



Thunderbird Times

February 2009

Newsletter of the Mighty South London Branch of the Triumph Owners Motor Cycle Club

We have a date for the Last Chance Animal Rescue run (Charlie Goddard's charity of choice) - Sunday 5th April. More details later.
And don't forget the A.G.M. - March 24th.

SECOND AND CONCLUDING PART OF: FOUR OLD GITS GO TO THE GITE

from Tim Pring

When we last left them, the four well 'ard were gorging themselves around the table of Roger the host and were accompanied by Jim. Jump back to England for a moment where I, dear reader, your faithful scribe, am known by my daughters as 'chicken legs'.

Now without effort or much at least, imagine if you have sturdy stomachs, the sight of Mog in his dressing gown with a hangover, whose legs make mine look like tree trunks. He is pottering around muttering and making tea, it is early for we all get up each morning by 9.45a.m. and toast, no beetroot has to be on the table by 10. no later. There is much



Residents of the 'Bide-A-Wee Home for Superannuated Bikers' await the weekly bingo session. *

coughing and grunting and other sounds emanating from our bodies as we assemble to plan the adventures for the forthcoming day. The pattern developing is that it's cold first thing, warms up by mid-day, sun comes out, we go out and then, it rains. Tuesday was a local day pottering around, down to St Nics, bit of shopping, rode each others bikes and then back up the twisting, wet, leaf-covered road toward home, Mog showing everyone the way, when out of the mist looms a bulky figure on a blue modern machine which eventually transpires to be Paul, AKA 'The Fat one'. He had spent a miserable night in his caravan in Normandy prior to 'joining his mates' in Brittany.

From what can be remembered of that evening, a self-catered meal of excellent omelettes and cheese and beer and wine and whiskey, the air became filled with more and more heated comments and more and more hot air as Charlie fuelled the stove and alcohol fuelled the conversation.

* *In the interests of political correctness & to save space next issue, I suppose I should apologise now. It's really the querulous quartet, Mac, Tim, Mog & Chas partying the night away. Ed.*

Wednesday I recall was an even slower start but finally we all assembled in the big shed where the bikes lived. Jim had a Dnepr outfit in bits, and the odd con rod stuck in his beard. Roger the genial host, his domestic chores completed, was playing with his latest toy, a 250cc MZ outfit. Perhaps now is the time to introduce some more participants in this saga of unfolding events. Jim, above mentioned, is an old poacher from Lincolnshire with a love of big heavy old mechanical devices, who could be the South's answer to Fred Dibner. He comes to France on his 'old' new Enfield to fettle Roger's fleet of Eastern European outfits, attired in his wellies and long despatch riders' coat, with long white beard and bushy eyebrows he looks as if he should belong in an earlier, less complicated era. A most important person not yet mentioned is Linda, she who is obeyed. The long suffering wife of Roger, not really, long, suffering that is, goes out every day to earn a living and put food on the table amongst other things. But enough of domestic bliss. We are here to ride, or perhaps not, motor bikes. By now, dear reader, you may be as confused as we are, but there is great activity in the big shed. Spanner, screwdrivers, even hammers are being wielded, only Jim is wielding but despite all of this engineering expertise Charlie's T140 is reluctant to start and a dead Boyer is the agreed diagnosis of these eminent mechanics peering and prodding under Charlie's seat. In case there might be grave misunderstanding the seat referred to is the T140's, not Charlie's.

Roger has a solution for this and suggests that Charlie rides his T140. A quick change of registration plates and we are ready to go. After about 15 minutes, it's time for lunch and as I am leading on my now flying T150 I pull up in yet another medieval square and head for the local bar. After a cup of coffee, into the dining room. Set menu 10 euros including wine. The T150 always goes better after lunch. Next the seaside and a beer, chat to the locals, admire a French man, or at least his gleaming 3 cylinder Japanese two-stroke of some sort, and then a saunter down the coast road to St Brieuc thence inland to St Nicholas.

Another participant in many adventures is Nippy. Now Nippy is a little unusual. He wears a nice leather jacket, flying helmet and goggles, but is in fact a dog. A friendly dog who is a motorcyclist. He rides in the chair whenever Roger takes out one of his outfits.



Normally Nippy rushes around chasing footballs and cats but also likes to sit on your lap, but when it comes to going for a ride he is a very serious animal. We set off for an 80 mile round trip with Roger in the lead riding the blue Ural, Nippy strapped into the sidecar peering through his goggles at the passing world, up into the hills and cold fog. Stopped in yet another ancient town, Roger had to return so as to be able to collect his son from school and Jim became leader of the expedition and we wound our way home via the local supermarkets to stock up with vital provisions such as red wine and Scotch. The following day was one of adventure, however. the notable event was Charlie's prang. What, another one you say - well yes, but this time both Roger and an unsuspecting Nippy were involved. Not content with riding a borrowed T140, Charlie thought he should try his hand as a sidecar pilot. He could have chosen the heavy, stable, two-wheel drive Ural but no, it had to be the light and tricky 250MZ. Around and about are lanes and tracks and it was to these that Charlie set off with Roger and Nippy in the sidecar. All went well to start with, but one is easily led into a sense of false security.

