

### **A Twist to Ramsgate**

Many years ago motorcycles were operated by a series of levers. I remember riding a 1930s Scott motorcycle with a hand operated gear change. The gear lever was on the right hand side of the fuel tank, and on the right side of the handlebars were the lever operated choke, front brake and lever operated throttle (accelerator). Things became quite busy when approaching a junction especially if you were turning right and had to give hand signals as well. The procedure was greatly simplified in the 1920s with the invention of a twistgrip throttle. Now used worldwide the twistgrip was invented by a Ramsgate electrician Harry Laslett. Harry had his electrical shop in Queen Street, and lived at Queensgate Road. Members of the Laslett family still live in Ramsgate.

Many have claimed they invented the Twistgrip with some saying it was first invented by Silvester Roper for his steam motorcycle in 1869. There have been many modifications to the basic design but Harry Laslett received a U.S. Patent for his design in 1925.



The photo above is promoting a Motorcycle Gymkhana of Southwood Football Ground. The gentleman at the back under a top hat is Stan Howard, a member of the local Police Force. Wearing the Mexican outfit is local engineer Jack Aycott and behind him is "Jonka" Spain. Many will remember the local motorcycle club dressed as Cowboys and Indians in local carnivals with horns and eccentric wheels on their bikes.