, popularly known as SUNBAC. It was primarily an event for motorcycles, it also included classes for 3-wheelers and for cars up to 1100cc. Atkinson tells us that Jimmy drove a 10hp Singer and Bicknell a 10hp Coventry Premier

"Both made good climbs up such tests as Sainsbury Hill and it was not until they

reached Rising Sun Hill that they had problems. On this hill (the most severe test of all the hills) they had to do a stop and restart test. In all Dixon stopped four times but managed to get away with assistance, whereas Bicknell stopped and had to be pushed to restart. As a result, **Dixon was awarded the silver medal** and Bicknell had to be satisfied with a bronze.” Phot from the LAT website and text from Atkinson p 90

Photo above shows Jimmy leaning out of his Singer car, with a Talbot close behind. On the [austinharris](http://austinharris.co.uk) website.

The driver of the Talbot was a bloke with a great name – **T. P. Manifold!!!**

1923 Land's End Trial

This event was always held on the Easter weekend. This year was a drier occasion than usual and Jimmy drove really well and won a gold medal.



This is a 1919 Singer 10



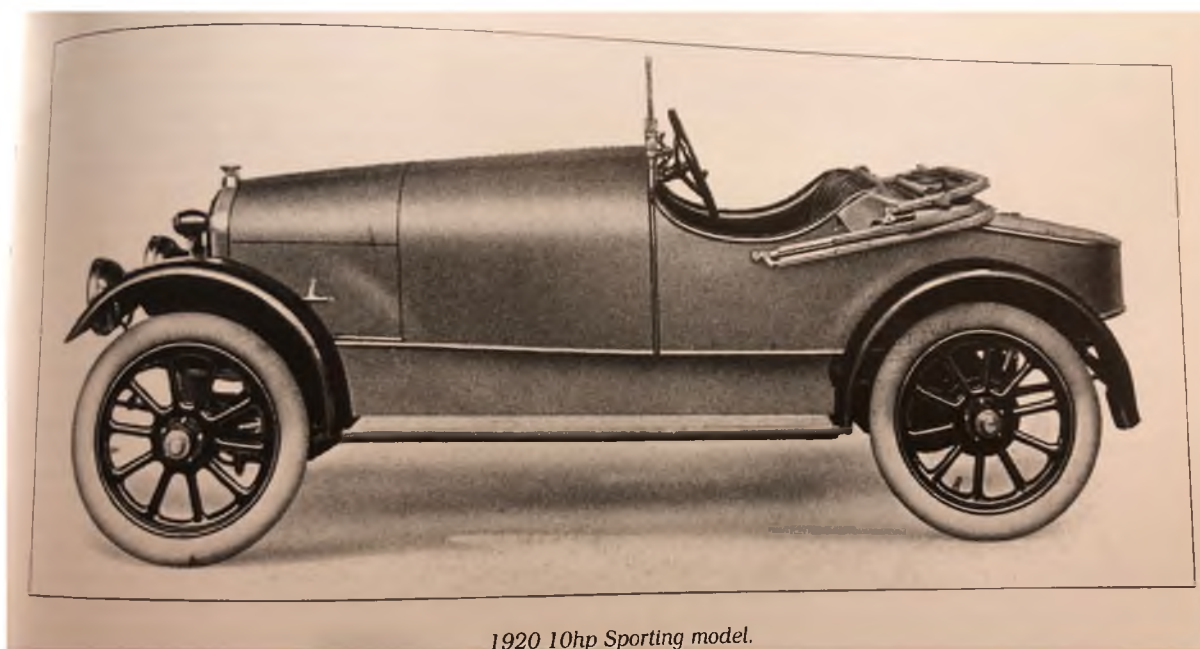
The engine was a four-cylinder unit of 1096 cc initially with [side valves](#) but changing to overhead valves in 1923. The three speed transmission was initially located with the rear axle but moved to the centre of the car in 1922 and from 1923 was in-unit with the engine. The chassis had rigid axles front and rear with semi-elliptic [leaf springs](#) until 1922 when they changed to quarter elliptic. Braking was on the rear wheels only. A basic version of the car was sold under the [Coventry Premier](#) brand in 1923

“In 1912, after experimenting with a transverse-engined air-cooled cyclecar, Singer introduced an excellent 1096 cc four-cylindere light car, marred only by having its three-speed gearbox built in unit with the back axle. It was one of the first 'big cars in miniature' to appear on the market, and possessed a usefully lively performance, which attracted a motor agent from Henniker Mews, Kensington, named Lionel Martin, a former racing cyclist who had recently gone into partnership with Robert Bamford. Martin was looking for a small, high-efficiency car as a foil to his Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost. He bought the 1912 show model off the company's stand at Olympia, took it back to Henniker Mews and had it completely stripped down.

Fibre inserts were used to silence the tappets, and the camshaft drive was altered so that the cams could be changed merely by removing the radiator and timing cover; then the car was taken over an extended test route so that the effect of various cam profiles could be compared, and the best camshaft for all-round performance could be chosen. The Martin treatment transformed the Singer from a sedate 40 mph runabout into a lively sporting vehicle with a top speed of well over 70 mph, and as a result the Henniker Mews workshops were kept busy tuning Singers; the competition successes of Martin's original hotted-up Singer Ten, especially at the Aston Clinton hill climb, inspired him, when he built a light car of his own design with a Coventry Simplex engine in an Isotta Fraschini chassis, to call it the 'Aston Martin'. [Unique cars and parts](#)

1924 Colmore Cup

We know Jimmy was an entrant in the 1924 Colmore Cup because Atkinson reports that “Dixon had an excellent trial and did not even both to fit non-skid chains to his tyres, unlike most competitors.” Bushcombe Hill gave most competitors a hard time. As did the Rising Sun Hill. But not Jimmy. I wonder where the gold medal went?



1924 Land's End Trial

This Easter, Jimmy was unable to finish as his Singer 10 sheared a key in the rear axle almost as soon as he started.

1924 RAC Small Car Trial

Singer entered two cars to be driven by Dixon and Bicknell in this trial in Wales, but at the last minute both cars were withdrawn shortly before the race with no explanation

From this moment on, Jimmy disappears from the racing scene. We know that he was running a restaurant and ice cream parlour in Clacton. He went on to become the president of the Clacton Chamber of Commerce. His fun continued because he had his motorbikes and cars, a boat, he flew with his friends, fished and genially had fun. Until he developed stomach cancer. His passing was not recorded in the motoring press sadly.

I expect that there are many more stories that I could discover.. if I was in England..but from me, here in the outback, I rest my keyboard.

Christopher Dixon
PO Box 1939
Katherine, NT 0851
Australia
cjadixon@hotmail.com