Proceeding at a fair clip down a narrow lane with ditches on either side, our intrepid hero managed to lose control and direct the outfit into aforementioned ditch. Over went the bike, under went Charlie, off went Roger, and Nippy became a flying dog landing a few yards away in a field. Charlie and Roger were roaring with laughter, the dog was not so happy and spent the next ten minutes performing toilet functions in the grass. Charlie had to be pulled out from under, the dog persuaded to get back in and they all came home. We thought Charlie had only suffered hurt pride but later that evening he needed extra rations of Scotland's finest and a massage from Linda. who among other things is a physiotherapist. Of course Charlie's friends were full of sympathy and concern for their injured comrade and this must have lasted for at least 2 minutes.

After more rides out the next day when nothing untoward happened, we loaded all the bikes prior to eating, drinking and going to bed as we had an early start for the ferry home.

Friday morning, up at 6.00a.m., a shock to the system, it was raining heavily and the large one was on his bike whilst we four were in the dry and warmth of our cars. The drive to St Malo was rather demanding as the roads were wet and we were heading directly into the rising sun which at times made it impossible to see the road. Nevertheless, we all made it safely to the ferry. Charlie and I, being the last of the big spenders, had booked a cabin for the return crossing which was just as well for a combination of full English breakfast and a choppy sea made a bed a welcome retreat for the ten hours crossing back to Portsmouth.

We most certainly should have a couple of visits to Roger's during the coming year. (T.P.)

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Young Rob had a bit of a result at Kempton. Having ripped a tooth off one of those toothy things in the gearbox of his Tribsa, he's spent most of the last year trying to find a replacement. Having all but given up and thinking of replacing the entire gearbox internals, he found one for the princely sum of £3 in the first box of bits he looked in. He still wasn't happy - complaining it cost him a fiver to get in just to buy a 3 quid bit.

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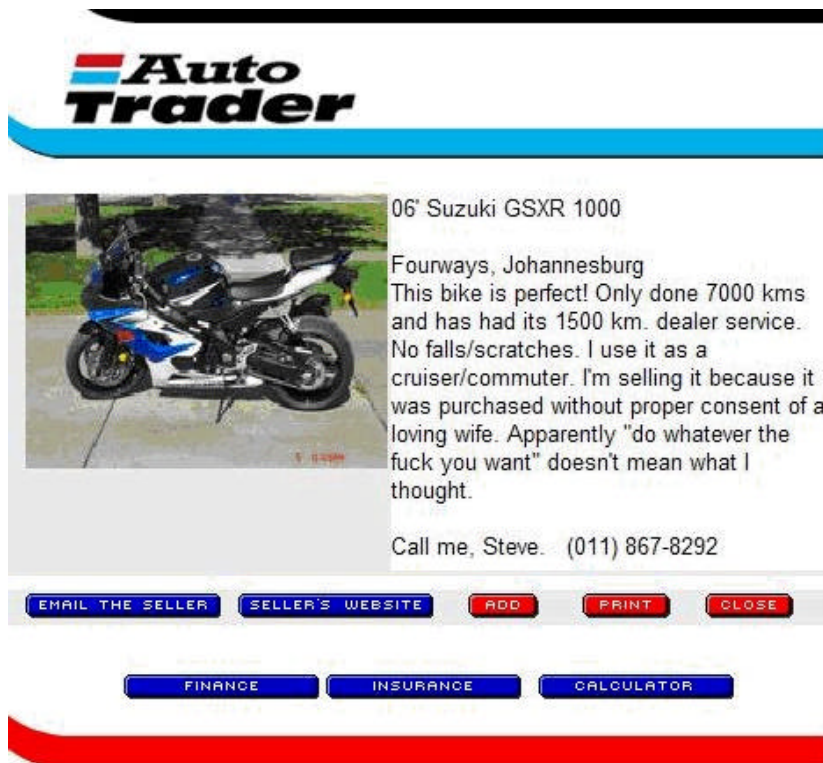
HEALTH & SAFETY WARNING

Under no circumstances should you carry your beer in this manner on a bike. It makes it too warm.

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Video Nasties

We have some footage, taken on cine film, transferred to VHS, & now onto DVD, of things the branch got up to in the late 50s onwards. Quality ranges from acceptable to abysmal, the background music is OK, but not when you're sitting listening to it for hours whilst trying to edit the stuff. You will see things like Dave Kent with hair, Gerry Hubble before he had a wheel surgically removed from his head, & some sad git combing the fringe of his Vespa seat cover. There are, however, some good bits. If anybody wants a loan of a DVD, let me know. *Mal*



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FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

- 27th February – 1st March - Alexandra Palace Motorcycle Show (£15 entry, & they're not showing a discount for the elderly).
- 21st March - Kempton park
- 22nd March - Pioneer Run
- 24th March** - **A.G.M**
- 29th March - South of England Classic Show, Ardingley
- 5th April - Last Chance Animal Rescue run.

THE CLUB:

Meets at the Princess of Wales, **98 Morden Road, London SW19 3BP**
(020 8542 0573) every Tuesday from 8.30 pm.

Runs leave the pub at 8.00pm sharp, 4th Tuesday of the month, April to Sept.
Please ensure you have a full tank of petrol.

CLUB CONTACTS:

Chairman

Treasurer

Secretary

Membership Secretary

Show Secretary

TT Editor

Social Secretary

Runs Leader

Regalia

Website Administrator

Mog Pharoah

Malcolm Orpin

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Dave Kent

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Soon to be filled

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Watch this space