According to the current rules Honorary Membership is the highest honour which the Club can bestow. How odd then that for the first fourteen years of its existence the Club never mentioned them by name in MPH. At first they were elected annually, starting with George Brown as the sole HM in 1949. In 1955 six were re-elected, three were not and four new ones elected. At the 1956 AGM it was reported that one member who had not been re-elected wanted to know on what grounds the system operated. "After a great deal of discussion it was decided that once a member was elected as an Honorary Member he should remain in this capacity for life, unless he chose to resign or some criminal action occurs. The Committee was instructed to be more cautious in their selection of candidates for Honorary Membership."

Recently John Smith-Dave has suggested that a series of short articles be published so that we know who they are, a reasonable request as election to this select group seems generally to bestow long life on the recipients, the longest serving member is Russell Wright who has been an HM for fifty years. It is not surprising therefore that newer Members do not know them all, or if they do them they do not know why they have been honoured. The minutes of the relevant AGM's do not help, the usual form of words being something like so and so left the room, upon which another so and so said what a good chap the candidate was and he was brought back to a round of applause.

However, as it is rather a long list, 39 names in all, it would be a mammoth task for any one writer. One possible approach is to list all the Honorary Members, past and present with a thumbnail sketch of who they are and why they were honoured, an Honours List if you will. I have done. I am also willing if there is sufficient support to collate individual details and reminiscences into a proper record which hopefully would be permanently available, perhaps on the web.

For a start then, here goes, in strictly alphabetical order a list of all Honorary Members elected/re-elected for life on or after the 1955 AGM:

**Eugene Aucott.** Elected 1974. From Philadelphia, as a young ex-serviceman he became Vincent's first dealer in the U.S.

**E.C. Baillie.** Although not elected until 1968, without this man most of us would not have our Vincents. As the Official Receiver he was the man who was persuaded that the company was worth saving. If your Vincent has the Vincent Engineers (Stevenage) Ltd trade mark on it then it owes its existence to his perspicacity. He was also very supportive of the Club in its earlier years.


**Jacqueline Bickerstaff.** Elected 1990. Founded Rarity Section in 1970, Rarity Section Organiser till ‘86. Overseas Representative 1986, Cadwell Scrutineer and writer on Vincents, amongst many other activities including epic rides on her vintage HRD.

**Sid Biberman.** Elected 2002. From Kentucky and universally known as Big Sid he joined the VOC in 1953 and has been racing, riding and restoring Vincents ever since.

**Robin Blackwell.** Elected 1991. Spares Secretary 1978 to ’91. Played a major part in setting up the VOC Spares Company.

**George Brown.** Elected 1949 when he was a Vincent tester by which time he was already well established as a successful racer with many successes on Gunga Din, amongst other works Vincents. He left Vincents in 1951 to open his own motorcycle shop in Stevenage. He then built Nero from a burnt out wreck and went on to dominate the British Sprint scene with it and latterly with Super Nero on which he established many National and International records.

**Irene Burnley.** See Irene Ulver

**Bobbie Burns.** Elected 1955. After setting the British Empire sidecar record at 145.8 m.p.h on the Ohaka Tram Road (New Zealand) with his modified and streamlined Rapide Russell Wright (q.v) offered him the use of his new Black Lightning. Using this machine he subsequently broke the World Record at 152 m.p.h.

**Brian Chapman.** Elected 1978. Started sprinting in 1967 at Duxford with a much modified Comet which was later developed into Mighty Mouse followed by the supercharged Super Mouse. Invited to America to demonstrate his bikes over there, they could not believe the performance he was getting.

**R.A. Cox.** Elected 1972. As Social Secretary Dickie Cox was the life and soul of every rally and famous for always organising fine weather.
Howard R Davies. Elected 1968. Founded HRD Motors Ltd., Wolverhampton in 1924, Won 1925 Senior TT on a 490 cc H.R.D.

Ted Davis. Elected 1955. Another Stevenage stalwart who became Chief Development Engineer for the D's, Ted was better known at the time for his exploits racing a Lightning sidecar outfit.


Rollie Free. Elected 1950. Holder American National Solo Record at 150.313 m.p.h. achieved wearing only bathing trunks and gym shoes on a tuned Black Shadow which Phil Vincent christened in retrospect the "Black Lightning" model for advertising purposes.

Mark Goodson. Elected Vice President 1995, on standing down at the end of his second term in 2005 he remains an Honorary Member. Mark was Hon Treasurer from 1986 to 1992 and Chairman from 92 to 95. A widely travelled ambassador for the Club.

