

## Cecil Cairnduff (RIP)

When I was given the honour of saying a few words at Cecil's funeral, it struck me that it would be impossible to sum up his life in just a few words. It would take a book. Cecil could never have been accused of leading a quiet life and some of the scrapes he got into have now become the stuff of legend. From his time at sea, to his civilian life working as a joiner, to his long and happy retirement, Cecil was always a colourful character, with colourful language to match! Throughout his life he had a love, and indeed a great knowledge of all things mechanical. His passion though was motorbikes, and especially racing. His lifelong involvement with bikes began when he and his brother, Davy, shared an old AJS and the roads around Craigtantlet became their own personal test track.

Cecil liked to develop a bike. As the saying goes, he had a good pair of hands on him, and so, when he teamed up with his good friend, Bobby Richardson, the result was one of the fastest Aermacchis in the country. The Doc and Cecil became an infamous pairing and their presence at a race meeting guaranteed there was never a dull moment on the track ....and especially, off it. The escapades of the two boyos are still talked about to this day.

Cecil being the character he was, was never going to settle for a quiet retirement and so, at an age when most folk would settle for a comfy chair in front of the telly, Cecil could be found in his shed working his magic on an old 350 Ariel. Later, he was introduced to the late John Hall and Team Cairnduff was born. As time went on, more bikes were added to the stable and riders came and went, but always at the heart of it was Cecil's endless enthusiasm. For the past decade and more, the team has had the same three riders, an example of mutual respect not always seen in such a competitive world.

Somewhere along the line, Cecil got christened 'The Chief' and over the years the team gave The Chief a fair number of race wins and Championships, something he was immensely proud of. It also allowed him to boast that he built the fastest bikes in the country. Unfortunately for the three of us, we then had to prove this every Saturday! It was at race meetings where Cecil was happiest, tinkering with a bike to get the last wee bit out of it or giving advice to others on how to sort out their bikes, whether they asked for it or not, or giving his opinion on current affairs or an update on UFO activity!

Cecil just loved the craic and camaraderie of the Classic racing paddock. Mind you, he managed to fall out with almost everyone at some point or another, the only thing quicker than the bikes was his temper! But once the flag dropped all was forgotten as he watched his riders in action. It was what he lived for and he often said that if it wasn't for the bikes he would have been dead years ago.

When his health prevented him from going racing we were all under strict orders to phone him as soon as we got home, to give him a lap by lap account of the race, not just our own performance but everyone else in the race as well. The last race that Cecil attended was at Bishopscourt in June 2007. It was a beautiful sunny day, the racing was close and he watched his team score a win and two lap records. I can still picture him sitting at Philip's van, an ice-cream in one hand, the results sheet in the other and the glasses on top of the head, as usual. He was a happy old man and it was the perfect ending.

On Behalf of Billy, Philip, myself, the ICRA and indeed the whole Classic fraternity, I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the Cairnduff family circle. We have lost a true friend.

**Liam Gallagher**

.....