

# THE 1924 SOUTHERN SCOTT SCRAMBLE.

In 1924 the Camberley & District Motor Club decided to put on the toughest motorcycle race the world had yet seen. As no name already existed for such an extreme event, they coined the name "Scramble" – The world's first Scramble.

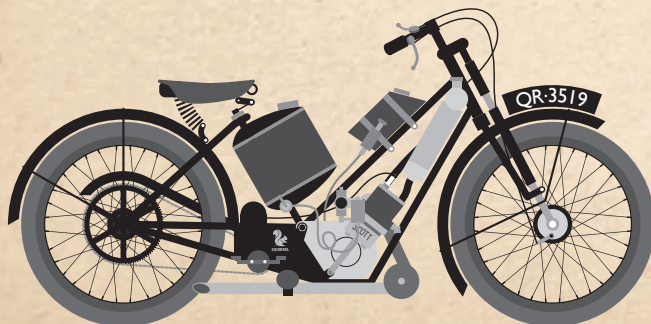
On a cold March morning in 1924, riders came from all over the UK to take part. It was an out and out race over a dedicated track across the military land to the north and east of Camberley. The winner being the fastest to complete 2 laps.

It was a huge success, and its format was quickly and widely copied. "Scrambling" rapidly spread around the world. The French called it "Motocross" and that is the popular name for it today. It was the genesis for all types of off-road motorcycle racing.

## SURREY HEATH MUSEUM.

To further celebrate Camberley's heritage the Surrey Heath Museum will be running a series of events including an exhibition celebrating 100 years of Motocross – 2nd March to 4th May 2024.

For details see –  
[e-voice.org.uk/surreyheathmuseum](http://e-voice.org.uk/surreyheathmuseum)



# THE 2024 CENTENARY.

On Sunday 24th March 2024, we will be running a centenary event over the same land and much of the original course.

150 riders will be able to celebrate the birth of their sport by riding over the same "hallowed ground" as our forebears did a century ago.

We will be following the spirit of the original event, with a few concessions to modern rules. So, the event will not feature a massed start, but as in 1924 the competitors will be set off at intervals around an off-road course.

A few people will be looking to ride old motorcycles and so we will have a mix of old and modern and even some new electric motorcycles.

For more information see –  
[Facebook.com/scramble100](https://Facebook.com/scramble100)



[CamberleyAndDistrictMotorClub.co.uk](http://CamberleyAndDistrictMotorClub.co.uk)



Camberley & District MC  
in association with  
W&DMCC



Rebuilding  
lives after  
sight loss

As it was in 1924,  
profits will be donated to  
Blind Veterans UK



# CAMBERLEY THE BIRTH PLACE OF MOTOCROSS

- The first ever Motocross race took place near Camberley in March 1924.
- The race was won by a local – Mr Arthur Sparks riding a Scott motorcycle.
- This event triggered a huge worldwide sport and industry – off road motorcycle racing.

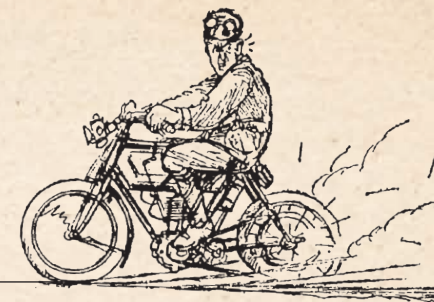
On 24th March 2024 an event similar to the original format will take place over the same land to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the world's first Motocross. [scramble100](https://Facebook.com/scramble100)



The winner of the 1924 event –  
Mr Sparks is pictured above on his Scott motorcycle.



# Our Camberley forebears invented an event that would become the genesis for a huge global sport.



In 1924 The Camberley Club planned an event that would be beyond challenging and decided to skip penalties for falling off and crashing as they assumed everyone would. It would be an out and out two lap race over the roughest of off-road terrain that the Army land around the north and east of Camberley could deliver. There would be no rules, just the fastest over the course would win. After much debate as to what such an event could be called, they decided to invent a new name and called it a "Scramble". It would be the world's first ever Scramble. The organisers were gentlemen, so 2½ hours were naturally set aside in the middle of the two-lap race for lunch.

It would be called the "Southern Scott Scramble" as the North's toughest event was the "The Scott Trial".

And so, the world's first Scramble was on. The world's first Motocross. The world's first Enduro.



Over 80 "Optimists" gathered for the start in March 1924 on a mix of road bikes, as dedicated off-road bikes had yet to be invented. Period accounts tell us that the terrain was spectacularly challenging, and half the bikes would disintegrate and not make the finish. Even many of the bikes that crossed the line were wrecked and had to be transported home by train. Some of the riders knew the challenge they were facing. Mr T.G. Waterhouse had the foresight to take a length of gas-piping with him so that he could straighten out his Velocette motorcycle "as the need arose".

Period press accounts tell us that spectators could trace the course by following the trail of motorcycle debris. A few journalists took part and one who had survived the horrors of trenches summarised his thoughts on riding in the Scramble – "I was very frightened".

Amazingly there were no serious injuries. Aided, no doubt, by the fact that they were a hardy bunch having all survived the War and the riding was slightly less perilous as nobody was shooting at them.

On site they had the local Bagshots St. John Ambulance and amusingly stated "They mean well and delight in practice."

The winner completed both laps in just over 2 hours of riding. He was a local Camberley chap, Mr Arthur Blencowe Sparks, a former 2nd Lt from the Royal Flying Corps. The steed he chose was a 486cc Scott Squirrel motorcycle. A 2-stroke twin cylinder machine. He averaged almost 25mph, an astonishing speed considering it was over ground so rough that most of the other competitors machines disintegrated under them.



For once the northerners had little to say, although one described it as the "worst freak course ... and with the steepest hill he had ever seen".

The event was a huge success, it was quickly copied, and similar events quickly sprang up all over the UK.

The motorcycle manufacturers realised that they had to up their game and produce motorcycles that could survive or even thrive off-road. The 1924 Camberley Scott Scramble became the genesis for all future off-road competition motorcycles and the many forms of motorcycle sport that it spawned.

Its success quickly took it global and the French called it the "motorcycle cross-country" later abbreviated to Motocross. As the years progressed organisers found it challenging to find courses where they could have laps of many miles long and in conjunction with making it more spectator friendly the laps shortened until we have a modern Motocross.