Frank Griffin. Elected 1998. A long standing Club member who not only was great help to Eddie Stevens (q.v.) in preparing the latest edition of Know Thy Beast but also at the time of writing is well on his way to producing working drawings of all post war Vincent spares as the leading member of the drawings project.

Ted Hampshire. Elected 1952. Ted had been with Vincents from the earliest days, was ever present at Club functions and the first port of call for advice on pre-war models and Vincent history.

Bill Hancock. Elected 1985. Bill was Technical Services Officer from 1967 to 1969. He continued to write in MPH and then became Spares Secretary at the end of 69 until 1978, when he became Secretary. He held that post until 1983 when work pressures meant he could not give the time which this post demands. Extremely popular despite his forthright manner his passing in 1985 was mourned by all and the Riders Rally renamed in his memory.

Neville Higgins. Elected 2000 Latterly best known as a regular contributor to MPH (The Prof's Piece), Scandinavian Section Organiser and sprinter of some renown with Jindivik.

Bill Hines. Elected 1959. Immensely popular Chairman of the Club from 1953 to 1959 he had the very difficult task of taking over following the death of the first chairman, Bernard Cribb, in a road accident.

Ron Kemp. Elected 1995 Long time active Club member and spare parts stockist.


Rene Milhoux. Elected 1950. Belgian rider who rode Gunga Din to beat the World standing start records at Jabbeke. Also took other national records and took part in other record attempts.


Vic Proctor. Elected 1949. Holder of the South African National Speed at 136.26 m.p.h. (achieved 166m.p.h. on nitro in 1954)

Paul Richardson. Elected 1951. Son of a Scottish father and French mother and brought up in Holland he became Vincent's Service Manager after a colourful war in the British Army. Author of Pearson's "Vincent" Motor Cycles, in the second edition of which he is described as formerly Technical Information Manager, this colourful approachable person had a number of roles at Stevenage in which his multi languages were a great help.


Tony Rose. Elected 1969. A private detective accustomed to doing high mileages he bought a new Shadow in November 1951 and proceeded do a 100,000 miles on it in by January 31st 1953. He was assured by P.C.V. that it would do that mileage without major overhaul or decarbonisation. At around the mid way stage, after it had been run with a broken oil pipe, Vincents lifted the heads for examination and replaced two broken pistons rings and a valve spring but no other work was done on the engine and it was not de-coked.
**Kurt Schupp.** Elected 1996. Kurt had been German Section Organiser since 1975.

**Glenn Shriver.** Elected 1980. Chicago Section Organiser, fervent supporter of both the marque and the Club.

**Bob Stafford.** Elected 1978. Bob had already been Series A Section organiser for 15 years, filling the additional acting-unpaid* roles of Series A mutual aid officer and Series A spares secretary. *British military rank, meaning self explanatory.

**E.M.G. Stevens.** Elected 1965. Mutual Aid Officer (1000cc) 1961-65. Responsible for the addition of the word 'Stainless' to the Vincent owner's vocabulary, he brought a scholarly approach to the technicalities of the marque. The series of articles on the subject which appeared in MPH from 1964 onwards subsequently appeared in book form as Know Thy Beast and is still in print by popular demand.

**Irene Ulver.** Elected 1986. Now married to John Ulver in Washington, Irene was Hon Treasurer from 1982 to 1986. Skilfully managed the Club's accounts at a period when the Club finances were becoming more complex.

**Ron Vane.** Elected 1997. Ron is best known for his record breaking three wheeler 'The Thing', a turbocharged twin, which set various records in the Seventies.

**Mrs Elfrida Vincent.** Elected 1955. Following their marriage in 1953 Mrs Vincent frequently accompanied PCV to Club functions.

**Les Warton.** Elected 1950. Leading Australian sidecar racer whose Australian national speed record of 122.5 m.p.h. was later beaten by Bobbie Burns (q.v.)

**John Webber.** Elected 1981. Editor of MPH who at the time of his election had already edited over 100 MPH's and would go on to edit a total of 334, from the Club's Silver Jubilee to its Golden Jubilee.

**Russell Wright.** Elected 1955. After Bobbie Burns (q.v.) had broken the world sidecar record on his Black Lighting, said he wouldn't mind having a go at the world solo record himself. Eventually this was achieved with a speed of 185 m.p.h. After being shown at the 1955 Motorcycle Show at Earls Court it was shipped to Bonneville where higher speeds in their respective classes were achieved by both Burns and Wright but these were not ratified by the FIM. (198.3 solo one way).